

Rationing of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the NHS – Julie Cooper

Julie

Cooper MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, commenting on reports of increases in waiting times for hip operations, said:

"It

is absolutely shocking in 21st Century Britain that patients in some parts of the country will only qualify for knee and hip replacement operations on the NHS if they can prove pain so exceptional that it prevents sleep.

"Rationing

of this kind is totally unacceptable and is against the best traditions of the

NHS. However, there are concerns that if the Government continues to deny sufficient funding to the NHS, rationing of treatments could become more widespread."

News story: The UK continues to be Scotland's largest market for trade.

[Scottish exports](#) to the rest of the UK in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £49.8 billion, an increase of £2.1 billion (4.4%) over the year. This is good news not only for Scottish businesses large and small, but also for employment, for product and service development and economic stability.

Scottish exports to the rest of the UK

Scottish exports to the rest of the UK in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £49.8 billion, an increase of £2.1 billion (4.4%) over the year. This was driven by an increase in the export of utilities (electricity, gas, water etc). The rest of the UK continues to be Scotland's largest export market as the figure is £21.1 billion higher than the estimated total for international exports.

Scotland's exports to the rest of the UK are 4 times greater than those to the EU.

Exports to countries within the European Union (EU)

International exports to countries within the European Union (EU) were estimated at £12.3 billion, which is 43% of total international exports. This is an increase of £520 million from the previous year (4.4%). The increase was driven by an increase in the export of petroleum and chemical products.

Within the EU, the Netherlands (£2.3 billion) was again, the largest market, followed by France (£1.8 billion) and Germany (£1.8 billion). Whilst the Netherlands is consistently reported as one of Scotland's top trading partners, a number of goods exported here are likely to be destined for onward supply to other countries. This is because of key ports in this area.

International exports to non-EU countries

International exports to non-EU countries were estimated at £16.4 billion, which is 57% of total international exports. This is an increase of £485 million from the previous year (3.0%).

Service sector exports from Scotland are of greater importance to the rest of the UK than internationally as more than half (55%) of the rest of the UK exports are services compared to 38% of international exports.

Total international and rest of the UK exports in 2015 (excluding oil and gas) are estimated at £78.6 billion, up £3.1 billion (4.1%) in the year. Exports to the rest of the UK accounted for 63% of this total, EU exports accounted for 16% and non-EU exports 21%.

The USA continues to be Scotland's top international trading partner (£4.6 billion). The top 5 international export markets (USA, Netherlands, France, Germany and Norway) accounted for £11.7 billion (41%) of international exports from Scotland.

Scotland's success in trading

Over the last ten years, findings from the Global Connection Survey have reinforced the strong trading performance that Scotland has enjoyed within the UK.

[See the full results of the Global Connections Survey here.](#)

[Press release: New report offers guidance to support disabled students](#)

The Department for Education has today (27 January 2017) published a new [report](#) which provides best practice guidance to help universities, colleges and independent higher education providers support their disabled students.

It will help to ensure that all higher education providers are best equipped to support disabled students to reach their full potential and succeed. It encourages providers to look at how they can support and offer the best possible environment for disabled students to pursue their studies.

The report has been produced by the Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group, which is a new sector-led group, supported by the Department for Education, and chaired by Professor Geoff Layer, Vice Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton.

The group is comprised of senior representatives from higher education as well as educational sector groups and was created in order to share best practice and reflect on how providers can best cater for disabled students.

Universities Minister Jo Johnson said

I welcome this guidance from the Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group, and would like to thank members of the group for their work. The guidance will support all higher education providers in expanding their inclusive teaching and learning practice, bringing benefit to them and their students.

This group is an excellent example of how the higher education sector can work together for the benefit of all students, supporting this government's social mobility agenda – giving everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, the chance to study at higher levels of education.

The National Union of Students, who are also members of the group, have produced a [survey format for providers to collect their own student feedback](#). This will enable them to gather information about the challenges their students' face in accessing their higher education course, and inform their approach to reducing barriers within their organisation. It will be issued alongside the report.

Professor Geoff Layer, Vice Chancellor University of Wolverhampton led on the development of this guidance. He said:

Higher education has the power to transform lives, providing skills, experiences and opportunities that leave an indelible positive impression. However, we know that a student's experience can be adversely affected if they have a disability and do not receive the right support to enable them to reach their full potential.

The Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group was set up to build on the work and good practice in place across our universities to support our disabled students to succeed. By addressing equality issues and adopting inclusive teaching practices, universities can recognise and value the diversity of the student body and work with

them to enhance the learning experience for all.

This report complements the [Teaching Excellence Framework](#) (TEF), which will put a renewed focus on teaching quality and encourage providers ensure that students from all backgrounds, including disabled students are able to get the most of their university experience.

Higher education institutions should also review learning, teaching and assessment approaches to identify and address inclusion and equality issues. There should be a renewed focus on learners and staff with disabilities to ensure that any concerns they have are being listened to and addressed.

1. Read the [inclusive teaching and learning in higher education report](#).
2. [National Union of Students survey format](#) for providers to collect their own student feedback.
3. The membership of the Disabled Student Support Leadership Group:

Organisation represented	Member
Chair	Geoff Layer, University of Wolverhampton
Higher Education Funding Council for England	Sarah Howls
Higher Education Academy	Pauline Hanesworth
Equality Challenge Unit	Chris Brill
National Union of Students	James Elliott
	John Conway, Royal Agricultural University
	Jo Cooke, De Montfort University
HE institution representation	Mark O'Hara, Birmingham City University
	Sue Rigby, University of Lincoln
	Richard Reece, University of Manchester
Scottish HE representation	Sheila Williams, University of Edinburgh
Health Education England	Emma Wilton
AMOSSHE	Ben Bailey
Universities UK	Fiona Waye
GuildHE	Kate Wicklow
Association of Colleges	Arti Saraswat
Independent Higher Education	Pete Whittard
Office for Disability Issues	Katherine Toomey (nominee)
Association of Heads of University Administration	Mark Ellul

Organisation represented

Department for Education

Member

Matt Toombs, Georgina Watts, Paul Higgs (Secretariat)

New vehicle tax rules moves DVLA in to the world of webinar

From 1 April 2017, the way vehicle tax is calculated is changing for new cars and some motorhomes. These changes will only apply to cars registered with DVLA on or after 1 April 2017. We've been working closely with stakeholders over the past 12 months to make sure that in the run up to this, they're aware of the changes and know what, if anything, they need to do to prepare.

Key stakeholders for the new vehicle tax rules are fleet companies. Traditionally, we tend to speak face to face with this customer base, but this can be time consuming and costly for either side when travelling to meetings. So, we asked our fleet customers what the preferred way of communicating with them would be – the consensus was that a 'webinar' would work. We'd trialled a new webinar kit recently, so we were looking for an opportunity to use it for the first time. With our fleet customers keen, this was an exciting opportunity to put our new kit into practice!

Two trials later and we were ready to go live. We sent a link to all who expressed an interest and at 10.30am on 10 January we were ready to broadcast.

In total, 195 participants joined the webinar to watch the presentation and listen to the commentary provided by Helen Jones and Rhian Townsend, two of our more experienced Service Designers.



Behind the scenes (in a room not far away!), colleagues were waiting to

answer questions as they came through. We were poised with laptops at the ready to answer all that we could. An hour later, presentation over and all questions answered, the webinar was done.

Feedback we've had since suggests that it went down really well. So it's an excellent example of how sharing ideas and working together with our stakeholders helps us meet their needs. Well worth it.

It also shows that our investment in the webinar kit is well worth having and in future we'll be putting it to good use for other audiences too.

If you weren't able to make it on the day you can see the presentation and the questions that were asked during the webinar [here](#)

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[Press release: Court gives waste offender time to clean up site](#)

Colin Barnes had previously failed to clear the site ahead of the court hearing on Wednesday 25 January after his environmental permit was revoked.

Barnes, who traded as CT Barnes Autos, was taken to court by the Environment Agency after failed attempts to get him to comply with the law.

King's Lynn magistrates deferred sentencing him and have given him six months to clear the site. He is due back in the court on 26 July.

The permit held by Barnes, aged 59, of Podmore Lane, Scarning was revoked by the Environment Agency after he continually failed to run the site in line with the conditions in his permit. Following the revocation Barnes was required to remove the large amounts of waste remaining on site.

Mrs Megan Selves, prosecuting, said the deadline for removing all the waste was extended three times to dates suggested by the defendant, as waste officers tried to support him to do the right thing. But despite removing some of the waste, most of it remained two years later.

She told the court that Barnes had an environment permit to store waste vehicles and parts but it was revoked on 15 September 2014. All the waste should have been removed by 3 November 2014.

Barnes failed to respond to advice given by Environment Agency

officers and despite agreeing to deadlines for when he could remove the waste, he has failed to comply and the waste remains on site,

He has repeatedly flouted the law and undermined the legitimate waste management industry.

Magistrates heard that Barnes had operated the site since 1977 as a vehicle repair and service business until 2006 when he obtained a permit and began depolluting and dismantling vehicles which had come to the end of their lives.

Since the issuing of the permit there has been a history of non-compliance so the permit was revoked.

Barnes told investigating officers that since the revocation he had been removing some of the waste but had to rely on others as he did not have a waste carriers licence at the time and they sometimes took a long time to collect it as the value of the waste had decreased.

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Rob Brodie said:

Unregulated waste activities can impact both visual and amenity and can cause harm to the environment and human health.

These offences were committed over 21 months and despite advice and guidance from us and agreements to extend deadlines for the removal of waste, very little of it was removed.

Mrs Selves said Barnes had a history of non-compliance with warnings from the Environment Agency and has previous convictions for similar environmental offences.

Barnes pleaded guilty to: Between 4 November 2014 and 2 August 2016 on land at Willow Lodge, Podmore Lane, Scarning, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2NS you did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the storage of waste motor vehicles and vehicle parts, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010