

Looking to the long-term

News story

GAD has completed actuarial reviews of 2 social security funds in Guernsey. The reports show key drivers of the funds' finances – benefits, migration patterns and earnings.



The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) has completed actuarial reviews for 2 of Guernsey's social security funds. These are the Guernsey Insurance Fund and the Long-term Care Insurance Fund.

GAD's involvement

Social security is a long-term undertaking because benefits for current contributors may still be being paid in 60 or more years' time. It is therefore important that policymakers and the wider public have a clear understanding of the financial commitments being made.

GAD looked at the period up to the year 2080. The reports show the contribution rates required to finance the benefits, allowing for the policy on the balance that should be held in the funds.

They also illustrate some of the key drivers of the funds' finances. These include how benefits are increased each year, migration patterns and earnings growth.

GAD Actuary James Thompson led the project. He said: "Decisions on the financing of social security commitments can be complex. These reviews are important in helping policymakers assess the long-term viability of the funds for the people of Guernsey."

Policy responses

The Committee for Employment & Social Security has considered the reports which will be presented to the States of Deliberation, the legislature and government of Guernsey, later this month (February 2021).

The results provide a sound basis on which to build future decisions on benefit rates and contribution levels.

The reports on both the [Guernsey Insurance Fund](#) and the [Guernsey Long-term Care Insurance Fund](#) are available to view on the States of Guernsey website.

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Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 10 February 2021

It is five weeks since we set ourselves the target of vaccinating almost 15 million of the most vulnerable people in the country, and the aim was – and is – clear to everyone.

By offering the prospect of protection from Covid to everyone 70 and over, to all frontline NHS and care staff, to older care home residents and staff and to all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, we can do the most, the fastest, to reduce the incidence of death and serious illness.

And, with less than a week to go until the target date of Monday 15th, there is no doubt that we have made great strides, with just over 13 million people now vaccinated in our United Kingdom, including 1 in 4 adults in England, over 90 per cent of everyone over 75 and over 90 per cent of eligible residents of care homes for the elderly.

But that still leaves nearly 2 million people – a population roughly twice the size of Birmingham – that we still hope to reach.

And there are people across the country who for one reason or another haven't yet taken up their offer.

So now is the moment to do it, wherever you are – you won't be more than about 10 miles away from a vaccination centre.

So, go online, or get someone to help you or simply pick up the phone and call 119.

And let me appeal to the fantastic social care workers we all rely on to look after our relatives, our parents and grandparents.

If you have not received a letter, please contact your employer and fix it up.

And let me stress that these vaccines are safe and effective, and it was good to see the World Health Organisation today confirm its support for the Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine for use in everyone over the age of 18 and, obviously, anyone over 65, and also supporting the 12-week interval between the two doses. Indeed, they say the longer interval provides greater protection.

And the reason I make this appeal today, for people to come forward in those groups and get vaccinated, is not so we hit some numerical target, but to save lives, prevent serious illness, and so the whole country can take another step on a long and hard road back to normality.

And, as the data comes in, I'll be saying more about that – including setting out the roadmap – over the next two weeks.

I think the people of this country absolutely understand the importance of protecting the most vulnerable first and that is what we are doing.

And, if we can keep the pace up and keep the supplies of vaccines up, we hope to reach everyone in cohorts 1 to 9 by the end of April.

And I want to thank all of those involved for their heroic efforts: the doctors, nurses, military medics, local authorities, transport planners, warehouse operatives, delivery drivers, countless volunteers, often working through the night or even digging out snowed-in vaccination centres, like the community effort at Alwoodley Medical Centre in Leeds last Saturday so GPs, nurses and their teams could deliver 1,200 doses that day.

And I want to thank the millions of people who have received their vaccinations and, with cases still high and the pressures on our NHS still severe, I want finally thank everyone, all of you who are continuing to follow the rules and urge you once again to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you.

UK-Peru Trade Dialogue: A new relationship for a global future

News story

Trade ministers from the United Kingdom and Peru met on February 4 2021, to chart a new course for our historically close trading relationship.



1. Trade ministers from the United Kingdom and Peru met on February 4 2021, to chart a new course for our historically close trading relationship.
2. They welcomed the ratification of the UK-Andean Countries Trade Agreement and agreed to use it to find new opportunities to increase trade and investment flows, modernise markets, reduce trade barriers and diversify trade in goods and services, with a specific focus on agribusiness, greening our economies and protecting the environment.
3. Ministers agreed to work together to address the great global challenges that face us:
4. On Covid recovery, Ministers were clear about the continued role of free and open trade in 'building back better' and considered that the UK-Andean Countries Trade Agreement will help the recovery of our businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises. They highlighted UK support to Peru through the International Programme Fund, facilitation of access to vaccines, donation of ventilators and research projects on Covid-19 impact in Peru funded by UK Research & Innovation.
5. On climate change, Ministers recalled the global objective of a rapid transition to low-carbon economies, and reiterated their commitment to promote the sustainable use of natural resources.
6. Ministers discussed UK objectives for COP26 and committed to ensure that trade plays its role in delivering a zero-carbon future. They agreed to pursue trade and investment measures that promote and facilitate access, dissemination and use of best available technologies for clean energy production and use, and for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
7. Ministers agreed on the importance of transitioning energy systems and to address as a matter of urgency any barriers to entry for cutting edge clean technologies, particularly in the energy sector.

8. On market access, Ministers agreed to continue exchanging information on sanitary and phytosanitary legislation, as well as regulatory co-operation, to be precise about the requirements of both parties and avoid unnecessary trade disruptions.
9. On clean and sustainable growth, Ministers agreed the need to encourage the highest environmental standards in our trade policies and agreed to collaborate on promoting the production and export of goods that protect and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity.
10. Ministers highlighted the importance of creating new openings for business expertise and excellence through improving procurement processes and that a double taxation agreement will improve business activities in both countries.
11. Ministers reaffirmed the UK and Peru's shared belief in open and liberalised markets, and they agreed on the need to make sure that its benefits continue to be shared widely.
12. Both Ministers welcomed UK formal notification of application to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).
13. Ministers discussed the growth potential of the region and their wish for deeper co-operation in different sectors. Ministers agreed that there is more we can do to expand our trade in digital products and services. They tasked officials to deliver a joint action plan to increase services trade by the end of 2021, including initiatives on agritech and e-commerce.
14. Finally, Ministers committed to work together to help maintain free and fair trade as a driver of global prosperity and recovery, including working to reform global trade institutions to embed our shared values of openness, transparency and multilateralism.

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Joint statement on death penalty in

the Republic of Botswana

Press release

The High Commissioners of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to the Republic of Botswana have issued a joint statement.



The High Commissioners of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to the Republic of Botswana have issued the following statement:

In light of the executions of Mr Wedu Mosalagae and Mr Kutlo Setima which took place on 8 February 2021, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand reaffirm our strong opposition to capital punishment in all circumstances, as a matter of principle.

The death penalty undermines human dignity and there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value. Any miscarriage of justice is irreversible and irreparable.

The African continent has joined the growing trend towards abolition of the death penalty worldwide, with 80% of the members of the African Union having already abolished the death penalty in law or in practice.

We continue to call on Botswana to initiate a public debate on its use of the death penalty, as the Government of Botswana already agreed in the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council in January 2018. We stand ready to share our experience with the process of abolishing the death penalty.

New 'Nightingale court' opens in Taunton

- Taunton Nightingale court begins hearing cases this week
- 42 temporary courtrooms now in operation nationwide
- part of government's plan to ensure justice continues throughout the pandemic

The council-owned space conveniently adjoins Taunton Magistrates' Court and was previously used to train councillors in how to write budgets and deliver speeches. The venue will host both a magistrates' and a Crown courtroom – providing vital capacity to minimise delays.

Temporary Nightingale courts, have been set up across the country to enable more socially distanced trials to take place, ensuring justice continues to be served.

This is because more space is required than was previously the case due to the need to keep everyone distanced in court buildings – such as jurors, witnesses, staff, legal professionals and judges.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp MP, said:

This new Nightingale court will help to reduce delays and deliver speedier justice for victims in Taunton, and I'm grateful to Somerset County Council for providing the building.

This is part of our efforts to ensure courts recover as quickly as possible from the pandemic – building on progress which has already seen magistrates' backlogs fall and the number of cases being dealt with in the crown court reach pre-pandemic levels in December.

The Ministry of Justice has spared no expense in its continued efforts to keep the justice system running during this pandemic.

£142m has been spent on upgrading court buildings and technology, alongside £110m to increase capacity – making over a quarter of a billion-pound investment in court recovery this year.

1,600 extra staff are being hired, plexiglass screens set up in more than 450 rooms, 20,000 remote hearings take place each week, and over 290 covid-safe jury trial courtrooms are now in operation.

The impact of these measures is already being seen. The backlog in the magistrates' courts has fallen consistently since August last year and in the full week before Christmas, Crown Courts resolved more cases than they received for the first time since the covid pandemic began.

These efforts will be supported by an extra £337m announced in the recent Spending Review to deliver swifter justice and support victims in 2021 to 2022, while £76m will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.

Every HMCTS building – including Nightingale courts – meets the government's covid-secure guidelines, and public health experts have confirmed the arrangements remain sufficient to deal with the current strains of the virus.

1. More than £110m is being invested in a range of measures to tackle the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), including the recruitment of 1,600 additional staff and opening more Nightingale courts.
2. We're also spending £153m to improve court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in court estate maintenance for more than 20 years.
3. This progress will be bolstered by an extra [£337m the government is spending next year](#) to deliver swifter justice and support victims, while an additional £76 million will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.
4. [Details on measures to keep courts safe, secure and clean](#).
5. More details on the [Nightingale courtrooms in operation](#).