

## Charitable thoughts

I have been approached by constituents who are working hard for charity.

One has asked me to mention his idea that people stuck at home might like to donate the price of their missed haircut to charity. To do so he has set up [www.haircutsforcharity.com](http://www.haircutsforcharity.com) for those who would like to check it out.

Another has told me about Rotary's wish to raise money for disaster relief. They are planning a telethon on May 2nd at COVID-19#RotaryResponds.

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## Dental care hubs

I have received this update from NHS England:

Dear Mr Redwood

Since the announcement on 25th March that all routine dentistry should cease, there are now 36 hubs now fully operational across the South-East of England.

Urgent dental care hubs have been opened in Berkshire over the last week with hubs opening in Maidenhead and Bracknell on 14th April, Reading on 20th and Slough on 21st.

When establishing the urgent care hubs we have had to consider the requirements of patient access alongside the safety of those patients and the dental team delivering those services. Critical to the safety of the dental team is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The availability of this equipment has limited the number of sites from which services can be provide at this stage. In identifying the sites for the hubs, we have located them in the main population centres, also trying to ensure they are accessible to the surrounding areas. Many of the residents of Wokingham Borough live in wards on the outskirts of Reading.

The other issue we have had to take into account are the different patient needs likely to be presented on an urgent basis. The potential Covid-19 status of the patients impacts on which hubs they will be referred to. The hubs in the two largest population centres (Reading and Slough) are for most of the population and can provide treatment for patients who are Covid-19 symptomatic, self-isolating or asymptomatic. The hubs in Maidenhead and Bracknell are for patients who have been identified as shielded from Covid-19 or greater risk to significant damage to their health due to Covid-19. The services delivered from these hubs will be delivered by a service provider who specialises in providing treatment for more vulnerable patients (the Community Dental Service).

Patients will access the hubs if necessary, via referral from their NHS dental practice. If patients do not regularly attend an NHS practice, they can find out about NHS dental practices close to their home via <https://www.nhs.uk/>

When they contact the dentist, the dentist will assess their needs offering advice or prescribing medication where necessary. If the dentist believes that urgent treatment is necessary, they will refer to an urgent care hub who will carry out a further assessment to confirm that urgent treatment is required and book the patient an appointment.

The referral process is underpinned by an electronic referral management system that will direct the patient to the hub that is closest to their home address and appropriate to their wider health needs.

The hubs that have been established to date are the first tranche of hubs and we will continue to look at the possibility of opening further hubs if circumstances allow, but the safety of the patients and the dentists are primary considerations in this process.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Macdonald

Director of Primary Care and Public Health Commissioning

NHS England and NHS Improvement – South East Region

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## Ways to damage the economy

Yesterday I published a study of the damage done to the UK economy by the boom and bust policies of past decades. It was part of a series of papers commissioned by the Centre for Policy Studies and published on Capx. It will be followed by a web based event next Wednesday at 5pm.

I looked at the Oil and Secondary banking crash of 1974, the Exchange Rate Mechanism boom and bust of 1989-92, and the Great Recession and banking crash of 2005-9. In each case the Bank of England allowed easy money and credit to excess, then reined it in too quickly, causing a damaging downturn and creating massive instability in the financial system.

I contrasted these big errors of the Bank with the more supportive policy of the new Governor, working closely with the government and so far keeping things liquid enough to avoid a financial and banking meltdown. I made my case that there is no such thing as an independent Central Bank serving a single country. All Central Banks are state owned and answerable to those who run the government. They can appear to be independent for a bit if there is

political agreement about their task and their performance, but as soon as a major policy issue or disagreement about economic policy arrives action will be taken to make the Bank supportive of government.

Today the damage to the main economies of the world is the direct result of government policy to control the virus. The role of the Central Banks is to ensure the recessions brought on by lock downs do not turn into a financial crash as well. So far a hyperactive Fed and accommodating Central Banks elsewhere show they are determined to avoid a crash. They are also showing they wish to co-operate with their governments, seeing monetary and fiscal policy as important and complementary mechanisms.

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## Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

I have received the enclosed update from HMRC:

Dear Sir John,

I want to update you on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. I'm very grateful to the huge number of MPs who have shared HMRC's guidance on the scheme with constituents and would please ask you continue to do so.

More than 285,000 businesses have already applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme since it went live on Monday 20 April. **To be sure payment comes through to employers before the end of the month, they will need apply today (Wed 22 April).**

### **Accessing the system**

We have noticed that some people have had difficulty accessing the system because they do not have an active PAYE enrolment. In order to make a claim they will need to:

- have a Government Gateway (GG) ID and password – if they don't already have a GG account, they can [apply here](#), or by going to [GOV.UK](#) and searching for 'HMRC services: sign in or register';
- be enrolled for PAYE online – if they aren't registered yet, [they can do so now](#), or by going to [GOV.UK](#) and searching for 'PAYE Online for employers'.

I'm pleased to say that we were able to investigate and resolve the issue quickly thanks to the agents who raised an issue with authorisations when the new system first went live on Monday morning.

### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Calculator**

We are updating the [online calculator tool](#) so that it covers more employment circumstances this afternoon. The update will mean that employers can use it to work out what they can claim for most employees who are paid irregular amounts each pay period, as well as those who are paid fixed amounts.

### **Webinars now available**

To support businesses, we have been offering live webinars on a variety of Covid-19 related topics, including the Job Retention Scheme and how to make a JRS claim.

Employers can book a place on our 'how to' JRS webinars [here](#).

They can [book a place on any of our other webinars](#) or watch a [recording on HMRC's YouTube channel](#)

### **If employers in your constituency have already made a claim**

Employers should retain all records and calculations for their claims, in case we need to contact them. Provided their claim is made in accordance with HMRC's published guidance, they can expect to receive the funds six working days after their application. **We ask them not to contact us before this time.**

HMRC will check claims made through the scheme and will act to protect public money against anyone who makes a claim using dishonest or fraudulent information.

We continue to be busy supporting customers at this time, so we would ask that they only call us if they can't find what they need on [GOV.UK](#) or through our webchat service – this will leave our lines open for those who need our help most.

We'd encourage all employers to also protect their own credentials from potential scammers and opportunist criminal activity.

I hope this update is helpful. I continue to wish you all the best at this challenging time,

**Jim Harra**

First Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive, HMRC

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## **Buying from home**

Recent experiences with delayed and cancelled deliveries of medical equipment and clothing from abroad should lead us to ask whether we should source more of these important items from home.

Procurement and state aid rules has required us to source many things through

open tender globally or within the Customs Union of the EU. Today there are many UK companies that could make medical machines, offer clothing and produce drugs and vaccines. Some can do so already, some would need to invest in capacity and would want reasonable assurances of sustained contracts.

The challenges posed by the virus are leading many countries, governments and companies to reconsider their arrangements. There was always an override to procure the most sensitive and potent parts of defence equipment nationally, with further limitations on buying from outside friendly states and the NATO alliance for things we do not make for ourselves. It looks as if these arrangements can be widened to cover more goods.

Recent experiences will re open the case for Chinese involvement in our digital systems and networks. Delays with PPE will lead to a wish to have more capacity here in the UK that can be scaled up in times of emergency.

I have always argued that our defence policy requires us to own the relevant technologies and to have plans to produce much more of our requirement at home against the day we have no wish to see were we to get into a larger war where enemies tried to throttle supplies from overseas.

It would also be a good part of strategic and emergency planning to make sure we have the capacity at home to handle medical emergencies, which must include the supply system to provide the drugs, medical supplies and equipment needed for any given pandemic or other disaster.