

A photograph of a forest with bare trees and sunlight filtering through the canopy, creating a misty atmosphere. The sun is low in the sky, casting long, warm rays through the branches. The ground is covered in moss and fallen leaves.

Government *WORLD*™

Spring 2020 Edition

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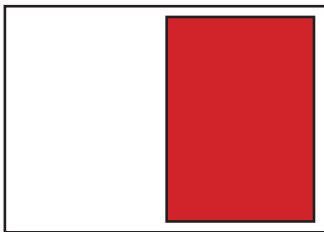
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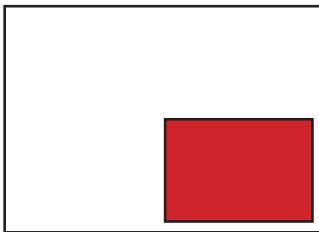
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News Roundup

and sports

Summary of the main news and sports events over the last three months

By Paul G Bazeley for Government World

January News Review

In Brexit news, the House of Commons voted to pass the Withdrawal Agreement to authorise the departure of the EU at the end of the month. The Bill also passed through the House of Lords before being given Royal Assent to finalise the UK withdrawing from the European Union. Near the end of the month the European Union votes to pass the 2020 Brexit agreement, it marked the last day Britain would be represented in EU parliament. At 23:00 GMT on the 31st January, the United Kingdom formally withdrew from the European Union.

The National Health Commission of China announced the third death from a virus known as Coronavirus or Covid-19. Authorities stated the virus had spread from Wuhan to major cities throughout the country and later puts most of its cities on lockdown to prevent the spread of the virus. As the month continued, other countries including

as South Korea, Taiwan, Germany and the US announced that they had identified cases of the coronavirus.

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle announced they were planning to take a 'step back' as senior members of the Royal Family. Later in the month, it was revealed the couple would finish their outstanding royal duties and that they would no longer publicly use HRH. It was also stated the couple would not receive public funds and would repay the £2.4million of public money that was spent renovating Frogmore House. Prince Harry will remain a Prince and the couple will remain Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The electric car company Tesla Inc saw a stock market capitalisation of \$88billion thanks to a strong third and fourth quarter. This meant Tesla was the most valuable automobile company in North America after overtaking Ford and General Motors.

Kim Jon-Un, the North Korean leader says the country will develop 'a new strategic weapon'. The news came after the US missed a deadline to restart denuclearisation talks with North Korea.

Drought, strong winds and record-breaking temperatures caused a series of large scale bushfires in Australia. By the end of the month, 27.2million acres of forest, parks and bush had been burned, 33 people had been killed, houses lost and tens of thousands of animals died.

In the Grammy Awards, Billie Eilish also won four awards; Song of the Year, Record of the Year, Album of the Year and Best New Artist.

The former NBA star Kobe Bryant died in a helicopter crash along with his daughter and seven other people

in California.

January Sports Review

In the Premier League, Liverpool maintained their dominance on top of the league beating rivals Man Utd 2-0. Other notable scores for the month were: West Ham 4 Bournemouth 0, Aston Villa 1 Manchester City 6 and Leicester City 4 West Ham 1.

February News Review

Early in the month, the first coronavirus death outside of China is reported in the Philippines. The doctor, Li Wenliang, who first tried to issue warnings of Covid-19 dies of the virus. Across the world cases and deaths began to rapidly increase, with Italy becoming one of the worst-hit countries. By the end of the month, Global Stock Markets had lost \$6trillion in value in the space of a week.

A man armed with a machete attacks people on Streatham Street, London before being shot dead by police. Three people were injured in the incident which was declared terrorism-related.

Home Secretary Priti Patel announced changes to the UK's immigration system.

As of 1 January 2021, changes such as the freedom of movement, a minimum requirement to speak English, priority to skilled workers over non-skilled and a minimum salary of between £20,480 and £25,600 will come into effect.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson approves the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway project despite delays, the project going billions over budget and strong opposition throughout the country.

Storm Ciara battered the United Kingdom causing widespread damage, disruption and flooding. Winds of up to 100 mph were recorded during the storm. Later in the month, the country was also hit with Storm Dennis again causing widespread damage, disruption and flooding.

The 92nd Academy Awards took place in Los Angeles with Parasite being the big winner, after receiving four awards. The South Korean film became the first movie to win Best Picture that was in a language other than English.

The Nepalese Government announced it planned to use the army to clear rubbish from the top of Mount Everest and five other peaks in the Himalayas. The news was

condemned by Nepalese Sherpas who claim only they can reach certain areas safely. A spokesman for the army stated they would be able to reach all the summits.

WhatsApp became the second largest social media platform, in terms of userbase, behind Facebook after it hit two billion users.

February Sports Review

While Liverpool finished the month still on course to win the title, their hopes of repeating Arsenal's invincible season ended after a 3-0 loss away to Watford. Other notable scores were: Tottenham Hotspurs 2 Manchester City 0, Arsenal 4 Newcastle United 0 and Manchester United 3 Watford 0.

Manchester City was banned from European club competitions, including the Champions League, for two seasons and fine €30million. The club was found guilty of deliberately inflating its sponsorship deals to get around UEFA financial fair play regulation. The club will appeal.

In the six nations England had a poor start after a shock loss to France in their opening game, however, wins over Scotland and Ireland kept them in with a chance. France remained unbeaten at the end of the month after also beating Italy and Wales.

The Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers 31-20 to win Super Bowl LIV.

March News Review

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared coronavirus a pandemic. Countries across the world placed strict guidelines with most countries enforcing a lockdown due to the rising threat of Coronavirus.

Coronavirus in the UK, supermarkets began to see mass panic buying for essential items early on in the month. By the middle of the month, most sports had been postponed including the Premier League. On the 21st March, all pubs, restaurants, cinemas, gyms and other social places were forced to close to prevent the spread. On March 23rd Boris Johnson announces a complete lockdown with all but non-essential shops to close. Work begins to turn the ExCel London into an emergency hospital. Prince Charles and

Boris Johnson are both confirmed to have tested positive for Covid-19.

The United Kingdom and the European Union began their post-Brexit trade talks. The government outlined a 30-page document of its priorities and ruled out any extension of the deal deadline which expires at the end of the year. At the end of the month, there were calls to push back the deadline due to disruption caused by coronavirus.

SpaceX successfully launched the Dragon spacecraft into orbit to resupply the International Space Station. Later in the month, SpaceX launched 60 Starlink satellites on a Falcon 9 rocket. The satellites are part of a low earth orbit constellation built by SpaceX to provide internet access. It is believed the company may sell some of the satellites for research, exploratory and military purposes.

The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen, a painting by Vincent van Gogh, was stolen in a raid from the Singer Laren museum in the Netherlands. The painting, estimated to be worth £5million, was on loan from the Groninger museum and is the only van Gogh they had in their collection. Thieves broke into the Singer Laren museum in the early hours of the morning and only stole the

one painting.

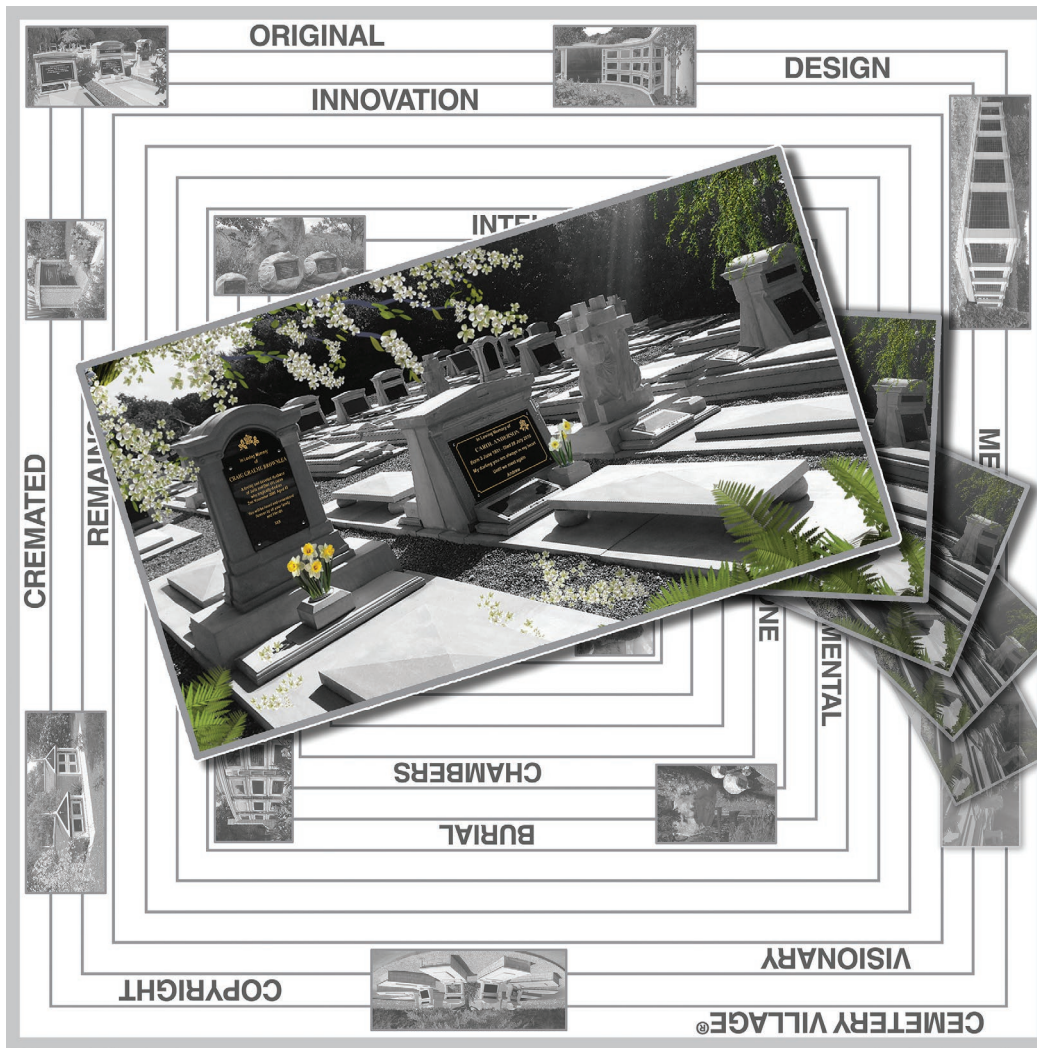
Vladimir Putin backs an amendment that would allow him to stay in power beyond 2024 and make a 'lifetime presidency' a possibility. Constitutionally, the president is required to step down in 2024, however, the amendment would place Putins presidential term count back to zero meaning he may potentially stay as president until 2036.

Harvey Weinstein, the disgraced American film producer, was sentenced to 23 years in prison for two felony sex crimes.

March Sports Review

Sporting events across the world were cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. This includes high-profile events such as the Olympics and Euro 2020. While several high profile sports stars tested positive for the virus.

End



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Fire brigade's millions in overtime revealed

January

Scotland's fire service is spending increasing amounts of cash on overtime as the organisation endures years of SNP cuts.

The brigade spent £7.2 million on overtime costs last year, the second highest amount in years.

It comes as unions argue the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has been putting up with more than a decade of funding reductions.

The statistics were obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information.

They show £5.5 million was spent in overtime in 2015/16, followed by £5.8 million the following year.

That then dropped to £4.9 million in 2016/17 but rocketed to £8.3 million in

2017/18.

The five-year total is now more than £31 million.

Earlier this year, the Fire Brigade Union said there were 917 fewer firefighters than in 2010, placing a greater strain on firemen and women and putting the public at more risk.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"We know the fire service has been placed



under increasing strain over the years by this SNP government.

"The fact so many millions more are being spent on overtime payments proves that point.

"Clearly, the existing firefighters and other brigade staff are being asked to do more, and that's down to a lack of resources.

"It's time the SNP started listening to firefighters and provided the organisation with what they need to do the job.

"Of course an organisation like the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will always require some overtime work, but the millions more being spent in the last couple of years point to a real problem."

Microchipping your pet is the best New Year's resolution you could make

January

The government and leading animal welfare charities are urging pet owners to microchip their cats and dogs this New Year, to give them the best chance at being reunited if their pet gets lost or strays.

Microchipping pets, and ensuring the data is kept up to date, is a vital part of being a responsible pet owner. Thousands of cats and dogs end up in rehoming centres every year and a microchip offers the best chance of identifying lost pets quickly and safely.

Since compulsory dog microchipping was introduced in 2016, 92% of dogs are now microchipped. Furthermore, data from Dogs Trust has shown a 15 percentage point decrease in dogs handled by local authorities since the change in the law as microchips allow them to be scanned and safely reunited with their owners before they formally become a stray dog.

While microchipping is a legal requirement

for dogs, it is not currently mandatory for cats, unless they are travelling under the Pet Travel Scheme. Cats Protection reported that 8 out of 10 stray cats handed in to their adoption centres in England



during 2018 were unchipped.

This government has always urged cat owners to microchip their pets as the right thing to do as responsible pet owners and is now taking steps to introduce compulsory cat microchipping to give pet owners peace of mind, help tackle cat theft and identify cats injured or killed on roads.

As the first step, in October, the Environment Secretary launched a call for evidence on cat microchipping to find out what the effects of making it mandatory would be on owners, rescue centres and cats. The closing date for evidence is 5pm on 4 January 2020.

Zac Goldsmith, Animal Welfare Minister said:

“Microchips are often the only hope of reuniting lost pets with their owners so it truly is the best New Year’s resolution you



could make to protect your furry friend in 2020. I urge cat owners to microchip their cat and for dog-owners to make sure the details on the chip are up to date.”

Jacqui Cuff, Cats Protection’s Head of Advocacy and Government Relations said:

“It is so important that cat owners microchip their pet cats as it is a safe and permanent form of identification. Cats love to explore, and are also great escape artists, so microchipping is important for cats, even those that live indoors.

Microchipping ensures lost cats can quickly be returned home, and that owners can be informed if their cat is injured and taken to a vet. We all want the best for our much-loved pets, so making a resolution to have your cat microchipped is a great way to start the year.

Cats Protection is delighted that the Government has shown its commitment to cat welfare and issued a call for evidence on cat microchipping including the benefits of making microchipping compulsory for cats, as it is for dogs.”

Dogs Trust’s Veterinary Director Paula Boyden said:

“We see first-hand both the heartbreak that dog owners suffer when they are separated from their pets, as well as the joy of being reunited.

This is why it is so important that owners keep their details on the microchip database up to date, as required by law. Doing so significantly increases the chances of a lost or stolen dog being reunited with their owner.

As an example, in last year’s Stray Dog Survey we uncovered that, of the dogs seized who were microchipped, a staggering 69% weren’t able to be reunited due to incorrect contact details.”

This government is committed to animal welfare and has already taken a strong stand in this area by banning wild animals in travelling circuses, committing to increasing maximum sentencing for animal cruelty from six months to five years, and making CCTV cameras mandatory in all slaughterhouses.

Year of action on railway starts with new fares trials

January

- new fares trial for GTR passengers and start of LNER trials, providing more flexible tickets and informing wider improvements across the rail system
- government to establish new 'fares trials fund' to establish further fares trials across the country
- trials to provide evidence base in advance of the independent Keith Williams Rail Review, which will provide recommendations focused on creating a simpler, more effective railway system

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (2 January 2020) told passengers to expect a year of action towards creating a rail industry relentlessly focused on improving their experience.

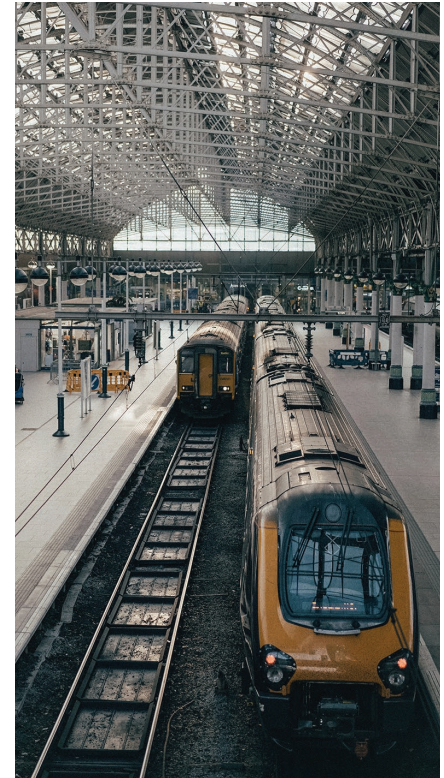
Steps to pilot new fares systems have been announced today, designed to support

people who want to travel and work flexibly.

A new fares trial on Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) will provide passengers on certain routes with the opportunity to purchase better value tickets aimed at part-time workers, reflecting modern working patterns.

The government will also establish a new 'fares trials fund', to kickstart further trials this year across the country. These will help thousands of passengers save money, and provide the foundations for reform.

Reforms of the rail system will be set out in a white paper this year, responding to the recommendations of Keith Williams' root and branch review of our rail network. The recommendations will include plans for a more modern rail system, including ending the complicated franchising model to create a simpler, more effective system.



Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said:

“This government will improve the railway system to ensure the focus is always on putting passengers first.

This commitment begins with the launch of innovative fares trials, to help explore the benefits and costs of a clearer, more flexible and fairer fares system.

Delivering such significant change will take time, but passengers can have total confidence that these trials will help provide the evidence needed to develop wider reforms to the fares system and a significantly better service.”

The announcement of GTR trials coincides with the start of trials on LNER today, enabling passengers to purchase cheaper single-leg tickets on services from London to Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Previously a passenger travelling between London and Edinburgh purchasing a ticket at the station would have paid £150.50 for a Super Off-Peak Single ticket or £151.50 for a Super Off-Peak Return ticket from 2 January. Under this trial, the cost of a Super Off-Peak Single is now £75.75.

The chair of the government’s root-and-

branch rail review has set out that his recommendations will focus on making the current system simpler and more



convenient for passengers.

Independent Chair of the Williams Rail Review, Keith Williams, said:

“My review’s proposals will make recommendations aimed at modernising the railway, creating a system that’s built for its passengers.

The trial launched today will help to shape my recommendations for a fairer, more flexible and modern service, which better reflects the way people want to travel.”

The move comes as the government freezes regulated fares in line with inflation for the seventh year running. Since 2014 fares have, on average, remained below the annual inflation cap.

The government has also helped cut the cost of fares for a generation of passengers through the new 16-17 and 26-30 ‘millennial’ railcard, and will be rolling out a new veteran’s railcard to give 700,000 former servicemen and women a third off their rail costs.

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Multi-million-pound culture boost for children in schools

January

Thousands more children will be able to learn instruments and play in orchestras or choirs thanks to a further £80million investment by the Government in music hubs.

Alongside this investment, charities that help young people learn about different styles of music are also set to receive a further £1 million next year to support the next generation of musicians.

Pupils will also have more opportunities to put their film making skills to the test, explore museums or take to the stage, as a series of other cultural education programmes receive an additional £4 million funding boost next year.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb has announced this multi-million-pound package today (Friday 3 January) alongside a manifesto commitment to offer an 'arts premium' to secondary schools to allow young people to learn creative skills and widen their horizons.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

"Music, arts and culture play an essential role

in enriching pupils' education, and we want to give as many young people as possible the opportunity to learn an instrument or perform in a choir or a band.

Our continued investment will play an important role in helping young people widen their horizons and access all the opportunities that learning a musical instrument can provide - whether that be playing for pleasure or performing."

The curriculum schemes that will receive a total of £85 million for 2020/21 are as follows:

Music Education Hubs

In Harmony

National Youth Music Organisations (NYMOs) and Music for Youth; and Cultural education (Heritage Schools, BFI Film Academy, Museums and Schools, ACE Bridge Network, National Youth Dance Company, Saturday Art and Design Clubs).

Music education hubs, which are organisations that give pupils access to instruments and support whole classes to play together, have transformed the teaching of music in schools through subsidised

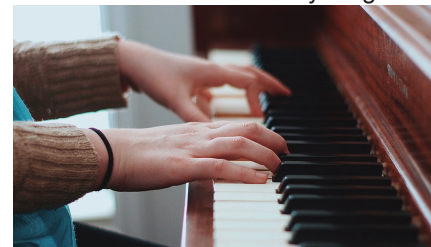
instrument lessons and ensembles.

These hubs have been supported by £300million between 2016 and 2020, which forms part of an overall investment of £500million in the arts during that period, making it the second highest funded element of the curriculum behind PE.

Hannah Fouracre, Director Music Education, Arts Council England said:

"We're delighted that this funding from the Department for Education has been confirmed.

These programmes support a creative, diverse and inclusive music education for children and young



£40 million investment to reduce NHS staff login times

January

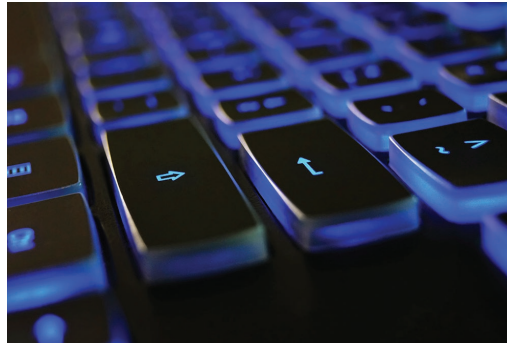
The government will provide £40 million to transform slow login times, one of the main technology frustrations facing NHS staff.

NHS staff currently have to log in to multiple computer programmes when tending to a patient, with each programme requiring its own login details. Some staff need to log into as many as 15 different systems.

This can be time consuming, and also requires staff to remember multiple complex passwords or use the same one on multiple systems, which is potentially a cybersecurity risk.

The investment will ease the administrative burden on NHS staff, freeing up time for more one-to-one patient care.

The investment will support projects similar to that seen at Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool, which implemented single sign-on technology and reduced time spent



logging into multiple computer systems from 1 minute 45 seconds to just 10 seconds.

With almost 5,000 logins a day, it saved over 130 hours of staff time and freed up their time to focus on patient care.

The 'logins project' will focus on 3 main areas:

1) working with IT system suppliers to standardise logins and provide multi-factor

logins, like finger print access, rather than password-led logins

2) ensuring trusts update their processes to give staff appropriate access permissions for the systems they need to treat patients

3) integrating local and national systems so staff can access the full range of clinical and workforce systems to support their needs
To bridge the technology gap between the NHS and social care, a further £4.5 million will be given to local authorities to develop digital adult social care projects to support the most vulnerable in society to live independently for longer and improve information sharing across the NHS and social care.

Examples of initiatives the money could fund include:

- artificial intelligence with assistive technology: using sensors to establish normal behaviour for individuals, for example sleep patterns, use of kettles and walking routes, and alerting carers where there are variances

- creating shared care records which combine both medical and social care information, with NHS and care staff able to access the record

- allowing information held by the care home to smoothly integrate into hospital IT systems as a person is admitted to hospital

To further improve the digital capability of NHS trusts, a new 'digital aspirant' programme will be set up. This will provide funding over several years to assist with digital transformation projects so that trusts can provide safe, high-quality and efficient care.

The programme will aim to raise the bar across the NHS by making sure organisations have a core set of capabilities in place.

The Health and Social Care Secretary will also commit to designing a model of what excellence looks like, so that every provider – from mental health trusts to care

homes – knows what they need to do to be outstanding on technology in the 2020s.

This will be assessed as part of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection regime, with trusts expected to meet minimum technology standards.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

"I want to harness the best digital technology to improve care for patients and ease the burden on our staff. And to do that, we need to get the basics right. Too often, outdated technology slows down and frustrates staff, and prevents them from giving patients their full attention and the care they deserve.

It is frankly ridiculous how much time our doctors and nurses waste logging on to multiple systems. As I visit hospitals and GP practices around the country, I've lost count of the amount of times staff complain about this. It's no good in the 21st century having 20th century technology at work. This investment is committed to driving forward the most basic frontline technology upgrades, so treatment can be delivered more effectively and we can keep pace with the growing demand on the NHS." Chief Executive of NHSX, Matthew Gould,

said:

"If you work in the NHS, the tech should not be getting in the way of your ability to do your job. Tech should be something you rarely think about because it just works. Today's announcements mean we can start to tackle one of the biggest gripes staff have with their tech. It will allow staff across the NHS to spend more time with their patients and less time fighting their computers."



Police leaders to start bidding for more Taser from today

January

Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales can start bidding today (Monday 13 January) to equip more of their officers with Taser as part of a Home Office drive to give police more powers and tools to tackle crime.

This follows the Home Secretary's commitment to put more officers carrying Taser on our streets through a £10 million ringfenced fund, allowing them to better protect themselves and others from harm.

Bidding will open on a new online platform launched by the Home Office, where forces will decide how much funding they apply for based on the threat and risk in their local area.

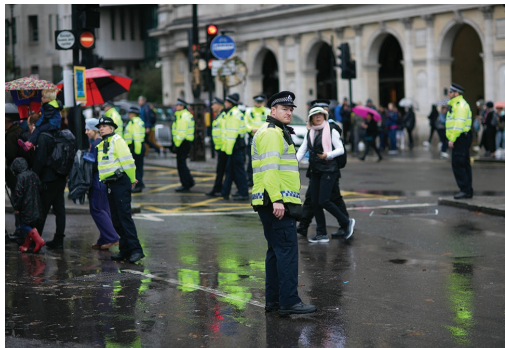
Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

"Our brave police officers put themselves in harm's way to protect us and I am committed to giving them the tools they

need to keep themselves and the public safe.

The rise in assaults on officers is appalling which is why I am providing funding to equip up to 10,000 more officers with Taser - an important tactical option when facing potentially physically violent situations."

Police and Crime Commissioners will need to outline how many additional officers they plan to train to use Taser. The final funding allocations for forces, which cover 2019/20



and 2020/21, will be announced as soon as February.

This comes after a series of announcements supporting the police, including a commitment to boost their ranks with 20,000 new officers over the next three years and increased stop and search powers. The Government also plans to consult on increasing the maximum sentence for assaulting police officers and other emergency service workers, to ensure jail terms truly fit the crime.

A new Police Powers and Protection Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech which will provide the police with additional powers to protect the public and establish a Police Covenant, ensuring officers and their families get the right emotional and physical support.

£20m announced to fund vaccines for coronavirus and other infectious diseases

February



The Government has today pledged £20 million to develop new vaccines to combat the world's deadliest diseases, amid concerns over the ongoing novel coronavirus outbreak in China.

When visiting the Public Health England's Porton Down laboratory last week, Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced the UK will ramp up efforts to fund ground-breaking research into vaccines, diagnostics and cures to fight against the threat of future viruses.

The new funding will support work developing new vaccines for epidemics, including their three new programmes to develop vaccines against the novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV. These projects aim to advance 2019-nCoV vaccine candidates into clinical testing as quickly as

possible.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“Vaccines are our best defense against a host of deadly diseases, including coronavirus. The UK is a hub of world-leading and pioneering research, and it is vital that we lead the way in developing new vaccines to target global threats with scientists from across the world.

The £20 million announced today will help our globally recognised vaccine development capabilities continue to develop new defences against emerging diseases including coronavirus. It's paramount we invest in vital

research about infectious diseases, keeping the UK at the forefront of modern-day science so we can share this knowledge globally.”

The £20m in new funding will go to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) – an innovative global partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil society organisations launched in Davos in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

CEPI was originally formed in response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Dr Richard Hatchett, CEO of CEPI, said:

“CEPI welcomes the UK’s continued support and funding for our vital work, which comes at a crucial moment as the world races to respond to the emergence of a novel coronavirus. The rapid global spread and unique epidemiological characteristics of the virus are deeply concerning.

Our hope is that, with our partners, we can

get an investigational vaccine from gene sequencing of the pathogen through to clinical testing in 16 weeks. The earliest stage of clinical trials (Phase I), to establish the safety of investigational vaccines, would take around two to four months.

This is an extremely ambitious timeline – indeed, it would be unprecedented in the of field vaccine development. It is important to remember that even if we are successful

- and there can be no guarantee
- there will be further challenges to navigate before we can make vaccines more broadly available.”

The Government is also in initial stages of talks between NIHR and UKRI regarding plans to run a rapid research call to support the global response to 2019-nCoV.



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End of coal power to be brought forward in drive towards net zero

February

- Britain's reliance on coal for electricity has dropped from 70% in 1990 to less than 3% today

- government announces its intention to consult on bringing forward the deadline for removing coal power altogether by 2024

- Prime Minister sets out intention at a speech launching a Year of Climate Action ahead of COP26, attended by Sir David



Attenborough and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte

The deadline for the phase-out of coal from Britain's energy system is planned to be brought forward a year to 1 October 2024, the Prime Minister has announced today (4 February 2020) in a speech to launch COP26.

The government will consult on bringing the deadline for ending unabated coal forward from 2025 to 2024, part of its drive to go further and faster on decarbonising the power sector, as it works towards net zero by 2050.

New statistics released today show the UK's greenhouse gas emissions fell by 2.1% between 2017 and 2018, thanks in large part to the rapid decline of coal-

powered electricity generation. Last year more than half of the UK's electricity came from low-carbon sources.

This means the UK has cut its emissions by 43% since 1990 while growing the economy by more than two thirds – the best performance of any G7 nation.

Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

“The UK has a proud record in tackling climate change and making the most of the enormous economic potential of clean technologies. This is my number one priority, and we will raise our ambition in this year of climate action.

Coal-generated energy will soon be a distant memory as we plan to decarbonise every sector of our economy, enabling a greener future for all our children.”

The Prime Minister today set out the UK’s position as a world leader in the response to climate change and called on all nations to strive towards net zero emissions.

The government will also bring forward an end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition is feasible, subject to consultation, as well as include hybrids for the first time.

Coal is the most carbon intensive fossil fuel and is responsible for harmful air pollution. Last year Great Britain went 3,700 hours without using coal for power, nearly 5 times more than the whole of 2017. There are currently 4 active coal generators, one of which has announced closure in March 2020.

Britain was one of the first countries in the world to commit to ending unabated coal

generation. Existing policies are already cutting our reliance on coal from around 40% in 2012 to less than 3% in 2019. The contribution of renewables is now at record levels, standing at 33%.

Read the Prime Minister’s full speech, delivered at the Science Museum.

The announcement comes as statistics released today show the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions fell by 2.1% between 2017



and 2018.

In November 2015, the government announced its intention to consult on proposals to end unabated coal generation in Great Britain by 2025. The government response to that consultation was published in January 2018.

The plan to bring forward the date of phasing out unabated coal will be subject to a public consultation. Unabated means that the plant has not invested in abating technology, such as carbon capture and storage.

The contribution of renewables to the UK electricity system in 2018 is available.

Last year Britain went for more than 5 months in total without using coal to produce electricity. In May it went for over a fortnight in one stretch – the longest coal-free period since the 1880s.

Government to cut the cost of new homes by a third

February

- Housing Secretary announces plans to cut costs of a proportion of new homes by a third for first-time buyers – turning the dial on affordability

- The First Homes scheme will give people the opportunity to buy a home in their local area – saving eligible first-time buyers on average around £100,000

- The discount will be prioritised for veterans and key workers such as nurses, police officers and firefighters

A new generation of homeowners will be able to take their first step on to the housing ladder thanks to a scheme cutting the cost of some new homes by a third, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (7 February 2020).

First Homes will see a discount locked into the property to ensure more first-time buyers benefit in years to come. Local people unable to afford a home will be able to buy in their area, rather than be forced to look elsewhere

by rising prices.

The scheme will lower deposit and mortgage requirements for local first-time buyers in England – shaking up the housing market and making the dream of home ownership a reality. The discount will apply to a proportion of new homes, with the government consulting on how this will be delivered.

Veterans will be prioritised as part of Armed Forces Covenant and councils will also be able to use the scheme for front-line workers in their area such as police, nurses, prison officers and teachers.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

“First Homes will be genuinely life-changing for people all over the country looking to buy their first home.

I know that many who are seeking to buy their own home in their local areas have been forced out due to rising prices. A proportion

of new homes will be made available at a 30% market discount rate – turning the dial on the dream of home ownership.

The discount will be passed on with the sale of the property to future first-time buyers, helping thousands more people in years to come and ensuring local communities can stick together.”

The average price of a newly-built home in England is £314,000. Under First Homes, a property sold with 30% off this price would deliver a £94,000 saving and enable first-time buyers to get on the ladder faster by taking more than £18,000 off a 20% deposit.

The average newly-built home in Cornwall costs £246,000, meaning a 30% discount delivers a saving worth more than £73,000. Areas with particular affordability pressures will see even greater savings with a 30% discount.

The government is committed to delivering more than one million new homes over the next 5 years to further improve the affordability of housing.

The proposals published today, which could see tens of thousands of First Homes being built, include measures to help release more land.

More than 240,000 new homes were delivered in 2018-19 – more new homes than at any point in the last 30 years.

And the latest figures show more than 250,000 energy performance certificates being issued to new homes in 2019 – the highest number ever, suggesting further progress being made.

The government is determined to rebalance the housing market to support homeownership through new schemes such as First Homes, building on existing support including Help to Buy equity loans which have helped more than 190,000 people take their first step on the property ladder.

The latest figures show the number of first-time buyers reaching 357,090 – an 11-year annual high and an increase of 84% since 2010 – and the percentage of home owning 25 to 34-year-olds has grown from 36% to 41% over the last 5 years.

Paula Higgins, Chief Executive of the Homeowners Alliance, said:

“We know that first-time buyers will welcome the opportunity to buy a good quality home at a discount in their local area.

We look forward to contributing to the consultation and working with the government to ensure that the scheme does what it says on the tin - more high quality and affordable local homes for current and future first-time buyers.”

The scheme will apply the discount in perpetuity, so when the home is sold in years to come the new local buyer will be able to purchase it at a discount as well.

The measures build on action from the government to make it easier for people across the country to take their first step on the property ladder, including:

- Consulting on a new national model for shared ownership enabling more people to take their first step on to the housing ladder by reducing the initial share that has to be bought, and then enabling them to take further steps in 1% increments. Instead of having to purchase chunks of 10%. A consultation on these new measures was published in August and the Government will respond in due course with further details.

- Extending the Help to Buy: equity loan scheme to 2023 and ensuring that developers who work with us meet the standards and quality that customers expect and deserve.

The government has today launched a consultation on the design of the new First Homes scheme.

To ensure the scheme helps those who would benefit the most, the government is consulting on a price cap on properties available through the scheme, as it has done for Stamp Duty cuts and the new Help to Buy equity loan scheme.

The consultation proposes that current and recent Armed Forces personnel will be taken to have met the local eligibility criteria for First Homes in any local area under any circumstances.

The discount will be paid for through the contributions that housing developers routinely provide through the planning system. These contributions are an established mechanism for ensuring that new developments deliver benefits for local communities. This means that the First Homes scheme will not result in extra building costs.



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Milestone for Cornwall as major A30 upgrade gets the green light

February

Following a planning hearing last year, Grant Shapps, the Secretary of State for Transport, has granted a Development Consent Order for work to start on the major A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross Dualling Scheme.

Highways England's £290 million improvement scheme, part of the Government's £15 billion Road Investment Strategy, will help to promote economic growth, improve journey times and increase safety by unlocking one of the last major bottlenecks in the county.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

"This Government is committed to delivering an infrastructure revolution and levelling up access across the country.

This vital upgrade of the A30 will improve safety, cut congestion, boost access for drivers on their daily commute and

create better journeys for the surrounding communities."

The 8.7-mile road scheme includes:

- a 70mph high-quality dual carriageway
- a two-level junction at Chiverton Cross and a new roundabout to ensure the free flow of traffic on the A30
- a new partial junction at Chybucca built on two levels with west-facing slip roads to provide access onto the dual carriageway from local routes
- new bridges at Tolgroggan Farm, Pennycomequick Lane and over the Allet to Tresawson road to provide local access
- a two-level junction at Carland Cross with a new roundabout north of the dual carriageway and re-using the existing

roundabout to the south
- keeping the existing A30 as a local route with new sections where necessary to provide continuity and connectivity for local communities

Highways England Senior Project Manager Josh Hodder said:

"We're delighted to receive the Secretary of State's decision, which represents a major step in developing a scheme to help unlock congestion, promote economic growth and bring out better connectivity for local communities along the A30.

Improving the A30 between Chiverton and Carland Cross is incredibly important for Cornwall's future.

It's the only remaining stretch of single carriageway on the A30 between Camborne and the M5 at Exeter; journeys on this part of the road are regularly delayed, congestion often brings traffic to a standstill, and as a result the Cornish economy is being held back."

Following the granting of planning consent, main construction works are scheduled to start later this year, with the route expected to be open to traffic in 2023.

During construction, the work will take place away from the existing A30 route to ensure continuity for traffic.

Mr Hodder added:

"The existing A30 will remain open while the scheme is built alongside. We are currently finalising our construction partner, all phases of the work and associated traffic management will be explained to the local community before we start, and ongoing communication will keep people updated throughout."

The cost of developing the scheme is being partly funded by an £8 million contribution from the European Regional Development

Fund, with an additional £12 million for the construction phase. The remainder of the cost of developing and delivering the scheme is being funded by central Government.

Cllr Geoff Brown, Cornwall Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport, said:

"This is very welcome news for Cornwall. The scheme will help to improve journey times for local people, businesses and

visitors, there is strong support locally to improve this stretch of the A30, and the project will build upon the excellent working relationship that we have with Highways England."

Now a decision has been issued by the Secretary of State, there is a six-week period in which the decision may be challenged in the High Court.



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Government to monitor impact of coronavirus on UK medicine supply

February

The Chinese government continues to impose further restrictions on movement within China in response to the coronavirus outbreak, including on flight and rail travel.

To relieve potential pressures on global supply chains, suppliers have been asked to carry out a risk assessment on the impact of coronavirus on their business.

As an extra precaution, companies have also been asked to retain existing stockpiles of medical supplies, compiled as a contingency measure ahead of our exit from the EU, where possible.

There are no current medicine shortages in the UK linked to the situation in China but

the UK government is taking precautionary measures to help continue the uninterrupted supply of medicines to patients in the UK.

Health Minister Nicola Blackwood said:

“We are not aware of any current medicine shortages linked to this novel coronavirus, but we are putting in place common-sense measures as a precaution to help to ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines to UK patients.

We have world-class systems in place to prevent supply problems and we are working closely with industry and partners to prevent shortages and ensure the risks to patients are minimised.”

The government will work closely with industry and partners to continually monitor the impact of coronavirus on the UK supply chain and put in place measures to protect UK patients.

There is no need for the public or NHS to stockpile. This could aggravate problems elsewhere in the supply chain if they emerge.



The Department of Health and Social Care is also working with NHS Supply Chain to retain centralised stock of medical products.

The department has well-established procedures to deal with medicine shortages and works closely with the MHRA, the pharmaceutical industry, NHS England and others operating in the supply chain to help prevent shortages and ensure that the risks to patients are minimised when shortages do arise anywhere in the UK.

The NHS and wider health system is extremely well prepared for coronavirus and follows tried and tested procedures of the highest standards to protect staff, patients and the public.



Iconic blue passports return next month

February

Britons will be able to travel with a blue passport when the traditional colour returns for the first time in almost 30 years.

The distinctive blue cover will be re-introduced now the UK has left the EU, and will replace burgundy passports which were gradually rolled out from 1988.

The first new passports will be issued and delivered early next month. Full introduction will be phased in and from mid-2020 all new passports will be blue.

The colour is not the only change, in a first for the British passport, the back cover will also carry its own symbolic design – the floral emblems of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales embossed.

The blue passport will also be the greenest British passport ever. The carbon footprint produced through manufacture will be reduced to net zero, through projects such as planting trees.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

“Leaving the European Union gave us a unique opportunity to restore our national identity and forge a new path in the world.

By returning to the iconic blue and gold design, the British passport will once again be entwined with our national identity and I cannot wait to travel on one.”

The new passport will also be the most technologically advanced British passport ever, with a raft of new and updated security features, including a hard-wearing, super-strength polycarbonate data page, which contains innovative technologies embedded into the document, to keep personal data secure.

It also includes the latest and most secure printing and design techniques, which means it offers better protection against identity theft and fraud and will be even harder to forge.

The blue cover is a return to the original appearance of the British passport, with the colour first used in 1921.

It remained the colour of choice until the

UK joined the EU when a change to burgundy was agreed and adopted.

All British passports will continue to be personalised with the holder's personal details and photograph in the United Kingdom, ensuring no personal data leaves the country.

Standard passports will continue to contain 34 pages. Frequent traveller 'Jumbo' passports will now contain 54 pages.

Those with valid, burgundy passports can continue to use their passport for travel until it expires.



PM to chair COBR meeting on the coronavirus outbreak

March

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will today (Monday 2 March) chair a meeting of the government emergency COBR committee on the coronavirus outbreak.

The Committee will discuss, finalise and sign off a battle plan containing a detailed set of countermeasures.

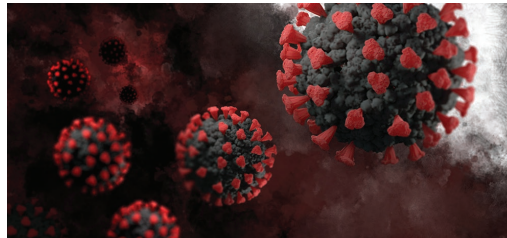
The Prime Minister will tell the meeting, which will be attended by senior ministers as well as Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor:

The number of coronavirus cases around the world is rising every day - and the UK is no exception.

There now seems little doubt that it will present a significant challenge for our country.

But we are well prepared, and the government and the NHS will stop at nothing to fight this virus.

This battle plan lays out in detail the measures we could use - if and when they are needed.



COBR has been meeting regularly on this issue since January and will be held as often as needed.

As the number of cases in the UK is expected to rise, the action plan will help ensure Government is doing everything it can and can adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Over the past few days, the Prime Minister has been in regular contact with the Chief Medical Officer and Cabinet Ministers at the heart of monitoring and responding to the virus here in the UK, including the Health Secretary and Foreign Secretary.

The Prime Minister has also been visiting NHS staff who may be on the frontline, such as those in Kettering General Hospital

last week, where he saw their new coronavirus pod, a special sterile cabin outside the hospital, where people can come to be checked.

Yesterday, he saw Public Health England's lab in Colindale, one of a number of labs across the UK where tests are carried out to confirm or rule out coronavirus. He then headed to Royal Free Hospital to meet with staff who are treating patients with the virus.

The PM and Health Secretary thank the NHS staff and healthcare professionals for their tremendous work and dedication in responding to this.

A war room will also be up and running in the Cabinet Office, bringing together communications experts from across government and the NHS to roll out the public information campaign and respond quickly to cross-cutting issues.

Public information campaign focuses on handwashing

March

This phase of the campaign focuses on the importance of washing your hands more often, especially:

when you get to work or arrive home
after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze
before you eat or handle food

You should wash your hands for 20 seconds, using soap and water or hand sanitiser.

You should also cough or sneeze into tissues before binning them.

The campaign will appear in the print media, radio, online and in public places, including billboards.

It has been brought forward in response to the current global situation.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The UK is a world-leader in preparing for and managing disease outbreaks and I have every confidence in our nation's ability to respond to the threat of COVID-19.

We all have a role to play in stopping this disease

and that's what this expanded campaign is all about – making sure the public knows exactly what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe. Washing hands regularly is the single most important thing that an individual can do.

Public safety remains our top priority. The government and the NHS are working 24/7 to fight this virus. It's imperative that everyone follows clinical advice by contacting NHS 111, and not going to A&E if you develop symptoms.

The first phase of the campaign began in February 2020, in response to the rising number of confirmed cases of coronavirus globally and in the UK.

On 3 March the Prime Minister published a coronavirus action plan for the UK, which sets out plans for a range of situations.

Since January, public health teams and world-leading scientists have been working continuously on the coronavirus response.

The NHS, Public Health England (PHE) and local authority public health across the country are working hard to support everyone in need of advice, testing or treatment.



The government has been working with partners across the country to provide advice to the public, travellers coming into the country and those most at risk from COVID-19.

PHE has already got the results of more than 13,000 tests, and all but 51 have been negative. Latest figures are published daily.

Expert teams are actively tracing people who have come into contact with someone who is suspected to have the virus.

Unless someone has been contacted already or has travelled to an affected area, they do not need to take further action.

UK Government funding creates Newport-based centre of excellence to tackle climate change

March

- New cutting-edge network of industrial centres to help UK lead the charge to net zero by 2050

- Four centres of excellence based in Newport, Nottingham, Strathclyde and Sunderland will help electrify planes, ships and cars

- Comes as UK Government holds new Cabinet Committee meeting focusing on Climate Change

The UK Secretary of State for Business and COP 26 President Alok Sharma has announced a £36.7 million investment to design, test and manufacture electric machines in some of the UK's most polluting industries.

The Business Secretary unveiled a total of £36.7 million in UK Government investment. £30 million will be used to create a network of industrial centres specialising in the

research and development of electric transport.

The CSA Catapult Innovation Centre in Newport will use a share of the £30 million to become one of four 'Driving the Electric Revolution' Centres for Excellence. The centres will bring together climate change pioneers to research and develop green electric machines including planes, ships and cars.

Each centre will propel UK manufacturing to the forefront of global efforts to tackle climate change and ensure the UK can reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Secretary of State for Business and COP 26 President Alok Sharma said:

"The electric revolution is an opportunity for our transport sectors to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels.

The UK is leading the way in developing cleaner technologies to help us reach our target of zero emissions by 2050 and these new centres will play an important part in that."



Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

“The Centre for Excellence created in Newport will generate productivity across the south Wales region, boosting the economy whilst driving forward Welsh innovation and research.

The UK Government is committed to meeting its 2050 net zero emissions pledge. I saw first-hand how the CSA Catapult Innovation Centre will help us reach our ambitious goal and put the country at the forefront of green innovation during my visit to Newport today.”

The £30 million industrialisation centres will provide a home for virtual product development, digital manufacturing and advanced assembly techniques, that could drive world-leading improvements in the testing and manufacturing of electric machines.

This includes power electronics, electric machines and drives - all of which are crucial in electric vehicles and ultimately to their widespread rollout on our streets.

More than 30 partner research and technology organisations will be a part of the industrialisation centres. The

network will be headed up by lead partner Newcastle University, along with 21 other universities from around the UK, plus 13 Research and Technology Organisations – and will be essential in attracting both



foreign direct investment and new, innovative entrants into this space.

Driving the Electric Revolution challenge

The Business Secretary also announced the 14 winning projects for the UK Government’s Driving the Electric Revolution challenge. One of the successful projects, TRW of Pontypool, will work with Romax Technology to help boost supply chain efficiencies in industries affected by electrification, from aerospace to automotive, to energy and rail.

A total of £6.7 million will be shared by the 14 projects, which comprise 38 major businesses from around the UK, including GKN, Jaguar Land Rover and Rolls-Royce.

The announcement comes as the Prime Minister held the first meeting of a new Cabinet committee focused on tackling climate change; discussing how the UK Government can go further and faster towards net zero.

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Action plan announced to boost smart motorway safety

March

- eighteen point package of measures to improve safety and public confidence set out by Transport Secretary

- plans will see 'dynamic hard shoulder' motorways abolished to end confusion

- 'stopped vehicle detection' to be rolled out at pace and places to stop in an emergency spaced closer together

An action plan to ensure smart motorways are as safe as possible has been set out today (12 March 2020) by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps. Work will focus on getting help to broken down drivers much quicker and making the schemes less confusing.

This follows analysis commissioned by the Transport Secretary which found that overall, evidence shows that in most ways

smart motorways are as safe as, or safer than, conventional ones. Data shows that the risks that are lower on smart motorways compared with conventional motorways include tailgating, rapid changes of vehicle speeds, vehicles drifting off the carriageway and vehicles being driven too fast.

However, some risks are higher than on conventional motorways, for example the risk of a collision between a moving and stationary vehicle.

In order to address these risks the Transport Secretary has unveiled a package of 18 measures, which includes abolishing confusing 'dynamic hard shoulder' motorways and substantially speeding up the deployment of 'stopped vehicle detection' – a radar-based system which spots stationary vehicles – so that it is installed across the entire smart

motorway network within 36 months.

This will enable broken down drivers to typically be detected within 20 seconds, with lanes closed more quickly.

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, said:

"I've been greatly concerned by a number of deaths on smart motorways, and moved by the accounts of families who've lost loved ones in these tragic incidents.

I commissioned an urgent stocktake of smart motorways to provide a clearer picture of their safety and make recommendations on next steps. I envisaged it to be swift, but during the course of our

investigations a complex picture emerged – which warranted further work.

That work has now concluded and overall, evidence shows that in most ways smart motorways are as safe as or safer than conventional ones.

But I am clear that there is more we can do to raise the bar on smart motorway safety. The extended package of measures I have set out will help rebuild public confidence in our motorway network and ensure that safety is firmly at the heart of the programme.”

The changes will also ensure that the distance between places to stop in an emergency is reduced to three-quarters of a mile where feasible, so that on future schemes motorists should typically reach one every 45 seconds at 60mph. The maximum spacing will be one mile.

The action plan also sets out the government’s commitment to installing 10 additional emergency areas on the existing M25 smart motorway and considering a national programme to install more places to stop where they are more than

a mile apart. Highways England will also investigate what more can be done on sections of the M6 and M1 where there have been clusters of incidents.

There will also be more communication with drivers to ensure motorists feel as safe as possible on smart motorways. An additional £5 million is being committed on national, targeted communications campaigns to

further increase drivers’ awareness and understanding of smart motorways and how to use them confidently.

The campaign will launch later this year and include advice on what to do if drivers break down on a smart motorway.



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- Soil Pollution

by Paul Bazeley

In the latest in our series about pollution, we move on to soil pollution. We will look at its causes and how it affects our lives.

Soil pollution is caused by the presence of man-made chemicals or other substance that cause alterations in the soils environment. The pollution occurs when the concentration of these substances becomes high enough to pose a risk to plants, wildlife, humans and/or the soil itself.

It is estimated that within the next 40 years there will be another 2 billion people on the planet, that is the equivalent of the current population of China and India combined. If this is the case we will need to grow more food

at a rapidly increasing rate, however, research from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation that 20 million hectares of arable land are lost annually due to poor quality soil. This teamed with the loss of another 10 million hectares being lost due to water-logging, erosion and high salt content means the amount of land we can use to grow food is declining while the population of the world is increasing.



The main types of contaminants that cause pollution can be split into five categories; agricultural practices, biological agents, industrial waste, radioactive pollutants and urban waste. Fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, manure and slurry are all types of agricultural waste. Many of these are used to help grow fruit, vegetables and plants, however, excessive use over time can raise the salinity levels this causes the soil to lose its minerals meaning it starts to kill off more than just pests.

Biological agents work into

the soil and introduce manures and digested sludge into the soil, which over time becomes contaminated. The industrial waste contaminant includes petroleum, drugs, glass and cement and they come from industries such as refineries, factories and gas works. Radioactive pollutants are fairly self-explanatory and consist of things such as nitrogen, uranium and radium. They can come from laboratories, power stations, accidental spills and even war. The radioactive substances will infiltrate the soil and can very quickly turn it toxic. Finally, urban waste can consist of domestic and commercial waste and effectively just means peoples rubbish. Most peoples rubbish ends up at a landfill site which is a huge contaminant to the land and ends up destroying all the soil nearby.

While the idea of these five contaminants destroying vast quantities of agricultural land each year, land which will be required more

and more in coming years may seem worrying, this is not the only effect soil pollution has on the world. Consistent exposure to soil contamination is linked to a far increased risk of developing a range of cancers. Soil



pollution has also been seen as a cause of neuromuscular blockages, neurological problems, nausea, fatigue and skin and eye irritation. Economically, soil pollution can cause huge losses, for example, in China over 19 million tonnes of grain is destroyed each year due to large amounts of heavy metal this means an estimated cost to Chinese farmers of 20 billion yuan or \$2.6 billion. Animals are the other big loser when it comes to soil pollution. Contaminants in the soil begin to negatively affect animals as they begin to ingest contaminated soil. This is a big problem as this may destroy a layer in the food chain causing issues for predator animals further up the chain leading to increased mortality and possibly extinction. Even small lifeforms such as worms are susceptible

to soil contamination and absorb the toxins, as many have pointed out these then get consumed by larger species which in turn are consumed by larger species and this sometimes leads back to humans to create a vicious circle.

The impact of soil pollution is clear and at times seems incredibly worrying, however, all is not lost. Just in our own homes, we can begin to compost food waste and some packaging, such as egg trays, we can make an effort to recycle as much as possible, we can try to reuse as much as possible, even if it is given to charity to be reused and buying organic food. Reducing the number of pesticides and fertilisers across the world would have an overwhelming and almost immediate impact.

Interestingly, other ways are being experimented with to try and improve the soil. Bioremediation



is a process which can be used to treat contaminated soil or water and consists of altering the conditions of the environment to stimulate the growth of microorganisms and degrade the pollutants. In some cases, some vitamins, minerals, nutrients and pH may be added to aid the growth of the microorganisms. Also, mycoremediation is a fungus-based type of bioremediation where the environment can be decontaminated by using fungi-based technology and has proven to be effective,

environmentally friendly and very cheap.

As people, we are becoming more acutely aware of the impact we can have and ways in which we can reduce and prevent contamination in the soil and suggestions point towards that continuing. Also, it seems technology is catching up to the problem and beginning to find effective and cheap ways of improving contaminated soil which suggests there is light at the end of the tunnel. Nevertheless, current research suggests we lose 24 billion tons of topsoil each year due to soil pollution. To put that into perspective it takes 500 years for 2.5cm of topsoil to be regenerated. So while it seems all is not lost in the fight against soil pollution there is still a long way to go.



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Next stage of expanded coronavirus (COVID-19) public information campaign launches

March

People are being urged to stay at home for seven days if they develop a high temperature or new continuous cough as part of an expanded public awareness campaign in the fight against COVID-19, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has announced today (Sunday 15 March).

For the first time, members of the public will see advice in TV adverts featuring Chief



Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and voiced by actor Mark Strong as part of the government's drive to ensure everyone knows the best way to limit and delay the spread of the COVID-19.

Building on the current campaign, which reinforces the importance of washing your hands more often, the next phase reflects the government's shift into the 'delay' phase of its action plan to limit the spread of the virus. A key part of this is asking people to self-isolate for seven days if they develop a high temperature or a new continuous cough – however mild.

As well as on TV, people will see and hear the campaign advice in newspapers and magazines, on drive-time radio, online and through social media and on billboards and large digital displays, including at bus stops.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“Coronavirus is the biggest public health crisis we have faced in a generation. It continues to spread both in the UK and around the world and we need to accept that sadly, many more of us will become infected.

The government and the NHS are working 24/7 to fight this virus. We must all work together and play our own part in protecting ourselves and each other, as well as our NHS, from this disease. This expanded campaign will focus on ensuring the public knows exactly what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe.

Washing hands regularly for 20 seconds or more remains the single most important thing an

individual can do, but we now also need to ask anyone with a high temperature or new continuous cough – however mild – to isolate yourself and stay at home for seven days. You should continue to follow our online clinical advice and not go to A&E or your GP if you develop mild symptoms.

Combating this virus will require a national effort - we all have a role to play to slow its spread and protect the elderly and the vulnerable.”

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Public Health England’s Medical Director said:

“We know that novel coronavirus affects the most vulnerable the most and so it is absolutely vital that we do everything we can to protect them. This new guidance sets out what we can all do to help save the lives of those most at risk.”

This week, the UK’s Chief Medical Officers raised the risk to the public from moderate to high. The campaign offers clear, practical advice so the public can play their part in preventing and slowing the spread of the virus.

As per the current advice, the most

important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

The next phase of the awareness campaign also reiterates the importance of seeking help online by visiting [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) to check your symptoms and follow the medical advice, rather than visiting your GP. It also urges people with any symptoms to avoid contact with older and more vulnerable people. Where possible, we are urging people to visit the 111 website rather



than calling, too, to ensure the phone service is readily available to those who need it.

Last week, the Prime Minister published a ‘battle plan’ for tackling the disease in the UK, which sets out plans for a range of scenarios. This week, the Prime Minister confirmed the UK has moved into the second stage of this plan, the ‘delay’ phase.

NHS, Public Health England and Local Authority Public Health teams up and down the country are working tirelessly to support everyone in need of advice, testing or treatment.

Since January, public health teams and world leading scientists have been working round the clock on the COVID-19 response, and government has been working with partners across the country to provide tailored advice to the public, travellers coming into the country and those most at risk from COVID-19.

First new ventilators to roll off production line this weekend as industry answers call to step up manufacturing

March

The news comes as some of the biggest names in British manufacturing race to step up ventilator supplies to help protect the NHS and save lives throughout the coronavirus pandemic, as part of the Prime Minister's call to manufacturers.

This weekend, the first batch of the Penlon ventilator device, which has been rapidly adapted from other existing ventilator designs, will be ready for dispatch, following approval from the MHRA that it meets the necessary safety requirements.

The device is being manufactured by a consortium* including Formula 1 teams McLaren and Mercedes, Ford, Siemens and Meggitt. An initial delivery will be ready this weekend, with potentially hundreds more of that device to follow, alongside thousands more of other new devices in the coming weeks.

Other existing ventilator devices are also being scaled up, in collaboration with British and international industry, including products from Diamedica, Breas Medical and Smiths Group.

A number of other British manufacturers have also started urgent production of new ventilators, designed from scratch, following efforts from the industry and Government to rapidly increase numbers available to the NHS.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

“Throughout our history British manufacturing has always stepped up in times of national need.

Ventilators are one of the most complex medical devices and the speed and scale that design and production is ramping up is awe inspiring.

We will do whatever it takes to ensure the NHS and social care sector has the support and equipment it needs to save lives.”

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“We are doing everything we can to support our NHS staff fighting this battle on the

frontline, and it's crucial we get even more ventilators there as soon as possible.

We have seen a fantastic response from businesses to our call for a national effort - and I'm delighted these companies accepted the challenge to save lives across the country.”

The Government has provided a number of letters of intent to purchase potentially thousands more ventilators with companies who have credible designs, subject to them passing the regulator and strict safety tests.

There are a number of companies involved in these devices including Plexus, Rolls Royce, GKN Aerospace, Team Consulting, Cogent, Dyson, TTP plc, Sagentia, Smith & Nephew, Cambridge Consultants, PA Consulting, Babcock, Oxford University, OES Medical, BMW, Pitlane Consortium and Kings College London.

Separately, a team led by UCL, working with Mercedes Benz, will also produce 10,000 new CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) devices to support affected patients, with a team from Oxford University also developing related technology, which will increase the capacity to provide oxygen to affected patients at an earlier stage in the process of the disease.

Thanks to the work of consortiums that are scaling up production of smaller manufacturers as well as the ingenuity of the biggest names in manufacturing to support the UK's response to this public health emergency, many are coming up with new designs for this high tech medical devices in a matter of weeks, rather than months, further underlining the scale of this coordinated effort.

The Penlon device is based on elements found in their current range of CE marked products and meets the rapidly manufactured ventilator system specification. It is a fully intubated mechanical ventilator designed to provide support to critically ill patients with a range of functions including volume and pressure controlled ventilation.

Further details are set out in the PM's call with manufacturers and suppliers, including other manufacturers involved: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-ventilator-manufacturers-and-suppliers-26-march-2020>

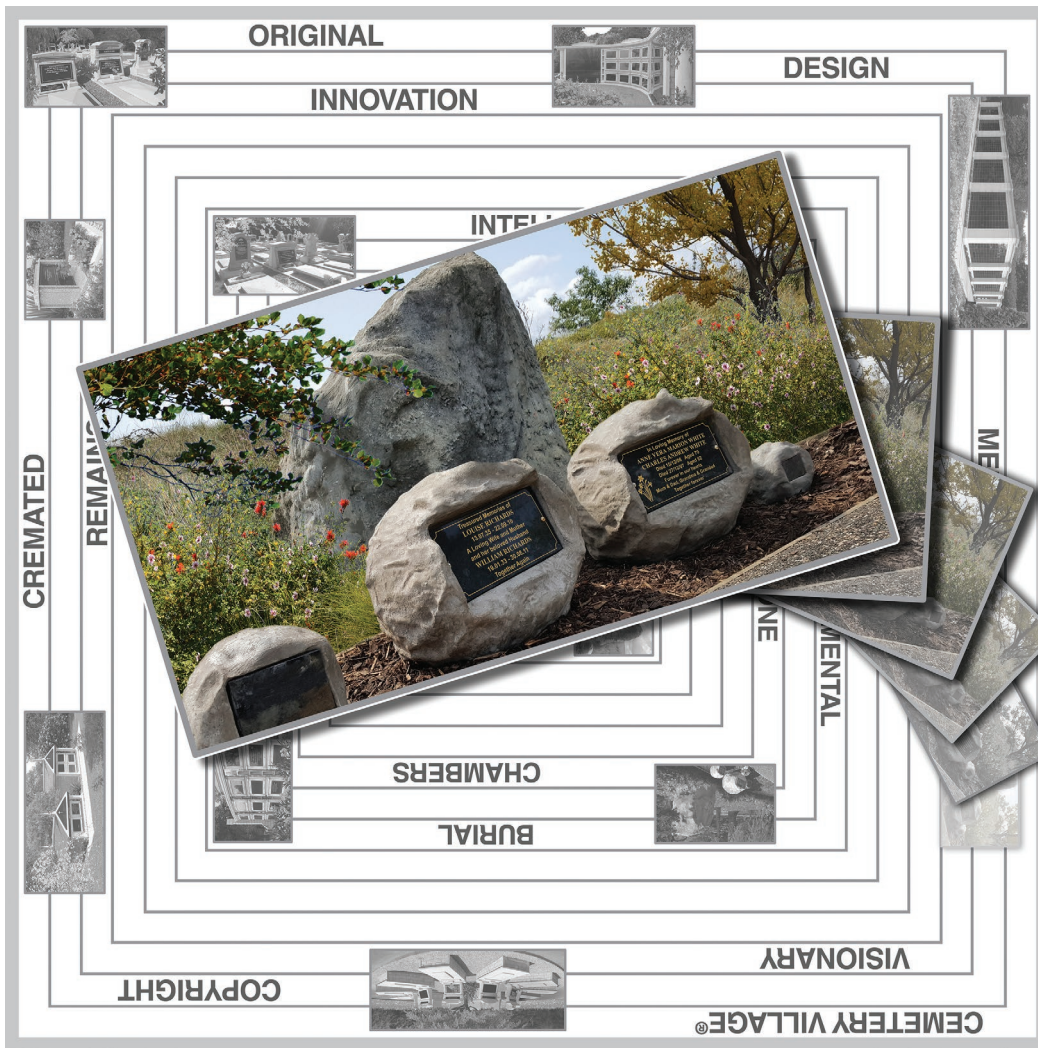
*The Ventilator ChallengeUK includes the

following companies and groups:

- Airbus
- BAE Systems
- Ford Motor Company
- GKN Aerospace
- High Value Manufacturing Catapult
- Inspiration Healthcare Group
- Meggitt
- Penlon
- Renishaw
- Rolls-Royce
- Siemens Healthineers and Siemens UK
- Smiths Group

- Thales
- Ultra Electronics
- Unilever
- UK-based F1 teams: Haas F1, McLaren, Mercedes, Red Bull Racing,
- Racing Point, Renault Sport Racing,
- Williams
- Accenture
- Arrow Electronics
- Dell Technologies
- Microsoft
- PTC





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