

Culture Secretary appoints Blondel Cluff CBE as Chair of the National Lottery Community Fund

The role will see her set the long-term strategic direction for the largest funder of community activity in the UK, working with charities to enable people and communities to thrive.

During 2020 it distributed over £650 million, thanks to National Lottery players, delivering support to more than 13,000 community groups as part of the coronavirus response. Beneficiaries ranged from radio shows for patients in hospital to aid their recovery, to online music sessions for children and young people, helping tackle lockdown loneliness.

Growing up within a family from Anguilla, Blondel has been a solicitor for more than 35 years, holding a number of high level public roles focused on communities, education, health and heritage over the past two decades.

She was co-opted to the Prime Minister's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, with a focus on education, and is a member of the Windrush Cross Government Working Group, led by the Home Office.

Blondel recently retired from diplomatic service, having represented the British Overseas Territory of Anguilla, supporting the territory through Hurricane Irma, constitutional reform and in its preparations for Brexit as a border nation of the EU.

She remains as CEO of the West India Committee, a UK registered charity and Royal Charter institution that is the custodian of a UNESCO inscribed library and collection on the Caribbean and is a Consulting NGO of UNESCO on small island developing nations and heritage. During the past six years, she has served as chair of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's London and South Committee and also chaired the London Committee of its predecessor, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In 2018 she received a CBE for services to numismatic design and for her work with the Caribbean community in the UK and abroad.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Over the past year, the National Lottery Community Fund has distributed hundreds of millions of pounds to support our dedicated charities playing a huge role in the national effort against coronavirus, providing a lifeline to vulnerable people across the country.

I am delighted to appoint Blondel as its new Chair. Her extensive background in charity and community work means she is ideally

placed to ensure Lottery funding helps us build back stronger from the pandemic and reflects the needs of people right across the UK.

Blondel Cluff CBE said:

Communities are the very lifeblood of a nation and, as such, I am honoured to have the opportunity to support them as Chair of the National Lottery Community Fund at such an important time for us all.

As per legislation the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has formal responsibility for the appointment of the members of the Board.

Ministers were assisted in their decision-making by an Advisory Assessment Panel which included a departmental official and a senior independent panel member approved by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

She will replace interim chair Tony Burton CBE.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

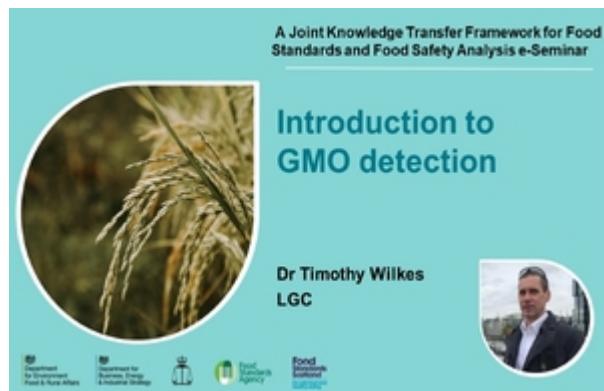
- The National Lottery Community Fund is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.
- Blondel Cluff will hold the post of Chair of the National Lottery Community Fund from 1 February 2021 to 1 February 2025. Remuneration for the new NLCF Chair will be £40,000 per annum for up to two days a week.
- She is a Fellow of King's College London, where she was a member of the college council for several years, focusing on institutional change, governance and investment.
- Blondel is a member of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee that is responsible for the themes and designs depicted on Britain's coinage. An author of various works on the Caribbean, Blondel regularly lectures on history and heritage.
- This appointment process was run in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.
- Blondel was asked to declare any significant political activity

undertaken in the last five years. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. She has not declared any activity.

GMO Detection e-seminar

News story

Introduction to the subject of GMO detection in food and feed samples, and advice and guidance on the application of DNA-based analytical methods



This e-seminar by Dr Timothy Wilkes (Researcher at the National Measurement Laboratory, LGC) includes topics such as legislation relevant to the regulation of GMOS, DNA-based detection methods, bioinformatic tools and decision support systems, as well as guidance on the sourcing of appropriate analytical reference materials.

The e-seminar is intended for individuals working in official control laboratories, the food industry and those involved with the UK official control system.

The production of this e-seminar was co-funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Defra](#), the [Food Standards Agency](#), [Food Standards Scotland](#) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [BEIS](#) via the Government Chemist, under the Joint Knowledge Transfer Framework for Food Standards and Food Safety Analysis.

Please note that this e-seminar was recorded in 2020 i.e. prior to the end of the period of transition for the process of the UK leaving the European Union.

[GMO detection e-seminar](#)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 15 February 2021

Today the national vaccination programme continues to power past the target we set six weeks ago with more than 15 million people vaccinated across the UK.

And once again I pay tribute to the astonishing efforts of everyone involved – the GPs, the nurses, the volunteers, the army and the pharmacists like Hardik Desai – who rallied local volunteers to vaccinate 3,000 people in his village hall in Ticehurst in Sussex, while keeping his pharmacy open – and of course I thank all of you who have come forward to be vaccinated.

This is an unprecedented national achievement but it's no moment to relax and in fact it's the moment to accelerate because the threat from this virus remains very real.

Yes, it's true, we have vaccinated more than 90 per cent of those aged over 70 but don't forget that 60 per cent of hospital patients with Covid are under 70.

And although the vaccination programme is going well, we still don't have enough data about the exact effectiveness of the vaccines in reducing the spread of infection.

We have some interesting straws in the wind. We have grounds for confidence. But the vaccinations have only been running for a matter of weeks – and while we are learning the whole time – we don't today have all the hard facts that we need.

And the level of infection remains very high, with more people still in hospital today than at the peak last April and admissions running at 1,600 a day.

So we have to keep our foot to the floor. And I can tell you today that the next million letters are landing on people's mats right now, offering appointments to the over-65s and we are also contacting all those aged between 16 and 64 with underlying health conditions, as well as adult carers.

And if we can keep this pace up – and if we can keep supply steady – and I hope and believe we can – then we hope to offer a vaccination to everyone in the first nine priority groups – including everyone over 50 – by the end of April.

And at the same time we will be giving second doses to millions of the most

vulnerable within twelve weeks of the first.

So this moment is a huge step forward but it's only a first step.

And while it shows what the country can do we must be both optimistic but also patient.

And next week I will be setting out a roadmap saying as much as we possibly can about the route to normality even though some things are very uncertain.

Because we want this lockdown to be the last. And we want progress to be cautious but also irreversible.

So please continue to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you.

The most vulnerable and health and care workers offered COVID-19 jab as government hits target to protect those most at risk

- The most vulnerable and those who care for them have been offered a COVID-19 vaccine as government target met on Sunday
- People in this group account for 88% of COVID-19 deaths
- Over a quarter of UK adult population have been vaccinated with first dose

As of Sunday 14 February, all care home residents and staff, health and social care workers, people aged 70 and over, and the clinically extremely vulnerable have been offered a vaccine. These groups account for 88% of deaths from COVID-19, meaning potentially tens of thousands of lives will be saved.

The health service across the UK has been working tirelessly to vaccinate those most at risk as quickly as possible after the government secured effective vaccines early and they passed stringent safety tests at the end of last year.

Since then the UK vaccination programme has accelerated with nearly 1,000 vaccines being administered a minute at one point and a record 598,389 first doses delivered in one day on 31 January.

More than 15.3 million people in the UK – more than a quarter of all adults – have now been vaccinated with their first dose.

The NHS is working hard to encourage the remaining people who have been offered a vaccine to come forward.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm so proud of the team – we've hit this fantastic milestone in our battle against COVID-19. In less than 10 weeks we've jabbed over 15 million people across the UK.

That's one in every 4 adults now starting to receive protection from this dreadful disease.

This accomplishment is thanks to the incredible efforts of frontline NHS workers, vaccine volunteers, the armed forces and all those working in local and central government. The vaccine rollout shows what our country can achieve working together.

There is so much more to do and I urge anyone eligible to step forward and take up their appointment. The vaccine is our route to freedom – we will beat this virus jab by jab.

As the milestone has been hit, from today NHS England has started offering vaccines to people in the next 2 priority groups as recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) – those aged 65 and over and people with underlying health conditions which mean they are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19

The government aims to offer a vaccine to all priority cohorts 1 to 9 by May and all adults by September.

As large numbers of people from at risk groups are vaccinated, we will be able to gather the evidence to prove the impact on infection rates, hospitalisation and reduced deaths. If successful, this should in time lead to a reassessment of current restrictions.

Until then it is essential that everyone continues to stay at home if possible whether they have had the vaccine or not. It's as important as ever to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

Vaccine Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

The NHS has pulled out all the stops to vaccinate the most vulnerable people in every corner of the UK, saving lives and reducing pressure on the NHS.

I want to thank everybody involved in this mammoth operation which is the largest vaccination programme in our history.

The NHS will now focus on vaccinating people who have not yet come forward and people in cohorts 5 and 6. Everybody will get their

second dose within 12 weeks and we're confident we can offer vaccines to all those in cohorts 1 to 9 by May.

The government is following the advice of independent experts at the JCVI on which groups of people to prioritise for COVID-19 vaccines. The JCVI advised the priority should be to prevent deaths and protect health and care staff.

The vaccination programme continues to rapidly expand, with thousands of vaccination centres across the country providing people with easy access to a vaccine, regardless of where they live.

NHS Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens said:

The speed and precision of this programme – focusing first on protecting people at highest risk – is testimony to the skill and dedication of NHS GPs, nurses, pharmacists, and many thousands of others who have all come together to make such a shared success of this well designed and brilliantly organised NHS vaccination campaign.

Delivering this major national milestone in just 10 weeks would be extraordinary at any time, but doing it in the teeth of the winter COVID surge – which has seen our hospitals looking after more than 100,000 severely ill coronavirus patients in just the last month alone – is a remarkable achievement.

The guidance from the government and the NHS to local vaccination services remains that they should still offer the vaccine to each of the priority groups in the order set out by the JCVI.

A total number of 15,300,151 people have received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. 539,630 people have received their second jab.

The [full list of priority groups](#) is as follows:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Through the government's Vaccines Taskforce, the UK has secured access to 407

million doses of 7 of the most promising vaccine candidates, including:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 40 million doses
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
- Moderna for 17 million doses
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses
- Novavax for 60 million doses
- Janssen for 30 million doses
- Valneva for 100 million doses

To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.

The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is the largest donor to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.

Tribute to Dame Fiona Caldicott from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Press release

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock pays tribute to Dame Fiona Caldicott, the National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care.



It is with great sadness that the government has learned of the death of Dame Fiona Caldicott, National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

I would like to pay tribute to Dame Fiona Caldicott whose death has been announced by her family. Dame Fiona spent her entire career serving the NHS and medicine, working as a clinician in the early part of her career and latterly as the National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care.

In this role she was a phenomenal advocate for the public and was instrumental in making sure that the NHS treats the public's health data with the respect it deserves. The fact that every NHS organisation in the country now has its own Caldicott Guardian to protect the confidentiality of people's data is testament to all that Dame Fiona achieved.

I send my deepest condolences to Dame Fiona's family, friends and colleagues.

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