

# [Press release: Statement on the sentencing of Ahed Tamimi](#)

Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt MP said:

The conviction and sentencing of Ahed Tamimi is emblematic of how the unresolved conflict is blighting the lives of a new generation, who should be growing up together in peace, but continue to be divided.

The treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention remains a human rights priority for the UK. We will continue to call upon Israel to improve its practices in line with international law and obligations.

We have offered to help the Israeli authorities through expert-to-expert talks with UK officials. The offer still stands and we hope Israel will take us up on it. While we recognise that Israel has made some improvements, it needs to do much more to safeguard vulnerable people in its care.

## **Further information**

- Follow Minister Burt on Twitter [@AlistairBurtUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## **Media enquiries**

For journalists

Email  
[newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)

Newsdesk  
020 7008 3100

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# [News story: UK flu levels according to PHE statistics: 2017 to 2018](#)

*Updated:* Added latest flu data.

## **Latest update**

Seasonal flu levels remain elevated but have now peaked.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) [report published at 2pm today](#), Thursday 22 March 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, although activity has now peaked.

The statistics show over the last week:

- a 8% decrease in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness
- a 10% decrease in the flu hospitalisation rate
- a 10% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate

The main strains circulating continue to be flu A (H3N2) and flu B.

## **Previous updates**

### **Thursday 15 March 2018**

Seasonal flu levels remain elevated but have now peaked.

The latest [Public Health England \(PHE\) report published at 2pm today](#), Thursday 15 March 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with signs that activity has peaked.

The statistics show over the last week:

- a stabilisation in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness
- a 4% decrease in the flu hospitalisation rate
- a 21% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate

The main strains circulating continue to be flu A (H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that from weeks 50, 2017 to week 5 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes was observed in over-65s in England.

This is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than seen in the 2014 to 2015 season. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

## **Thursday 8 March 2018**

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 8 March 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with signs that activity has peaked.

The statistics show over the last week:

- a 37% decrease in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness
- a 31% decrease in the flu hospitalisation rate
- a 26% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate

The main strains circulating continue to be flu A (H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that from weeks 50, 2017 to week 4 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes was observed in over-65s in England.

This is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in the 2014 to 2015 season. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

## **Thursday 1 March 2018**

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 1 March 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with signs that activity has peaked.

The statistics show over the last week the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness remains the same, a 4% decrease in the flu hospitalisation rate and a 13% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A (H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 7 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England.

This is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

Dr Paul Cosford, Medical Director and Head of Health Protection at PHE, said:

While our latest data shows there are signs that flu rates have peaked, we are continuing to see a lot of flu circulating and this is placing a significant impact on NHS resources. I want to take this opportunity to recognise all of our healthcare staff whose hard work continues to deliver an excellent service.

We are still seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B.

Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season with an additional 1.5 million people vaccinated this season.

In order to prevent the spread of flu, it is important to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and to avoid close contact with others if you have flu symptoms.

## **Thursday 22 February 2018**

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 22 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with signs that activity has peaked.

The statistics show over the last week there has been a 17% reduction in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a small increase in the flu hospitalisation rate and a 17% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A (H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 7 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England.

This is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

Dr Richard Pebody, Acting Head of Respiratory Disease Department at PHE, said:

We are continuing to see flu circulate, with signs that flu activity has peaked. Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season and we have vaccinated an additional 1.5 million people. We are currently seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B. It is important to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and to avoid close contact with others if you have flu symptoms.

## **Thursday 15 February 2018**

Seasonal flu levels remain high but are continuing to stabilise across the UK.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today,

Thursday 15 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK and rates across most indicators remain stable. The statistics show over the last week there has been a 21% reduction in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a 9% reduction in the flu hospitalisation rate and a 7% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A(H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 6 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England. This is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

## **Thursday 8 February 2018**

Seasonal flu levels remain high but are continuing to stabilise across the UK.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 8 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK and rates across most indicators remain stable. The statistics show over the last week there has been a 17% reduction in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a 14% reduction in the flu hospitalisation rate, and a 10% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A(H3N2) and flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 5 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England, this is currently similar to the excess mortality observed last season and lower than in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

Richard Pebody, Acting Head of the Respiratory Diseases Department at PHE said:

We are continuing to see flu circulate, with signs that flu activity is stabilising.

Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season and we have vaccinated an additional one and a half million people. We are currently seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B.

It is important to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and to get the vaccine if you are newly eligible, although we are now coming to the end of the vaccine season.

## Thursday 1 February 2018

Seasonal flu levels remain high but are stabilising in the last week across the UK.

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm today, Thursday 1 February 2018, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, with rates across most indicators remaining stable. The statistics show over the last week there has been a stabilisation in the GP consultation rate with flu-like illness, a 7% reduction in the flu hospitalisation rate, and a 26% reduction in the flu intensive care admission rate. The main strains circulating continue to be flu A(H3N2), A(H1N1) and Flu B.

The report also shows that in weeks 50, 2017 to week 4 of 2018, statistically significant excess mortality from all causes continues to be observed in over-65s in England, although this currently remains lower than the excess mortality observed last season and in 2014 to 2015. These excess deaths cannot with certainty be attributed to specific causes, but flu and the very cold weather that some areas have seen since Christmas are likely to be contributing factors.

The 'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It' campaign continues to run across digital, radio and press advertising platforms to inform the public about the steps they can take to protect themselves and reduce spread of the virus by practising good respiratory hand hygiene.

Richard Pebody, Acting Head of the Respiratory Diseases Department at Public Health England said:

We are continuing to see flu circulate, with signs that flu activity is stabilising.

Rates of vaccination across all those eligible for the vaccine have increased on last season and we have vaccinated an additional one and a half million people. We are currently seeing a mix of flu types, including the A(H3N2) strain that circulated last winter in the UK and then in Australia and flu B.

The best form of protection against flu is to get the vaccine if you are eligible and to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene, although we are now coming to the end of the vaccine season.

Whilst this is the most significant flu season since 2010 to 2011 in terms of GP activity, the ICU indicators taken overall suggest that it is less severe at this stage than 2010 to 2011. And in terms of the impact on excess mortality, we have not reached yet the levels seen in 2014 to 2015 and 2016 to 2017.

The flu virus can live for many hours on hard surfaces and therefore practising good hand hygiene can limit the spread of germs and transmission

of flu. People are advised to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue, bin it, and then wash their hands afterwards to kill the germs. Practising good hand hygiene and giving eligible people the flu vaccine is the best defence against the virus.

People suffering with flu-like symptoms should catch coughs or sneezes in tissues and bin them immediately, wash their hands regularly with soap and warm water and frequently clean regularly used surfaces to stop the spread of flu. Avoid having unnecessary contact with other people if you or they have symptoms of flu.

Seasonal flu usually circulates for several weeks each year. The intensity of circulation depends upon the underlying population immunity, the circulating viruses and external factors such as the weather. It is an unpredictable virus and it is not possible to anticipate how flu levels will progress.

Amongst other diseases like norovirus that normally increase during winter, seasonal flu puts extra pressure on the NHS every year.

The latest data is available online. Currently 72.4% of adults over 65, 48.7% of adults with a long-term health condition, 47.1% of pregnant women, 44% of 3-year-olds, 42.6% of 2-year-olds and 63.9% of healthcare workers have received the vaccine.

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## [News story: Royal Navy prepares for future UK fishery patrols](#)

HMS Forth is the first of five state-of-the-art Royal Navy vessels designed for fishery protection, as well as counter-piracy, anti-smuggling, border patrol, counter terrorism and maritime defence duties.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Royal Navy has a proud tradition of protecting the UK's coastline and keeping a close eye on our fishing waters. With these state-of-the-art, vastly capable ships we stand ready to protect our fisheries once Britain leaves the EU.

The River-class Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) 'production line' is moving apace with the £116 million ships emerging at around six month intervals. The Royal Navy Fishery Protection Squadron are expecting a further two ships – HMS Medway and Trent – to be handed over later this year, with the remaining two – HMS Tamar and Spey – expected to arrive in Portsmouth by 2020. Just last week HMS Trent was formally named at the Glasgow shipyard where was built.

They will become the Royal Navy's eyes and ears around the UK, helping to safeguard fishing stocks. They will also assist in reassuring and protecting the Falkland Islands and are capable of deploying to the Mediterranean and Caribbean to uphold UK interests around the world.

Last week the Treasury announced that the MOD will receive £12.7 million from the Government's Brexit preparation allocation to support work with DEFRA on maintaining the UK's fisheries. The MOD is working closely with other government departments like DEFRA to determine the optimum deployment of these extremely flexible vessels.

With a total crew of around 58, but designed to go to sea with 39, they can spend up to 320 days a year on operational taskings. The larger crew allows a rotation of personnel to ensure they get to spend time at home or on training.

The new OPVs are four knots faster than their predecessors at 24 knots, have an increased range of 5,500 nautical miles, have a 30mm automatic cannon as their main armament instead of a 20mm gun, two Miniguns, four machine-guns and are equipped with two Pacific 24 sea boats. Each ship has an extended flight deck to operate up to Merlin size helicopters and accommodation for up to 50 embarked Royal Marines for boarding and supporting operations ashore if required.

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## **Press release: Dame Shirley Pearce DBE joins the Committee on Standards in Public Life**

The Prime Minister has appointed Dame Shirley Pearce as a member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life following an open competition.

Shirley has held senior executive and non-executive roles in higher education, health and policing. She is currently Chair of Governors of the London School of Economics and Political Science, a member of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Panel for the Ministry of Education in Singapore and a Trustee for the Royal Anniversary Trust.

In 2013 Shirley was appointed by the Home Secretary as the inaugural Chair of the College of Policing (the first professional body for policing) where she oversaw the introduction of the first Code of Ethics for policing based on the Nolan Principles. She was also a Board member of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Healthcare Commission and Health Education England.

She was Vice Chancellor of Loughborough University from 2006 – 2012, where

she delivered a new strategy for the university which saw a significant increase in turnover, closer working with industry partners and research success in the Research Excellence Framework alongside a top rated student experience.

Earlier in her academic career she held appointments at University College London (UCL) and the University of East Anglia (UEA) where she established a new medical school with an innovative curriculum and a focus on primary care and inter-professional learning.

In 2005, Shirley was awarded a CBE for services to education in the National Health Service and in 2014 was appointed DBE for services to Higher Education.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life advises the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in the UK. It monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders.

Shirley takes up the post effective immediately for a five-year term. Her appointment was made after open competition in line with the Cabinet Office Governance Code regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The Committee is currently conducting a [short review of MPs' outside interests](#) and an [inquiry into ethical standards in local government](#).

## Notes to editors

1. Interview requests and media enquiries should go to Maggie O'Boyle on 07880 740627.
2. Dame Shirley Pearce replaces Sheila Drew Smith OBE, whose term ended on 16 February 2018.
3. The other members of the Committee are: Lord (Paul) Bew, Chairman, Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP, Simon Hart MP, Dr Jane Martin CBE, Jane Ramsey, Monisha Shah, and Rt Hon Lord (Andrew) Stunell OBE.

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## [News story: Aircraft Accident Report AAR 1/2018 – G-WNSR, 28 December 2016](#)

[Aircraft Accident Report 2/2018](#) was published on 22 March 2018.

It concerns the accident to Sikorsky S-92A (G-WNSR) that experienced loss of yaw control on landing at West Franklin Platform, North Sea.