

Alister Jack welcomes coronavirus vaccine rollout to Scotland

By Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland (originally published in the Scottish Mail on Sunday 06/12/20)

Magnificent news for us all that the rollout of the first Covid-19 vaccine to be approved in the western world begins here in the UK.

Inch by painful inch, countries everywhere have been struggling to find an exit from the misery inflicted by this wretched pandemic and now we have a great, tangible leap forward thanks to brilliant scientists who have harnessed the power of their knowledge to bring us a safe vaccine which offers the chance to finally slacken the grip of Covid-19.

It is great news too for the Union. We know the 300-year-old links which bind us as one nation state have a great past, but here now is proof that the self-same Union offers us a great future too.

For make no mistake, all four nations which form the United Kingdom are benefitting equally from our combined strength as one country. From our furlough scheme, Covid testing, vaccine procurement, and now the efforts to get the vaccine to where it is needed, the UK Government has been working tirelessly to support all parts of the country through the pandemic.

The UK Government took advance steps to secure the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine which will be made available to frontline medical staff and some of our most vulnerable citizens from tomorrow.

The figures are astonishing, and a clear indication of the heft this country can bring to bear amidst a crisis of terrifying proportions. The initial shipments from Belgium will amount to some 800,000 doses and Scotland will quickly get 65,500 of those.

Backing those stellar scientists to the hilt, the UK Government has secured nearly 360 million vaccine doses, representing the world's largest and most diversified vaccine portfolio. This means we have the best chance of securing speedy access to other vaccines once they finish their essential checks for efficacy and safety.

Right from the start, the UK Government has strained every sinew to aid the global search for a vaccine, funding more international research than any other country of comparable size.

We are starting to see real returns on that £230 million investment. Pfizer/BioNTech have delivered a vaccine with an outstanding 95 per cent effectiveness rate and no serious safety concerns – now approved by the regulator. There will be more vaccines to come from other sources – with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine likely to join us soon on the front line of the Covid fight.

And of course, securing, approving and paying for millions of doses of safe vaccines is one thing – delivering them quite another altogether. The mass vaccination programme we are undertaking now is unlike anything we have seen before and here again the power of the Union is to the fore.

Doses will be distributed fairly across all parts of the UK according to population share. As a result Scotland will be able to vaccinate and protect priority groups such as the clinically vulnerable and frontline health and social-care workers.

It is wonderful that the UK Government has made experts from the forces available for us here in Scotland to help ensure the vaccines reach priority groups swiftly.

It has been heartening to see co-operation on this great endeavour across the United Kingdom. The UK Government has involved the devolved administrations at every stage – in the certain knowledge that full co-operation between Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont and the Senedd is the best for every citizen of these islands.

The conquest of Covid – for that is what we are aiming for – is a real display of what we can achieve together. The Union is firing on all cylinders, delivering fairly in each and every corner of the country.

Of course, we have many miles to go before we can rest, before we can declare Covid under control. That means not relaxing our guard just yet and still obeying the rules around hygiene and social distancing.

Though the approval of this first vaccine is perhaps an early Christmas present, this festive season will still – unfortunately – be lower key this year.

Yet we can now look forward to better times not so very far ahead, and to a time when Covid restrictions can at last be eased off.

I am confident people will ignore any false stories and embrace, at the first chance, the opportunity to protect themselves and their loved ones from a truly dreadful illness.

For my part, I will gladly roll up my sleeve and have the jabs, when my turn comes.

Meantime, we must concentrate fully on the task of rebuilding an economy laid low by an invidious enemy. Here too the Union has proved its worth, with thousands kept in jobs and countless businesses supported by the broad shoulders of the UK and the deep pockets of our Treasury.

Rather than the inward-looking and diminished country the Brexit naysayers said we risked becoming, Britain has in these last months shown not just amazing solidarity within our borders, but maintained engagement with our many friends around the world. The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, developed with UK Government funding, is to be made available to countries in the developing world on a not-for-profit basis in perpetuity. Britain remains a beacon of

light in an often dark world.

Many people have made huge sacrifices this year. Much has been done, but we know much remains to be done.

However, let's take a moment to savour this week's good news. We are, in all four nations of our fantastic Union, looking forward to a bright future.

Marshall Scholarship Winners 2021

Washington (7 December 2020) – The 46 recipients of the 2021 Marshall Scholarships have been unveiled today by the British government. The winners, considered to be among the best and brightest university students and recent graduates in the United States, were chosen following a rigorous selection process and will begin graduate studies at many of the UK's top academic institutions beginning in September 2021.

For the first time in the program's 66-year history, the incoming class will be majority-minority with 52% reflecting minority communities across the United States, including a record number of Black and Latinx scholars. A majority of the class are female scholars and six are first-generation college students.

"Marshall Scholarship classes traditionally represent a diverse mix of cultural, academic, institutional and socio-economic backgrounds, but the 2021 class is truly ground-breaking," said Dame Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to the United States, "This class, one of the most diverse and inclusive in the program's history, is a wonderful mirror of modern American society and demonstrates the vital role that the Marshall Scholarship continues to play in maintaining a vibrant US-UK relationship."

Overall, the 2021 class represents a wide range of academic backgrounds and includes activists for social justice, an elected public official, entrepreneurs, journalists, scientists, and artists. Several scholars will be pursuing degrees related to the urgency of Climate Change and Renewable Energy and will arrive in the UK two months before the country hosts the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021.

"Throughout the life of the Program, Marshall Scholars have regularly pursued academic disciplines which reflect contemporary issues and priorities" said Christopher Fisher, chair of the Marshall Commission. "With this new class, we see Scholars continuing to search for a better understanding of today's world and how best to meet tomorrow's challenges. In the face of the most pressing current crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic – we see dozens of Marshall Scholars contributing to finding a solution to the associated health, social and economic challenges, whether in the laboratory, in the hospital or in the formulation of policy and practical responses."

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, the program received a record 1,190 applicants from top undergraduate students representing institutions across the United States. Of the 35 US institutions represented in the class, nearly half are from state or public universities, alongside two winners from the US Naval Academy and the US Military Academy. Connecticut College and Georgia State University will send Marshall Scholars to the UK for the first time ever, while Hamilton College and the University of Tennessee each won their first scholarship in over three decades.

The program is principally funded by the British Government, but also benefits from generous support through partnership arrangements with world-leading British academic institutions, allowing winners to pursue graduate degrees in almost any academic subject at any university in the UK. The 2021 class will take up their studies at 14 different institutions across the UK beginning in September next year, ranging from the London School of Economics & Political Science to Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland.

The scholarship program also continues to receive generous support from the Association of Marshall Scholars (AMS), the official alumni organisation of the Marshall Scholarship. The British Schools & Universities Foundation (BUSF) also provides generous support and funds for a scholarship.

The full list of 2021 winners of the Marshall Scholarship are:

Student	US University	UK University
A'dryanna Jenkins	Penn State University	University of Cambridge
Alexander Sojourney	Arizona State University	Goldsmiths, University of London
Amber Stanford	Georgetown University	University of Bristol
Ann Monk	Connecticut College	School of Oriental & African Studies
Anna Landre	Georgetown University	London School of Economics & Political Science
Annah Chollet	University of Pennsylvania	University of Oxford
Brent Strong	Michigan State University	University of Glasgow
Caroline Yuk	University of Alabama	University of Oxford
Chimene Ntakarutimana	University of Kentucky	University College London
Claire Petersen	Northwestern University	University of Cambridge
Colton Botta	North Carolina State University	University of Edinburgh
Cullen Chosy	Stanford University	University of Cambridge
Daniel Dominguez	Colorado State University	University of Glasgow
Essence Lotus	New York University	Goldsmiths, University of London
Evelyn Wong	Harvard University	University College London
Frishta Qaderi	Brown University	University of Oxford

Student	US University	UK University
Humza Jilani	Harvard University	University of Oxford
Isaiah Fleming-Klink	Georgetown University	University of York
Ishmael Maxwell	Carleton College	Queen's University Belfast
John McHugh	Indiana University	University of Oxford
Jorge Ledesma	Harvard University	University of Oxford
Josie Campbell	University of Tennessee	Royal Academy of Music
Katherine Collins	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Cambridge
Kayla Matteucci	Fordham University	University of Cambridge
Keerthana Annamaneni	Yale University	University of Oxford
Kendall Gardner	Tulane University	London School of Economics & Political Science
Kiki Gilbert	Princeton University	University of Cambridge
Langdon Ogden	United States Military Academy	King's College London
Leah Trotman	Agnes Scott College	London School of Economics & Political Science
Madeline Fox	University of Pittsburgh	University of York
Malak Kudaimi	University of California – Irvine	London School of Economics & Political Science
Marla Odell	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Cambridge
Marquis Palmer	Hamilton College	School of Oriental & African Studies
Matthew Salah	Swarthmore College	University of Leeds
Max Hammer	University of Michigan – Ann Arbor	University of Edinburgh
Maya Ravichandran	Rutgers University	University of Oxford
Naomi Murray	University of California – Davis	University College London
Nataliya Stepanova	University of Maryland – College Park	University of Edinburgh
Nicholas Shafer	University of California – Berkeley	University of Oxford
Nitheyaa Shree Ramesh	Georgia State University	University of Bristol
Patrick Clinch	University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill	University of Oxford
Quinn O'Loane	United States Naval Academy	University of York
Sejehari Saulter- Villegas	New York University	University of Bristol
Valencia Scott	University of California – Davis	University of Oxford

Student	US University	UK University
Yareqzy Munoz	University of Pennsylvania	University of Manchester
Yumna Navqi	Penn State University	London School of Economics & Political

About the Marshall Scholarship

Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the Marshall Scholarship Program began in 1953 as a gesture of gratitude to the people of the United States for the assistance that the UK received after World War II under the Marshall Plan. Since that time, it has remained uniquely positioned among national scholarships for its prestige and scope: offering talented young Americans the chance to study any academic subject at UK universities of their choice for up to 3 years. This has given rise to an unprecedented breadth of expertise in almost every academic field, producing numerous university presidents, six Pulitzer Prize winners, one Nobel Laureate, fourteen MacArthur Fellows, two-academy-Award nominees, two Supreme Court Justices and a NASA Astronaut.

With over 2,200 scholarships awarded to date, Marshall Scholars are leading the conversation and direction of some of the most critical issues of our time. Notable winners of the scholarship include:

- Supreme Court Associate Justices Stephen Breyer and Neil Gorsuch
- Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Anne Applebaum , Tom Friedman , Jeffrey Gettleman and Dan Yergin
- Ray Dolby , Founder of Dolby Laboratories and 1997 winner of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation
- Dr. Dan Barouch , Leading COVID-19 vaccine researcher and William Bosworth Castle Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School
- Dr. Nancy Cox , Former Director of Influenza Division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Reid Hoffman , Philanthropist and founder of social networking platform LinkedIn
- Anne McClain , NASA Astronaut who served aboard the International Space Station in 2018
- Jocelyn Benson , Secretary of State for the State of Michigan
- Patrick Hovakimian , Associate Deputy Attorney General, US Department of Justice
- Joshua Oppenheimer , Academy Award-nominated documentary film director of The Act of Killing
- William Burns , Former US Deputy Secretary of State and President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Nancy Gibbs , Former Managing Editor of TIME Magazine
- Roger Tsien, 2008 Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry
- R.F. Kuang , Author of the Poppy War book series and 2020 winner of the Astounding Award for Best New Writer

For media inquiries about Marshall Scholarships and individual recipients, please contact Josh Stanton (Deputy Head of Public Diplomacy at the British Embassy) at Joshua.stanton@fcdo.gov.uk.

UK's First Sea Lord concludes visit to Alexandria

World news story

UK First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Tony Radakin, concluded a short official visit to Alexandria, Egypt.



The visit to Alexandria, which is the first for the Head of United Kingdom's Royal Navy and Naval Service, aimed to boost UK-Egypt maritime cooperation and discuss aspects of common interest between the two nations' navies.

During his visit, Admiral Tony Radakin met with Commander of the Egyptian Naval Forces, Vice Admiral Ahmed Khaled Hassan Saeed, and was accompanied by British Defence Attaché Captain (Royal Navy) Stephen Deacon. The two countries' naval leaders discussed topics of common interest including the latest developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, maritime security, and future bilateral naval engagements.

Commenting on the visit, British Defence Attaché Captain (Royal Navy) Stephen Deacon said:

This visit from the First Sea Lord, Head of the UK's Royal Navy, is yet another sign of the growing development in UK-Egyptian naval cooperation following the success of last month's joint maritime and amphibious exercises. Recently, we have seen visits from our Minister for the Armed Forces, from the flagship of the Royal Navy, HMS ALBION, and from one of the newest ships in the fleet, HMS TRENT. Now our most senior naval officer has also visited Egypt. Maritime security is at the top of both countries' agendas for cooperation, and by working together, we are better equipped to face shared challenges.

Chief nurse for adult social care to provide clinical leadership during winter

- Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE has been appointed Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care in England
- Professor Sturdy will act as champion for the interests of social care nurses and work to ensure at risk adults are provided with high quality care
- Industry leaders welcome the appointment designed to promote great work and raise standards

Social care nurses in England will soon benefit from the leadership and advice of the first Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, who was appointed today.

Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE will take up the new role to represent social care nurses and provide clinical leadership to the workforce.

She will work closely with the Minister for Care and the Chief Nursing Officer in this important role to ensure the provision of high quality, personalised, joined up care.

The Chief Nurse will act as an inspiring leader for social care nursing and help develop social care policy and how it relates to the workforce.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

I'm delighted to welcome Deborah Sturdy as our first Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care.

This is a really important new role – supporting, leading and speaking up for social care and our fantastic care workers.

This year has shone a light on the commitment of carers across the country. Care staff and nurses have risen to the challenge of providing skilled, compassionate care in the face of the huge challenges of the pandemic.

The appointment of a Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care is another step towards giving carers the support and recognition they absolutely deserve.

The role is an interim appointment for up to 6 months, to further increase the professional support and expertise in the department over winter ahead of filling the post on a more permanent basis in 2021.

Professor Sturdy has had a long and successful career in nursing, including working with older people and people living with dementia. Since February 2020, Professor Sturdy has worked on secondment for one day a week to the Chief Nursing Officer as strategic adviser for social care nursing.

She has also provided nursing advice to the Gosport Independent Panel, set up to address concerns about the care of residents in Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Before this, Professor Sturdy was employed as professional nursing adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) between 2000 and 2011.

Interim Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care Professor Deborah Sturdy said:

I am honoured to have been asked to help define a new narrative for social care nursing and support colleagues to find their voice, and contribute to the development of the workforce in the coming months and work together to deliver the best care possible.

The social care nursing and care workforce together are a powerful force to help shape and deliver the health and social care agenda. I hope that in this role I will be able to give a voice to those working in social care and develop the workforce, through the difficult months ahead and beyond.

Professor Sturdy has held a variety of roles across both health and social care, including clinical practice, management, policy and research and will continue her role as Director of Health and Wellbeing at Royal Hospital Chelsea in a part-time capacity.

One of her main tasks will be to engage with the frontline nursing workforce to listen to their views and act as a champion for their interests in government, and the sector. She will also be promoting and raising standards for the social care nursing and wider workforce and working with our national and regional partners to celebrate success.

Chief Social Workers for Adults Mark Harvey and Fran Leddra said:

We are so pleased to welcome Deborah as the Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care. We are looking forward to working with her to strengthen and support the adult social care nursing workforce and to help us provide a strong professional voice for the sector.

Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, said:

I am looking forward to working with Deborah as she takes up this vital role providing a bridge across health and social care as well as supporting the delivery of the winter plan for social care.

Most importantly, this means leadership and representation at the highest level for the many thousands of social care nursing colleagues who make a difference to millions of people every day.

Background information

The role will begin on 21 December and will sit with DHSC, reporting to the Director General of Adult Social Care with a professional line to the Chief Nursing Officer, Ruth May.

Further quotes:

Gary Lashko, CEO the Royal Hospital Chelsea, said:

On behalf of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, I would like to congratulate Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE, our Director of Health and Wellbeing, on this important secondment to the Department of Health and Social Care. We are all immensely proud that she will be representing nurses on a national level and when she takes up her new role, she may take with her some of the learning from the excellent work she has done here at the Royal Hospital whilst caring for the Chelsea Pensioners.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive of Care England, said:

Nurses play a vital role in social care and we are delighted that the Department of Health and Social Care has appointed Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE as the new chief nurse for social care. Deborah has extensive experience in social care, and the NHS, and will be a valuable asset to our sector at an incredibly challenging time.

Vic Rayner, Executive Director, National Care Forum, said:

I am delighted to hear about this long awaited appointment. Deborah will be an excellent champion and advocate of social care nursing, at a point when the nurses within social care are under more pressure than ever before.

Her appointment is exceptionally timely as we move forward to ensure that the most vulnerable members of all our communities, and the staff who work with them take part in a mass vaccination programme. Her ability to highlight the role that nurse clinicians can play in supporting the smooth roll out of vaccination will be

vital, and in ensuring the voices of social care nurses are heard loud and clear as plans to develop and reward the whole nursing workforce ensue.

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, Queens Nursing Institute Chief Executive, said:

I am absolutely delighted with the appointment of Professor Deborah Sturdy to the role of Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care in England.

Deborah is a superb champion for the sector with a unique career combining practice, research and policy in adult social care. Her deep knowledge and thoughtful insights into the needs of the sector and her outstanding ability to co-create solutions are personal qualities which will be drawn upon every day in this new role.

The QNI is immensely proud that Deborah, who was awarded QNI Fellowship for her achievements in adult social care, has been appointed to this role. I wish Deborah every success and very much look forward to the QNI supporting her in this critical new role.

David Foster, chairman of Foundation of Nursing Studies, said:

Professor Sturdy is exactly the right person for this role. She is highly experienced and credible in this sector and as an influential leader will make an impact in this pioneering new role.

Joanne Bosanquet, chief executive, Foundation of Nursing Studies, said:

As a enormously respected nurse, academic, leader and policy expert Professor Sturdy brings exactly the right skills to this job. Her energy and passion for people cared for in this sector will ensure she makes a real difference.

[Christmas period authorisation application deadlines](#)

News story

Validation during the Christmas period 2020 for an application for an MA, ManA, WDA, Batch Release and Export Certificate.



Veterinary Medicines Directorate offices

The last validation meeting to discuss applications for new Marketing Authorisations (MAs) will take place on 17 December 2020. Applications to be considered for validation must be received on or before 14 December 2020.

Weekly validation meetings will resume week commencing 4 January 2020.

For further information contact Howard Stenson h.stenson@vmd.gov.uk

Manufacturing and Wholesale Dealer Authorisation applications (new and variations)

The last day for validation of applications for authorisations for manufacturers, blood banks, equine stem cell centres and wholesale dealers (new and variations) will be on 18 December. To be considered for validation by this date, please ensure that your application reaches us by Friday 11 December. The validation discussions will resume week commencing 4 January 2021.

For further information contact Alison Reynolds inspections@vmd.gov.uk

Export Certificates

Your application for an export certificate must be received by 18 December to ensure it is dealt with during the Christmas period. Any applications received after this date will be dealt with during the week commencing 4 January 2021.

For further information contact exportcert@vmd.gov.uk

Specific Batch Control-PVMP

Your application must be received by 17 December to ensure it is dealt with during the Christmas period. Any applications received after this date will be dealt with during the week commencing 4 January 2021.

For further information contact s.response@vmd.gov.uk

Batch Release Requests-IVMP

Your batch release request must be received by 17 December to ensure it is dealt with during the Christmas period. Any requests received after this date will be dealt with during the week commencing 4 January 2021.

For further information contact batchr@vmd.gov.uk

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