

# The Guardian

卫报

2022.05.30 - 2022.06.05

- [2022.06.05 - Opinion](#)
- [Headlines monday 30 may 2022](#)
- [2022.05.30 - Spotlight](#)
- [2022.05.30 - Opinion](#)
- [2022.05.30 - Around the world](#)
- [Headlines](#)
- [2022.05.31 - Spotlight](#)
- [2022.05.31 - Opinion](#)
- [2022.05.31 - Around the world](#)
- [Headlines thursday 2 june 2022](#)
- [2022.06.02 - Spotlight](#)
- [2022.06.02 - Opinion](#)
- [2022.06.02 - Around the world](#)
- [Headlines friday 3 june 2022](#)
- [2022.06.03 - Spotlight](#)
- [2022.06.03 - Opinion](#)
- [2022.06.03 - Around the world](#)
- [Headlines saturday 4 june 2022](#)
- [2022.06.04 - Spotlight](#)
- [2022.06.04 - Opinion](#)
- [2022.06.04 - Around the world](#)

## 2022.06.05 - Opinion

- I'll be happy to be running up that hill with Kate Bush for ever
- The Observer view on Turkey's name change
- The Observer view on inequality in the UK
- Succumbing to workplace stress? We're now supposed to suffer in silence
- Boris Johnson as Johnny Rotten – cartoon
- What did Depp v Heard teach us? That justice and reality TV are incompatible
- Uefa, the police, French ministers... all peddled gross lies. Only fans prevented disaster
- Letters: beauty and desire can lie in unexpected places
- For the record
- Sheryl Sandberg's influence reaches all of us. But it's a troubling legacy
- Unlike the Queen, King Charles will have no sense of caution, only of entitlement

The Observer**Kate Bush**

## I'll be happy to be running up that hill with Kate Bush for ever

Rebecca Nicholson



Her timeless classic from the 80s is finding another new audience thanks to Stranger Things



The sound of summer 2022: Kate Bush in 1985, the year Running Up That Hill was released. Photograph: United Archives GmbH/Alamy

Sat 4 Jun 2022 12.00 EDT Last modified on Sun 5 Jun 2022 00.08 EDT

If Fleetwood Mac can be introduced to a new audience because someone posted a clip of themselves on a skateboard drinking juice half-lip-syncing to Dreams – a whole group of people who hadn’t just heard of it because of the Corrs! – then of course Kate Bush’s [Running Up That Hill \(A Deal With God\)](#) will end up being the sound of summer 2022.

Her 1985 single/stone-cold classic is leaping up the charts and, according to the number of search-engine-friendly headlines I’ve seen, a new generation is tapping “who is [Kate Bush](#)?” into the search bar. Which means an older generation is inevitably tutting about them needing to ask who Kate Bush is in the first place. Let’s see how that works when you’ve got a question about the TikkyTok, grandma.

Running Up That Hill came to prominence again because it features in a crucial scene in the [new season](#) of *Stranger Things*, though to say it features is to underplay its role. It is part of the action and drives the story. According to the show’s music supervisor, Nora Felder, [getting permission](#) to use it was no easy task. (You might say they had to run up... actually, let’s leave it, it’s

been a long bank holiday for everyone.) Bush does not often allow her songs to be used in films or on TV and was given full descriptions of the scene and context before she made her decision, though it turned out she was a fan of the show anyway.

*Stranger Things* is not the only nod to the power of Running Up That Hill that has appeared in recent years – Fiona Apple [refers to it](#) in her song Fetch the Bolt Cutters as a metaphor for an industry that constrained her – but it is remarkable at harnessing its potency. Television and film are full of moments that reach for glory in music, but it is rarer than you'd think for it to end up being truly memorable. The ones that work end up changing the way the song is heard, potentially for a long time to come, which has its pros and cons, though it is never set in stone. Think of Journey's Don't Stop Believin', a masterful end note for *The Sopranos*, before it was dunked in cheese by [Glee](#).

If any song can steel itself against over familiarity, it's Running Up That Hill. Whether it is for the first time or the 500th time, you still hear it now and think, what the hell was that? And then you play it again.

## **Christine Baranski: Good Fight will pull no punches to the very end**



Christine Baranski: ‘fabulous’. Photograph: Evan Agostini/Invision/AP

The fact that *The Good Fight* got as far as six seasons is astonishing. Maybe the television executives who kept saying yes to more episodes were microdosing as much psilocybin as Diane Lockhart, played by the fabulous Christine Baranski. (That’s the woman who [gave Elon Musk the evils](#), for those who prefer memes.) The series, ostensibly about a legal firm in Chicago, ended up being a madcap interpretation of the rampant and incessant real-life news cycle, which, you might reasonably argue, has enough madness to it as it is. Yet it has been utterly brilliant, and criminally underwatched, and Baranski’s performance is one of the all-time greats.

Sadly, all fine television must come to an end and its forthcoming sixth season will be its last. Its creators, Michelle and Robert King, told the [Hollywood Reporter](#) that they realised they were “tired” and that an ending was near. Still, for a show that has worked in Weinstein, Epstein, Russian *kompromat* and a musical skit about censorship in China that was [actually censored in the US](#), it promises to go out swinging.

“Season six focuses a lot on a coming civil war,” said Michelle King. Oh, good.

## **Elliot Page: the courage to defy Hollywood conventions**



Elliot Page. Photograph: Evan Agostini/Invision/AP

I am not usually a fan of “in their own words” type celebrity interviews, because they often feel like a cop-out, but I very much enjoyed Elliot Page’s American *Esquire* [cover story](#) this month. The actor revealed that he was transgender at the end of 2020 and offered his eloquent and often moving thoughts on transitioning, identity, joy and pain (as well as sport, books and dogs).

Page also talked about starring in his breakout film, *Juno*, in 2007, before his transition, when he played a teenage girl who got pregnant by her boyfriend and ended up in an adoption tangle. He said that he wanted to wear a suit on one of the red carpet events, but the studio insisted on a dress. It’s worth looking up the images of what his co-star, Michael Cera, wore during those same promotional duties; you may not drop dead with shock to see that he is in casual trousers and scruffy trainers. I found this oddly infuriating, years later, not least because Juno the character is a jeans-and-shirt type in the movie.

The whole cover story is well worth a read. It struck me as particularly generous. I can barely begin to imagine how exhausting and demoralising it must be to explain your right to simply exist as a transgender person. Page doesn’t have to put himself out there and discuss his darkest moments with

all the world, but in doing so, there is hope, that just one person reading it might gain a new, greater understanding.

Rebecca Nicholson is an Observer columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/04/ill-be-happy-running-up-that-hill-with-kate-bush-for-ever>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[The ObserverTurkey](#)

## The Observer view on Turkey's name change

[Observer editorial](#)

The rebrand to Türkiye is an age-old idea. Could England one day be forced to change its name as well?



The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said the name Türkiye best represented the expression of the country's culture, civilisation and values.

Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty

Sun 5 Jun 2022 01.30 EDT

What's in a name? A great deal, if Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is to be believed. His years-long quest to change his country's moniker to Türkiye (pronounced Tur-key-yay) reached a [successful conclusion](#) last week when the UN gave its official blessing. "Türkiye is the best representation and expression of the Turkish people's culture, civilisation and values," Erdogan declared. Maybe so, although in typically

high-handed fashion, Erdoğan does not appear to have asked the Turkish people for their views.

Nor has he consulted Welsh and French speakers, for example, who have their own ways of talking turkey. Trying to book a flight from Caerdydd (Cardiff) to Twrci this summer could cause confusion. The French, being French, will likely stick to Turquie.

The change to Türkiye has a sound historical basis. Land areas occupied by present-day Turks were known by various names over the centuries, including Asia Minor, Anatolia and eastern Thrace. But [Turkey](#) formally became the Republic of Türkiye (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti) after independence in 1923, following the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate. Its centenary will fall next year.

Erdoğan is said to have wanted rid of a westernised, anglicised name that jarred with his nationalist-populist brand

Erdoğan is said to have wanted rid of a westernised, anglicised name that jarred with his neo-Islamist, nationalist-populist brand. In Ankara, as elsewhere, identity is everything. More prosaically, it is suggested the word turkey conjured up unwelcome images of Thanksgiving dinners and the Christian feast of Christmas. Worse, in American slang, a turkey is a silly, foolish person.

Changing a country's name is not a new idea. Shifting political landscapes are often the cause. In 1707, the Acts of Union created the novel concept of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. In 2019, Macedonia, formerly a republic within Yugoslavia, itself a 20th-century invention, became North Macedonia after a vexatious dispute with Greece.

What became the United States was previously known, by indigenous peoples at least, as Turtle Island. Before the revolution of 1776, it gloried in the name of United Colonies. Some now call it Great Satan or Global Hegemon. Russia became part of the USSR, then had second thoughts. War also turned East Pakistan, initially East Bengal, into Bangladesh. Less

dramatically, [Swaziland](#) became Eswatini in 2018 so as not to be confused with Switzerland.

Colonial hangovers inspired many national makeovers. Shrugging off the yoke, Bechuanaland became Botswana, Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and Nyasaland became Malawi. Likewise, Siam became Thailand. Until 1972, Queen Elizabeth II was also Queen of Ceylon. When it became Sri Lanka, it deposed her by mutual consent. In contrast, Burma's 1989 transformation into [Myanmar](#) was contentious. Opponents rightly complained the new name had been imposed by fiat by an unelected military junta.

Geography is another determining factor, as with the relatively new creations of North Korea and East Timor. When Sudan's southern regions won independence from the north in 2011, they chose, a tad unimaginatively, to become South Sudan. Like Mesopotamia and Palestine, Persia was as much a location and a civilisation as a country. Now it's named Iran.

Many leading world cities have rebranded, too, reflecting old roots and shifting identities. New York was once New Amsterdam and, briefly, New Orange, a surprising name for the Big Apple. St Petersburg was Petrograd and Leningrad in between. Bombay is Mumbai. Constantinople, formerly Byzantium, now goes by the less exotic name of Istanbul, which brings us back to Tur-key-yah.

Should the United Kingdom follow Erdogan's example? If Scotland secedes, it will no longer be united. And the way the younger royals carry on, it could soon be a republic. As Great Britain inexorably shrinks and shrivels into Little England, a new name may be required. How about Brexitannia?

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/05/observer-view-on-turkey-name-change>

## The ObserverInequality

# The Observer view on inequality in the UK

### Observer editorial

Only political renewal will rebuild trust and create a fairer society



The national mood was different 20 years ago at the Queen's golden jubilee.

Photograph: Paul Faith/PA

Sun 5 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

Britain has become a better country in which to live on almost every measure in the [70 years](#) since the Queen succeeded to the throne. We are a wealthier nation, with lower levels of absolute poverty and higher life expectancies. Many more can afford to enrich their lives with international travel. In the 1950s, few people owned televisions or fridges; today, technology of which they could only have dreamed has become a permanent feature for the vast majority. Women's participation in the workforce has [more than doubled](#) and Britain is today a far less racist country than it was then.

But the national mood is different from 20 years ago at the golden jubilee, or even the diamond jubilee in 2012. In the early 2000s, Britain appeared at last to be on an upwards trajectory after the recession of the 1990s. There was an air of confident optimism, fuelled by buoyant growth accompanied by much-needed reinvestment in public services, a blooming creative industry that exported British culture around the world and the establishment of the minimum wage and a more generous welfare settlement, especially for pensioners and for families with children. Peace was achieved in Northern Ireland and power devolved to Scotland and Wales. The chancellor, Gordon Brown, even declared the [end of “boom and bust”](#).

Crises have been met with a political response that has fallen far short of what the country deserves

It has taken the benefit of hindsight to understand just how premature that was. First, there was the 2008 financial crisis that reverberated around the globe and set in train more than a decade of stagnating living standards for young people and those on low incomes; then, a referendum vote to leave the EU that sucked in all political energy for five years, leaving little for anything else; and a pandemic that claimed the lives of thousands of Britons and sent the national debt soaring to levels [not seen since the 1960s](#). Global oil shocks and the war in Ukraine have sent inflation soaring to historic levels this year.

Each of these crises has been met with a political response that has fallen far short of what the country deserves. Conservative chancellors used the financial crisis as a justification for cutting back financial support for low-income families with children, even as they delivered expensive tax cuts that disproportionately benefited better-off families. Winning the Brexit referendum only delivered more power to ideologues within the Conservative party, who spent years agitating for a hard economic, as well as political, break with the EU that jeopardises the political stability of Northern Ireland and will drive up regional disparities in a country that already has some of the worst levels of geographic [inequality](#) among wealthy nations. Boris Johnson made serious and deadly errors in his

handling of the pandemic, while undermining public trust in democracy by breaking laws he himself introduced to protect lives during a national emergency.

The product of all this is that the optimism of 20 years ago has been replaced with unhealthy levels of cynicism in our governing class; a sense things will continue to improve has been edged out by the gloom of stagnation. This is the first generation of young people who look set to be [worse off than their parents](#). Britain's housing crisis means that many people in their 30s will never own a home, leaving them consigned to the insecurity and expense of privately renting. But our addiction to growth fuelled by consumer debt and enabled by rising house prices means no politician has dared implement the effective solutions to the housing crisis that would right this intergenerational wrong.

Rates of child poverty are increasing after a decade of welfare cuts have left parents reliant on food banks

A decade of underinvestment in public services means that waiting times in the NHS are at [record levels](#), with those who can afford it resorting to going private in order to access timely care. The Royal College of Emergency Medicine has warned that unacceptable waits for ambulances in England are [putting lives at risk](#). A shortage of NHS dentists means some people are resorting to [pulling out their own teeth](#) to alleviate their pain. Rates of mental health disorders have increased from one in nine to one in six children in the last five years, but services are in crisis, with many children rejected for treatment because they do not qualify as [ill enough](#). Politicians have dodged the difficult questions about how to fund decent older care in a society with an ageing population and in which older people are unnecessarily kept languishing in hospital wards for weeks or even months because there is nowhere to discharge them to.

Meanwhile, rates of [child poverty](#) are increasing after a decade of welfare cuts have left parents reliant on food banks and charity in order to ensure their children are warm and well fed. The rule of law has been undermined by [cuts to frontline policing](#) and court delays mean some crime victims are waiting more than two years for their case to [reach court](#).

That life in Britain today is far better, on average, than it was in 1952 does not mean citizens should put up and shut up. The last decade has brought challenges of a scale not seen since the Second World War, but the UK is a wealthy country better equipped than ever to meet them, if only our leadership were equal to the task. Britain in 2022 is a country that has never been more desperately in need of political renewal.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/05/observer-view-on-inequality-in-uk>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[The ObserverUK news](#)

## Succumbing to workplace stress? We're now supposed to suffer in silence

[Tim Adams](#)



Grievances about our jobs were once aired collectively on the picket line. Not any more



‘The government has announced a brutal cull of civil service jobs.’  
Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

Sat 4 Jun 2022 10.00 EDT Last modified on Sun 5 Jun 2022 00.09 EDT

That indelible rogue civil service quote – “Arrogant and offensive. Can you imagine having to work with these truth twisters” – continues to do the rounds on the internet two years after it was first posted (and deleted) from the @UKCivilService account. The original post followed revelations about Dominic Cummings and Barnard Castle, but there has hardly been a day since when it hasn’t felt justified. One [fan site](#), with 32,000 followers, is dedicated to reposting it twice a day, just to be sure.

The tweet – no one has discovered the source – seemed pertinent to that [recent survey](#) that showed escalating stress levels among MPs’ staff, with three-quarters suggesting their role was “emotionally draining” and a third describing it as “harrowing”. Those findings, which came as the government announced its [brutal proposed cull](#) of civil service jobs, reminded me of a correlation I discovered when researching a story on mental health: that the number of working days lost to “stress-related illness” in the UK – about [17m in 2021](#) – equated closely to the number of days lost annually to [strike action](#) in the first half of the 1980s. You might say that, as Margaret Thatcher designed, collective grievances in the workplace have been effectively privatised and outsourced to the individual.

## Data never sleeps



Hazel Sutherland, of the National Portrait Gallery, watches the film David at the gallery in 2004. Photograph: Adam Butler/AP

The most peaceful sleep I've ever observed was that of David Beckham in Sam Taylor-Johnson's film, *David*, of the footballer after a training session in Madrid in 2004. The gently lit film lasted nearly two hours, during which time Beckham, at the height of his fame, hardly stirred. Most of the time there seemed to be a slight smile playing around his lips. His hair never threatened bedhead. Watching that film it was hard not to imagine how lesser mortals' slumbers – restless legs, teeth grinding – might look on an art gallery wall.

Most of us never see ourselves asleep and are happy to keep it that way. A new Google function, however, promises to analyse how decorous – or otherwise – are our nights. As well as collecting data on heartbeat and breathing patterns, the app will also employ “cough and snore monitoring” that might alert us, on waking, to “underlying pathologies”. Sweet dreams.

## Compassion for cows



What's life like from their point of view? Photograph: Jason Batterham  
2/Alamy

The beef and dairy corporations have long tried to have us imagine their products in the abstract. The recent appetite for books and films about cattle makes that harder to achieve. There was [Temple Grandin's campaign](#) to have us see the world as a cow might see it, in order to improve the care of livestock. "We've got to give those animals a decent life and we've got to give them a painless death. We owe the animal respect."

That belief was at the heart of Cotswold farmer Rosamund Young's surprise bestseller [The Secret Life of Cows](#), which Alan Bennett credited with "changing the way I look at the world". That sentiment will have been shared by anyone who sat mesmerised, as I did, through Andrea Arnold's extraordinary documentary, [Cow](#), based on several years filming the life of a single dairy animal in Kent.

A stampede of other books has appeared; the latest, Roger Morgan-Grenville's *Taking Stock*, advocates far less intensive farming methods. The books and films are a reminder that empathy is a first step in changing behaviour. Once you know that cows have best friends, the herd instinct that demands factory farming is much easier to resist.

# Tim Adams is an Observer columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/04/succumbing-to-workplace-stress-we-are-now-supposed-to-suffer-in-silence>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

**Observer comment cartoon**

**Boris Johnson**

## **Boris Johnson as Johnny Rotten – cartoon**

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/picture/2022/jun/04/boris-johnson-as-johnny-rotten-cartoon>

[The Observer](#)[US justice system](#)

## What did Depp v Heard teach us? That justice and reality TV are incompatible

[Catherine Bennett](#)



The US defamation trial has shown us how ‘transparency’ in court translates, which is into a festival of misogyny



Amber Heard leaves court after the jury announced split verdicts in the Depp v. Heard civil defamation trial. Photograph: Tom Brenner/Reuters

Sun 5 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT

Asked on CBS about [losing Depp v Heard](#), Amber Heard's lawyer, Elaine Bredehoft, put much of the blame on the courtroom cameras and the brutal atmosphere they generated. "It was like a Roman colosseum."

Actually, for the squeamish, it was much nicer than that. Those of us watching Depp's lawyer, Camille Vasquez, dismember Heard could claim to be acting in a spirit of sober inquiry and debate, motivated purely by the wish to advance understanding of US legal procedures. For instance, I learned, between gawping at Heard's ornate plaits and Vasquez's [white costumes](#), that it's legal in the state of Virginia for cameras to livestream a celebrity witness offering excruciating testimony about sexual abuse, yards from her alleged assailant.

Another lesson: the arid findings of two UK courts cannot compete, in a US one, with lashings of Technicolor "[Darvo](#)" ("deny, attack, and reverse victim and offender", a common defence tactic in sexual assault and domestic violence trials). And another: it does not conflict with the administration of

US justice, in particular the principle that people are equal before the law, if a celebrity witness knows millions of viewers are scrutinising her face and body language while opposition experts speculate on the consequences of her alleged personality disorder.

Did Heard really cry in court or not? Diligent students recalled that her acting coach testified that Heard struggled “acting wise” to produce real tears when performing. On the other hand, non-acting wise – this point seems not to have registered so widely – the coach often saw Heard in real tears.

Now, courtesy of the intensive Heard-Depp course in judicial fairness, we have a good understanding of how such commitment to total courtroom transparency is likely to translate, once online supporters are engaged, into a surge of woman-hating abuse and memes. Of this, Bredehoft said, the jury in this case must have been aware. “They have weekends, they have families, they have social media,” she said.

There was also a 10-day break allowing for further absorption of tribal online feeling before jurors returned to a courtroom besieged by #justiceforJohnny supporters: “How could they not have been influenced?” Bredehoft was duly pilloried for sour grapes, on social media.

In fact, she’d seen it coming. In February, arguing against live broadcasting, Bredehoft prophesied how existing “anti-Amber networks” would use resulting videos. “What they’ll do is take anything that’s unfavourable – a look,” she said. “They’ll take out of context a statement and play it over and over and over and over again.” This is precisely what has happened, as if Heard’s inconsistencies (on charitable donations) were not, without added monstering, enough. Depp’s lawyers, to judge by his fans’ previous efforts during his London libel suit, had more to gain from the harvesting of such material. “Mr Depp believes in transparency,” his lawyer said. The judge, Penney Azcarate, whose sole decision it was to livestream or not, concluded that the public did need more, on this occasion, than old school reporting and illustrations: “I don’t see any good cause not to do it.”

Maybe the resulting festival of misogyny would not have been predictable to any judge unfamiliar with social media, nor with the tendencies of the

mansphere, nor with the escalating ambitions of courtroom broadcasters. It's harder to understand why a judge would not understand the specific risks of live broadcasting a case involving allegations of sexual violence, along with its potentially inhibiting impact on future witnesses. A Stanford Law School lawyer, Professor Michele Dauber, has called Azcarate's decision "the single worst decision I can think of in the context of intimate partner violence and sexual violence in recent history".

The deterrent effect on female victims, once reporting a crime doubles as an audition for courtroom broadcasting, is only one way in which compelled public performance actually conflicts with justice.

How is justice served by a courtroom becoming complicit with the values of mass entertainment?

With Depp v Heard considered broadcastable, restraint in other courts can be portrayed, as it mistakenly was by conspiracy-minded elements of the Ghislaine Maxwell audience , as a sinister cover-up. It confers unwarranted influence on editors, on the courtroom broadcasters whose profits soared as their exposure of Heard elicited more online mockery, more clicks, more histrionic tweets depicting the case as a duel.

Court TV: "Do YOU think there is going to be a clear winner in the end??" With the help of Heard, who says she is unable to pay the millions she owes in damages, Court TV doubled its daytime ratings. UK viewers discovered a new and cheaper alternative to Netflix.

When British broadcasters last agitated for televised courtrooms, it was on the then plausible basis that this innovation – as well as providing cheap content – would educate viewers and improve openness. Writing to the prime minister in 2012, representatives of the BBC, ITN and Sky said: "For too long the UK has lagged behind much of the rest of the world on open justice. The time has come for us to catch up." Before online death threats and abusive TikTok memes, the main admitted risk of court broadcasting was usually its exploitation by certain defendants, such as the mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik. But presciently a spokesman for Victim Support

argued that, while the justice system needed to be more transparent, “this does not mean that court cases should become a new form of reality TV”.

Even if the transformation of one celebrity defamation trial, via live streaming, into the sustained, one-sided demonising of its female participant does not amount to a case for restriction, Depp v Heard casts serious doubt on broadcasters’ claims about enhanced confidence and transparency. How is justice served by a courtroom becoming complicit with the values of mass entertainment? If anything, the live-streaming, with the associated character assassination, has added to uncertainty, for many spectators at this circus, about the relative importance of legal argument as opposed to the popularity of the combatants.

As for fairness, is it fair to force civilians, even actor-civilians, to perform for justice? Either way, what a boon for her adversaries that Amber Heard never got the hang of fake crying.

Catherine Bennett is an Observer columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/05/what-did-depp-v-heard-teach-us-justice-and-reality-tv-incompatible>

## The ObserverChampions League

# **Uefa, the police, French ministers... all peddled gross lies. Only fans prevented disaster**

Neil Atkinson

Assuming that Liverpool fans would be a problem at the Champions League final, the authorities didn't wait for a good reason to bring out the tear gas



French police and fans at the Stade de France on 28 May 2022. Photograph: Thomas Coex/AFP/Getty Images

Sun 5 Jun 2022 02.30 EDT

It helps that you were there. It helps that there were phones, cameras, authority figures. It helps that former footballers, friends of footballers, politicians and executives were there. It helps that Sky Sports were incredible in capturing it and the supporters themselves better.

It helps that attendees of football events are now more middle class, better connected, own the means of production and know how to depict what happens to them in real time.

It hinders that BT Sports, which broadcast the game, were dreadful, hinders because the first report is the most important – presenter Jake Humphrey repeating uncritically the lies of [Uefa](#) – but it helps that you could check your phone and see Humphrey was wrong.

It moves us along actual years that journalists who arrived early predicted there would be problems, observed those problems emerging and documented everything live. It means we can use the words for more important things. It helps, because we can start on the front foot.

The front foot: Uefa were liars and their [apology on Friday](#) didn't cover the lies they told moments before the planned kick-off time. Their apology didn't cover their desire to blame supporters, their paying customers, first. Their apology didn't clear the decks and was a reminder these aren't people we can view as acting in good faith.

Why should we believe their review is independent or the man who heads it is independent? Why do we need a Uefa-led review when Uefa themselves are among those who need to be investigated? They are anything but neutral when, as they made clear on 28 May at 8.55pm, their first move is to blame their customers.

You saw tear gas in use against everyone, including children, around the stadium before, after and at the fanpark too

The front foot: the French interior and sports ministers doubled down on their lies in front of the French senate on Wednesday, slippery with figures, light on evidence. They said Real Madrid supporters weren't affected. On Friday, Real Madrid [made a statement](#) to the contrary.

The French ministers said they and their police were not to blame. Instead, there were, they said, 40,000 people [who may have had fake tickets](#) who

must have disappeared into Scotch mist, who never made it into a Liverpool end still not full by 9.30pm. Fake people or fake tickets?

Yet the ministers' tone and approach gave the game away. The people who attended a sporting event were to be policed as a grave problem first and foremost. This is the essence of how many people who attend football matches are treated. The enemy, from the outset.

The front foot: the truth is that if it hadn't been for the reaction of Liverpool supporters before the game, the end result would have been disastrously worse. Football supporters learn to self-police, to care. That Saturday night was a repeated act of care. The care will need to continue – Liverpool Football Club announced last week that they will support mental health charities and resources for those caught up in events.

It doesn't matter if you are a football supporter in Paris or a Muslim in Paris. You deserve respect. The world over

It helps that you saw attendees for the most significant club football match of the year treated with absolute contempt. It helps that you saw tear gas in use against everyone, including children, around the stadium before, after and at the fanpark too. It helps that you got to see how it is to be policed as the enemy, as something sub-human.

When policed like this, with my means of media production, my white skin, my middle-class affectations, my flowery shirts and my cameraphone, I am always reminded that many people are policed like this across western democracies every single day. Because we're on the front foot and you were there, we may well get the apologies and redress lacking soon.

But what about the policing where we aren't? What about the segments of our societies where policing is like this every day, where you are always the enemy, where you never ever get to consent to your treatment? Another truth of what came out of the senate on Wednesday is that the question is binary now. Every politician is either in favour of policing by consent or acting to make life more fearful and more violent than it is already.

Policing by consent requires active steps to encourage support from every community. You deserve respect. The world over. It's not about saying these experiences are the same. The underlying principle, however, that the police must be accountable to those they claim to serve, is universal. And that underlying principle lies in tatters around us the more we see riot shields, guns and clouds of tear gas. Policing works only as an "us" and part of why 28 May rattled so many was it was made clear there was sheer hatred from the police.

Communities around the world are regularly policed this way. It hangs over days and degrades lives. It appears that the tendency of those in authority to accept the actions and views of those in charge of policing us is a hard default to shift. It takes events that shock. It takes consistent, progressive, careful policing that respects the consent of all citizens to be policed.

The football-specific stuff does matter, though. Events at the 2022 [Champions League](#) final were not a great surprise. Beyond policing, stewards are too often treated poorly, paid too little and given little clue as to how best to direct people.

What was different about [Paris](#) was that you were there. Journalists and executives, officials and those at the top of the game saw for themselves what it means to be kettled for absolutely no reason for two hours for having the temerity to watch a sport.

Football is a crucible. It isn't the cause and we cannot be responsible for answers. But if there is one thing that we know from football it is that we cannot trust those in charge to care. We will look after each other and we will show care.

Neil Atkinson is host of the [Anfield Wrap podcast](#), dedicated to Liverpool FC. The fee for this article will go to [the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants](#)

---

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[The Observer](#)[Sexuality](#)

## Letters: beauty and desire can lie in unexpected places

An article about sexual preferences, particularly with regard to lesbians and trans women, prompted an array of responses



Barrister Allison Bailey said she was unlawfully discriminated against at her chambers. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

Sun 5 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

As a transgender person who spends a lot of time seeking the opinions of other trans people and activists, I think a majority of trans people, including myself, agree that nobody should ever feel pressured into dating someone, and that having a genital preference is not transphobic ("[If a lesbian only desires same-sex dates that's not bigotry, it's her right](#)", Comment). However, I do think there is room for reasonable discussion when a cisgender person declares that they simply do not find any trans people attractive.

When it's possible for trans people to be assumed cis, to insist that you don't find trans people attractive is to imply that it's possible to instantly tell who is trans and who isn't, and this is consistently proved false. It suggests there is another reason behind the declaration, whether that be a perfectly valid genital preference (with the necessary assumptions about trans people's genitals that entails), or that they believe they are "still men" or "still women". The notion that a trans person is "still just a woman/man" is evidently not acceptance of their identity, and transphobic.

**Alex Winter**

Selly Oak, Birmingham

Sonia Sodha is to be congratulated for her clear-eyed analysis of what is in some respects a complex issue but which nonetheless revolves around one simple point: do lesbian women have the right to choose other lesbian women as their preferred sexual partners?

As a lesbian in her 70s, who has been with the same partner for over 40 years, I find the debate on lesbians who wish only to have sexual relations with other biologically born women bewildering. Trans women have chosen to live as women, which is their choice, but this should not be linked to the fact that many lesbians would not consider them as potential sexual partners. From the point of view of trans women, the issue is more complex, as Sonia Soda's article clarifies, but the question remains: why cannot lesbians be allowed to choose other lesbians?

**Ellen Kelly**

Edinburgh

I am a lesbian and agree with Sodha that no one should be pressured to have sex with anyone against their wishes. I am sceptical that many people think otherwise, and find it curious that her evidence for the prominence of the view is the quote from Stonewall's chief executive that "sexuality is personal... but if, when dating, you are writing off entire groups like people of colour or trans people, it's worth considering how societal prejudices may have shaped your attraction".

This is not coercive but invites people to reflect on their preferences. As Amia Srinivasan said in her essay "Does anyone have the right to sex?", sex

and sexuality are inescapably political, and those with power tend to set the standards for beauty and attractiveness. What can we do about this injustice, given the wrongness of pressuring anyone to change their sexual preferences? At a societal level, the obvious answer is representation: of more types of person and more types of body as beautiful and sexually desirable. We may find beauty and desire in unexpected places, which would be a positive result for all involved.

**Zoe Walker**

Cambridge

## Fuel for thought

I wonder how the pollution caused by wood burning compares with that caused by the production, distribution and consumption of fuel that might be used to provide the same heat (“[Lifestyle choice or urban air polluter? Citizen scientists make case against wood burner](#)”, News)? Most of the wood I have burned has come from trees in my garden, sawn partly by hand, split with a maul, transported in a wheelbarrow to my house and seasoned. In contrast, the heat it produces would have had to come from oil extracted underground, shipped several thousand miles, refined and driven to my house.

**Maurice Waite**

Appleton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

## Beware the BJP tiger

The Conservatives are riding a tiger, but it seems they are unaware of the nature of the beast, or too taken in by the scenery to care about what happens when the ride comes an end (“[Tory devotion to ‘dear friend’ Modi says so much about needy post-Brexit Britain](#)”, Comment). By the time the tiger turns on them, the rot of communal hatred will have spread too deep in the UK.

The Hindu-Muslim divide has been nurtured by politicians of all stripes but the Tories’ desperate need to cultivate the BJP has led it to turning a blind eye to the degradation of democracy in India. Just as Indians have managed to import their caste prejudices and – in some parts of the UK – gender

inequality that most of India left behind in the 1940s and 50s, the diaspora will see this government’s tacit approval of the BJP’s communal politics as an invitation to replicate those divisions in this country. Divide and rule was meant to make India easier to govern. It could end up making parts of Britain a challenge to govern.

Brexit Britain needs a trade deal that is worth more than the paper it is signed on. It can sign a deal with an India that is slipping down all indices of democracy as the Modi government steps up its Hindutva agenda for the 2024 election, but it’s likely that India is going to be more inward looking, less confident and probably less prosperous. The Tories have always been the party that have claimed to “get” trade and economics. Surely they can see this?

**Priyanjali Malik**  
London NW6

## Empire state of mind

I was pleased to read that Abdulrazak Gurnah “suspects the British empire is still important and may well have played a part in the Brexit vote” (“[Memory of empire had a role in Brexit, says Nobel laureate](#)”, News). But this is barely news. “We used to run the biggest empire the world has ever seen,” boasted Boris Johnson in February 2016. “Are we really unable to do trade deals?”

Gurnah said that “there were boxes and boxes of documents, held somewhere in the country, which were the archives from various colonies”. Barely news either. The existence of “migrated files” from the colonies at Han slope Park, Buckinghamshire, was [exposed](#) nearly 10 years ago. Barely news then, except that the British are still a long way from coming to terms with their colonial past and its legacy.

**Robert Gildea**  
Oxford

## Red, white and queue

Although I agree with Rachel Cooke in applauding the White and Red Rose commemorative markers on the M62, I dispute the fact that cars “whizz past” said markers ([Notebook](#), Comment). The congestion on the M62 is routinely awful; 5mph past the markers would more often be realistic. Even the stupendous view doesn’t make up for the frustration.

**Caroline Hinchliffe**

Leeds

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/commentisfree/2022/jun/05/observer-letters-beauty-desire-lie-unexpected-places>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## [For the record](#)UK news

# For the record

This week's corrections

Sun 5 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

Plans for 15,000 new homes and £2.8bn of development ([Brave new wave of regeneration washes along Poole's waterfront](#), 29 May, p50) relate to the entire Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council area, not just Poole or Poole harbour as we suggested. The council has set aside £50m to accelerate growth, but only £8m of that is for the FuturePlaces regeneration company, not the whole amount. And the Building Better, Building Beautiful commission was formed in 2018, not 2013.

An article said “the General Medical Council refuses to allow forensic and legal medicine to become a specialisation”. It is the UK Medical Education Reference Group that has responsibility for considering applications for speciality status and that turned down the request; if UKMERG did endorse a new specialty, it would be for the health secretary to decide on approval ([Strangulation: battle to shine a light on Britain's 'private' crime epidemic](#), 29 May, p36).

JD Group's shares fell by 6%, not 18%, after the departure of Peter Cowgill (The high-flying king of trainers loses his crown [— leaving JD with big shoes to fill](#), 29 May, p51).

We said that Tudor monarchs ordered copies of Irish financial records to be stored in London; in fact it was from the late 13th century, in the Plantagenet era, that this requirement came into force ([Seven centuries of Irish archives reborn from ashes of civil war bombardment](#), 22 May, p28).

A review column said that Boris Johnson had called Keir Starmer “Severe Korma” in parliament; he actually called him “Sir Beer Korma” ([Do all speak at once](#), 29 May, New Review, p37).

*Write to the Readers' Editor, the Observer, York Way, London N1 9GU,  
email [observer.readers@observer.co.uk](mailto:observer.readers@observer.co.uk), tel 020 3353 4736*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jun/05/for-the-record>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[The Observer](#)[Sheryl Sandberg](#)

## **Sheryl Sandberg's influence reaches all of us. But it's a troubling legacy**

[Stephanie Hare](#)



From epic data mining to shocking failures of content moderation, Meta's COO passes on a vast clean-up job



Sheryl Sandberg's business model cared little for privacy, integrity of democracies, or the safety of children. Photograph: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty

Sun 5 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT

If you are reading this, odds are that you are one of the [2.87 billion daily users](#) of the products offered by Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. If you are not using any of these products, you are connected to people who do use them. And this connects you to Sheryl Sandberg, [who resigned last week](#) from her role as Meta's chief operating officer.

Even if you have never met her, interacted directly with her or read her books on corporate feminism or bereavement, Sandberg has had an impact on your life. She's not the only reason that our data is tracked online, [whether we use Meta's products](#) or not. Many others have helped to create and exploit an entire industry that profits from our data. What's more, lawmakers and regulators worldwide have done little to stop this, in no small part because companies like the ones Sandberg helped run spend millions of dollars every year lobbying to prevent or water down any attempts at regulation.

Still, as Shera Frenkel and Cecilia Kang write in [\*An Ugly Truth: Inside Facebook's Battle for Domination\*](#), Sandberg “pioneered a whole new level of tracking” and led the creation of “a new business of data mining at scale”. Put simply, “scale” means to add revenue at a faster rate than costs. Sandberg once said that she felt she was “[put on this planet to scale organisations](#)” and she has the track record to back it up.

Sandberg’s response, in lockstep with Zuckerberg, has been to deny, deflect, apologise and promise to do better

At Google, where she worked before joining Facebook, she led the transformation of the search engine into the world’s leading digital advertising business. After she took up her role at Facebook, its advertising sales exploded from \$777m in 2009 to [\\$117bn in 2021](#) – the year Meta reached a market valuation of a trillion dollars. Along the way, the company acquired Instagram and WhatsApp, had a successful initial public offering (IPO) and expanded from 400 employees to more than 77,000 today. Meta is now the second leading digital advertising business behind Alphabet, Google’s parent company.

Yet where Sandberg sees scale, others see something sinister. The Harvard emerita professor Shoshana Zuboff, author of [\*The Age of Surveillance Capitalism\*](#), has described Sandberg as the “Typhoid Mary” of surveillance capitalism owing to her role in spreading Google’s data-mining practices to Facebook. At the heart of data mining is an implicit agreement: the products are “free” in that we don’t have to pay money to use them. Instead, we “pay” with our data, exchanging our online behaviour, preferences, social network and privacy for connection.

In the early years of these companies, it might have been possible for us to be ignorant of the terms of this agreement or to minimise our complicity in it. However, since 2016 none of us could be in any doubt. We learned that [Russia had manipulated Facebook](#) to interfere in the US election. We learned, thanks to this newspaper’s investigations, that [Facebook had improperly shared](#) the data of 87 million users with Cambridge Analytica to facilitate targeted political advertising in the United States, the United

Kingdom and elsewhere. We learned that supporters of the former president Donald Trump [had used Facebook to organise the attack](#) on the US Capitol on 6 January 2021. And we learned that Meta has known about and [failed to fix its role in spreading misinformation](#) and disinformation.

With each revelation, Sandberg's response, in lockstep with that of Meta's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, has been to deny, deflect, apologise and promise to do better. Yet while Meta has made many changes, the fundamental agreement remains the same – we give them our data in exchange for their products, they translate it into billions of dollars in advertising revenues and terrible things sometimes happen along the way. If we don't like it, we are free to leave, as Meta explained in [a recent update to its privacy policy](#). What was once implicit is now explicit. None of us can claim any more that we do not know what we are participating in.

In response, some users have deleted Facebook, quit Instagram and left Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp for Signal, a more privacy-preserving messaging app. However, the overwhelming majority of Meta's users continue to use its products. Investors have been similarly unmoved; while Facebook's [share price was volatile](#) from 2018 to 2020, it resumed soaring thereafter, reversed only by a recent privacy-protecting move from Apple and Zuckerberg's costly and, so far unproved, pivot to the metaverse.

Live-streaming of shootings, sex trafficking and the challenge of moderating hate speech remain unresolved

Concerns about our privacy, the integrity of our democracies or the safety of our children had little impact on the business model that Sandberg so finely honed. Nor did [Facebook's role in facilitating genocide](#) in Myanmar, which was [condemned by the UN](#) in 2018. Sandberg said she was devastated and promised to do better when testifying before the US Senate intelligence committee. However, as recently as March this year, the [Associated Press reported](#) it was still possible to pay for ads calling for the killing of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim community.

But failures of content moderation, one of Sandberg's other responsibilities as chief operating officer, will be part of her record – and remain a challenge

for Meta. As Bloomberg reported last month, it is [still possible to sell and buy guns](#) on Facebook Marketplace. Livestreaming of shootings, sex trafficking and the challenge of moderating hate speech versus freedom of expression remain unresolved.

Artificial intelligence alone cannot solve this and [Meta](#) has not hired anywhere near enough human content moderators, who suffer terrible damage to their mental health while cleaning up the platforms – while enjoying none of the wealth. These are problems for other companies, of course, but because of its scale, it's an even bigger problem for Meta.

Sandberg, who will remain on Meta's board, she says, and spend more time on her philanthropy, will go down in history for her success in scaling Google and [Facebook](#) and her failure to deal with the costs of that success. That is her legacy. How we choose to respond to it will be ours.

Stephanie Hare is the author of *Technology Is Not Neutral: A Short Guide to Technology Ethics*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/05/sheryl-sandberg-influence-reaches-us-all-but-its-troubling-legacy>.

[The Observer](#)[Prince Charles](#)

## **Unlike the Queen, King Charles will have no sense of caution, only of entitlement**

[Nick Cohen](#)



A monarch who does not know his place would be a disaster for an unstable Britain



Prince Charles on a visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2014. Photograph: REUTERS

Sat 4 Jun 2022 14.00 EDT

Elizabeth II has been on the throne for 70 years, as I am sure you have heard. She is 96 years old. There's no delicate way of putting this, so let us be blunt: she will not reign over us for much longer. She will be succeeded by a man who has proudly announced his readiness to break the conventions controlling the behaviour of the head of state. Because there is no prospect of parliament jumping a generation and passing the crown to his son, no one can stop the forward march of Charles III taking the throne.

The design flaw in all systems of hereditary power is that they eventually throw up a duffer. Monarchy “indiscriminately admits every species of character to the same authority” [Thomas Paine wrote](#) in 1791. The reign of Charles III will be such a neurotic experience because we will have a monarch who doesn't accept that his authority has nothing to do with his ability and everything to do with an accident of birth.

Elizabeth II's modesty has made many support what Helen Mirren called “[queenism](#)” rather than “monarchism”, and wish “we could have a queen

without the rest of the royal family”.

She does her job and stays out of politics. In the 20th century, there were good reasons to behave with restraint. Elizabeth II only came to the throne because parliament had deposed her uncle, Edward VIII. The House of Windsor survived, but all around it war and revolution had destroyed the Habsburgs, Romanovs and Hohenzollerns. Caution, as much as personal preference, demanded that she be careful.

Times change and aristocrats are no longer frightened. There will be no sense of caution about Charles III: only a sense of entitlement. Without self-consciousness, he denounced young people [with ideas above their station](#) in 2003. “What is wrong with everyone nowadays? Why do they all seem to think they are qualified to do things far beyond their technical capabilities? People seem to think they can all be pop stars, high court judges, brilliant TV personalities or infinitely more competent heads of state without ever putting in the necessary work or having natural ability. This is the result of social utopianism which believes humanity can be genetically and socially engineered to contradict the lessons of history.”

He showed no awareness that he was the beneficiary of, if not genetic engineering, for any half-competent engineer could produce a better product, a genetic fluke. In his mind he will be a self-made monarch who will succeed to the throne on merit rather than by luck.

The first decade of the 21st century saw what we used to call the establishment begin to realise that Charles was a hard prince to house train. [Mark Bolland, a former courtier](#), said he “routinely meddled in political issues and wrote sometimes in extreme terms to ministers, MPs and others in positions of political power”. Aides to the then Labour administration said that if he carried on opposing government policy “[sooner or later there will be real constitutional trouble](#)”.

Heirs to the throne are often in conflict with monarchs because there is little else for them to do than hang around waiting for the king or queen to die. The Queen doesn’t moan. Her son does. The Queen doesn’t politick. He can’t help himself. You could, if not forgive, then at least understand Prince Charles’s behaviour when he was decades away from getting a proper job.

He had to pass the time, after all. The excuse doesn't wash today, as there is no evidence that he has calmed down now that his coronation is in sight.

Once opportunists are in power, they can blow around like bin bags in the wind

Like their counterparts in politics, the courtier journalists who surround royalty have picked a degraded way to earn a living. I read their books out of duty rather than pleasure because I know there will be nuggets of truth in the slurry. To maintain access, they must be faithful transcribers of their masters' unintentionally revealing musings. The story they bring from Clarence House is of a presumptuous prince, whose conviction that the rules don't apply to him leaves him closer to Boris Johnson than his mother.

Robert Jobson's all but officially endorsed [biography](#) from 2018 describes a future king who expects to "lead as monarch, not just follow". One "close source" said that Charles III "will want a seat at the table, not just to be briefed or rubber-stamping the decisions after they are taken". A raucously divided country, with a border in the Irish Sea and a separatist government in Scotland, will soon have a puffed-up monarch adding his demands to the unstable mix. Will elected politicians put him in his place? Can they? As Johnson has shown, the old conventions of public life are flimsy protections. Once narcissists are in power, they blow around like bin bags in the wind.

Greenish readers who believe that interventions from an ecological King Charles would be welcome should look at where his environmentalism comes from and where it leads. Charles's widely unread *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at the World* is another book worth forcing yourself to plod through. It sets out an obscurantist vision that is so reactionary it opposes all aspects of modernity from the scientific revolution on. Hence his fondness for the [dictatorial petro-monarchies of the Gulf](#). They may cause devastating environmental damage but at least they are free from the democratic constraints the Enlightenment put on European royals. Hence the belief in quack "alternative" medicines, the damage to health they bring notwithstanding.

His wide-eyed mysticism takes him far from the Anglicanism of his mother. One can only pity the archbishop of Canterbury when the next supreme governor of the Church of England explains how he has found the "sacred geometry" of the orbit of Mercury sits "within the orbit of the Earth in such a proportion that it fits exactly over the pentagon at the heart of the five-pointed star".

When dominant prime ministers or CEOs retire after only a decade of achievement, their successors struggle to repeat their success. How much harder will it be to follow 70 years of a reign that even republicans concede has been an accomplished performance? The more so when an accident of birth has thrown up a silly, vain, zealous and fatally unself-conscious monarch, who, to use his own anti-meritocratic notions against him, doesn't know his place. In other words, the UK is heading for a smash-up. *Après ma'am, le déluge.*

Nick Cohen is an Observer columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/04/unlike-the-queen-king-charles-will-have-no-sense-of-caution-only-of-entitlement>

## Headlines monday 30 may 2022

- [Partygate Tory minister rules out new inquiry into claims of illicit gathering in Johnson's flat](#)
- [Live Conservatives 'in denial' over difficulties party is facing, says former minister](#)
- [Boris Johnson PM accused of abusing ministerial code so rule-breakers can avoid sack](#)
- [Partygate Labour urges inquiry into alleged second event at No 10 hosted by Carrie Johnson](#)

## [Gray report](#)

# No 10 refuses to deny social event at Boris Johnson's flat not investigated by Gray

Labour says prime minister must 'come clean with British people' as spokesman insists matter is closed



Labour has called for an investigation into allegations Boris Johnson and his wife met two friends in their flat while indoor socialising was banned.  
Photograph: Reuters

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
[@peterwalker99](https://twitter.com/peterwalker99)

Mon 30 May 2022 10.03 EDTFirst published on Mon 30 May 2022 03.43 EDT

Downing Street has refused to deny that a social event took place in Boris Johnson's flat during lockdown that was not considered by the Sue Gray

inquiry, but officials insisted there is no need to reopen any investigations and that the matter is closed.

Labour has called for an investigation into leaked text messages, reported over the weekend, suggesting Johnson and his wife, Carrie, met two friends in their flat on the prime minister's birthday, 19 June 2020, when indoor socialising was banned.

Asked whether the alleged event would be looked into, Johnson's deputy spokesman said on Monday Gray had been able to examine any gathering for which there was "credible evidence", adding that her inquiry and that by the Metropolitan police had both been completed.

Asked repeatedly if he would deny that a gathering took place inside the flat on the evening in question, the spokesman refused to do so.

"I have seen the same reporting that you have, but this is covered in the terms of reference in Sue Gray's report, where she clearly says that any other gatherings where she received credible allegations would be looked into," he said.

Asked if that meant simply that Gray did not know of any evidence of a 19 June event, but that some could have emerged since, he said: "I'm pointing to the process that Sue Gray followed in producing her report."

Responding to the comments, Angela Rayner, Labour's deputy leader, said Johnson "must come clean with the British people".

She said: "Less than a week after the release of the [Gray report](#), this raises serious questions about whether Downing Street has been caught lying yet again and why the event has not been investigated."

It is alleged that a Downing Street aide received a text from [Carrie Johnson](#) confirming that she was with two male friends in the flat on the date in June, where the prime minister later joined them. This was the same day as the birthday celebration for Johnson in the cabinet room, for which he and Carrie were both fined.

According to the [Sunday Times](#), the aide wrote to the cabinet secretary, Simon Case, stating they had made an offer to share the messages which Gray's team ignored.

In another apparent confusion, Johnson's deputy spokesman said it was not known which No 10 staff might have been rude to cleaners and security guards in the building, despite briefings from other officials that the culprits were known.

On 25 May, after Gray's report disclosed "multiple examples of a lack of respect and poor treatment of security and cleaning staff", No 10 informally briefed reporters that it knew who had done this, and that they no longer worked at Downing Street.

But questioned about this, the spokesman said he did not know if those responsible had been identified after all.

"You've seen the report which sets out Sue Gray's findings, and you've seen the details of those named within that report," he said. "We would not necessarily know the individuals. It was Sue Gray who investigated."

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST.

The Cabinet Office has defended the integrity of Gray's report, saying it was "impartially conducted and its contents represent the findings and conclusions of the investigation team alone".

It was previously reported that a gathering was held in the Johnsons' flat on 13 November 2020, with food and alcohol available and loud Abba music being played. Gray admitted she had stopped investigating that particular event when the Met started their investigations, and chose not to pursue her inquiry afterwards.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

## Tory MP tells Boris Johnson to have vote of confidence to ‘end speculation’ – as it happened

Nickie Aiken, whose Westminster council was lost to Labour in local elections, says Partygate has damaged party and government

- [Tory council leader in Rishi Sunak’s seat calls on Johnson to quit](#)
- [Jeremy Wright joins Tory MPs calling for Johnson to quit](#)
- [Ukraine war – latest updates](#)

Updated 5d ago

*[Nicola Slawson](#) and [Tobi Thomas](#)*

Mon 30 May 2022 12.37 EDTFirst published on Mon 30 May 2022 04.49 EDT



Boris Johnson during a visit to CityFibre Training Academy in Stockton-on-Tees. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/AFP/Getty Images

[Nicola Slawson](#) and [Tobi Thomas](#)

Mon 30 May 2022 12.37 EDTFirst published on Mon 30 May 2022 04.49 EDT

## Key events

- [6d agoSummary](#)
- [6d agoTory MP Nickie Aiken urges Johnson to have confidence vote to 'end speculation'](#)
- [6d agoJeremy Wright latest Tory MP to call for Boris Johnson to resign](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 6d ago

[11.57](#)

## Tory MP Nickie Aiken urges Johnson to have confidence vote to 'end speculation'

**Nickie Aiken** has called on **Boris Johnson** to submit himself to a vote of confidence to "end speculation", **Tom Larkin** of Sky News is reporting.

The Tory MP told constituents that "events in Downing St during the pandemic has damaged the govt and Conservative Party".

London MP Nickie Aiken calls on PM to submit himself to a VONC to "end speculation". She's told constituents that "events in Downing St during the pandemic has damaged the govt and Conservative Party".

Her Westminster council was a big loss to Labour in local elex

— Tom Larkin (@TomLarkinSky) [May 30, 2022](#)

- 
- 

Updated at 04.08 EDT

[6d ago](#)[12.20](#)

## Summary

Here's a roundup of the key development from the day:

- **Boris Johnson is facing continued pressure from within his own party as the fallout from Partygate rumbles on and more MPs call for him to resign as prime minister.** Former Tory minister Tobias Ellwood said the Conservative party stills seemed to be “in denial”.
- **Jeremy Wright, a former culture secretary and attorney general, has become the latest Tory MP to call for Boris Johnson to resign – although his statement saying this disappeared from his website, before reappearing.** In the statement, the Kenilworth and Southam MP said the saga had done “real and lasting damage to the reputation not just of this government but to the institutions and authority of government more generally”.
- **The Conservative MP Elliot Colburn has submitted a letter calling for a vote of no confidence in the prime minister, Boris Johnson.** In an email to a constituent, Colburn reportedly said: “I am especially appalled at the revelations of the poor treatment of security and cleaning staff … so my letter remains submitted.”
- **Nickie Aiken has called on Boris Johnson to submit himself to a vote of confidence to “end speculation”, Tom Larkin of Sky News is**

**reporting.** The Tory MP told constituents that “events in Downing St during the pandemic has damaged the govt and Conservative Party”.

- **Downing Street has refused to deny that a social event took place in Boris Johnson’s flat during lockdown that was not considered by the Sue Gray inquiry**, but officials insisted there is no need to reopen any investigations and that the matter is closed.
- A culture minister has said it is not “immediately obvious” that there should be an investigation into an alleged second event at No 10 hosted by the prime minister’s wife. Chris Philp was asked on Sky News about reports emerging at the weekend that Carrie Johnson had organised a couple of parties in the Downing Street flat. “Well, I think we have had an unbelievably comprehensive set of investigations going on now for a period of nearly six months,” he said.
- Boris Johnson is “abusing the ministerial code” by redrafting it to reduce the potential sanctions for ministers who break rules, a former member of the government’s ethical standards watchdog has said, urging Conservative MPs to challenge this. Jane Martin, who served on the committee on standards in public life for five years until December 2021, said Johnson had wrongly used a report by her committee as a spur to weaken the code.
- **Half of Britons believe the wrong people will be held accountable for Partygate, a survey has found.** The Ipsos poll, conducted after the release of Sue Gray’s report into lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street, found only 41% of people were confident the report would lead to the right people being held accountable while 50% said they were not confident.
- Yesterday, the Observer reported Martin Reynolds, Johnson’s former principal private secretary, who quit in February following outrage about Partygate, could be the next UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia but Paul Waugh of the i paper has now heard he instead might be lined up for a senior international trade post. This is perhaps due to the reaction people had to the idea of the man mentioned 24 times in the Sue Gray report representing the Queen as the ambassador in Riyadh.
- Labour has said that the take-up of the government’s flagship tutoring programme is so slow that all current secondary pupils in England will have left school by the time the Conservatives finally

**deliver on their education catch-up promises.** At the rate of delivery for this academic year, Labour says that figure will not be reached for at least five and a half years, by which time all pupils currently in secondary school will have completed year 11 and moved on.

- **Stormont parties have urged the Democratic Unionist party (DUP) to back the election of a new speaker as the assembly was recalled on Monday.** The Sinn Féin vice-president, Michelle O'Neill, told MLAs that people in Northern Ireland wanted action, not protest.

Thanks so much for joining me today. I'll be back again tomorrow.

You can follow our Russia-Ukraine war liveblog here:

•  
•

Updated at 04.07 EDT

6d ago11.57

## **Tory MP Nickie Aiken urges Johnson to have confidence vote to 'end speculation'**

**Nickie Aiken** has called on **Boris Johnson** to submit himself to a vote of confidence to "end speculation", **Tom Larkin** of Sky News is reporting.

The Tory MP told constituents that "events in Downing St during the pandemic has damaged the govt and Conservative Party".

London MP Nickie Aiken calls on PM to submit himself to a VONC to "end speculation". She's told constituents that "events in Downing St during the pandemic has damaged the govt and Conservative Party".

Her Westminster council was a big loss to Labour in local elex

— Tom Larkin (@TomLarkinSky) May 30, 2022

•  
•

Updated at 04.08 EDT

[6d ago](#) [11.36](#)

Paul Waugh, the *i* paper's chief political commentator, [has this on Martin Reynolds](#), Johnson's former principal private secretary, who quit in February following outrage about Partygate.

Yesterday, the Observer reported "Party Marty" [could be the next UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia](#) but Waugh has now heard he instead might be lined up for a senior international trade post.

This is perhaps due to the reaction people had to the idea of the man mentioned 24 times in the **Sue Gray** report representing the Queen as the ambassador in Riyadh.

Waugh writes in [his latest column](#):

The man who was dubbed "Party Marty" for his "bring your own booze" invitation to a No 10 garden party saw his reputation further trashed after Gray's final report revealed he had messaged that Downing Street [had "got away with" one particular drinks event](#).

Reynolds went back to the Foreign Office in February and has since been touted as the next UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia, so has he "got away with" Partygate more broadly? Well, I'm told that he is in fact being lined up by Johnson for a senior international trade post. If the ambassador role is seen as too embarrassing a reward for failure, the alternative trade job would suggest Johnson really does want to ease the pain for at least some of those who supported him.

One source claimed that International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan opposed the proposed appointment and was overruled by No 10, but I understand the minister was not upset at all. If Reynolds does

indeed get a new job, it appears he'll have the full support of the Government.

Johnson certainly has a history of trying to help out those who remain loyal to him. Despite Kit Malthouse and James Cleverly (both former deputies of his at City Hall) initially deciding to stand for Tory leadership against him in 2019, they soon joined his campaign team. Both now have key ministerial posts.

The recruitment for a new director general of the National Crime Agency has been re-opened, with former Met Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe apparently [the Prime Minister's favourite](#). Today, No 10 failed to deny Johnson had intervened, saying only “the Prime Minister has no formal role in this process... a fair and open recruitment campaign is underway.”

With a reshuffle pencilled into many Whitehall diaries for the end of June, after the expected double loss of the Tiverton and Wakefield by-elections, Johnson is expected once more to show what MPs call “misplaced loyalty” by sacking-not-sacking some key figures (moving Priti Patel from Home Office to party chair would surprise few).

•  
•

Updated at 11.42 EDT

[6d ago](#) [10.45](#)

**Labour** has said that the take-up of the government's flagship tutoring programme is so slow that all current secondary pupils in [England](#) will have left school by the time the Conservatives finally deliver on their education catch-up promises.

The analysis follows the prime minister's pledge from last summer that there would be 100m hours of small-group tutoring over a three-year period to help pupils in England who have fallen behind in their learning due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

However, according to analysis by Labour the figure would not be reached for at least five years, by which time all pupils currently in secondary school will have completed year 11 and moved on.

You can read **Sally Weale's** full report here:

•  
•

Updated at 10.47 EDT

[6d ago](#)**10.19**

The conservative MP **Elliot Colburn** has submitted a letter calling for a vote of no confidence in the prime minister, [Boris Johnson](#).

26 MPs have now called for the PM to stand down.

In an email to a constituent, Colburn reportedly said: “I am especially appalled at the revelations of the poor treatment of security and cleaning staff ... so my letter remains submitted.”

You can read the full story here:

•  
•

Updated at 10.25 EDT

[6d ago](#)**10.02**

The **Welsh** government has said is to press ahead with plans to increase the number of Senedd members, despite opposition from senior [Conservatives](#).

**PA** reports:

*The reforms, proposed by Labour and Plaid Cymru as part of a cooperation agreement, would see the number of members increase from 60 to 96.*

*Currently the Senedd remains smaller than its other devolved counterparts, with the Scottish parliament having 129 members and the Northern Ireland assembly having 90.*

*A Senedd committee has backed the changes, saying a strengthened parliament would result in more powerful scrutiny of government and better representation of people in Wales.*

*Welsh Tories have called for the expansion plan to be put to a referendum, with party leader Andrew RT Davies calling it a “waste of both time and money”.*

- 
- 

Updated at 10.06 EDT

[6d ago](#)**09.27**



Caroline Davies

Stormont parties have urged the Democratic Unionist party (DUP) to back the election of a new speaker as the assembly was recalled on Monday.

The Sinn Féin vice-president, **Michelle O'Neill**, told MLAs that people in Northern Ireland wanted action, not protest.

But the DUP MLA **Paul Givan** said the recall by Sinn Féin of the Stormont assembly was not a serious attempt to restore power sharing, telling MLAs:

Today's recall is another attempt at majority rule and has no credibility when it comes forward from the party that kept these institutions down for three years.

Sinn Féin proposed a recall last week, supported by Alliance and the Social Democratic and Labour party (SDLP). But a new speaker and the first and deputy first ministers cannot be installed without the DUP's support. It has said it wants "action" first on the Northern Ireland protocol and has dismissed Sinn Fein's move as a "stunt".

Two MLAs, **Mike Nesbitt** of the Ulster Unionist party and **Patsy McGlone** of the SDLP, were nominated for the role of speaker.

Under assembly rules, no business can take place after an election until a new speaker is elected. [An attempt to do so on 13 May](#) failed because it requires cross-community support from a majority of unionist and nationalist MLAs.

O'Neill told the chamber:

The people have spoken and they want action, not protest. They want the parties and every single MLA elected to this democratic institution to get their sleeves rolled up and to get down to business.

The DUP's standoff is with the public and not with the European Union. As I stand here today I am ready to work with others.

Givan told the MLAs:

The public will see the hypocrisy for what it is from Sinn Féin.

This isn't a serious attempt to restore the principles of power sharing and these institutions. It is a stunt.

Read more here:

•  
•

Updated at 09.36 EDT

[6d ago](#) 08.59

## **Jeremy Wright latest Tory MP to call for Boris Johnson to resign**



Peter Walker

**Jeremy Wright**, a former culture secretary and attorney general, has become the latest Tory MP to call for Boris Johnson to resign – although his statement saying this disappeared from his website [before reappearing](#).

In the statement, the Kenilworth and Southam MP said that while he could not be sure if Johnson knowingly misled MPs in denying that lockdown-breaking parties had taken place inside Downing Street, the saga had done “real and lasting damage to the reputation not just of this government but to the institutions and authority of government more generally”.

He wrote:

That matters because it is sadly likely that a government will again need to ask the citizens of this country to follow rules it will be difficult to comply with and to make sacrifices which will be hard to bear, in order to serve or preserve the greater good. The collective consequences of those citizens declining to do so may again be severe.

Wright ended:

It now seems to me that the prime minister remaining in office will hinder those crucial objectives. I have therefore, with regret, concluded that, for the good of this and future governments, the prime minister should resign.

The statement did not say whether Wright had formally submitted a letter to the 1922 Committee of backbench Tory MPs seeking a confidence vote in Johnson, which will happen when 15% of their number do so, totalling 54. Currently, somewhere near 20 are confirmed to have done so, although others may also have.

He was contacted for comment.

•  
•

Updated at 09.40 EDT

[6d ago](#) [08.53](#)

Conservative MP **Anthony Browne** has confirmed he is not among those calling for the prime minister to resign.

Speaking to the BBC Radio 4's World At One programme, Browne was asked about Conservative former minister **Jeremy Wright**, who, in a statement on his website, called for [Boris Johnson](#) to quit.

The statement returned to his official website after disappearing. It was replaced with a “page not found” message for several minutes.

The statement, which said Boris Johnson should resign because of the real and lasting damage of Partygate, later reappeared.

Browne said:

Well, I came on to talk about economic growth. I mean, clearly, the whole parties in Number 10 has been a very painful episode.

I've been very disappointed by it, as many other people but the government, the prime minister has got the big measures right in terms of the pandemic and in terms of the war in Ukraine, which is obviously a huge international crisis that is ongoing at the moment.

On whether he is therefore not going to be among those calling for the prime minister to resign, the MP for South Cambridgeshire said: “No, but I am happy to answer questions about growth.”

•  
•

Updated at 08.59 EDT

[6d ago](#)[08.19](#)

Downing Street has refused to deny that a further party took place in the Downing Street flat after **Boris Johnson**'s birthday gathering in the Cabinet Room.

The Sunday Times reported at the weekend that the prime minister's wife, **Carrie Johnson**, hosted a further event in the flat where she lives with her husband later that day on 19 June 2020.

Asked about the report, a No 10 spokesman said **Sue Gray** had made clear in her terms of reference that she would look at other allegations where there were “credible” claims rules had been breached.

I have seen the same reporting that you have but I think this is covered in the terms of reference in Sue Gray’s report where she clearly said that any other gatherings ... where she received credible allegations, would be looked into.

Downing Street staff were given clear guidance to retain any relevant information and cooperate fully with the investigation.

- 
- 

Updated at 08.51 EDT

[Newest](#)[Newest](#)

[Previous](#)

1

of

2

[Next](#)

[Oldest](#)[Oldest](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2022/may/30/conservatives-denial-party-difficulties-tobias-ellwood-boris-johnson-partygate-uk-politics-latest>

**Boris Johnson**

## **Boris Johnson accused of abusing ministerial code so rule-breakers can avoid sack**

Former member of government's ethics watchdog urges Conservative MPs to challenge PM's revisions



Boris Johnson's 'redrafting demotes the seven principles of public life', said Jane Martin, a former local government ombudsman. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

*Peter Walker* Political correspondent  
[@peterwalker99](https://twitter.com/peterwalker99)

Mon 30 May 2022 05.19 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 05.29 EDT

Boris Johnson is “abusing the ministerial code” by redrafting it to reduce the potential sanctions for ministers who break rules, a former member of the

government's ethical standards watchdog has said, urging Conservative MPs to challenge this.

Jane Martin, formerly the local government ombudsman who served on the committee on standards in public life for five years until December 2021, said Johnson had wrongly used a report by her committee as a spur to weaken the code.

The prime minister was [widely criticised on Friday](#) after announcing a revision to the ministerial code to formally set out that ministers who breached the code would not be automatically expected to resign but could apologise or forfeit some pay instead.

In changes made before an inquiry by MPs into illicit lockdown parties inside Downing Street, Johnson blocked his independent ethics chief, Christopher Geidt, from gaining the power to launch his own investigations.

He also rewrote the foreword to the code, removing references to honesty, integrity, transparency and accountability.

In a [letter to the Times](#), Martin said Johnson had used “shamelessly manipulative tactics” and ignored the committee’s report used as the basis for the code’s rewrite.

“Its recommendations were absolutely not designed to water down standards, but intended to develop a balanced approach to accountability with appropriate sanctions – including retaining resignation for the most serious breaches, such as misleading parliament,” she wrote.

“This prime minister is abusing the ministerial code, which is (and should be) owned by him. His redrafting demotes the seven principles of public life, indicating a choice to ignore the fundamentals of parliamentary accountability, which he of course understands.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am

“I conclude that he is avoiding accountability through all conventional channels. Surely Conservative MPs cannot ignore this any longer.”

Speaking on Monday morning the junior culture and media minister, Chris Philp, said the decision to update the code had been made a year ago and was [unconnected to the inquiry into parties](#).

“All of the rules about the importance of being honest with parliament, and all of those things, are still in there,” he told Sky News.

The main change “was the ability to have a graded series of sanctions, so just like in any workplace, if somebody breaks the rules they don’t necessarily get fired straight away, there are other sanctions that fall short of getting fired”, he said.

Asked why Johnson’s new foreword to the code no longer included references to the importance of the main principles of ethics in public life, Philp said: “The foreword is a general introduction, and I guess that he just wanted to talk about whatever he wanted to talk about in that foreword. They are all still in the code.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/may/30/boris-johnson-ministerial-code-rule-breakers>

**Boris Johnson**

## **Partygate: Labour urges inquiry into alleged second event at No 10 hosted by Carrie Johnson**

Gathering was said to have taken place on PM's birthday but not included in Sue Gray's report



Carrie Johnson may have hosted another event for the prime minister during lockdown. Photograph: Michael Mayhew/Allstar

*[Aubrey Allegretti](#)  
[@breeallegretti](#)*

Sun 29 May 2022 15.34 EDTFirst published on Sun 29 May 2022 10.48 EDT

Labour has called for an investigation into leaked text messages suggesting there was a second gathering in Boris Johnson's Downing Street flat during lockdown, held by his wife, Carrie, on his birthday.

The emergence of new evidence of an event hosted on 19 June 2020, which was not mentioned in the [Partygate report](#) by Sue Gray, sparked accusations of a cover-up and calls for No 10 to “come clean”.

The event has not been denied, but Carrie Johnson’s spokesperson said that Gray had been made aware of the texts “as part of her exhaustive inquiry into alleged breaches” of Covid rules.

They added: “Staff were given ample opportunity to present evidence including these messages, and all relevant information was passed to the [Metropolitan police](#) for investigation.

“The lunchtime gathering in the cabinet room on 19 June 2020 was subsequently found to be in breach and a fixed-penalty notice was issued to Mrs Johnson among others, for which she apologised unreservedly and promptly paid the fine.”

It was alleged that a Downing Street aide received a text from Johnson’s wife confirming that she was with two male friends in the flat, where the prime minister later joined them.

At the time, strict lockdown rules meant indoor socialising was banned, but people could meet up in groups of six outdoors. An exemption to meeting was made where the gathering was “reasonably necessary … for work purposes”.

The gathering came hours after the birthday celebration held in the cabinet room, for which both Johnsons were fined by police. It is thought to be separate to a third event on Johnson’s birthday with his relatives, which took place in the Downing Street garden and is thought to have adhered to the rules at the time.

It was previously reported that a gathering was held in the flat on 13 November 2020, with food and alcohol available and loud Abba music being played. Gray admitted she stopped investigating that particular event when the Met started their investigations, and chose not to pursue her inquiry afterwards. Tory MPs [have expressed anger at the revelation](#).

Angela Rayner, Labour's deputy leader, said the text messages had been suppressed and that the public "deserve the truth about why the holding of a lockdown party in the prime minister's flat on his own birthday has not been made public until now".

She added that the revelation "raises new questions about potential misconduct in public office, which must now be subject to proper and genuinely independent scrutiny" and that "this looks like yet another cover-up".

Rayner called for the messages to be given to MPs on the privileges committee, who are expected to begin their investigation into whether the prime minister misled parliament by initially denying any Covid rules had been broken.

In the letter, Rayner also said Downing Street had previously denied that such a gathering took place, and asked whether any other senior civil servants attended it.

A Cabinet Office spokesperson defended the integrity of Gray's report, saying it was "impartially conducted and its contents represent the findings and conclusions of the investigation team alone".

Gray made reference to the cabinet room gathering in her report, saying it lasted for 20 minutes and that those who attended ate food and drank alcohol. Photos were published of Johnson, the cabinet secretary, Simon Case, and the chancellor, Rishi Sunak.

Her long-awaited findings, published on Wednesday, made no reference to any other gathering that day and only once mentioned the prime minister's wife in relation to a different event.

However, the report did hint that other details might emerge, saying: "Given the piecemeal manner in which events were brought to my attention, it is possible that events took place which were not the subject of investigation."

The Sunday Times reported that a Downing Street aide with a copy of the texts from Carrie Johnson wrote to the cabinet secretary, Simon Case, stating

they had their offer to share the messages with Gray's team ignored.

A Cabinet Office source said it was categorically not true that such evidence was ignored. They added that the exchange with the aide about the material was part of the information that had been provided to police.

However, the claims threaten to reignite anger over the Partygate scandal, under which the prime minister has sought to draw a line.

A government source admitted that Gray's report had not set off the "political implosion" some anticipated, but added that the consequence would probably lead to "a gradual drip" of other damning details.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Tory MPs thought to have submitted a [no-confidence letter](#) in the prime minister agreed. "It's bad," one said. "This is never going to go away. There's going to be a steady stream of new revelations. It's just going to keep on!" Another speculated there would be a "drip, drip, drip" of further evidence.

A No 10 spokesperson said: "Sue Gray and the Metropolitan police have completed their inquiries. The prime minister cooperated fully with both investigations."

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/may/29/partygate-sue-gray-knew-carrie-johnson-texts-birthday-party-whitehall>

## 2022.05.30 - Spotlight

- ['Same nightmare week after week' UK firms fed up with post-Brexit EU trade](#)
- ['I've seen bedsheets with my face on them' Thomas Brodie-Sangster on obsessive fans, Love Actually and the Sex Pistols](#)
- [Shine on! Why we've fallen back in love with lip gloss](#)
- [Sony LinkBuds review Novel earbuds that let the outside world in](#)

## International trade

# ‘Same nightmare week after week’: UK firms fed up with post-Brexit EU trade

Exporters fear Northern Ireland protocol row will spur trade war with Brussels, making an already difficult job even harder



Mark Brearley of Kaymet, a manufacturer of tea trolleys, trays and hotplates, says leaving the EU has increased his costs and made selling goods abroad more difficult. Photograph: Federation of Small Businesses



[Richard Partington](#) *Economics correspondent*

[@RJPartington](#)

Mon 30 May 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 02.46 EDT

Mark Brearley is still frustrated by Brexit. More than a year from [Britain's formal withdrawal from the EU](#), on terms agreed by Boris Johnson's government, exporting the goods his company produces hasn't got any easier for the London-based manufacturer.

Describing it as "the same nightmare week after week", he says: "A lot more time is spent with things going wrong. The EU really feels like the hardest place in the world to ship things to sometimes."

For the past seven decades the company Brearley runs, Kaymet, has made and sold tea trolleys, trays and hotplates from its factory just off the Old Kent Road to customers including the British royal family. It's thought that Kaymet's wares were used by the queen – celebrating her platinum jubilee this week – on her coronation world tour. The company sells goods in 40 countries across the world.

[Graph: exports of developed countries](#)

But leaving the EU has added to Brearley's costs and makes selling items abroad more difficult. "There's loads of things I could've been doing if it wasn't for these problems. We could do things that take us forward, rather than back," he says.

Official figures show that UK exports to the EU remain significantly below pre-Brexit levels, despite some recovery from an initial plunge in January 2021 at the end of the transition period. Exports had fallen 40% on the month as traders adapted to new red tape and border delays, but came back to finish last year down 11% compared with 2018 – the year used by the Office for National Statistics as the most reliable comparison, before Brexit stockpiling and the Covid pandemic influenced trade flows.

However, concern is mounting that fresh Brexit roadblocks are looming as the government threatens to tear up the Northern Ireland Protocol, which covers trade between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland. Despite Boris Johnson claiming to have "got Brexit done", his government now views this central plank of his deal as broken.



Mark Brearley of Kaymet in his south London factory. Photograph: Federation of Small Businesses

“There’s a sense of, ‘Oh God, here we go again,’” says Brearley, who worries that Kaymet will suffer if the EU responds with fresh trade barriers.

Raoul Ruparel, who was Theresa May’s special adviser on [Europe](#) during the first round of Brexit negotiations, says companies could start dusting down their old no-deal Brexit plans if the situation worsens.

“Any business will tell you it’s unhelpful,” he says. “In this case, a lot of them are just getting on with it and they just have to make the best of it. But what they don’t want is constantly changing trade rules with the UK and the EU.”

Despite business concerns of retaliation from Brussels, the government has insisted that pushing ahead is the right thing to do. “The UK’s solution to fix the problems with the protocol and protect the Belfast [Good Friday] Agreement will cut costs for businesses, remove unnecessary paperwork and protect UK and EU markets,” a spokesperson said.

### [Graph: UK imports, 2019-2022](#)

There could, however, be economic costs. Steffan Ball, the former chair of Philip Hammond’s council of advisers when he was chancellor, and now chief UK economist at Goldman Sachs, says the most likely outcome is a “compromise deal”. Still, risks of “significant economic impacts” loom if one isn’t reached, he warns.

“Back in 2020, the [Office for Budget Responsibility \[OBR\]](#) estimated that a ‘no-deal’ Brexit would reduce the level of real GDP by an additional 2% in the long run. In addition, the escalation in tensions raises the prospect of a trade war, with potential tariffs imposed on exports to the EU,” he says. “But this outcome is very unlikely in our view.”

Even with the current deal, the OBR – the Treasury’s economics forecaster – expects Brexit to cost the economy 4% of GDP over 15 years, double the long-term impact of the scarring from the Covid pandemic.

Trade figures suggest UK exporters are already feeling the pinch. According to the [Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis](#), which tracks

trends in global trade, goods exports in March from advanced economies – including the UK, US, Japan and euro area – were 2% above the monthly average for 2018, after adjusting for inflation. In the UK, however, real exports were almost 22% down in the same month.

Some sectors have suffered a more dramatic hit than others. Exports of clothing and footwear to the EU are both down by almost 60% compared with 2018. Meat exports have plunged by almost 25%, vegetables and fruit by 40%, while car exports are down by more than a quarter.

-

Paul Alger, director of international affairs at the UK Fashion and Textile Association, says the outsize hit for his industry is probably because many of the items sold by UK firms do not qualify for the post-Brexit trade deal. Under its terms, goods must meet “rule of origin” requirements, which require a certain proportion of an item to be domestically produced to benefit from tariff-free access. However, much of the clothing sold by UK retailers is made in Asia or the US, making it ineligible.

“They’re also finding that customs are very difficult in some countries. Particularly around labelling,” said Alger. “A lot of companies will say we didn’t realise how good a deal we had for moving goods from the UK to the EU until we actually left.”

In one example of shifting trade patterns, Marks & Spencer is setting up a warehouse to handle EU deliveries of clothing and homewares to reduce the impact of tariffs and export costs. The British high street stalwart said last week that Brexit had cost it [f29.6m in profits and £15m in lost trade.](#)



Danny Hodgson runs Rivet & Hide, which sells quality men's clothing from stores in London and Manchester, as well as online. Photograph: Handout

Danny Hodgson runs Rivet & Hide, which sells quality men's clothing from stores in London and Manchester as well as online. He says EU sales, which he spent a decade building, plunged by half in the first month after Brexit and never recovered.

"It's really frustrating," he says. Rivet & Hide has pushed up prices for EU customers to include new tariffs, VAT and shipping costs.

"I hear Johnson boasting about free trade and all the rest of it. I don't know how he's got the brass neck to talk about us doing free trade when basically he's the one who's imposed sanctions on our business. "We were freely trading with the EU and now we've had tariffs imposed on us through our Brexit deals."

With Britain's economy facing the risk of recession amid the cost of living crisis, Hodgson says the government has caused harm to the British economy that could have easily been avoided.

"We're less profitable, there's a lot more work involved, there's a lot more hassle, but I'm still slogging away at it in the hope one day things improve," he says. "But if there was a trade war, it would finish that off."

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/may/30/brexit-uk-firms-eu-trade-northern-ireland>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[The G2 interview](#)[Movies](#)

Interview

## **‘I’ve seen bedsheets with my face on them’: Thomas Brodie-Sangster on obsessive fans, Love Actually and the Sex Pistols**

[Hannah J Davies](#)



‘I didn’t want acting to become a habit’ ... Thomas Brodie-Sangster, photographed at the Larrik, west London. Photograph: Suki Dhanda/The Guardian

The actor became famous at 13 in Richard Curtis’s yuletide romance. Now 32, he talks about playing Malcolm McLaren, the success of The Queen’s Gambit and coming to terms with not playing Ron Weasley



[@hannahjdavies](#)

Mon 30 May 2022 01.00 EDTLast modified on Mon 30 May 2022 04.50 EDT

The night before I meet Thomas Brodie-Sangster, a friend reads his Wikipedia page to me in horror. “He’s 32!” she says. “He can’t be!” The waitress in the cafe where we meet in central London makes a similar noise when she clocks Brodie-Sangster, noting that he has barely changed since he hit the big time in 2003. When he was in his mid-20s, [bars were still refusing to serve him](#) unless he showed ID. In 2019, [a viral tweet](#) highlighted how young he looked, with an image of him alongside Keira Knightley, who is just five years older.

That film that catapulted the baby-faced actor to fame in the early 00s was, of course, Love Actually, [Richard Curtis](#)’s unapologetically schmaltzy

yuletide romance. Brodie-Sangster played Sam, who learns to play the drums to impress the classmate he has a crush on, alongside the likes of Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson and Colin Firth. Brodie-Sangster was 13 at the time. Does it annoy him to still be labelled “the Love Actually kid”? He shakes his head. “If I got annoyed about it every time, I’d spend a lot of my life that way,” he says. “It’s something I’m really proud of. It’s cool to be in a film that’s somehow *still* gaining momentum. It did quite well but it wasn’t a huge blockbuster. But over the years it’s gained that cult following.” He watched it for the first time this year since the premiere, and says it was “pretty good, brilliant writing,” before adding with a laugh: “And great acting all round.”

Dressed in a smart blazer and checked shirt, Brodie-Sangster is a modest, thoughtful interviewee. “Tom’s always been a professional,” Thompson tells me via email. “He was fully formed at 10 ... a joy to work with and an increasing wonder to watch.”



‘I’d say he was a real genius’ ... Thomas Brodie-Sangster as Malcolm McLaren in *Pistol*. Photograph: Rebecca Brenneman/FX

He has driven here from his Hertfordshire home to talk about a show and a role that are seemingly the polar opposite of his measured, grounded

existence. In *Pistol* – a six-episode series based on Sex Pistols' guitarist Steve Jones's memoir, [Lonely Boy](#) – Brodie-Sangster sports fake ginger curls as the band's megalomaniac manager Malcolm McLaren, who shot the ragtag group of working-class men to fame, and was later described by frontman John Lydon as “the most evil man in the world”. Directed by [Danny Boyle](#) and adapted by Craig Pearce (*Moulin Rouge!*), it is peppered with archive footage and snarling recreations of the band's hits. Unsurprisingly, given the clashes and conflicts the series details, it did not have the blessing of Lydon, who called it “disrespectful” and unsuccessfully [went to court to stop](#) his former bandmates licensing the rights to their music.

Early reactions to the series, based on the trailer, have focused on the lack of physical resemblance between the cast and their characters – notably Anson Boon as Lydon, and Brodie-Sangster as McLaren. Creative licence aside, it is surprisingly good and gritty, and will appeal to those who lived through the 70s as much as those experiencing the birth of punk for the first time. In any case, Brodie-Sangster was keen not to make his Malcolm a caricature. “This series is full of such mad, over the top characters,” he says. “One of the key things was to make it still believable. I didn't want to do an impression.”

Brodie-Sangster is, of course, far too young to have experienced the Pistols first-hand. Born in south London more than a decade after their heyday, he was 10 when his actor parents sent off his headshots to friends who were starting a talent agency. This led to his first audition, for Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. He has previously described his “anger and frustration” at not landing the role of Ron Weasley; today he says stoically that he “never really regrets any decision that happens … 90% of the time you don't get the role, so you have to find a way of being OK with it.”



‘It’s cool to be in a film that’s somehow *still* gaining momentum’ ... Brodie-Sangster with Liam Neeson in Love Actually. Photograph: Working Title/Allstar

Alongside Love Actually and the children’s fantasy film Nanny McPhee – working with Thompson again – he appeared in a CBBC series, Feather Boy, the name his classmates would shout at him in the corridors of his state school in Pimlico. He didn’t encounter much jealousy, he says, and when he did, he shrugged it off. “What happened in school didn’t really affect me,” he says. “Because I was thinking, I’ll probably get another job and bugger off.” He has been working almost continuously ever since, including voice acting in the US animation Phineas and Ferb, playing a young Paul McCartney in Sam Taylor-Johnson’s Nowhere Boy, and appearing as swaggering chess prodigy Benny Watts in the Netflix hit The Queen’s Gambit, for which he was nominated for an Emmy award for best supporting actor in a limited series. He also appeared in the teen film franchise Maze Runner, and had a small role in series three and four of Game of Thrones as Jojen Reed, who helped Bran Stark harness his ability to see into the past, present and future.

The latter two projects brought him into close contact with the young and largely female “stans” who continue to follow him around the internet. “I thought after a couple of years they would grow up and something else

would replace me,” he says. Fandom and standom, he adds, can be great, unless it gets to “an unhealthy level – with obsession around celebrity culture, idolising people for not doing anything at all”. Is it unhealthy that someone has listed a candle for sale on Etsy that claims to smell of him? (Scent notes include lavender, citrus and vetiver). He laughs. “Very healthy. I don’t know where they got eau de Thomas from. I’ve seen bedsheets with me on them, too,” he says.

Before *The Queen’s Gambit*, he took a two-year break from acting. “There was nothing else I wanted to do day in, day out,” he says. “I just fancied slowing down for a bit, figuring out how to move forward. I didn’t want acting to become a habit.” He wasn’t too worried about being forgotten in the meantime. “If that happens, that happens. I’ll find something else to do,” he says. “But it could definitely happen. People get forgotten and things move on; cultures change in the film industry.”



Swaggering chess prodigy ... Brodie-Sangster (*right*) with Anya Taylor-Joy in the Netflix hit *The Queen’s Gambit*. Photograph: Courtesy Of Netflix/AP

When *The Queen’s Gambit* aired in late 2020 it became Netflix’s biggest ever hit and one of the most talked-about shows on TV. Sales of chess sets in the US jumped by a reported 87%. Brodie-Sangster was as surprised as anyone. “I don’t think anyone would have said that a show about chess

would have the legs that it did,” he says. “That’s why it went to Netflix – it was supposed to be a film but no one wanted to make it. It’s chess. No one is gonna go and watch that. Eventually they said: ‘OK, we’ll do it, but make it a series.’” He is in awe of [Anya Taylor-Joy](#), who starred as troubled prodigy Beth Harmon. “It was a hard job for her, going across different time periods, and she is in every scene. But she was strong – ploughing through it with no signs of weakness. Though I’m sure she needed a break afterwards.”

Chess was a world Brodie-Sangster knew a little about; 70s punk, not so much. When he thought of the designer Vivienne Westwood, who was in a relationship with McLaren during the Pistols era, had a son with him and ran the boutique SEX with him in London’s Chelsea, he thought of “Edwardian puffy dresses, billowing fabrics and stuff. I didn’t know that she was behind the punk movement.” As for McLaren, even after some research, it was hard to work out precisely who he was. “I watched videos of him: sometimes he would sound American, sometimes he had this very proper British accent and other times he sounded quite London,” says Brodie-Sangster. “There were lots of mannerisms [to study] as well, and how he held his mouth. His pitch would go all over the place; his hands would come out quite a lot. There were all these details. It’s like creating a book in my head of all these things, and then trying to pull them all together and do it justice.”

You realise the Sex Pistols are just lost little boys. They’re young and angry, and you understand where that hurt comes from

If McLaren were still alive, what would he ask him? “Where’s the [Sex Pistols’] money!” he laughs. “I’d ask him about his background and his childhood. What led him to want to wake England up, to destroy things to get a reaction? And I’d want to know how he felt about the boys? How much he felt he needed to look after them or whether that was all an act? I’m not sure whether he’d give me a straight answer to any of those”. He’s fascinated, too, by what McLaren did next – wacky ideas such as his 1983 single, Double Dutch, featuring a New York skipping troupe, The Ebonettes, an album of opera adaptations, and a foray into hip-hop in the US. “I’d say he was a real genius – and perhaps a bit of an arsehole.”

While Malcolm gets plenty of funny quips, he's frequently shown in acid-tongued "arsehole" mode towards the band and Vivienne (played by Talulah Riley), at one point referring to her as "the girl that does the sewing". ("That one's meant to bleed," says Brodie-Sangster.) What was it like to direct his more cutting remarks towards Riley – St Trinian's star, ex-wife of Elon Musk and now Brodie-Sangster's girlfriend? "I wasn't dating her at the time," he says. Riley recently said that the pair "hadn't really acknowledged each other as a romantic possibility until the moment that we both did". Despite their challenging relationship on-screen, things are going well off it. "Thankfully we're not too much like Viv and Malc," he says, before gently steering the conversation back to their other co-stars.

The series is darker than some viewers might expect. Jones's memoir told of the sexual abuse he had suffered at the hands of his stepfather, and the show details the painful flashbacks and hypersexualisation caused by his trauma. We also see the effects of drugs on the band, who lost bassist Sid Vicious to an overdose in 1979. "A writer who lived through the period asked Danny [Boyle] about how dark the series would be," Brodie-Sangster says. "They said something like: 'Glamorising the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll of the Sex Pistols – the most out there, ridiculous, angry band that there was at the time – without diving into the darkness, wouldn't make for a well-rounded show.' Danny was like: 'No, don't worry – it comes.' And it does come. You realise that they're just lost little boys. They're young and angry, and you understand where that hurt comes from, why they're screaming. It's like John Lennon or Kurt Cobain. I think, in particular, Jonesy [as Jones is referred to in the series] is that way. I think Danny wanted to show the fragility of these angry, strong spit-in-your-face guys, a fragility to their outlandish masculinity."



‘Thankfully we’re not too much like Viv and Malc’ ... Brodie-Sangster in *Pistol* with girlfriend Talulah Riley, who plays Vivienne Westwood. Photograph: Disney+/Rebecca Brenneman/FX

While the cast and crew hoped to make the show authentic, there was space, too, for what Brodie-Sangster describes as “a weirdness that’s *so Danny Boyle*. He’s up for anything. There are these little moments that pull you out of reality and you go: ‘Woah!’ There’s a scene where Jonesy [played by Toby Wallace] and Chrissie Hynde [Sydney Chandler] sing David Bowie’s *Starman*, and then suddenly a mirror ball comes down. You think: ‘Is that gonna be a bit cheesy?’ But actually we enter their vision of what they want from stardom, and it’s brilliant.”

For all of its arty touches, *Pistol* does well to centre the music, with the actors learning their instruments largely from scratch to provide the show’s soundtrack. And there’s a pleasingly devil-may-care feel to the performances. Maisie Williams is particularly insouciant as punk icon Jordan – AKA Pamela Rooke – whom she tracked down while preparing for the part. Rooke ended up advising the show’s makeup artist about the techniques she had used. “It’s such a shame she died before it came out,” says Brodie-Sangster. “Maisie said that she was lovely.”

What next for Brodie-Sangster? Netflix subscribers will soon see him fronting two episodes of Voices of Liberation, an ambitious documentary series about the second world war. There's a personal connection in the form of his family history. "My great-grandfather was in the secret service, and my great-grandmother housed members of the French resistance in Sussex," he says. "They flew in by moonlight, and once they'd received training and documents they would secretly fly back to France. She would sew cyanide capsules into their cuffs and all kinds of madness." He's looking forward to telling the rest of this dramatic story, and to seeing what viewers make of Pistol. "And I should probably get another job", he says. He may forever be "the Love Actually kid", but that won't pay the bills.

*Pistol airs on Disney+ in the UK and Australia and FX on Hulu in the US from 31 May.*

Rape Crisis offers support for rape and sexual abuse on 0808 802 9999 in England and Wales, 0808 801 0302 in Scotland or 0800 0246 991 in Northern Ireland. In the US, Rainn offers support on 800-656-4673. In Australia, support is available at 1800Respect (1800 737 732). Other international helplines can be found at ibiblio.org/rcip/internl.html

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/may/30/ive-seen-bedsheets-with-my-face-on-them-thomas-brodie-sangster-on-obsessive-fans-love-actually-and-the-sex-pistols>

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Makeup](#)

## Shine on! Why we've fallen back in love with lip gloss



Taking a shine ... (from left) Lisa Eldridge's Gloss Embrace Affair shade, Diesel's crinkled vinyl pants and Victoria Beckham in red PVC trousers at Paris fashion week. Composite: Guardian Design; Courtesy of Lisa Eldridge; Diesel; Stephane Cardinale/Corbis via Getty Images

Gleaming 90s-style lips are everywhere, just like shiny fabrics. Is it simply because we're in the mood for a party?



[Lauren Cochrane](#)

Mon 30 May 2022 05.00 EDT

The first makeup item I remember buying was a lip gloss. It was a small pot of purple goo, made by Japanese brand Shu Uemura, and – even by today's standards – pretty expensive at £16. I saved up for it, like I did for my Vivienne Westwood bustier and Air Max 98s. Because, like them, it was a status item. I applied it, performatively, any chance I got. This was in the late 90s – probably the last time I gave a second thought to lip gloss. These days, I'm more of a lip balm person.

That may be about to change, though. Lip gloss, forgotten and gathering lint at the bottom of handbags for decades, is back. Possibly down to a nostalgia for the 90s and early 00s – and no doubt boosted by the phasing-out of masks – shiny lips are the beauty detail to focus on this spring, seen on catwalks at Fendi, Victoria Beckham and Blumarine, on celebrities ranging from Dua Lipa to Vanessa Hudgens, and on TikTok – where #lipgloss has more than 6bn views. Superdrug reports the category “flying off the shelves”

the past year, while online retailer LookFantastic says there was an 11% rise in searches for lip gloss from 2020 to 2021.

As in the late 90s, there are status lip glosses – see Lisa Eldridge's Gloss Embrace in the brownish Affair shade (a favourite of Lipa's), Ami Colé's Lip Oil Treatment (described by New York magazine's The Strategist as "[the Telfar bag of lip gloss](#)"), NYX's Butter Gloss (with 7.6m views on TikTok) and Beckham's Posh Gloss, a knowing nod to her lip-gloss-centric makeup in the Spice Girls era.

Jacqueline Kilikita, senior beauty editor at Refinery29, puts the resurgence down to two factors. "First, our obsession with nostalgia, which increased during the tough pandemic," she says. "There's also a move towards more minimal makeup post-pandemic, and a slick of gloss is a quick and easy way to update any look." She says the Y2K trend is "massive", and that "as crop tops, low-rise jeans and chunky highlights made a comeback, so did gloss." While Naomi Campbell, Posh Spice, Aaliyah and Pamela Anderson might be the inspiration, it's not like for like. TikTok creators are "teaming clear or nude gloss with dark liner for a look that harks back to the 00s and 90s but feels modern."



Posh gloss ... The Spice Girls at the 2000 MTV Europe music awards.  
Photograph: Fred Duval/FilmMagic

The formulations of lip glosses have improved since then. I can't be alone in remembering that sticky feeling, and the way strands of hair got caught on your lips (an annoyance [Miuccia Prada turned into a styling trick on the catwalk in 2013](#)). Superdrug says that customers are after "skincare-makeup hybrids" and something like Eldridge's Gloss Embrace or Jones Road Cool Gloss work because they feel more like a balm. This is, Eldridge says, thanks to a formulation based on fats. "Imagine if you were making a cake and used loads of butter and then added olive oil. It doesn't evaporate off and it will stay on the lips ... It doesn't feel gloopy, and if you want to add more you can, but you don't need to."

Dr Ewoma Ukeleghe, followed on Instagram by 22.5k people for her skincare videos, is a recent convert for this reason. "I've had a moment wearing lipsticks, then lip balms, but now I'm loving lip glosses," she says. "I think formulations and shade ranges have really developed over the years, making glosses the perfect option." Favourites include Fenty [Beauty](#) Gloss Bomb in Cookie Jar and Tower28 ShineOn Jelly in Cashew.

Searches for shiny fabrics such as PVC, vinyl and latex are up 15% since last November

The move away from masks has helped the lip gloss trend, but another pandemic-related factor is a sort of laziness: we gravitate towards items that are low maintenance. Eldridge agrees with Kilikita about the ease of lip gloss. "You don't need a mirror, you don't need to be precise about it."

This is a long way from the beginning of gloss. Originally, the product was associated with high glamour – it's [thought to have been invented around 1928 by Max Factor](#), and became popular in the movie industry in the 30s. "It was called lip pomade," says Eldridge. Later, in the 70s and 80s – when roll-on lip gloss became the beauty accessory to flash – it worked with a disco aesthetic, where shine and glitter were essential for a dancefloor-ready look.

The revival of lip gloss could be seen as part of a wider resurgence of shiny, glossy textures in fashion. Lyst, the fashion shopping app, reports that searches for shiny fabrics such as PVC, vinyl and latex are up 15% since November 2021. This is no doubt down to an increase in these textures on the catwalk – at brands including Chanel, David Koma and Courrèges – but also on celebrities including Julia Fox in black vinyl co-ords, Kim Kardashian in a mustard vinyl jumpsuit and Victoria Beckham in red PVC trousers and even the typically fashion-conservative Anne Hathaway on the Cannes red carpet in a [Gucci minidress with PVC bodice](#). Sexy and party-ready, it's a far cry from the practical and warm clothing we wore throughout the lockdowns of the past two years, and maybe that's why it works. In April, Vogue published an article with the headline "[Fashion's new mood? Skin-tight and shiny](#)".



Dark storylines, with a glossy veneer ... Kat (Barbie Ferreira) and Maddy (Alexa Demie) in Euphoria. Photograph: HBO

Brenda Otero, cultural communications manager at Lyst, believes this trend says more about us than simply the fact we're rediscovering our desire to go out-out. "It's almost like an escape from reality," she says. "If you compare it with the 70s, it's a very similar kind of reality in terms of politics and society and conflicts." [Euphoria](#), the trend-setting TV show, exemplifies this

idea: characters like Kat and Maddy have dark storylines, covered over with [a glossy veneer, on both lips and in outfits](#).

Shine can also be found on the high street now – from Weekday to Rains and Diesel – and, for those less inclined to wear what is essentially new plastic, in vintage stores. Peter Goldsmith, the founder of Goldsmith Vintage, confirms “a boost in sales in shiny fabrics across our stores and online platforms”. He too sees it as harking back to the 70s, but for him the key is the decade as a time of “self-expression”. “Young people want to show their fun, glamorous sides – often inspired by RuPaul, drag culture and the LGBTQ+ scene,” he says.

There's also an argument that these textures provide a sort of protection from day-to-day stresses. “You feel like a superhero,” says Kerry O'Brien, the founder of Commando. A brand principally known for its underwear – a pregnant Serena Williams chose to wear her own Commando knickers for the cover of Vanity Fair in 2017 – it launched a line of patent leggings in 2014, and the designs have since become a favourite for celebrities including Kourtney Kardashian, Ashley Graham and Gwen Stefani. “The momentum continues to go up and up,” says O'Brien. “It's one of our bestselling styles.”

Otero says the gloss trend could go in various directions. “In the 70s, it just developed into a super-glamorous 80s. We don't know what's going to happen at the moment. The crisis might continue longer. So [the look] will be something darker.”

Ultimately, whether it's lip gloss or patent leggings, shine – as sartorial artifice – is just one look to play with. “Gen Z use fashion as a way to experiment with identities,” says Otero. “One day you wear a vintage Nirvana T-shirt. The next, you wear something really shiny.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2022/may/30/shine-love-lip-gloss-90s-season-masks-escapist>

**Sony**

## Sony LinkBuds review: novel earbuds that let the outside world in

Compact earphones have a central hole so you can hear what is going on around you while you listen or talk



The Sony LinkBuds have a unique open-fit design that lets the sound of the outside world through for natural awareness of your surroundings.  
Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

*[Samuel Gibbs](#) Consumer technology editor*

Mon 30 May 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 05.30 EDT

Personal audio has taken a bizarre turn with Sony's latest attempt to reinvent the earbud. The weird doughnut-shaped speaker with a hole in the middle allows you to listen to music without blocking out the world.

The LinkBuds are the first in a new line of earbuds from Sony that aim to let you listen to music but also have awareness of what is going on around you. They cost £149 (\$179/A\$319) and compete with earbuds such as Apple's standard [AirPods](#) and [Google's Pixel Buds A](#).

Breaking the tradition for what earbuds should look like, they lack any form of tip, silicone or otherwise, and look like a [Polo mint](#) stuck to a [mint imperial](#). The circular main body fits in your concha while the ring-shaped speaker sits outside your ear canal for an open fit.



The back of the earbud has a presence sensor, charging contacts and speaker grille. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

They only weigh 4.1g each and are kept in place by silicone wings in one of five included sizes, which tuck under the folds at the top of your concha. It's a unique, low-profile fit that takes some getting used to. It was immediately comfortable in my right ear but took some adjustment for my smaller left ear.

Once in place you can clearly hear the world around you through the hole in the middle of the speaker for full awareness on the street, park or in the office while you are listening to music. You can easily have full conversations without taking them out and can hear your own voice to stop

you accidentally shouting on calls. My voice came through sounding clear and natural on the other end of calls, too.

Music has good separation of instruments, balance and detail in the highs, treble and mid-bass, with a full equaliser to adjust to your sound preferences. However, the ring speaker struggles to produce deeper notes, which means some tracks sound a bit hollow, making them better suited to pop, rock and songs that don't rely on thumping bass.

The LinkBuds are discreet when kept at quiet listening volumes but crank up the volume to mask other people talking around you and they will be able to hear your music.

## Specifications

- **Water resistance:** IPX4 (sweat)
- **Connectivity:** [Bluetooth](#) 5.2, SBC, AAC
- **Battery life:** 5.5 hours/2.5 hours talk, up to 17.5 hours with case
- **Earbud weight:** 4.1g
- **Driver size:** 12mm ring
- **Charging case weight:** 34g
- **Case dimensions:** 41.4 x 48.5 x 30.9mm
- **Case charging:** USB-C

## Connectivity, controls, battery



The [Sony Headphones Connect app](#) on Android and iPhone handles settings, updates and adjusts extras such as one-tap access to Spotify or [Microsoft's Soundscape](#) audio augmented reality service. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The earbuds last up to 5.5 hours of music playback and clip into a small and pocketable case that can store an additional 12 hours of charge for a total of 17.5 hours. When low on battery, a 10-minute charge will be enough for up to 90 minutes of playback.

The earbuds support standard Bluetooth 5.2 and the universal SBC and AAC audio formats but also have [Fast Pair](#) with Android and [Swift Pair](#) with Windows PC. They only connect to one device at a time but can seamlessly switch between them. Connection to various phones, tablets and watches was rock-solid.



The design and fit of the LinkBuds is unlike anything else. Tapping the patch of skin between ear and sideburns activates the onboard controls.  
Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The LinkBuds have customisable controls for playback, volume and other options, which you can either tap twice or thrice on the earbud or even just on the side of your head to get the same effect. Each earbud can have different controls, which work well enough, but the selection is a little restrictive compared with the best competitors.

The music pauses when you take out an earbud and starts again when put back. There's also an automatic volume adjustment option that turns the music up or down depending on how loud your environment is.

## Sustainability



The rubber stabilising wing simply pulls off the top of the earbud to swap out for a different size, five of which are included in the box. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

Sony does not provide an expected lifespan for the batteries in the earbuds or case. Batteries in similar products typically last more than 500 full-charge cycles while maintaining at least 80% of their original capacity. The LinkBuds are not repairable and the battery cannot be replaced, ultimately making them disposable.

The earbuds and case are [made of recycled plastic](#). The company does not publish environmental impact reports for headphones. It publishes [annual sustainability reports](#) and [its roadmap](#) to have zero environmental impact by 2050.

## Price

The Sony LinkBuds cost [£149 \(\\$179/A\\$319\)](#) and are available in white or grey.

For comparison, the [Apple AirPods 3](#) cost [£169](#), [Google Pixel Buds A-Series](#) cost [£100](#), and the [Microsoft Surface Earbuds](#) cost [£199](#).

## Verdict

The LinkBuds are an interesting new idea in the world of Bluetooth earbuds, one with a novel physical design that ensures full awareness of the outside world while playing music.

They lack a bit of bass but otherwise sound good, particularly in quieter environments, making them perfectly suited to the office or similar. Voice calls are great, too. The fit is a bit weird at first but should suit those who do not like having tips inserted in their ear canals.

They are great for running and other activities that require awareness of your surroundings but those who wear earbuds to block out distractions should look elsewhere. The battery can't be replaced, however, ultimately making them disposable and [losing a star](#).

They certainly won't suit everyone but those looking for a good open-fit alternative to Apple's AirPods finally have a competitive option in the much more interesting Sony LinkBuds.

**Pros:** open fit, decent sound, decent battery, great case, good connectivity, great call quality, sweat resistant, good app,

**Cons:** no sound isolation at all, no noise-cancelling, limited control options, can only connect to one device at a time, cannot be repaired, expensive.



It looks weird in the hand but its low-profile design means it doesn't stand out once you've correctly inserted it into your ear. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

## Other reviews

- [Apple AirPods 3 review: solid revamp with better fit and longer battery](#)
- [Surface Earbuds review: Microsoft's AirPods rivals](#)
- [Samsung Galaxy Buds Live review: novel bean-shaped AirPod rivals](#)
- [Pixel Buds A-Series review: Google's cheaper but good earbuds](#)
- [Sony WF-1000XM4 review: the best-sounding noise-cancelling earbuds](#)

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.05.30 - Opinion

- Andy Burnham is a prime Labour leader candidate, but also a mayor. That's a problem
- I am queer and proud – even though I am now married to a man
- This age of inflation reveals the sickness ailing Britain's economy: rentier capitalism
- A third of new mothers are traumatised by childbirth, but there's one easy way to help

[OpinionLabour](#)

## **Andy Burnham is a prime Labour leader candidate, but also a mayor. That's a problem**

[Martin Kettle](#)



Piecemeal devolution and a mess of Westminster rules are preventing political talent playing a bigger role in British public life



Andy Burnham supports sacked P&O workers at the Port of Liverpool on 18 March. Photograph: Anthony Devlin/Getty Images

Mon 30 May 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 00.22 EDT

Call it the [Andy Burnham](#) problem in British politics. Yet the Labour mayor of Greater Manchester is more a victim than a source of it. Nor is the problem confined to him, or indeed to the Labour party. The same thing applies in all the parties. It is structural, cultural, very British, and it needs addressing.

The problem is the mismatch between the realities of British politics and governance on the one hand and the assumed supremacy of the unreformed Westminster parliament on the other. Burnham's case is particularly topical, because there may shortly be a [vacancy for leader](#) of the Labour party. If Durham police issues a fixed-penalty notice against him for breaching Covid regulations, Keir Starmer has said he will step down. Burnham is the bookmakers' clear favourite as successor. As things stand, however, he is ineligible to stand because he is not a member of parliament.

The three main parties all currently operate a version of this rule. To be leader of the Conservatives, [Labour](#) or the Liberal Democrats, a candidate

must be a serving MP. The existence of such rules did for Tony Benn's chances of becoming Labour leader in 1983, and Michael Portillo's of leading the Tories in 1997. Yet it was not always this way. Lord Alec Douglas-Home became Tory leader and prime minister in 1963 while he was still in the House of Lords, before renouncing his title and winning a by-election three weeks later.

It is possible Burnham could pull off something similar in a post-Starmer contest. But the by-election and his candidacy would need a lot of fast fixing from the top. Burnham supporters at Westminster have already raised the possibility that Harriet Harman, the long-serving Mother of the House, who is stepping down as MP for Camberwell and Peckham – where she has a majority of nearly 34,000 – might resign early and create a vacancy into which Burnham would be parachuted.

It is a risky strategy. Local parties don't like being pushed aside in this way, as Labour has already found in its selection for the Wakefield by-election. Nor do voters like their support being taken for granted; Labour has lost seats in such circumstances in the past. Greater Manchester voters might take out their resentment against Burnham's departure in a new mayoral contest. And it is far from certain that either Starmer, or a temporary party leader, would have the motive or the clout to deliver for Burnham anyway.

There's another thing. What if the London mayor, Sadiq Khan, decided to throw his hat into the ring? Khan is essentially in the same position as Burnham. Yet Labour could face an embarrassing choice between the two if there was a by-election vacancy in Khan's south London patch. What if the Welsh first minister, Mark Drakeford, who has proved an extremely effective Labour vote-winner in the last year, uncharacteristically fancied the bigger stage himself too?

This sort of problem is becoming more common for all the parties – and it will continue. That's partly because the parties are less rigidly controlled from the centre. But it is also because power has been redistributed down from central government through devolution. In the UK this has evolved piecemeal and asymmetrically, mostly with England and the Westminster parliament as afterthoughts, rather than under some classical constructed constitutional blueprint. But people have got used to it.

Until the early 21st century, some of these conflicts were dealt with through dual mandates. Northern Ireland MPs often sat in both the old Stormont and at Westminster. During the transition to devolution, Labour's leaders in Scotland and Wales, Donald Dewar and Alun Michael, remained MPs and sat in both parliaments. Alex Salmond was SNP leader for the second time from 2004 to 2014, even though he did not sit at Holyrood until 2007, and did not give up his Westminster seat until 2010 – even while serving as first minister.

Then came the [expenses scandal](#). Dual mandates were now thought to be inherently sleazy and were widely banned. Yet the rules remain tangled. In Northern Ireland, the DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, has just had to choose between his election to Westminster and to Stormont; he chose Westminster. A similar ban on dual mandates exists in Wales. But the Scottish Tory leader, Douglas Ross, still sits at Holyrood and Westminster.

And while Burnham would be required by law to choose between his mayoral post and a seat in parliament, Khan could hold both, as both Johnson and Ken Livingstone did for limited periods. Most mayoralties outside Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire also permit dual mandates. Labour's Dan Jarvis was mayor of South Yorkshire until earlier this month, while continuing to be an MP.

The present mess does an active disservice to Britain's public life. Any system that played a part in stopping a talented Tory like Ruth Davidson playing a larger role on the UK stage is a failing system. So is one that prevents Labour's Burnham from leveraging the credibility he gained from leaving Westminster into a national asset for his party. Any system that instead produces a Boris Johnson – as our mismatch of devolved and centralised has done – needs a rethink.

Some will argue that the answer is an all-embracing new constitutional settlement, in which the great cities, regions and nations are all somehow represented, German Bundesrat-style, in a new upper house to replace the Lords. In an intergovernmental scheme of that sort the devolution barons – Drakeford and Donaldson, Nicola Sturgeon and maybe even a future first minister of England – might find a place ex officio, helping to make dual mandates more comprehensible and less open to charges of sleaze, and

making it more likely that the parties will be able to elect the leaders they want.

The underlying difficulty, though, remains the abject failure of the UK parliament and the UK parties to either understand or adapt to devolution. Government in Britain was fundamentally reshaped by the creation of the Scottish and Welsh parliaments, plus the Northern Ireland assembly and the mayoralties. The parties were slow and resistant to change. Their rules and their thinking still reflect their reluctance.

The answer is neither to abandon devolution nor to embrace it with renewed fervour. It is to recognise its real strengths but also its real failings, and to adapt these lessons within a shared idea of Britain that is neither nostalgically reactionary nor grindingly utopian. This is not an argument for Andy Burnham to be the next Labour leader, or for him not to be. But it is an argument for him to be able to stand. It is an argument for parties opening up the rules a bit more, and for recognising the kind of country we have become. Do that, and we might be on the way to solving the Burnham problem.

- Martin Kettle is a Guardian columnist
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/30/andy-burnham-labour-leader-candidate-mayor-problem-mess-of-westminster-rules>

[Opinion](#)[Sexuality](#)

## I am queer and proud – even though I am now married to a man

[Kerry Hudson](#)

I have had long-term relationships with women and am still amazed not to be jeered at from cars when I kiss my husband



Rainbow nation ... Prague Pride 2017. Photograph: Madeleine Steinbach/Alamy

Mon 30 May 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 05.08 EDT

A fortnight ago, I sat in a chilly, near-empty basement bar in Prague that smelled of beer, sweat and fried cheese, watching the Czech equivalent of David Gray. Between songs, he swigged disconsolately from a bottle of red wine. He was obviously as sad as my husband and I were about the night out. After two tequilas, we cut our losses.

As we left, I looked longingly over the road at Patra, the best queer bar in town. It was hosting a [Eurovision](#) party, with drag queens, cocktails and a glorious, shouty crowd spilling out into the street. I lingered at the door. I was wearing cowboy boots and head-to-toe leopard print – was a woman ever more ready for Eurovision? But I was also with my husband. Yes, I am queer, but I knew I wouldn't be going in. The space was not mine to take up when I could go to any other bar in the city.

When I married a man, I knew it meant changing how I represented and inhabited sexual identity. Before I met my husband, I had long-term relationships with women, so I am deeply aware of the privileges of being straight-passing. Never again do I have to carefully insert my partner's pronouns into conversation while gauging the other person's response. I rarely experience discrimination or fetishisation. Even after seven years, I am still amazed not to be jeered at from cars when we kiss, or have B&B receptionists goggle as we ask for a double bed.

I am finding a middle ground. I take our son to the family days at [Pride](#). We have hung a rainbow flag in our window (much to the curiosity of our neighbours); I advocate for LGBTQI+ rights. I am still learning, but I am trying to give what I can while not taking what is not mine any more. I am queer and proud, but I know my place. Sadly, it is not at that fabulous Eurovision party, but it is not, thankfully, listening to Czech David Gray, either.

*Kerry Hudson is the author of [Tony Hogan Bought Me an Ice-cream Float Before He Stole My Ma](#) and [Lowborn](#)*

***Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)***

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/30/i-am-queer-and-proud-even-though-i-am-now-married-to-a-man>

## OpinionInflation

# This age of inflation reveals the sickness ailing Britain's economy: rentier capitalism

[William Davies](#)

Ever since Thatcher's monetarist medicine, profits have become all-but guaranteed for wealthy elites – and society has suffered



Composite: Guardian Design/Getty Images

Mon 30 May 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 02.55 EDT

Inflation in the UK has hit its highest level in 40 years, particularly thanks to the dramatic rise in energy and food prices. This fact has provoked panic among some commentators and policymakers that Britain is about to relive the inflationary turbulence of the 1970s, and has prompted Rishi Sunak [to announce](#) a last-minute £15bn “cost of living package” partly funded by a

one-off tax on energy companies. Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, has already been the subject of outrage for suggesting that workers should show “restraint” in their pay demands, to prevent an upward spiral in wages and prices as seen in the 1970s. Right now, with inflation at 9% and [employers expecting](#) to increase pay this year by just 3%, Bailey should be able to relax on that front.

Inflation aside, the differences between Britain’s economy of 2022 and that of 40 years ago are stark. In 1982, unemployment hit a postwar record, at more than 3 million, as manufacturing employment plummeted. Today, [Boris Johnson](#) boasts of record low unemployment. Trade union coverage was still over 50% in 1982; today, it’s less than half that, and almost half of that again in the private sector. The inability of most workers to negotiate collectively for wage increases is one of the principal reasons why Bailey sounded so out of touch, and why comparisons with the 1970s miss the mark.

We are not witnessing a rerun of the 1970s and early 80s. But there are other reasons to consider the relationship between the crisis now facing Johnson’s government and that which confronted Margaret Thatcher in her first term in office. Put simply, the crisis today is a legacy of how that previous crisis was handled.

It is worth remembering that inflation represented *the* dominant economic policy challenge through most of the 1970s. It was inflation that prompted the historic reckoning by Jim Callaghan at the 1976 Labour party conference, heralding the end of the Keynesian consensus: “We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession, and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists.” Politicians and experts disagreed over the solution to inflation, but the urgency of finding one was widely accepted.

In the political imagination of the 1970s new right that emerged from thinktanks on both sides of the Atlantic, the problem of inflation was tied up with a whole host of broader social and moral crises: overpowerful unions, an excessively generous welfare state, the weakening of entrepreneurship,

family breakdown, disdain for capitalists. What all of these problems had in common, from this perspective, was a failure to respect the ultimate value of money. Britain would beat inflation by rediscovering its respect for property, hard work, fiscal discipline and responsibility.

The medicine administered by Thatcher was socially devastating. The monetarist doctrine, originally developed by Milton Friedman, which held that governments should target the amount of money in circulation then set interest rates accordingly, caused interest rates to rise to such punitive levels that Britain entered the deepest recession since the 1930s. [Inflation](#) fell, eventually, but only after whole industrial regions, towns and cities had been dragged down with it. The collapse in trade union membership was as much an effect of the destruction of unionised jobs as it was of anti-union legislation.

What is the significance of this today? Reflecting back on the upheavals of that time, many political economists have come to view monetarism as a deliberate political project that sought to re-establish the supremacy of asset owners and financial elites. After all, it was quite clear who suffered most from inflation, and who would benefit most from having it flushed out: creditors and the wealthy. It was only after Thatcher had strangled the life out of inflation (and much else besides) that the City and the housing market could begin their dramatic ascent that, aside from the wobbles of the early John Major years and the 2008 banking crisis, has continued ever since.

Viewed this way, Thatcherism wasn't so much an unleashing of "enterprise" or risk-taking, as its supporters have always claimed, but rather an unleashing of capital to chase the highest returns possible, regardless of any broader social or economic benefit. In his book *Rentier Capitalism*, the social and economic geographer [Brett Christophers](#) has shown that the central effect of Thatcherite reforms was to open up whole new income streams that owe little to productivity and a great deal to gaining a stranglehold over those who depend on rentiers.

We can see this in the outsourcing specialists such as Serco and G4S that hover around government departments to secure lucrative long-term contracts, using legal muscle to protect themselves against any downside; in

the descent by private equity funds on essential adult and [children's](#) care to extract abnormal profits, largely through squeezing an already disempowered workforce. We can see it in the way that house prices and rent have become [entirely unmoored](#) from wages. Rent-seeking extends well beyond the sphere of “the market”, to extract revenue from – and raise the cost of – the basic necessities of life.

According to orthodox economic theory, profit is the reward that a business or investor receives for taking a financial risk, including the risk of bankruptcy. But in a rentier economy such as Britain's, profits become guaranteed, while risks are eliminated by fair means or foul. The 2008 bailout of banks that had become “too big to fail” was emblematic of this kind of phoney capitalism, in which vast rewards are divorced from any genuine acceptance of risk. Similarly, now that the retail price of energy is effectively decided by Ofgem, the soaring profits of energy giants [such as Shell](#) have to be understood as official UK government policy, just as the house price inflation that followed Sunak's [stamp duty holiday](#) was. Although Sunak's one-off levy on energy firms ameliorates certain effects of rentier power, it does nothing to weaken the underlying shape of the economy.

Some critics wonder if this economic model even counts as “capitalist” any longer, seeing as it has abandoned the risky, productivity-enhancing investments that have long been seen as capitalism's hallmarks. Certainly, the liberal language of “citizens” and “consumers”, “public” and “private” sectors, feels inadequate to describe a cost of living crisis in which we are largely trapped in our payment obligations, living at the behest of businesses that have neither a political nor an economic incentive to serve our interests.

The state, in Thatcher's view, had become captured by labour. Today, the problem is the opposite one: the state now protects certain forms of capital at every turn, to the point where many businesses, funds and wealthy elites have forgotten how it feels to lose. It may well be that much of today's inflation stems from geopolitical factors (war and Brexit), but until a government is elected to represent the economically vulnerable and take a stand against rentier power, merely living will remain a high-cost exercise for many.

- William Davies is a sociologist and political economist. His latest book is This is Not Normal: The Collapse of Liberal Britain
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/30/age-of-inflation-economy-rentier-capitalism>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[\*\*Republic of Parenthood\*\*](#)[\*\*Parents and parenting\*\*](#)

## **A third of new mothers are traumatised by childbirth, but there's one easy way to help**

[\*\*Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett\*\*](#)



Good communication during and after birth can help the many women who experience PTSD



Nancy Pedroza is supported in labour by Ryan Morgan, her partner, and Nichollette Jones, her doula, in Fort Worth, Texas, April 2020. Photograph: Callaghan O'Hare/Reuters

Mon 30 May 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 05.29 EDT

Jessica Cornwell was silent in labour. During the forceps and ventouse delivery of her twins she haemorrhaged, and her life was saved by a doctor who inserted their hand into her womb to remove her placenta. One of her sons was rushed to the newborn intensive care unit. “I couldn’t talk,” she writes in *Birth Notes*, her memoir of recovery from the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) she developed. “I couldn’t say anything at all.”

Cornwell now knows that she entered a dissociative state during the birth. “I started dissociating pretty much the minute that I went into labour, and a lot of the midwives commented on how quiet I was. How I handled pain well,” she tells me. Her book, a visceral, poetic account of her journey to diagnosis and treatment, and a damning indictment of the lack of knowledge of and research into birth trauma, was originally going to be called *Where There Are No Words*.

I’ve been thinking a lot about words and language since I gave birth, how good communication can save a person from becoming traumatised. [Mental](#)

health professionals tell me that it is often when patients (and their birth partners) feel that communication has been poor, when they have no idea what is happening to them or to their body, that PTSD symptoms can result. “Intense fear tends to be one of the main causes of PTSD, and so, if she feels that everything is out of control, no one is telling her what’s happening, no one is listening to her, all of that combined can cause PTSD,” says Dr Kim Thomas of the Birth Trauma Association. “A lot of women will say ‘I thought my baby was about to die’ or they think that they are about to die, but none of the hospital staff seem to be cognisant of this.”

According to one study, every third woman would describe their experience of giving birth as traumatic, yet until relatively recently childbirth wasn’t considered an event that could cause PTSD. It was normal, natural. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 3, PTSD was the result of events that were “generally outside the range of usual human experience”. This was only removed in 2013, and childbirth is still not explicitly listed as a potential stressor, though experts are finally in agreement that it can be.

Nevertheless, birth trauma is often misdiagnosed as postnatal depression. It took Cornwell two years to get her diagnosis having been told she had postnatal depression, and again, where there should have been language there was instead an absence. Birth trauma and pregnancy simply weren’t included on the “life events” checklist she was given. She found herself wondering if “the absence of traumatic categories related to motherhood was accidental, an oversight, or a deliberate omission – or if the research simply hasn’t caught up yet”.

Watching Cornwell, who is a close friend, undergo her quest to put these experiences into words has been awe-inspiring. She is not alone in this. Sometimes it is several wines down, told almost in the style of a standup routine. At other times it is mentioned almost casually, like the occasion when a woman in a cafe handed me a coffee and gestured at the child in the playground opposite. “I only have one,” she said, “because they took my womb out afterwards.”

Finding the words, building a narrative, is what helps processing. I have received an outpouring of emails from women with birth trauma, often long,

detailed accounts using medical terminology. These are women who have asked to see their notes so that they can work out what has happened to them, or who have attended debriefings. Always, the questions are the same: “Why wasn’t I listened to?”, “Why did no one tell me what was happening?”, “Why were my requests for pain relief ignored?” (asking for pain relief and not being granted it is a recurring theme); “Why was this done to me without consent?”

Sometimes there are serious failings of care, but often it seems a traumatic birth is characterised by such communication gaps. Cornwell stresses that raising awareness of birth trauma is not about demonising overworked medical professionals, but working out how to improve the experience of birth for future patients so that we don’t have to hear these stories time and time again. Entering a dissociative state, as she did, is a signpost of future PTSD, as is previous trauma such as sexual violence. She thinks that training to help doctors and midwives identify women who are unusually silent in labour so that they can be given help grounding them if they are dissociating could be a positive development. Thomas highlights a [study](#) in which women who were extra vulnerable had a “psychology alert” sticker placed on their birth notes to make medical staff aware of mental health concerns, with great success. Staff can be coached in listening skills, and more professionals have been coming to them asking for training.

I’m still making my way through the birth stories that I have been sent. Each is unique, but there are some statements that could apply to all the women writing, such as this from a mother of three who almost died during her labour and is now living with lifelong health issues: “The main thing that upsets me the most is that I had no voice. I wasn’t listened to and I wasn’t heard.”

## **What’s working**

I am pathetically grateful to the makers of Ewan the Dream Sheep, a cuddly cartoon sheep that glows red and plays womblike sounds (yes, really), for helping my son drift off. Millions have been sold and I can understand why,

because it seems to have a miraculous soporific effects. I've already recommended it to several friends.

## What isn't

I'd like to apologise to anyone who has been forced to witness one of my son's recent public "poonamis". We were, alas, a bit slow to realise that we needed to go up a nappy size.

- Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett is a Guardian columnist

*Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/30/third-new-mothers-traumatised-childbirth-communication-women-ptsd>

## 2022.05.30 - Around the world

- [Sidhu Moose Wala Punjabi singer and rapper shot dead](#)
- [Hong Kong Churches drop Tiananmen tributes after 33 years amid arrest fears](#)
- [China ‘Tragically ugly’ school textbook causes social media outcry](#)
- [Canada Arctic tuberculosis outbreak lays bare overcrowded living conditions](#)
- [New Zealand Husband of British diplomat pokes fun at country's 'crappiest fountain'](#)

[India](#)

## Sidhu Moose Wala: Punjabi singer and rapper shot dead

Musician whose real name was Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu was killed a day after his security cover was withdrawn



Sidhu Moose Wala performs during the Wireless festival last year at Crystal Palace in London. Photograph: Burak Çingi/Redferns

*Associated Press in Delhi*

Mon 30 May 2022 02.34 EDT Last modified on Mon 30 May 2022 12.24 EDT

Indian police are investigating the murder of a popular Punjabi rapper a day after he was fatally shot.

Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, better known by his stage name Sidhu Moose Wala, was killed on Sunday evening while driving his car in Mansa, a district in

Punjab state, northern India. Moose Wala, 28, was taken to hospital where he was declared dead.

Punjab state's top police official VK Bhawra said the initial investigation had revealed the killing to be the result of an inter-gang rivalry.

A day before the attack, Punjab's government had pulled security cover for more than 400 individuals, including Moose Wala, in an attempt to clamp down on VIP culture, local media reports said.

Moose Walawho blended hip-hop, rap and folk music, started off as a songwriter before a hit song in 2017 catapulted his singing career, making him well known among the Indian and Punjabi diaspora in countries [including the UK](#) and Canada.

Most of his singles have an English title, though the songs were mainly sung in Punjabi. His glossy music videos often focused on macho culture. His debut album in 2018 made it to Canada's Billboard albums chart.

Moose Wala was a controversial figure, in part because of his lyrical style. In 2020, police charged him under India's Arms Act for allegedly promoting gun culture in one of his songs.

His latest track, The Last Ride, was released this month.

The rapper joined India's Congress party last year and unsuccessfully ran in the state's assembly elections.

Punjab's chief minister, Bhagwant Mann, said he was shocked and saddened by the murder, adding that "no culprit will be spared".

Rahul Gandhi, a senior Congress leader, tweeted his condolences. "Deeply shocked and saddened by the murder of promising congress leader and talented artist," he wrote.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Hong Kong

# Hong Kong churches drop Tiananmen tributes after 33 years amid arrest fears

Concerns of breaching security law prompt cancellation of services that were among last ways to publicly mark China's 1989 crackdown



A tribute last December to 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown victims at the place where the 'Goddess of Democracy' statue had stood at the Chinese university of Hong Kong before its removal by school authorities.  
Photograph: Vincent Yu/AP

*Agence France-Presse in Hong Kong*

Mon 30 May 2022 01.44 EDT

For the first time in 33 years, church services to commemorate the Tiananmen Square crackdown will not be held in [Hong Kong](#), erasing one of the last reminders of China's bloody suppression of the 1989 protests.

Since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law in 2020 to snuff out pro-democracy demonstrations, once-packed candlelit vigils have been banned, a Tiananmen museum has been forced to close and statues have been pulled down.

The annual Catholic masses were one of the last ways for Hong Kongers to come together publicly to remember the deadly clampdown in Beijing on 4 June 1989, when the Chinese government set tanks and troops on peaceful demonstrators.

But this year, they too have been cancelled over fears of falling foul of Hong Kong authorities.

“We find it very difficult under the current social atmosphere,” said Rev Martin Ip, chaplain of the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, one of the organisers.

“Our bottom line is that we don’t want to breach any law in Hong Kong,” he said.

The diocese, whose justice and peace commission was a co-organiser, said its frontline colleagues were concerned they might violate Hong Kong law.

Discussion of the 1989 crackdown is all but forbidden in mainland [China](#). But in semi-autonomous Hong Kong, its history was often taught in schools and advocacy for ending the rule of the Chinese Communist party was alive and kicking – until the imposition of the security law.

In the space of months, decades of commemoration have been wiped out as authorities wield the law to refashion Hong Kong in Beijing’s authoritarian image.

The Hong Kong Alliance, the most prominent Tiananmen advocacy group and the candlelight vigil organiser, was prosecuted as a “foreign agent” over incitement to subversion.

Last September, its leaders were arrested, their June 4 Museum was shuttered after a police raid, and digital records of the crackdown were deleted overnight under a police order to close the group's website and social media accounts.

For others, much like the organisers of the masses, uncertainty over where the new red lines fall has been enough to make them pull back.

Six universities removed June 4 monuments that had stood on their campuses for years. Just before Christmas last year, three were whisked away within 48 hours.

The "Pillar of Shame" in the University of Hong Kong (HKU), an eight-metre-high sculpture by Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, was dismantled, tucked into a cargo container and left on an HKU-owned plot of rural land.



The 'Pillar of Shame' being removed from the University of Hong Kong last December. Photograph: Lam Chun Tung/AP

At Lingnan University, a wall relief by artist Chen Weiming was banished to an underground storage room.

His “Goddess of Democracy” statue at the Chinese University of Hong Kong was sent to a secretive “safe place”.

“They are trying to wipe out a shameful episode in history when the state committed a crime on its people,” Chen said.

The universities said they had never consented to the statues’ presence, and that their removal was based on an assessment of legal risk.

Where the Goddess used to stand, only a faint mark from her square pedestal can now be seen.

The Pillar has been replaced by a new sitting-out area with pebble-shaped chairs and potted flowers.

“This is the meaning ... after a few years nobody knows what happened there,” Galschiot said.

He has been trying to take the Pillar back to Europe, but such is the sensitivity around it that the university refused to lend him its crew, and logistics companies dare not get involved.

They say “it’s too complicated and it’s too dangerous”, Galschiot said.

The drive to remove all trace of Tiananmen is ongoing – earlier this year, HKU covered a painted June 4 slogan on campus with cement and called it “regular maintenance”.

In the city’s public libraries, 57 Tiananmen books are restricted from general borrowers – nearly double the amount since local news outlet Hong Kong Free Press counted last November.

Instead, the space for remembering the crackdown now lies outside Hong Kong, with exiled dissidents setting up their own museums in the US and activists planning to resurrect the Pillar of Shame in Taiwan.

On June 4, vigils will be held globally, with rights group Amnesty International coordinating candlelit ones in 20 cities “to demand justice and

show solidarity for Hong Kong”.

Tiananmen survivor Zhou Fengsuo, who lives in the US, said that in recent years he had seen more people joining such events in the west, including recently emigrated young Hong Kongers.

“I am grateful that Hong Kong for the last 30 or so years has carried the torch of commemorating Tiananmen,” Zhou said. “Now it’s our job to do it outside of Hong Kong.”

---

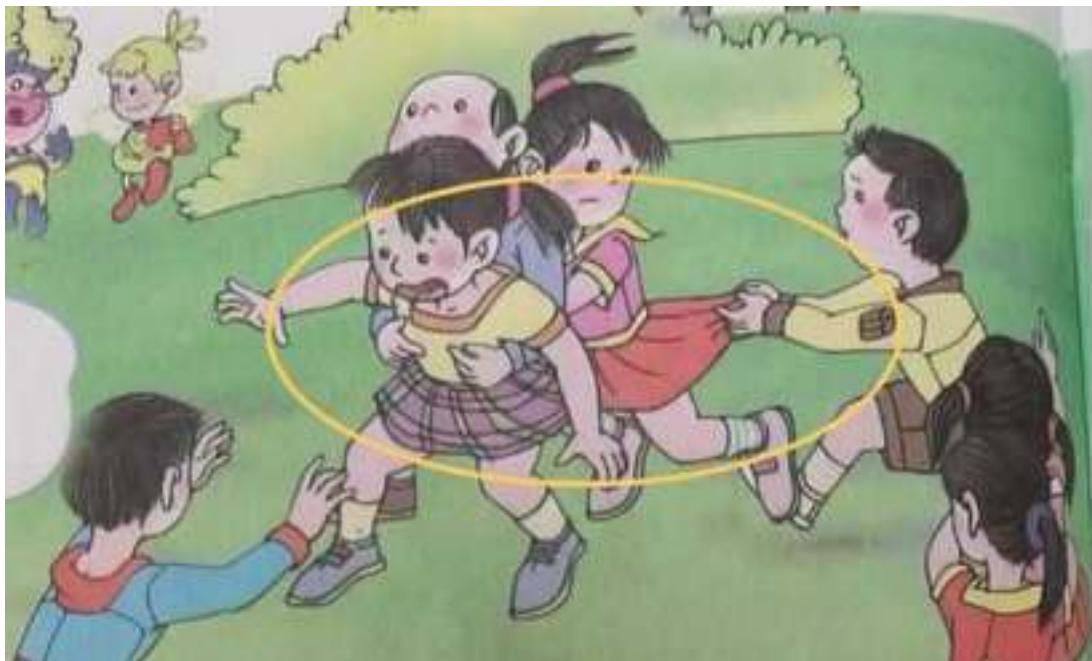
This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/hong-kong-churches-drop-tiananmen-tributes-after-33-years-amid-arrest-fears>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

**China**

# ‘Tragically ugly’ school textbook causes social media outcry in China

Education ministry orders publisher to rectify illustrations of children deemed inappropriate



Photos of the pictures went viral on social media, with one commenter describing them as ‘evil’. Photograph: supplied

*Helen Davidson in Taipei  
@heldavidson*

Mon 30 May 2022 05.20 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 00.09 EDT

China’s education ministry has ordered a state-owned publisher to rectify a school textbook that went viral owing to what social media users described as “tragically ugly” and inappropriate depictions of children.

The mathematics books published by the People’s Education Press contain illustrations of people with distorted faces and bulging pants. Boys are seen grabbing girls’ skirts and one child appears to have a leg tattoo.

The books are reportedly used in elementary schools across the country, from Shandong province in the north-east to Yunnan in the south.

Photos of the pictures went viral on China's social media. Related hashtags had been viewed more than 4bn times by Monday and millions of comments were left beneath posts.



Some social media users came to the conclusion that the artwork was deliberately bad and provocative. Photograph: supplied

Some social media users came to the conclusion that the artwork was deliberately bad and provocative, noting a backwards Chinese flag in one instance and some clothing in the colour combination of the US flag, [according to a report](#) on the social media monitor website What's On Weibo.

One commenter described the illustrations as “evil” and warned of a “worrying” future where “the education department is infiltrated by the west, and the textbooks are manipulated by the people who have infiltrated the system”.

Others were aggrieved that more talented artists had not been hired for the work.

One commenter said the textbook was about a decade old and that complaints had been raised before, but less attention was paid to the issue.

“The core [problem] is still that no one takes responsibility,” they wrote. “This is the cultural annihilation of the country, the awakening is too late, and the cost of auditing crimes is too low.”

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

A teacher from a Qingpu district school in Shanghai posted several photos online and said the images failed to convey “the innocence, self-motivation and sunshine of Chinese children”.

In response to the outcry, the ministry of education said it had launched a review of all textbooks for primary and secondary schools, focusing on content and illustration, “to ensure that the textbooks adhere to the correct political direction and value orientation, promote the excellent Chinese culture, and conform to the aesthetic habits of the public”.

It said it had instructed the publisher to “immediately rectify” the textbook, and invited feedback from the public.

*Additional reporting by Xiaoqian Zhu*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/tragically-ugly-school-textbook-social-media-outcry-china>

## [Canada](#)

# **Canadian Arctic tuberculosis outbreak lays bare overcrowded living conditions**

Officials in Nunavut say there are 31 cases of active tuberculosis in the hamlet of Pangnirtung, a community of 1,500



A general view of Iqaluit, Nunavut. The government of Nunavut spends around C\$10m a year on treatment alone but says the costs of prevention and eradication are far higher. Photograph: Stéphane Mahé/Reuters

*[Leyland Cecco in Toronto](#)*

Mon 30 May 2022 05.30 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 00.10 EDT

A tuberculosis outbreak in the Canadian Arctic has prompted frustration in a remote Inuit community and highlighted the persistence of an illness that has largely been wiped out in the rest of the country.

The outbreak also lays bare the [dismal living conditions and overcrowding](#) in many Arctic communities, despite Canada's status as one of the world's wealthiest nations.

Officials in Nunavut say there are 31 cases of active tuberculosis in the hamlet of Pangnirtung, a community of 1,500 on Baffin Island. There are also an additional 108 cases of latent tuberculosis – a form of the illness that puts patients at risk of developing an active form of the respiratory illness in the future and can be resistant to vaccines.

[Tuberculosis](#), one the largest killers in North America in the 20th century, is caused by the contagious bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which predominantly attacks the lungs. It can cause a fever and in some cases, a chronic bloody cough. The outbreak in Nunavut is the worst since 2017, when a teen girl died of the illness.

Territorial officials had so far resisted sharing precise data with residents and news outlets. On Thursday they released data that showed the scope of the outbreak.

“The information should have been provided to us regularly to begin with,” the Pangnirtung mayor, Eric Lawlor, told the *Globe and Mail*. “This is more concerning than Covid, actually.”

The government of Nunavut spends about C\$10m a year on treatment alone but says the costs of prevention and eradication are far higher.

Because of chronic overcrowding in houses, poverty and a lack of access to medical care, the average annual rate of TB among Inuit is 290 times higher than in Canadian-born, non-Indigenous people, [according to a 2018 report from the Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

In 2020, there were 72.2 active cases of TB per 100,000 population among Inuit, according to the public health agency. The national case rate is 4.7 per 100,000.

The outbreak, while it has concerned health officials, has also served as a stark reminder of the region’s troubling historical relationships with the

illness.

Indigenous peoples, including the Inuit, were involuntary test subjects for experimental tuberous vaccines beginning in the 1930s. That treatment is the subject of a class action lawsuit.

Beginning in the 1940s, Inuit were separated from their family and brought to tuberculosis sanatoriums in southern Canada.

Many lived in the facilities for years, and their families often weren't told about their whereabouts or conditions, even when they died. The practice continued until the 1960s.

The treatment of Inuit was the subject of an apology by Justin Trudeau in 2019.

"For too long, the government's relationship with Inuit was one of double standards, and of unfair, unequal treatment," the prime minister said.

The year earlier, Trudeau pledged to eliminate tuberculosis in the region by 2030 – a promise that he looks unlikely to fulfill, given that rates of the illness have little changed since his pledge. While the coronavirus has delayed eradication plans, critics say insufficient political and government funding is also to blame.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/canada-tuberculosis-outbreak-nunavut>

## New Zealand

# Top British diplomat's husband pokes fun at New Zealand's 'crappiest fountain'

Tweet about Wellington water feature drew light-hearted responses from MPs and the public, with one saying: 'There's a fine line between iconic and crap'



The husband of Britain's high commissioner to New Zealand called Wellington's bucket fountain the 'crappiest' ever. Photograph: David Wall/Alamy

*Tess McClure in Auckland*

*@tessairini*

Sun 29 May 2022 20.51 EDT Last modified on Sun 29 May 2022 20.54 EDT

The husband of New Zealand's British high commissioner has announced his loathing of the Wellington bucket fountain, a well-known and polarising

water feature that graces the centre of the nation's capital.

Toby Fisher, husband of British commissioner Laura Clarke, tweeted: "After 4 years in Wellington, it's time to be straight with you all, this is the crappiest fountain ever."

Fisher's joking statement is only the most recent in a long history of controversy surrounding Wellington's bucket fountain. Actor [Elijah Wood famously urinated](#) in the fountain while in New Zealand filming the Lord of the Rings. The structure's primary-coloured pails are [semi-frequently stolen](#) as souvenirs, and have to be reconstructed at a cost of about \$2,000 a pop.

Installed in October 1969, the fountain dumps an erratic stream of water through its buckets, slopping a large portion over the surrounding pavement as it descends.

The [Dominion Post newspaper recorded](#) less-than-impressed letters to the editor from the time of its installation: "It is, I think, the sheer ugliness of the thing that fascinates," one letter-writer wrote. "The fact that it doesn't work efficiently merely adds to the onlooker's incredulity."

Clarke stepped in to jokingly denounce his remarks: "As British high commissioner to NZ I'd like to be clear that the opinions of my husband ... in no way represent my views, or the position of the British Government."

As British High Commissioner to NZ I'd like to be clear that the opinions of my husband [@tobyfisherlaw](#) in no way represent my views, or the position of the British Government.

(.... checks notes...)

The bucket fountain is a well-loved part of Wellington's heritage.  
<https://t.co/pXL96CX7UV>

— Laura Clarke (@LauraClarkeUK) [May 28, 2022](#)

Fisher's remarks have been met mostly with good-natured jabs, including from several members of parliament.

"Fight me," replied climate change minister James Shaw.

"You're brave now Toby!" commented National MP and former opposition leader Judith Collins.

"Further evidence Au/NZ must cut all ties to the Crown and become a republic," one tweeter replied.

Other Wellingtonians said Fisher had failed to grasp the fountain's subtle charms. "There's a fine line between iconic and crap," one commenter explained.

"I love it because it's so janky and ugly and when the water finally goes it's underwhelming and it's got pride of place in the city," said another. "It's terrible, that's why it rules so hard."

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/top-british-diplomats-husband-pokes-fun-at-new-zealands-crappiest-fountain>

# Headlines

- [Live Andrea Leadsom condemns Boris Johnson's 'unacceptable failings of leadership'](#)
- [Travel Firms should have been ready for post-Covid surge, UK minister says](#)
- [Environment Sunak's UK oil subsidy could have insulated 2m homes, says thinktank](#)
- [School meals All families on universal credit should get free school meals, says ex-children's tsar](#)
- [Civil service Graduate scheme paused in drive to cut 91,000 roles](#)

---

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

# Tory MP John Stevenson submits letter of no confidence in Boris Johnson – as it happened

This live blog is now closed. You can read the full story here: [Prime minister faces growing Tory calls for confidence vote](#)

Updated 5d ago

[Nicola Slawson \(now\)](#) and [Christy Cooney \(earlier\)](#)

Tue 31 May 2022 11.59 EDTFirst published on Tue 31 May 2022 04.37 EDT



Boris Johnson holds a news conference in response to the publication of the Sue Gray report. Photograph: Reuters

[Nicola Slawson \(now\)](#) and [Christy Cooney \(earlier\)](#)

Tue 31 May 2022 11.59 EDTFirst published on Tue 31 May 2022 04.37 EDT

## Key events

- [5d agoSummary](#)
- [5d agoThe Tory MPs calling on Boris Johnson to resign – and what they said](#)
- [5d agoMusic from ‘Abba party’ could be heard all over No 10, says Cummings](#)
- [5d agoFull story: Boris Johnson writes to civil servants over plans to cut 91,000 jobs](#)
- [5d agoMinister says PM 'didn't stand as the patron saint of virtue' and 'people knew who they were electing'](#)
- [5d agoBoris Johnson apologises to civil servants for 'concern and uncertainty' caused by staff cuts](#)
- [5d agoTory MP John Stevenson submits letter of no confidence in Boris Johnson](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 5d ago

[08.20](#)

## Tory MP John Stevenson submits letter of no confidence in Boris Johnson

**John Stevenson** says he has submitted a letter of no confidence in the prime minister, and that he is “deeply disappointed” in revelations about the parties and events during lockdown.

A statement by the Tory MP has been shared on Twitter by ITV's **Tom Sheldrick**.

In the statement, Stevenson says he called for **Boris Johnson** to put himself forward for a vote of confidence as a way to "draw the line under all the recent issues".

He said:

The continuing criticism, revelations and questions are debilitating for the government at a time when there are so many other important and critical issues to be addressed.

The MP for Carlisle concluded:

Sadly, the prime minister appears unwilling to bring matters to a head and submit himself to such a vote. Therefore, the only option is for the Conservative MPs to facilitate a vote of confidence. I have already taken the appropriate action.

BREAKING: Carlisle Conservative MP John Stevenson ([@John4Carlisle](#)) says he has submitted a letter of no confidence in Prime Minister [@BorisJohnson](#) [pic.twitter.com/AT5VMs0oYR](https://pic.twitter.com/AT5VMs0oYR)

— Tom Sheldrick (@TomSheldrickITV) [May 31, 2022](#)

•  
•

Updated at 08.44 EDT

[5d ago](#)[11.59](#)

## Summary



Nicola Slawson

Here's a roundup of the key developments of the day:

- Boris Johnson is facing mounting calls for a confidence vote in his leadership that could put his position under threat within days, as two more MPs suggested they had lost faith in the government. [Here's a full list](#) of the Conservatives who have sent a letter of no confidence, publicly urged the PM to quit or criticised his leadership.
- The former minister Andrea Leadsom has [criticised Boris Johnson's "unacceptable failings of leadership"](#) following the publication of the Sue Gray report. In a letter to her constituents, published on social media, Leadsom said she believed it was “extremely unlikely that senior leaders were unaware of what was going on”.
- The former foreign secretary William Hague has said the prime minister is “in real trouble” and that Tory MPs are “moving towards having a ballot” on his leadership. Allies of Boris Johnson had been hopeful he had escaped unscathed but Lord Hague said it was proving to be “one of those sort of slow-fuse explosions in politics”.
- Boris Johnson “didn't stand as the patron saint of virtue” and that “people knew who they were electing” the science minister, George

**Freeman said.** He urged caution among Tory MPs considering submitting letters of no confidence in the prime minister.

- **Dominic Cummings has accused Sue Gray of not properly investigating the alleged “Abba party” in Boris Johnson’s flat during lockdown,** saying the music was so loud that dozens of people working in the office downstairs could hear it.
- **ITV’s Paul Brand reports there are rumours that the prime minister has begun phoning MPs who have voiced doubts about his leadership** and hinting that they could be promoted if they offer him their support.
- **Boris Johnson has written to civil servants justifying plans to cut 91,000 jobs, saying the government must reduce its costs “just as many families are doing”.** Following the announcement that the civil service’s flagship graduate scheme was to be frozen for at least a year to help reduce head count by 20%, the prime minister tried to assure officials that support would be provided to “anyone affected”.
- **Shadow financial secretary to the Treasury James Murray said that the “government hasn’t prepared” for the rise in demand for travel.** The Labour MP told Sky News said Labour had been warning there would be problems after the travel sector cut staff during the pandemic and are now struggling to cope with the increased demand.
- **Meanwhile, the arts minister, Stephen Parkinson, said the “industry should have been recruiting people ready” for the increased demand for travel.** Asked if government could have done more to help the aviation sector during the pandemic, Lord Parkinson told Sky News that the government had helped but put the blame squarely on the travel sector.
- **The former children’s commissioner for England has called for free school meals to be extended to all families on universal credit, while acknowledging that poverty has not been tackled in this country “well enough”.** Speaking on BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme, Anne Longfield, who is chairing a year-long commission on young lives, said she had supported the extension of free school meals to all families receiving the benefit for “some time”

Thanks so much for joining me today. I’ll be back again tomorrow.

You can follow our Russia-Ukraine war liveblog here:

•  
•

[5d ago](#) [11.27](#)

## The Tory MPs calling on Boris Johnson to resign – and what they said



Jessica Elgot

**Explainer: a full list of the Conservatives who have sent a letter of no confidence, publicly urged the PM to quit or criticised his leadership.**

**Boris Johnson** was warned he would face a string of no-confidence letters after the **Sue Gray** report into Partygate concluded. In order for a vote of no confidence to be triggered, the chair of the 1922 Committee, **Graham Brady**, must receive letters from at least 54 Conservative MPs – 15% of the parliamentary party.



Boris Johnson during his statement on the Sue Gray report to the House of Commons on Wednesday. Photograph: Jessica Taylor/AFP/Getty Images

Here is the full list of Tory MPs who have urged the prime minister to stand down or criticised his leadership, though some say they have not written letters to Brady. Several other critical MPs say they will not reveal whether they have sent a letter – so the true number is likely to be higher.

•  
•

[5d ago](#)[10.48](#)

## Music from ‘Abba party’ could be heard all over No 10, says Cummings

Aubrey Allegretti

**Dominic Cummings** has accused **Sue Gray** of not properly investigating the alleged “Abba party” in **Boris Johnson’s** flat during lockdown, saying

the music was so loud that dozens of people working in the office downstairs could hear it.

In his first interview since the Partygate inquiry finished last week, the prime minister's former chief adviser turned arch-critic said the gathering that took place on the night he left No 10 was not a work meeting.

Cummings said Gray's justification not to properly look into the event was "brazen", suggesting she turned a blind eye and took a "fuck this" attitude.

In her report, Gray admitted she had just begun collecting evidence about the gathering on 13 November 2020 when the police got involved, and that she decided not to continue when Scotland Yard's investigation concluded because "it was not appropriate or proportionate".

In her review of the event, Gray said a meeting was held in the Downing Street flat with five special advisers, which Johnson joined at 8pm, and food and alcohol were provided. It became known as the "Abba party" because the song The Winner Takes It All was reportedly blasted out of the flat, allegedly because Johnson's wife, Carrie, was celebrating Cummings' departure.

**Carrie Johnson** was not mentioned in relation to the event in the Gray report. Over the weekend, her spokesperson did not deny [reports](#) that another party was held in the flat earlier in the year, on the prime minister's birthday.

Some Tory MPs told the Guardian they [feared a cover-up](#) when the flat party was not properly investigated.

Speaking to the journalist **Suzanne Moore**, Cummings said of the Gray team's decision not to fully investigate the November 2020 flat event that "they have sort of just said: 'Fuck this, we're not going to get involved.'"

Recalling his surprise that it had gone unreported for so long, Cummings said:

Because we were in extreme lockdown it got no coverage. The media was so happy that I'd gone, no one wanted to talk about it.

Dozens of people downstairs could hear it, so all the police had to do was interview any one of them to find out. You don't have a work meeting, at the top of No 10, where the music is so loud that you can hear it in the fucking press office.

Read more here:

•  
•

Updated at 10.56 EDT

[5d ago](#)[10.45](#)

## **Full story: Boris Johnson writes to civil servants over plans to cut 91,000 jobs**

**Boris Johnson** has written to civil servants justifying plans to cut 91,000 jobs, saying the government must reduce its costs “just as many families are doing”.

Following the announcement that the civil service’s flagship graduate scheme was to be frozen for at least a year to help reduce head count by 20%, the prime minister tried to assure officials that support would be provided to “anyone affected”.

Johnson argued that given Britain had left the European Union and the Covid pandemic was subsiding, “we no longer require the state to have the same colossal presence in people’s lives”.

“We must ensure the cost of government is no greater than absolutely necessary to deliver for the people we serve,” he wrote. “And as many families and businesses now look at how to reduce their costs in a period of higher global inflation, it is right that we do the same.”

Cabinet ministers were told on Monday they had a month to come up with plans for reducing headcounts in their department by up to 20% and that they should “show discipline in your recruitment”.

The Guardian [revealed](#) last week that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had already initiated an effective recruitment freeze and warned redundancies could not be ruled out.

Senior Whitehall sources said they hoped not to have to axe any jobs, but rather fulfil the reduction of 91,000 personnel by hiring fewer people to replace those leaving the civil service.

After it was revealed the graduate scheme, which recruits about 1,500 university-leavers a year, was being paused for at least a year, a Cabinet Office insider dismissed suggestions the scheme had been singled out.

“This is not an exceptional issue,” they said, suggesting ministers wanted to “take advantage of churn in the civil service for a year or two”.

The decision to the graduate scheme was made at a cabinet meeting earlier in May, and then confirmed at a Cabinet Office board meeting on 19 May, chaired by Stephen Barclay, the prime minister’s chief of staff.

Read more from my colleagues **Aubrey Allegretti** and **Tobi Thomas** here:

- 
- 

[5d ago](#)[10.25](#)

ITV’s Paul Brand reports there are rumours that the prime minister has begun phoning MPs who have voiced doubts about his leadership and hinting that they could be promoted if they offer him their support.

Word among Conservative MPs is that Boris Johnson has begun calling his critics, hinting at the prospect of promotion and asking in return that

they 'stay with me'. Clearly No 10 feel the threat of a confidence vote if those kind of approaches are being made.

— Paul Brand (@PaulBrandITV) [May 31, 2022](#)

- 
- 

[5d ago](#)[10.08](#)

Our correspondent Jessica Elgot makes it 46 Tory MPs who have either written a letter of no confidence or suggested the prime minister should stand down. And she notes those are only the ones who have so far gone public.

The threshold number of letters required to trigger a vote of no confidence is 54.

By my count, that makes it 46 MPs who have either confirmed they have written a letter, called for the PM to resign or suggested they would consider their position in same circumstances. Those are only the public ones.

— Jessica Elgot (@jessicaelgot) [May 31, 2022](#)

- 
- 

[5d ago](#)[09.33](#)

**Minister says PM 'didn't stand as the patron saint of virtue' and 'people knew who they were electing'**

Urging caution among Tory MPs considering submitting letters of no confidence in the prime minister, the science minister, George Freeman, has told the BBC's World At One that Boris Johnson "didn't stand as the patron saint of virtue" and that "people knew who they were electing".

"He got a massive majority," said Freeman. "Got us out of the Brexit deadlock, delivered the pandemic vaccine programme success, Ukraine, cost of living - £37bn [the projected size of the support package announced this week]."

"Before we change prime ministers we need to make sure we're doing the day job first. We mustn't be driven by short-term speculation."

- 
- 

Updated at 10.05 EDT

[5d ago](#)[09.02](#)

## **Boris Johnson apologises to civil servants for 'concern and uncertainty' caused by staff cuts**

**Boris Johnson** has written to civil servants explaining that the government needs "fewer" of them and apologising for the "concern and uncertainty" caused by his plan to reduce staff numbers.

In a message sent to civil servants and seen by the PA news agency, the prime minister outlined how the civil service has grown by 20% since 2016 during "exceptional circumstances", but that it needs to spend taxpayers' money "judiciously" and will look to reduce costs in the face of high inflation.

Johnson said:

We no longer require the state to have the same colossal presence in people's lives. And rolling back the state in turn means we will also

need fewer civil servants.

The general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services Union, **Mark Serwotka**, said:

The prime minister thanks civil servants in one sentence, tells them their jobs are at risk in the next. He is a disgrace and we call on him to stand down immediately for the good of the country.

Earlier this month, Johnson tasked ministers with cutting about 90,000 civil service jobs – about a fifth of its workforce – to get numbers down to 2016 levels.

Part of his message sent on Tuesday reads:

I profoundly believe that the public service you provide is a great and noble calling, but we must also remember that every penny of it is paid for by the taxpayer. That money is not the government's money, it's the people's money – hard-earned pounds that we share a moral duty to spend judiciously.

So we must ensure the cost of government is no greater than absolutely necessary to deliver for the people we serve. And as many families and businesses now look at how to reduce their costs in a period of higher global inflation, it is right that we do the same.

That is why I have asked my ministerial team and permanent secretaries to develop proposals to return the civil service to the size it was in 2016.

I know that this will cause concern and uncertainty and I am sorry for that. It is why I want us to complete this work swiftly and to provide every possible support to anyone affected by the changes that follow.

Even with these changes, we are retaining a very substantial civil service – as we had in 2016 – and we are taking forward an exciting programme of modernisation that will create better jobs.

The general secretary of the Prospect union, **Mike Clancy**, said there would be “deep anger” among members “that the prime minister seems to be giving them a slap on the back while saying one in five of their jobs will go”.

He continued:

And, beyond worrying about their jobs, staff also face a cost of living crisis which this prime minister has done nothing but deepen.

These massive cuts to public services will do immeasurable damage to the public services we all rely on. It is time for the government to step back and drop these reckless plans.

•  
•

Updated at 10.04 EDT

[5d ago](#)**08.55**

**Andrea Thorpe**, the chairman of Maidstone and the Weald Conservative Association, said: “I do think we need firm leadership, a firmer leadership now.”

She told BBC Radio 4’s World at One programme:

My position is very changeable. Last week I thought he [Boris Johnson] has got to stay. This week, having spoken to many constituents here, a lot of people are just waiting for the letters to pile into Sir Graham Brady’s inbox and I think the damage has been done.

She added:

But there’s more to it than Partygate now. It’s the cost of living; it’s the fact that we’ve still got the national insurance rise; we’ve still got VAT on fuel. All of these, these aren’t Conservative values and we’re not getting lower taxes; we’re just in this state of, the whole country seems to, the police aren’t working, the NHS isn’t working and I think that’s the general feeling I’m getting.

•  
•

Updated at 08.59 EDT

5d ago **08.20**

## Tory MP John Stevenson submits letter of no confidence in Boris Johnson

**John Stevenson** says he has submitted a letter of no confidence in the prime minister, and that he is “deeply disappointed” in revelations about the parties and events during lockdown.

A statement by the Tory MP has been shared on Twitter by ITV’s **Tom Sheldrick**.

In the statement, Stevenson says he called for **Boris Johnson** to put himself forward for a vote of confidence as a way to “draw the line under all the recent issues”.

He said:

The continuing criticism, revelations and questions are debilitating for the government at a time when there are so many other important and critical issues to be addressed.

The MP for Carlisle concluded:

Sadly, the prime minister appears unwilling to bring matters to a head and submit himself to such a vote. Therefore, the only option is for the Conservative MPs to facilitate a vote of confidence. I have already taken the appropriate action.

**BREAKING:** Carlisle Conservative MP John Stevenson ([@John4Carlisle](#)) says he has submitted a letter of no confidence in

Prime Minister [@BorisJohnson](#) [pic.twitter.com/AT5VMs0oYR](#)

— Tom Sheldrick (@TomSheldrickITV) [May 31, 2022](#)

- 
- 

Updated at 08.44 EDT

[5d ago](#)[07.56](#)



Tobi Thomas

The UK civil service has paused its flagship graduate scheme for at least a year in order to reduce its number of staff.

The scheme, known as the civil service fast stream, will not run in 2023 as it has in previous years. The decision was made at a Cabinet Office board meeting on 19 May, chaired by **Stephen Barclay**, the prime minister's chief of staff.

The move comes after the government said it wanted to cut 91,000 civil service roles to save money.

The civil service fast stream is made up of 15 individual schemes, and graduates with a minimum degree result of 2:2 are able to apply.

**Simon Case**, the cabinet secretary, sent a letter to civil servants in which he acknowledged that although the job cuts would be “challenging”, civil service staffing levels had risen significantly since 2016, partly due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2016 the state employed the fewest civil servants since the second world war, 384,000, but due to Brexit that number rose to 475,000 at the end of 2021.

The government also said it had not completely ruled out a recruitment freeze or compulsory redundancies to reduce staffing levels. However, the decision to pause the civil service fast stream has faced criticism.

**Alex Thomas**, a programme director at the Institute for Government thinktank, said:

Pausing the fast stream as a way for the civil service to bring in new talent from different backgrounds risks cutting off the supply of people who have the digital and project management skills to improve public services.

Focusing on headcount reductions rather than budget savings can create perverse incentives, skewing towards losing the cheaper and younger talent rather than making bigger efficiencies elsewhere.

Read more here:

•  
•

Updated at 08.13 EDT

[5d ago](#) **07.40**

My colleague **Jessica Elgot** has been sent another example of a Tory MP being openly critical of **Boris Johnson** but falling short of calling for his resignation.

In a letter to a constituent West Cornwall's MP **Derek Thomas** says he doubts the prime minister can restore trust and suggests he misled MPs but then doesn't say he should go.

Another intriguing email to constituents - from West Cornwall's MP Derek Thomas. Says he doubts the PM can restore trust, suggests he misled MPs but then doesn't say he should go. Starting to get a pattern of MPs being critical but just... leaving it hanging.  
[pic.twitter.com/ni1V5iP9yx](https://pic.twitter.com/ni1V5iP9yx)

— Jessica Elgot (@jessicaelgot) [May 31, 2022](#)

•  
•

[5d ago](#) 07.34

**George Grylls** of the Times has put together a thread of Tory MPs who have been critical of **Boris Johnson** but who have “gone under the radar – showing [the] breadth of dissent”.

In a letter to a constituent, **Andrew Selous** said:

I have no power over whether anyone else chooses to resign. I do advocate strongly for high standards in public life, standards which I try to adhere to myself.

A selection of five other critical Tory MPs who have gone under radar - showing breadth of dissent.

Andrew Selous: “I have no power over whether anyone else chooses to resign. I do advocate strongly for high standards in public life,

standards which I try to adhere to myself.”  
[pic.twitter.com/9hekNDILSW](https://pic.twitter.com/9hekNDILSW)

— George Grylls (@georgegrylls) [May 31, 2022](#)

**John Lamont**, meanwhile, has described reading about the parties in Downing Street during lockdown as “sickening” and says he [awaiting the findings of the House of Commons investigation](#) into potential breaches of the ministerial code.

John Lamont, PPS to Liz Truss, says “no one can be above the law” and said the parties in Number 10 were “sickening”.  
<https://t.co/7bq9Q4bqNS>

— George Grylls (@georgegrylls) [May 31, 2022](#)

**Kate Griffiths** said she “remains angry about the actions of the prime minister and his senior staff” and says there are still “unanswered questions”.

Kate Griffiths, 2019er, says she is considering her position because she remains “angry about the actions of the prime minister and his senior staff”.  
[pic.twitter.com/rfhUM68zxm](https://pic.twitter.com/rfhUM68zxm)

— George Grylls (@georgegrylls) [May 31, 2022](#)

In his column for his local paper [The Kidderminster Shuttle](#), **Mark Garnier** said of reading the Sue Grey report and seeing the leaked photographs of the event:

I can’t pretend to say that this looks anything other than awful. The stories become more lurid by the day, and some question the probity of the Met and how their view on what happened seems to differ from what appears in released photographs.

Mark Garnier said the Downing Street parties scandal looked “awful”.

“Some question the probity of the Met and how their view on what happened seems to differ from what appears in released photographs,” he says.<https://t.co/C8Df12uUJ9>

— George Grylls (@georgegrylls) [May 31, 2022](#)

Finally, **Andrew Murrison** said he was still considering whether or not to put a letter in.

Andrew Murrison said he was still considering whether to put a letter in as the revelations in Gray’s report were “shocking” but did “not materially alter what we already knew or suspected”.  
[pic.twitter.com/esXWNBhMao](https://pic.twitter.com/esXWNBhMao)

— George Grylls (@georgegrylls) [May 31, 2022](#)

- 
- 

Updated at 08.14 EDT

[5d ago](#)07.08



Tobi Thomas

The former children's commissioner for England has called for free school meals to be extended to all families on universal credit, while acknowledging that poverty has not been tackled in this country "well enough".

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, **Anne Longfield**, who is chairing a year-long commission on young lives, said she had supported the extension of free school meals to all families receiving the benefit for "some time", adding that this was something **Marcus Rashford** and **Henry Dimbleby** had also called for.

It came as teaching unions have written to the chancellor and education secretary asking for free school meals to be provided for all children from families receiving universal credit in England.

In a letter seen by the BBC, unions and organisations claiming to represent 1 million school staff asked for an urgent expansion of the scheme amid the cost of living crisis. It said vulnerable children not receiving the meals were facing a "real barrier to learning".

The letter said:

We see the devastating reality of children coming to school unable to afford to buy lunch, because their family circumstances mean they fall outside the restrictive free school meal eligibility criteria.

Longfield said:

[Free school meals for families on universal credit] is something that makes sense in any day. But at the moment we're in a huge financial turmoil, families are struggling with the huge cost of living increase, so [free school meals] adds certainty.

It means that all children get a nutritious meal, they learn and concentrate better, and it makes a positive difference to their physical health and their time in school.

Longfield said she supported making schools meals free for all primary-age children, as it “takes away the stigma from the young children which would take free school meals”.

She added: “But ultimately this is about tackling poverty, which is something we haven’t done in this country well enough.”

Read the full story here:

•  
•

Updated at 07.25 EDT

[5d ago](#)**07.00**

It is “pointless speculating about something unless or until it happens”, the arts minister, **Stephen Parkinson**, said when asked about the prospect of a confidence vote in the prime minister.

Asked about his experience as Theresa May’s adviser, Lord Parkinson told Sky News:

Well there's an awful lot of speculation about the numbers of letters that go in and past experience shows, not just then but before, the only person that knows how many letters that have been sent in is the chairman of the 1922 Committee [Sir Graham Brady].

It's pretty pointless to speculate about the numbers before then, it's a distraction from the work of government and in government we're getting on with making sure that we grow the economy to help with the cost of living.

He added: "It's pointless speculating about something unless or until it happens."

Asked if the rebellion against Johnson was growing, Parkinson said: "We'll cross those bridges if and when we come to them."

He said:

Only Sir Graham Brady knows how many letters are sent and it's just important that across government we're focusing on the things that matter, at DCMS that's the happy news of announcing the new city of culture winner which we'll be doing this evening.

He added:

Well, the prime minister's taken responsibility, he's apologised for what went on in No 10, he's made some changes to the operation there, so that people can see that a difference is being made and he is redoubling his efforts to focus on the things that matter to people. The cost of living, the war in Ukraine.

It's for colleagues in the House of Commons to decide what they want to do, in the House of Lords that doesn't affect us, we don't write letters to the chairman of the '22, but across government everybody is focusing on the things that matter to people, making sure they can get away on their holidays, making sure that there's help with the rising cost of living, making sure that the economy is growing, that we're getting people into good jobs, clearing the backlogs in the NHS because

of the Coronavirus pandemic and that's the sort of thing that people want us to be focusing on.

- 
- 

Updated at 07.26 EDT

[Newest](#)[Newest](#)

[Previous](#)

1

of

2

[Next](#)

[Oldest](#)[Oldest](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2022/may/31/government-travel-demand-covid-boris-johnson-conservatives-uk-politics-latest>

## [Travel & leisure](#)

# Travel firms should have been ready for post-Covid surge, UK minister says

Disruption caused by surge in post-pandemic holidays could have been avoided, arts minister says



Travellers queue to check in for their flights at Gatwick. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/EPA

*Jessica Elgot* Chief political correspondent  
[@jessicaelgot](https://twitter.com/jessicaelgot)

Tue 31 May 2022 04.28 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 10.52 EDT

The travel industry should have been better prepared for a surge in post-pandemic holidays, a government minister has said, after scenes of travel chaos in airports before the half-term break.

The arts minister, Stephen Parkinson, a former adviser to Theresa May, said the disruption was causing “a lot of distress” for people who had not been

able to get away for several years because of the pandemic.

Flight cancellations have led to many passengers facing long delays to their half-term breaks. EasyJet has [cancelled more than 200 flights](#) to and from Gatwick between 28 May and 6 June. The airline's Twitter feed has been referring dozens of [stranded Gatwick passengers](#) to its disruption help webpage.

Tui also [made several last-minute cancellations](#) including from Gatwick, Birmingham and Bristol, blaming "operational and supply chain issues".

Airports are under particular pressure because of the widespread use of travel vouchers from previously cancelled holidays, and this week will be the first school holidays in England and Wales since the lifting of all UK Covid travel restrictions.

The chief executive of the Airline Management Group, Peter Davies, said the industry was likely to be reluctant to spend money to tackle the bottlenecks faced by passengers.

"When you've got thousands of people arriving at Heathrow at seven o'clock in the morning, and that's been happening for years, where you've got a lot of people arriving on overnight flights, then you should gear yourself up to make sure you can handle those people," he said.

"But of course that costs money and it costs space, and people are reluctant often to do that."

Lord Parkinson said that airlines and airports had been urged by the government to hire more staff to cope with demand. "Colleagues in the Department for [Transport](#) are working with the industry, we have been for months urging them to make sure they've got enough staff so that thanks to the success of the vaccine rollout, as people are able to travel again, people can take the holidays that they've missed and that they've deserved," he told Sky News.

"Of course it's causing a lot of distress for people, particularly in half-term, people with family and children with them.

“It’s very distressing if you turn up at the airport and your flight isn’t ready, so we’ve been saying to the industry that they need to prepare for this: they need to have the staff that they need to make sure people can get away and enjoy holidays.”

Parkinson said it was clear better recruitment should have been done to cope with the increased demand. “There was a period when people just simply weren’t able to travel for obvious reasons, but there’s been many months where we’ve been back on track, particularly since the vaccination … the companies should have had the people in place.”

The shadow Treasury minister, James Murray, said it was not the case that the government had been giving the right support to the sector.

“We’ve been warning for months throughout the Covid pandemic that you can’t just let the airline industry and airports fall over, let them shed all of their staff, and then expect to get back on track when demand comes back after the pandemic,” he said.

“We were warning about this, trade unions were warning about this, employee representatives were saying throughout the Covid pandemic, ‘You need a sector-specific package to support the aviation sector’, and now we’re seeing what’s happened because the government hasn’t prepared for what would obviously come next,” Murray said.

Sign up to the daily Business Today email or follow Guardian Business on Twitter at [@BusinessDesk](#)

Tui issued a statement saying the increase in demand had caused the cancellations. It said: “We would like to apologise to some of our customers who have experienced flight delays in recent days.

“While flight delays and cancellations with us are rare, unfortunately, the sudden increase in people going on holidays combined with various operational and supply chain issues, has meant that a small number of our flights have been impacted.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/may/31/travel-industry-prepared-post-covid-uk-disruption-airports>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Energy efficiency

# Sunak's UK oil subsidy could have insulated 2m homes, says thinktank

The billions now going to fossil fuel exploitation could have funded efficiency measures that cut energy bills for good



E3G calculates that the chancellor handed oil and gas companies between £2.5bn and £5.7bn. With £3bn he could have insulated 2m homes and cut energy bills. Photograph: ivansmuk/Getty Images/iStockphoto

*Damian Carrington Environment editor*

*@dpcarrington*

Tue 31 May 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 02.01 EDT

Billions of pounds given away in a tax break for UK oil and gas exploitation could have permanently cut the energy bills of 2m homes by £342 a year if invested in insulation measures, according to a green thinktank.

Rishi Sunak announced the 91% tax break alongside a [windfall tax](#) on the huge profits of oil and gas companies last week. The E3G [thinktank calculated](#) that the tax break would hand between £2.5bn and £5.7bn back to the oil companies over three years, while an energy efficiency programme of £3bn over the same period would upgrade 2.1m homes making them less reliant on gas.

Soaring international gas prices are expected to more than double energy bills in a year by October, pushing a third of households into fuel poverty. Proponents of energy efficiency, including loft and wall insulation, say it is a no-regrets investment that cuts bills for good, slashes the carbon emissions driving the climate crisis and boosts jobs. Green groups said the chancellor's grants to households partly funded by the [windfall tax were only a “sticking plaster”](#).

Another report published on Tuesday by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI) found that a £4bn annual investment in energy efficiency could permanently halve heating bills for households by 2035. Its author said Sunak was handing out “raincoats” but “failing to fix the roof”.

The tax reduction meets official definitions of a fossil fuel subsidy, which the UK and other countries had pledged to phase out. It incentivises new oil and gas production, despite a recent Guardian investigation finding that the fossil fuel industry is already [planning projects](#) that would blow the world's chances of maintaining a liveable climate.

Euan Graham, at E3G, who conducted the tax break analysis, said: “[Sunak] is providing a subsidy to oil and gas producers which will do long-term harm to the energy transition. The government has not grasped what is needed in order to deliver a genuinely resilient and affordable energy system. Instead, it is willing to implement policies that support the interests of oil and gas companies instead of British households.”

Ministers argue that more UK oil and gas supply would increase future energy security, but the [fuels are owned by the companies](#) and mostly exported.

The tax break has also been criticised by the [Institute of Fiscal Studies](#) (IFS). “[It means] a massively loss-making investment could still be profitable after tax. It is hard to see why the government should provide such huge tax subsidies and thereby incentivise even economically unviable projects,” said Stuart Adam at the IFS.

The E3G analysis used [investment estimates from the industry](#) and data from an [insulation plan](#) backed by energy companies and groups. The £342 a year savings in upgraded homes is based on the bills expected in October. The new tax break meets the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund definitions of a subsidy, as well as a [new UK legal definition](#).

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am

The TBI report advocates the setting up of an independent “home energy service”, which would provide every home with a simple, practical plan to reduce their bills and decarbonise, along with interest-free loans. It said a 10-year plan would save bill payers a total of £100bn compared to current prices and that similar approaches in Germany and Scotland were already driving down bills.

“Short-term support, such as the measures announced last week are important, but by spending a fraction of that amount per year [Sunak] could cut heating bills in two over the coming decade and insulate the UK from future economic shocks,” said Daniel Newport at TBI. “He is currently handing out much-needed – but very expensive – raincoats. Now we need to fix the roof.”

Sam Hall, director of the Conservative Environment Network, which is supported by more than 100 Tory MPs said: “It was disappointing that the chancellor announced no new measures to help people upgrade the nearly 19m poorly insulated households across the UK.” A green homes grant scheme for England was scrapped in March 2021 and judged a [“slam dunk fail”](#) by parliament’s public accounts committee, having only upgraded about 47,500 homes out of the 600,000 originally planned.

The Department for Business, [Energy](#) and Industrial Strategy was contacted for comment.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/31/sunak-uk-oil-subsidy-could-have-insulated-2m-homes-says-thinktank>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## School meals

# All families on universal credit should get free school meals, says ex-children's tsar

Anne Longfield says poverty hasn't been tackled well enough, as teaching unions in England urge chancellor to expand free meals



Teaching unions wrote of the 'devastating reality of children coming to school unable to afford to buy lunch' in a letter to the chancellor and education secretary. Photograph: Ben Birchall/PA

*Tobi Thomas*  
[@tobithomas](#)

Tue 31 May 2022 03.46 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 12.18 EDT

The former children's commissioner for [England](#) has called for free school meals to be extended to all families on universal credit, while

acknowledging that poverty has not been tackled in this country “well enough”.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme, Anne Longfield, who is chairing a year-long commission on young lives, said she had supported the extension of free school meals to all families receiving the benefit for “some time”, adding that this was something Marcus Rashford and Henry Dimbleby had also called for.

It came as teaching unions have written to the chancellor and education secretary asking for free school meals to be provided for all children from families receiving universal credit in England.

In a letter seen by the BBC, unions and organisations claiming to represent 1 million school staff asked for an urgent expansion of the scheme amid the cost of living crisis. It said vulnerable children not receiving the meals were facing a “real barrier to learning”.

“We see the devastating reality of children coming to school unable to afford to buy lunch, because their family circumstances mean they fall outside the restrictive free school meal eligibility criteria,” the letter said.

Longfield said: “[Free school meals for families on universal credit] is something that makes sense in any day. But at the moment we’re in a huge financial turmoil, families are struggling with the huge cost of living increase, so [free school meals] adds certainty.

“It means that all children get a nutritious meal, they learn and concentrate better, and it makes a positive difference to their physical health and their time in school.”

Longfield said she supported making schools meals free for all primary-age children, as it “takes away the stigma from the young children which would take free school meals”.

She added: “But ultimately this is about tackling poverty, which is something we haven’t done in this country well enough”.

However, she said a first step would be to extend it to families from lower incomes.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

In England, all infant state school pupils up to year two can get free school meals during term time. For pupils in year three and above, those living in households on income-related benefits (such as universal credit) are eligible, as long as their annual household income does not exceed £7,400 after tax. That figure does not include welfare payments.

In Northern Ireland the cap is set at £14,000 a year. Scotland and Wales have committed to providing free school meals for all primary school pupils.

A government spokesperson, in response to the letter, said: “We recognise that millions of households across the UK are struggling to make their incomes stretch to cover the rising cost of living, which is why, in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, we are providing over £15bn in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/may/31/universal-credit-families-free-school-meals-poverty-ex-childrens-tsar-anne-longfield>

## Civil service

# Boris Johnson likens civil service job cuts to families reducing cost of living

PM justifies plans to scrap 91,000 jobs in letter to civil servants but promises support



The government has not ruled out a recruitment freeze or compulsory redundancies to reduce staffing levels. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/EPA

*[Aubrey Allegretti](#) and [Tobi Thomas](#)*

Tue 31 May 2022 11.06 EDTFirst published on Tue 31 May 2022 03.45 EDT

Boris Johnson has written to civil servants justifying plans to cut 91,000 jobs, saying the government must reduce its costs “just as many families are doing”.

Following the announcement that the civil service’s flagship graduate scheme was to be frozen for at least a year to help reduce head count by

20%, the prime minister tried to assure officials that support would be provided to “anyone affected”.

Johnson argued that given Britain had left the European Union and the Covid pandemic was subsiding, “we no longer require the state to have the same colossal presence in people’s lives”.

“We must ensure the cost of government is no greater than absolutely necessary to deliver for the people we serve,” he wrote. “And as many families and businesses now look at how to reduce their costs in a period of higher global inflation, it is right that we do the same.”

Cabinet ministers were told on Monday they had a month to come up with plans for reducing headcounts in their department by up to 20% and that they should “show discipline in your recruitment”.

The Guardian [revealed](#) last week that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had already initiated an effective recruitment freeze and warned redundancies could not be ruled out.

Senior Whitehall sources said they hoped not to have to axe any jobs, but rather fulfil the reduction of 91,000 personnel by hiring fewer people to replace those leaving the civil service.

After it was revealed the graduate scheme, which recruits about 1,500 university-leavers a year, was being paused for at least a year, a Cabinet Office insider dismissed suggestions the scheme had been singled out.

“This is not an exceptional issue,” they said, suggesting ministers wanted to “take advantage of churn in the civil service for a year or two”.

The decision to the graduate scheme was made at a cabinet meeting earlier in May, and then confirmed at a Cabinet Office board meeting on 19 May, chaired by Stephen Barclay, the prime minister’s chief of staff.

The programme is made up of 15 individual schemes, and graduates with a minimum degree result of 2:2 are able to apply.

Simon Case, the cabinet secretary, had sent a letter to civil servants in which he acknowledged that although the job cuts would be “challenging”, civil service staffing levels had risen significantly since 2016, partly due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2016 the state employed the fewest civil servants since the second world war, 384,000, but due to Brexit that number rose to 475,000 at the end of 2021.

The government also said it had not completely ruled out a recruitment freeze or compulsory redundancies in order to reduce staffing levels. However, the decision to pause the civil service fast stream has faced criticism.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Alex Thomas, a programme director at the Institute for Government thinktank, said: “Pausing the fast stream as a way for the civil service to bring in new talent from different backgrounds risks cutting off the supply of people who have the digital and project management skills to improve public services.

“Focusing on headcount reductions rather than budget savings can create perverse incentives, skewing towards losing the cheaper and younger talent rather than making bigger efficiencies elsewhere.”

The biggest civil service union warned of potential strike action after plans for job cuts were announced, with Mark Serwotka, the general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), saying the civil service had reached a “tipping point” and that national strike action was realistic.

He added that the civil service was already struggling with a backlog of passports, driving licences, court cases and pension payments due to “chronic understaffing and a recruitment crisis”.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.05.31 - Spotlight

- [Avril Lavigne ‘I moved out of my parents’ house and straight into a tour bus with no rules’](#)
- [‘Our ears were bleeding!’ Harry Hill on making his Tony Blair musical](#)
- [Covid With UK cases at their lowest for a year, what could the future look like?](#)
- [The long read The man who built his own cathedral](#)

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Avril Lavigne](#)

Interview

## **Avril Lavigne: ‘I moved out of my parents’ house and straight into a tour bus with no rules’**

[Sarah Manavis](#)



‘I didn’t want to be all bubblegum pop’ ... Avril Lavigne. Photograph: Joe Termini

When she was only 17, the Canadian singer’s debut album wowed the world. Now, as Let Go hits its 20th anniversary, its pop-punk anthems are finding new life thanks to TikTok

Tue 31 May 2022 03.00 EDT

For a generation of girls who spent years exclusively wearing butterfly clips, bright blue eyeshadow and pale pink everything, the release of the “pop-punk princess” Avril Lavigne’s debut album, Let Go, on 4 June 2002 was not merely a new sound, it was enlightenment.

In an era when bubblegum pop and “sexy baby” personas reigned, the 17-year-old Lavigne emerged as its antithesis. Rarely seen without a baggy pair of jeans, heavy kohl eyeliner and a loose tie round her neck, she co-wrote her own songs, with lyrics about skateboarding and getting fired from a chicken shop. Her first two singles, Complicated and Sk8er Boi, both spent half of the year on the Billboard Hot 100 and Let Go remains one of the 20 bestselling albums of the 21st century.

Sign up to our Inside Saturday newsletter for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the magazine’s biggest features, as well as a curated list of our weekly highlights.

Lavigne’s snarky attitude, grungy look and alternative-inspired sound was a potent combination that elevated Let Go above the rest of the pop pack. Almost overnight, girls all over the world began to swap choker necklaces for men’s neckwear, body glitter for leather bracelets, and denim for cargo pants. Her videos, featuring Lavigne trashing malls and skating with groups of boys, were watched obsessively. Let Go unleashed an army of seven to 15-year-olds brimming with ennui, desperate to remake themselves in Lavigne’s image.

“I was getting out of high school and I just wanted to rock out,” says Lavigne today, speaking from her home in Malibu ahead of the album’s 20th

anniversary. “I want loud guitars, I want live drums … I want to write about the crazy stuff, the insane emotions, the good and the bad.”

All of this, Lavigne says, was a genuine reflection of her teenage experience. Born in Ontario, Canada, in 1984, she spent most of her childhood in Napanee, a small town with a population of roughly 5,000, where she wrote poems, learned to play guitar and hung around with the grungy kids. She initially made a name in the country music world, an influence that can be heard in some of the twangy cadences and narrative storytelling on Let Go. She even performed on stage with Shania Twain after winning a radio contest in her early teens, before signing to Arista Records and moving to California at 16.

I remember being at home at 14 and thinking: I need to hurry up and get this music thing going!

Even at the time, Lavigne felt acutely aware of her innocence within the music industry. “I didn’t even know what Hollywood was or what record deals were,” she says. The process of finding co-writers and producers who matched her artistic style involved an endless string of uncomfortable meetings in corporate boardrooms; her age coupled with her lack of understanding of the mechanics of production led to a struggle to get her sound across. “They didn’t care what I had to say; they had their own style and didn’t bother to look at me and try to let me lead,” she says.

However, Lavigne’s instincts were strong: “I was very clear on what I wanted to do and what I didn’t want to do. I wanted to be angsty and to sound more like a band; I didn’t want to be all bubblegum pop. I wanted to turn my emotions into lyrics. I was honestly just very, very pure.”

She eventually settled on a music writing and production trio known as the Matrix, consisting of Lauren Christy, Graham Edwards and Scott Spock. The moment things began to click for the group was when they wrote their first track together, the song that became Lavigne’s breakout hit, Complicated. “I didn’t know what hits were, but my body and my intuition knew that this was a hit song,” she says. “I was like: ‘This is fucking cool, this sounds cool to me.’”

Over the next year, Lavigne and the Matrix would meet in studios and hotel rooms across southern California to build the 13-track album. The themes were heavily influenced by Lavigne's life, which at the time, she says, mostly involved wearing "fat skate shoes" and finding skateboarders hot. But while many of her songs were fun and frivolous, such as Sk8er Boi, or light and melodic, like Mobile and Anything But Ordinary, darker emotions cut through elsewhere on Losing Grip and the album's only ballad, I'm With You, which Lavigne says is still a highlight of her live performances.



Avril Lavigne performing in 2004. Photograph: MediaNews Group/Boston Herald/Getty

The combination of these different themes and attitudes made for an album that could be played repeatedly without becoming repetitive. "I wrote this album right when I got out of high school and now I get to hear these lyrics of me talking about my small town and my obsession with skater boys," she says. "Even things like in My World, I literally talk about the fact that I got fired by a 'fried chicken ass' I worked for at a fried chicken chain. It's hilarious. I look back at those lyrics, and I'm like: 'I can't believe I said that in a song.'"

The naivety and simplicity of her lyrics turned out to be a key to her success. Targeting a young audience, Let Go propelled Lavigne beyond two-hit

wonder status. But even with the success of the album, she couldn't quite grasp quite how big it had become. "I remember my manager being like: 'Do you realise you're No 1? And still No 1 this week and No 1 this week and then this week?'"

Lavigne's self-assurance obscured just how young she was when she rose to fame – and that she did so during a time when young celebrities were facing extreme sexualisation and horrifying invasions of privacy. However, Lavigne stood apart from other female pop stars at the time through her "tomboy" look and active criticism of her contemporaries. (In one interview, she mocked Britney Spears for "dressing like a showgirl".)

Looking back at her treatment in the early 00s, does she wish it had been different? Unusually, Lavigne feels gratitude for being a teenager when Let Go debuted. "I remember being at home and being 14 and thinking like: 'I need to hurry up and get this music thing going!'" She laughs: "I was like: 'I want to be doing this while I'm YOUNG!'

"I moved out of my parents' house and directly into a tour bus, not having any rules," she adds. "I was like: 'I can drink beer now and eat pizza every day' and I just got to hang out with my band and travel the world. It was crazy, but it was pretty special."

Let Go's 20th anniversary comes alongside a reappraisal of Y2K culture by a generation too young to remember it. Several of its tracks have gone viral on TikTok, and Lavigne has been cited as an influence by gen Z artists such as Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo (who brought Lavigne on stage at a recent gig for a duet of Complicated). Concurrently, there has also been a rise in emo nostalgia among older music fans. Lavigne is playing a festival in the autumn, Las Vegas's When We Were Young, that went viral earlier this year for featuring so many popular emo and pop-punk artists of the 00s, including My Chemical Romance, Jimmy Eat World and Paramore.

Lavigne finds the whole experience surreal. "That younger generations are discovering my stuff and that Billie, Olivia, and Willow [Smith] go out into the world and continue to shatter the mould like I did 20 years ago is super-inspiring." She says even the musicians she is friends with and collaborates with are longtime fans. "All these people around me are like: 'Oh my God,

I'm a huge fan, I listened to you growing up, you inspired me! It's really trippy."

Her future plans include working with two other superstars: Blink-182's Travis Barker, whose label, DTA Records, put out Lavigne's recent album, Love Sux, and Machine Gun Kelly, who features on the album and with whom Lavigne will be going on tour. Major items on her bucket list include a Christmas album, a makeup line and a cookbook. ("My food is, like, gourmet," she says, "I can do everything! Pasta, sauce, vegan, salads and soups – I can do every kind of soup.") She has also recently found a director to lead a film adaptation of Sk8er Boi. "I can't wait to learn this process of making a movie," she says. "I think I'll want to make more."

Twenty years on, Lavigne believes the appeal of Let Go has endured because once people connect to her music "they stay connected".

"I've always had this thing where I'm like: just be as sincere as possible," she says. "The songs are real and they're emotional. That works for me."

*Let Go will be rereleased this summer.*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/may/31/avril-lavigne-let-go-turns-20-interview>

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Stage](#)

## ‘Our ears were bleeding!’ – Harry Hill on making his Tony Blair rock opera



‘He starts off as a peace-loving hippie in a rock band’ ... Charlie Baker and Holly Sumpton in rehearsals as Tony and Cherie. Photograph: Photo by Mark Douet

Saddam gets a Groucho Marx makeover, Gordon Brown sings about macroeconomics – and Cherie is part Lily Savage, part Lili Marleen. The big-collared comic reveals all about Tony!



### [Brian Logan](#)

Tue 31 May 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 03.53 EDT

It's a Tuesday morning and Harry Hill and Steve Brown are discussing their unlikely musical about the New Labour years. There's a song "in absolutely awful taste" about [Blair's "people's princess" eulogy](#), they tell me. They've got John Prescott and Robin Cook, played by women. "And there's a song in it," says Brown, "that started life as a dull speech of Gordon Brown's." Hill elaborates: "It's him explaining macroeconomics. It's a lovely song, that."

They start singing it – and heads turn towards our table in Bafta's Piccadilly cafe in London. "It's one of those recitative songs," says Brown. "It's very stirring." "I still don't know what macroeconomics is," interjects Hill. A pause. Then Brown ventures, helpfully: "It's like macrobiotics, I think."

From messiah to pariah! Why didn't I think of that? Hold act two!

I arrived at today's interview having [Tony! \(The Tony Blair Rock Opera\)](#) pegged as the year's most surprising theatre package, and nothing I hear over an hour with its creators disabuses me of the notion. "I'm not a particular fan of musicals," says Hill, cheerfully, "or politics." Brown, who writes the songs, adds: "Harry's not the person you first expect to write a satire. And it *is* satire – or a cross between satire and surrealism." Pause for thought. "It's sur-tire, or sat-realism."

They're quite the double act, bantering back and forth, sending themselves up. Hill, of course, is standup and TV's big-collared lord of misrule – though smaller of collar today. Brown is his composer and collaborator, a veteran of Spitting Image, bandleader for Alan Partridge and, incidentally, father of [the standup Alfie Brown](#). Their Tony Blair show, they tell me, started life as a spoof jukebox musical when Hill decided (as you do) to crowbar party hits from the compilation CD Vintage Cheese into a performed biography of the former member for Sedgefield. This concept got as far as a staged reading, reports Hill, but "after the third song, our ears were bleeding". Turns out there's only so much Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep a theatre audience can take.



'My wife refers to us as the Flop Twins' ... Harry Hill and co-writer Steve Brown. Photograph: Mark Douet

But Hill stuck with the idea, drafting in Brown to develop it. “I just think Tony Blair’s story,” he says, “is really operatic. He starts off as a peace-loving hippie in a rock band, then becomes enormously successful and we all turn to him as a beacon of hope. Then it all goes terribly wrong. And now he’s in a situation where, if you bumped into him in the street, you wouldn’t necessarily want a selfie.” From messiah to pariah, I venture. “Why didn’t I think of that?” says Hill. “Hold act two!”

By a happy coincidence, the show, long in gestation, premieres within a month of the 25th anniversary of New Labour’s landslide election to power. But some people’s memories are yet to acquire a rosy tint. “We’ve had all these idiot George Galloway followers online,” says Brown, “telling us, ‘It’s terrible! It should never be staged. You shouldn’t memorialise someone like that.’ And I’m like: ‘Did you see the film [Downfall](#)? It’s about Hitler. That was all right, wasn’t it?’” Both writers insist the show is no apologia for Blair, and more about the forces that created him. An [Oh What a Lovely War](#) for the New Labour years, as they describe it, the show is “about power, and the absurdity of one man being in charge of a country”, says Brown. “That system is really not working out well.”

“We’re also saying: ‘You voted for him. We all voted for him,’” says Hill. “He had another election after the Chilcot inquiry, and he won by a sizeable majority. So who’s to blame? Is it him, or is it us?”

Over and above any of that, mind you, Tony! is designed to be a hoot. Blair is played by the comedian [Charlie Baker](#). Saddam Hussein, with moustache and cigar, is given a Groucho Marx makeover. Hill describes the show’s Cherie Blair as “a cross between Lily Savage and Lili Marleen – seductive, but coarse”. And “we have a woman playing Osama bin Laden,” says Brown, “which absolutely defuses that – I was going to say ‘bomb’, but that may be a bad choice of words.”



‘We bought all the props from a joke shop’ ... Baker and the cast in rehearsals. Photograph: Photo by Mark Douet

“When musicals are billed as funny,” says Hill, from bitter experience, “they’re not funny enough. I’ve been hoodwinked so many times. I’d like to see a show that’s as funny as watching a standup comedian for an hour and a half. That’s what we’re aiming for.”

This is not the duo’s first comedy/musical theatre crossover. Casting a shadow over *Tony!* is their 2014 show [I Can’t Sing](#), a musical based on The X Factor, and notorious as one of the West End’s most precipitous failures. The pair can laugh about it now, secure in the sense that *I Can’t Sing* wasn’t *bad* (its [reviews](#) were quite positive) so much as overexposed. “It would have been fine if we’d opened in a smaller theatre,” says Hill. “We were selling as many tickets as most West End shows, but in the [2,300-seat capacity] Palladium, it was always half-full.”

But *I Can’t Sing*’s fortunes have affected ambitions for the *Tony Blair* show. “I tried to get [investors] interested,” says Hill. “But people were thinking: look what happened to the last one. My wife, who is not one to mince her words, refers to us as the Flop Twins.”

But the Flop Twins are undaunted – excited, even – by the chance to make a show unburdened by the responsibilities that come with multi-million pound backing. It's a problem, says Hill, when a West End production gets so unwieldy you can't tweak the jokes, or "when they're saying, 'Can you write another four bars of music so we can move this scenery?'"

Tony!, premiering in a 200-seater in London's Finsbury Park, is gloriously low-budget and light on its feet by comparison. "For the work-in-progress, I basically bought all the props from [Smiffys](#)," says Hill, referring to the fancy dress and joke shop. "And 80% of them are making it through to the final production."

If that means the pair can't make money from the show – well, that's a small price to pay for the good times. "We're like cricketers used to be," says Brown. "Gentlemen players, just for the summer. They were all doctors and solicitors, and they didn't get paid. Writing musicals is like that."



Wrong size of venue ... I Can't Sing. Photograph: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

At least they've got other sources of income. Hill embarks this autumn on his first solo tour, Pedigree Fun, in a decade. (His last, [Sausage Time](#), was a cracker.) He cites lockdown as the catalyst. "I wasn't planning to go on tour.

But when they say, ‘You can’t go on tour’, you think, ‘I want to go on tour now.’” But the bar for live performance, he reports, has been raised by [a 2018 gig by Talking Heads’ David Byrne](#), produced and choreographed far beyond the expectations even of Byrne’s biggest fans, Hill included. “I saw it and was completely knocked out,” says the comedian. “I came away thinking: he could so easily have just turned up with a band and sung. And I thought: *that* is what you’ve got to do. Go for it! So that’s my plan.”

With his tour in the offing, and summer commitments to his hosting role on [Channel 4’s Junior Bake Off](#), Hill can afford to be sanguine about the prospects for Tony! The Islington venue notwithstanding, they don’t expect Blair himself to attend. “We have it on good authority,” says Hill (from “new friend of mine” Robert Peston, no less) “that he’s not a man who can laugh at himself.” As long as normal punters show up, says Hill, “I’d be happy for it to do just these five weeks, honestly. For it to go well and enjoy it.” Prospects for a West End transfer may be low, after all, given their Flop Twins reputation and a Theatreland ever less conducive to original material.

“They used to do shows like [the Private Eye-inspired] [Dear Bill](#) in the West End, didn’t they,” recalls Brown, wistfully.

Hill: “And what about George IV? That was brilliant.”

Brown looks quizzical: “Do you mean King Charles III?”

Hill: “Charles III, sorry. Did you see it?” [Mike Bartlett’s verse play about Prince Charles’ accession to the throne](#), he says, “provided a certain amount of inspiration for this. I thought it was brilliant.”

The pair are here, finally, neither to bury Blair nor to praise him, but to play with the remarkable Shakespearean arc of the ex-PM’s career, particularly in light of the world that’s followed in his wake. “There’s a lovely song at the end,” says Hill, “where Blair says, ‘The truth is, the whole world is run by arseholes, always has been. I just happened to be the one at the time.’ Then he lists the leaders we’ve got now: Putin, Bolsonaro, and so on. And he says, ‘If I could help you rid the world of them, and say I’m sorry – would you have me back?’”

Call it sur-tire, call it sat-realism – either way, that's a thrilling moment in the theatre for [Harry Hill](#). “You sit there thinking: actually, maybe ...” He trembles. “It's really weird. It sends a real shiver up your spine.”

- [Tony! \(The Tony Blair Rock Opera\) is at the Park Theatre, London, from 2 June. Harry Hill is on tour later this year](#)
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/may/31/ears-bleeding-harry-hill-tony-blair-rock-opera-saddam-cherie>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Coronavirus

# As UK Covid cases fall to lowest level for a year, what could the future look like?

With confirmed cases dropping as testing falls away, will the disease continue to remain in the background?



The UK has eased back towards normality, but testing habits have changed and cases could rise as the weather changes. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

*[Ian Sample](#) Science editor*

*[@iansample](#)*

Tue 31 May 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 12.09 EDT

After enduring record-breaking levels of Covid in the past six months, Britain has seen cases fall to their lowest for a year. But as the country eases back into a life more normal, will the disease remain in the background – or is another resurgence on its way?

Science editor Ian Sample explains how the virus is changing – and why one expert thinks infection rates “are not going to get down to very low numbers again in our lifetimes”.

## Why have cases fallen so low?

Britain has weathered two major waves of coronavirus in the past six months, driven by versions of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. At the winter peak, official figures recorded hundreds of thousands of confirmed cases a day, although the true number of infections was substantially higher. The surge in infections bolstered immunity to Covid, particularly among the vaccinated, which in turn has helped to push cases down.

But there are other forces at work behind the dwindling numbers.

As with much older human coronaviruses that cause the common cold, cases of Covid rise and fall with the seasons, with more transmission in the winter and less in the summer months. We are now into a period where cases should naturally subside. Another important factor at play is the dramatic shift in testing habits.

Since April, most people have had to pay for Covid tests, meaning far fewer infections are being confirmed and logged as cases. Whereas lateral flow and PCR tests in the community once detected perhaps half of all Covid infections, they are now picking up less than one in 10, according to Paul Hunter, professor of medicine at the University of East Anglia. “The daily dashboard isn’t picking up anywhere near as many infections as it was,” he said.

According to the government’s Covid dashboard, daily cases in England have fallen by 98% since the start of the year. They now sit below 5,000 cases a day for the first time since last June.

In contrast, the Office for National Statistics, which estimates infection levels from swabs taken in random homes around the country, has recorded only a 73% fall in prevalence in England, from more than 3 million people

infected in the week ending 31 December to nearly 875,000 in the week ending 21 May.

After the successive waves of infection and the UK's mass vaccination programme, the proportion of people with antibodies against Covid is extremely high. In England, about 99% of over-25s have Covid antibodies, but levels are high even among pre-teens, with 89% or more of those aged 8 years and over carrying antibodies against the virus.

## **Will cases drop further over the summer?**

They may fall a little more and remain low through the summer as people spend more time outdoors, but another rise before the autumn is not out of the question.

With the full relaxation of Covid rules, the steady filling of offices, and people gradually reverting to pre-pandemic behaviour, there is plenty of scope for the virus to spread. And as immunity wanes from vaccinations and past infections, protection against infection will be the first line of defence to fail.

Because protection against severe illness wanes more slowly, any rise in cases should not translate into high rates of hospitalisations and deaths unless another variant intervenes.

## **... but Covid maybe spreading differently**

Over the past few weeks, scientists have noticed a shift in the Scottish data, with a higher proportion of lateral flow tests coming up positive in more affluent than deprived areas.

“It’s not clear if this is a long-term effect yet,” said Prof Rowland Kao, who studies infectious disease dynamics at the University of Edinburgh, “but if it holds it’s very unusual.”

The way Covid is circulating appears to have changed.

In summer 2020, daily cases fell to the low hundreds, but they may not get as low this summer, Hunter said. “It won’t continue falling for ever. Covid is undoubtedly becoming endemic. We are not going to get down to very low numbers again in our lifetimes.”

Despite huge uncertainties about the trajectory of the pandemic, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has proposed an autumn booster programme for people aged 65 and over, the clinically vulnerable, frontline health and social care workers and the staff and residents of care homes.

## **... And it is still evolving**

Britain’s spring surge of Covid was driven by an Omicron variant called BA.2. Its dominance in the UK is now being challenged by two recent descendants, namely BA.4 and BA.5, which are driving a new wave of Covid in South Africa.

The UK [Health](#) Security Agency declared BA.4 and BA.5 “variants of concern” last week, as new data revealed they had a growth advantage over BA.2.

Another descendant causing concern is BA.2.12.1, which spreads faster still, and last week became the dominant variant in the US. So far, there is no evidence that any of them cause more severe disease, but as the original Omicron demonstrated in December, the danger comes from reaching more people. “Any increased spread without a decrease in severity could be a bad thing,” Kao said, adding that with plenty of virus in circulation around the world, we should expect more variants to come.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/as-uk-covid-cases-fall-to-lowest-level-for-a-year-what-could-the-future-look-like>

# The man who built his own cathedral

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/the-man-who-built-his-own-cathedral-justo-gallego-mejorada-del-campo-spain>

## 2022.05.31 - Opinion

- What does it mean to be Russian? For many of us, it's no longer a simple question
- I've finally put something on eBay that people want – now I wish I hadn't
- I agreed to my sperm donor's anonymity - now I see my daughter has a right to know who she is
- Linking nitrous oxide to climate risk is yet another example of the disdain shown to women's pain

## OpinionRussia

# What does it mean to be Russian? For many of us, it's no longer a simple question

[Ivan Philippov](#)

Like others ashamed by the invasion of Ukraine, I have left Russia, my home. We feel like leaves, scattered by a hurricane



A monument to friendship between Russia and Ukraine is dismantled in Kyiv on 26 April 2022. Photograph: Laurence Figa-Talamanca/EPA

Tue 31 May 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 11.20 EDT

“Ukrainians don’t have to pay!” I am trying to buy three shawarmas in a market in Tbilisi, Georgia, but the street vendor emphatically refuses to take my money. I try to explain, even though I was warned not to say this: “I am sorry, I am not Ukrainian, I am Russian.” The vendor looks at the Ukrainian flag pin on my lapel; he doesn’t believe me.

Before 24 February, I never thought about what it means to be Russian. Now it's all I think about.

I was born in Moscow and, until recently, lived there all my life. But “I am Russian” would literally be the last thing I would answer to the question, “Who are you?” I am a father, I am a creative executive at a film company, a writer, a journalist, a podcaster, a friend … a Russian? Well, yes, but it’s just the name on a passport that I have, nothing else.

I grew up in the 1990s and 2000s, when people of my generation – or at least the people I knew – thought of themselves as citizens of the world. After my first year at university I hitchhiked across [Europe](#). The only time I thought about my nationality was when I was had to apply for visas. I know, however, that this was ultimately down to privilege. Unlike my friends from Dagestan, Buryatia, Yakutia or North Ossetia, I could afford not to think about my Russian identity. With a Slavic face and a Slavic name, I was not subject to the everyday chauvinism that saturates Russian society.

I loved my country, but I never waved a Russian flag at a demonstration or publicly expressed my patriotism – it was just not something that people like me did. We thought about patriotism in terms of politics – if you care for your country you try to make it better. So I tried. For over a decade I went to all the opposition rallies, I protested against injustice. Like-minded people and I tried our best to make our country a better place. But I never fell for the patriotic mantras about how great Russia is or how great it used to be and should be again.

Why should I be proud that the Soviet Union was the first country to launch a man into space? [Yuri Gagarin or Sergei Korolev](#) should be proud of that, it was their achievement, not mine. Why should I be proud that the Soviet Union won the [great patriotic war](#)? My grandfathers fought in it. The war broke them, but they won: they should be proud of that. I know they were. These achievements were certainly never part of my identity in the same way that they are for the “Putin majority”, my compatriots who build their sense of self on past victories to which they are associated only by an accident of birth.

But now these questions do feel important to me. “I am Russian,” I repeat to the street vendor. “But you are with them?” he asks, nodding in the direction of my companions. Maria Belkina and Kirill Zhivoi are the people who run [Tbilisi Volunteers](#) – a movement that has already helped thousands of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia. Yes, I am with them. We had just finished buying a car full of supplies – food and hygiene products to be distributed among refugees in one of the Tbilisi Volunteers help centres. “I am with them – but I am Russian.”

The day of the invasion – 24 February – is a day that will be forever seared into my memory. The enormity and the irrationality of the war was like a physical blow. In my carefully constructed social bubble, there wasn’t a single person who supported the war. We felt like leaves, scattered by a hurricane. We still feel like this.

Some of us left Russia and some stayed. I left with the film director Kantemir Balagov. It was past midnight when we were sitting in the deserted food court of Istanbul airport, waiting for our flight to Yerevan, Armenia. Nursing a glass of water, Kantemir asked me: do you think we should stop speaking in Russian? Do we have to be ashamed of our language? That is probably the only question to which I have an unequivocal answer: “No!”

Let me try to explain. Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskiy both speak Russian, but their languages could not be more different. Zelenskiy’s Russian is passionate, emotional and vibrant – alive. The language of Russian propaganda is dead: a senseless pile-up of obscure bureaucratese. The great Russian director Andrey Zvyagintsev made a powerful film, [Loveless](#), about an absence of love in everyday Russian life. The Russian that Putin and his cronies speak reflects this – it is deliberately un-alive. So no, we will never be ashamed of Russian: we speak a different language.

It’s not quite the same with our passports. In the line to the border control in Istanbul, I overheard a conversation between a Ukrainian mother and daughter. They were standing right behind me – they were trying to fly back home to Kyiv. They left for a holiday in Turkey before the war and now they were going back to a world in which their grandmother was hiding in a bomb shelter and their father and brother had joined the territorial defence

forces. I listened to their conversation and felt an overpowering sense of shame. My Russian passport burned like hot coal in my pocket.

I don't think I will be able to read any of my favourite Russian books or watch Russian films or TV shows that I loved any time soon. They all have has the same ending now: 24 February and the robotic voice of President Putin announcing his "limited military operation". Bucha, Irpen, Hostomel, Mariupol ... We will have to write new books and make new films. And, step by step, we will figure out what it means to be Russian now.

Back in Tbilisi, I finally convince the vendor to take my money. "You don't support the war, do you?" he asks me suspiciously. No, of course I don't. How can anyone support this bloody madness? But while I am very much against the war and against Putin, I am Russian. For some reason, it is important for me to say that. As I am about to leave, he gives me an extra kebab for free.

Ivan Philippov is a writer and former journalist. He is currently a creative executive at AR Content

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/31/im-russian-what-that-means-language-passport-invasion-of-ukraine>

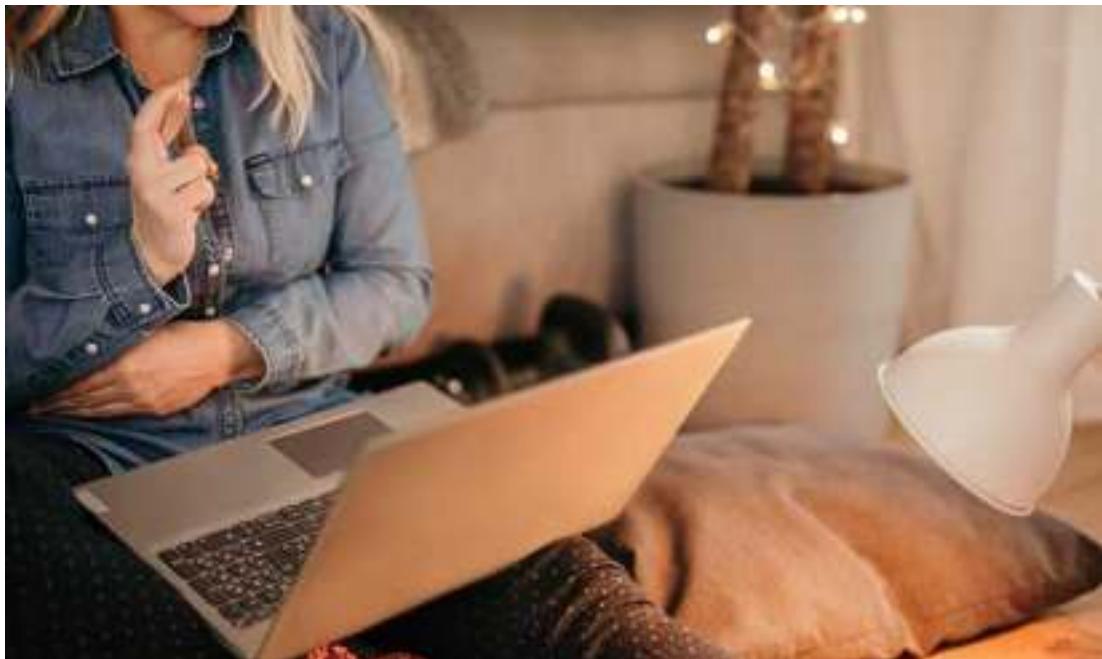
[Opinion](#)[Life and style](#)

## I've finally put something on eBay that people want – now I wish I hadn't

[Zoe Williams](#)



I was so excited when eBay started, until I realised no one wanted my stuff – so why do I feel so emotional about this sudden flood of unexpected interest?



I had no idea this item would be in any kind of demand. Photograph: SimonSkafar/Getty Images (Posed by a model)

Tue 31 May 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 10.19 EDT

It was so exciting when eBay first started, a final reckoning with the fact that we all, between us, had enough stuff. We just had to keep it moving around so that it felt new to someone, and life's defining itch-scratch-itch cycle – earn-spend-earn – would be broken. All that would be left to destroy was private property, and wham, we would reach Arcadia (the state of simple pleasure, not the [doomed fashion business](#)).

Then, it turned out that no one wanted my stupid stuff. I'd end up with a closing bid of £1.28, having gifted myself administrative posting tasks that would reach into the following month. My reputation was soon scorched as a seller, and I took to using the site only for buying vintage dog cufflinks, which never arrived. At least I wasn't banned from selling, unlike my Mr, who had his card marked early on as a potential money launderer. I have been round these traps a lot, and scoured Breaking Bad and Ozark many times to find out how money laundering works. I can find no reasonable explanation for the suspicion, except that the quality of his goods was too low for the possibility of honest exchange.

And so, years in, I've finally posted something for sale that people want. I had no idea this item would be in any kind of demand; I was a hair's breadth from putting it out on the street. I can't tell you what it is or you'll all want it, and I'll just make this problem a thousand times worse. Instantly, people were going round the back, messaging privately, playing hardball. One guy tried to persuade me that it was in such bad condition that I would be better off just giving it to him, and said he was happy to come and collect right this minute. "Dude," I replied, "your [eBay](#) name is *the item +69*. I know exactly how much you want it, also, how old you are." Relationships build up; one concerned bidder is worried that I've low-balled the postage, and haven't a hope in hell of getting it to Stoke-on-Trent for £12.90. I don't know if I can enter into any more correspondence, there are just too many emotions. Finally, I have figured out what old-school capitalism had going for it – frictionless trade.

- Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/31/ive-finally-put-something-on-ebay-that-people-want-now-i-wish-i-hadnt>

---

## OpinionSperm donation

# I agreed to my sperm donor's anonymity - now I see my daughter has a right to know who she is

[Dorothy Byrne](#)

When I got pregnant, the law guaranteed lifelong anonymity. Now, with DNA testing on the rise, that law needs to change



‘During a brief period, donor parents were guaranteed anonymity for ever.’  
Photograph: Nadezhda1906/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Tue 31 May 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 11.20 EDT

Out of 68 million people in the UK, there are just 29,725 individuals who have no legal right to know their parentage. My child is one of them. It’s clearly wrong, and I am to blame. Twenty-seven years ago I decided to have a baby on my own. I didn’t have a partner, but two different men offered to be the donor. I went to a leading fertility doctor, the late [Prof Ian Craft](#), who

had produced the first test-tube twins. He advised that research showed it was less emotionally complicated for a child to have an anonymous donor – research I have since been unable to locate.

So that's what I did. Aged nearly 45, I gave birth to a wonderful healthy daughter. At the time, anonymous donors were guaranteed anonymity for life. So by making that decision I gave up my child's right to ever know who her father was. Now I see the ethical flaw in the arrangement. How could *I* have given up *someone else's* right to know who they are?

Present law acknowledges this, but my daughter is a legal anomaly. The 29,725 people, of whom she is one, were born by egg or sperm donation between 1 August 1991 and 1 April 2005. During this brief period, donor parents were guaranteed anonymity for ever. Prior to 1991, no official central record was kept of donors; after 2005, children were given the right to know the identity of their donor once they were 18.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Agency (HFEA) [is considering](#) whether to recommend that, in future, children conceived through donation should have the right to know the identity of their biological parents from birth. I believe this discussion is a good opportunity for the agency to consider whether the guaranteed anonymity of past donors should also be reconsidered.

My daughter has not yet found out who her father is – and as things stand, she may never know. This affects her sense of identity and has some potential medical consequences. I always told her the truth about how I had conceived her and, while she missed having a father, her childhood was happy. But all that I could tell her was the information I was permitted legally: his height, build, colouring and stated profession.

She is, however, allowed to know the number of her half-siblings, in her case at least eight. The HFEA offers donor parents, and children once they are 18, the opportunity to state if they would like to be contacted. Very few do. To date, just 223 donors from between 1991 and 2005 have said they were open to being contacted by their children and only 27 people have received identifying information from the HFEA about their donors. Of

course, many people may not know they were born by donation or may have no interest in finding out about their biological parents. My child wants to know, but DNA testing has not produced any relatives.

Meanwhile, whenever we have had to provide a family medical history, half of it remains blank. With growing understanding of the importance of heredity in medical conditions, this has significant implications. In the state of Victoria in Australia, the [ending of donor anonymity](#) was made retrospective after a campaign by a woman born by donation who developed cancer early. She wanted to ensure that any half-siblings she had should be alerted to the potential risk to their health. Sadly she died after succeeding in her fight.

There is a precedent for the British state to renege on a promise of lifetime anonymity for biological parents. In the mid-1970s, adopted adults gained the right to obtain the original copy of their birth certificate.

The HFEA's chief executive, Peter Thompson, says that society needs to "start a conversation" about donor anonymity because of the widespread use of [cheap DNA tests](#). He says that maintaining confidentiality may be impossible: "The honest truth is that people will just find out." The organisation suggests donors should consider ending their anonymity so that they can do so with support from the HFEA. The same goes for children who don't know their origins. The Donor Conception Network, the organisation that represents families of donor-conceived children, believes it is better that this information is revealed "with all parties aware and informed, and with parental support and counselling/support services on hand where needed".

My daughter is clear that donor anonymity should be abolished retrospectively: "The benefits outweigh any downside. I don't think it's right to stop someone knowing who they are."

Dorothy Byrne is the former head of news and current affairs at Channel 4 and president of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge

- *Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/31/my-daughter-no-legal-right-to-know-father-anonymous-donor-law>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## OpinionHealth

# Linking nitrous oxide to climate risk is yet another example of the disdain shown to women's pain

[Isabelle Oderberg](#)

Why this report? Why now? Why did I get all those rolling eye emoji text messages?

- [Is nitrous oxide a climate risk? Yes, but doctors say effective pain relief in childbirth should be the priority](#)



'Nitrous oxide is one of the lowest-risk options available to birthing parents who want some mild pain relief or are fearful going into birth and need to calm anxiety.' Photograph: Science Photo Library/Ian Hooton/Getty Images

Tue 31 May 2022 02.02 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 16.12 EDT

When [a new report](#) suggested that people who use nitrous oxide when giving birth [should be warned about the impacts on climate change](#), I felt the mild tremor of a collective groan uttered in unison across the country. More than one person sent me headlines accompanied by a rolling eye emoji.

Clearly the climate crisis is a pressing matter of life or death and the future of all humanity. The staggering results of our federal election show that this is an issue about which Australians are deeply concerned. And many medical colleges are considering the effects of climate change on their patients, with the Australian Medical Association even [issuing a call to arms](#).

I spend my days examining issues of women's health and medical care. Given the minuscule effect on the environment that nitrous – also known as laughing gas – has, I feel that this report and its positioning by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists was seriously misguided.

The are about 300,000 live births a year in Australia. Figures showing nitrous usage were only provided from one hospital in the press release, so we have no way of knowing whether they're widely indicative, but they showed that 62% of patients used nitrous during labour. If 62% of births include use of nitrous, that is 186,000 parents. That sounds like a lot, but is it? Is it enough to make a meaningful difference to climate change?

“While it’s appropriate for the sector as a whole to examine its greenhouse gas emissions and seek ways to get them down, we have to remember that the core of the climate crisis is the burning of coal, oil and gas for energy,” the Climate Council’s senior researcher for climate solutions, Tim Baxter, told me.

“At planetary scale, the relative impact of nitrous oxide use in labour wards isn’t irrelevant, but it is very, very small. No individual mother should be made to feel guilty about her choice of pain relief. At an individual scale, parents could do more to protect their child’s health, their wallets and the climate by doing simple things like getting gas out of their homes.”

A glaring omission is the use of nitrous in dentistry, for which it is much more well-known. Prof Ian Meyers OAM is the president of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons. He told me nitrous is mostly used to alleviate fear and anxiety in children but it is used more broadly too.

So why this this report? Why now? Why this issue above all others? Why the omission of other uses? Why did I get all those rolling eye emoji text messages?

We know, and have known for some time, that pain among women is not taken as seriously, even when they are having the same procedures as men. One study showed that women who had heart bypass surgery were only half as likely as men to be prescribed painkillers after that procedure. They also wait longer to receive analgesia in emergency rooms.

Nitrous oxide is one of the lowest-risk options available to birthing parents who want some mild pain relief or are fearful going into birth and need to calm anxiety. It is also very low risk for the babies. Given that it's used in such small numbers, for short(ish) durations and its minimal effect on global warming, you just wonder why this issue was raised at all.

It was excruciating. It was like something from the middle ages

### *A hysteroscopy patient*

Any parent knows the judgment surrounding giving birth is can be overwhelming. Throughout the last decade parents have been pushed towards “normal” or “natural” births, [in some cases with dire consequences](#).

For those who don't want to have an epidural or morphine, the report's authors suggested transcutaneous electric nerve stimulators (Tens), hypnobirthing and massage as alternatives to nitrous. The idea that most parents can afford a Tens machine, hynobirthing classes or massage is laughable.

I don't see anyone asking men queuing up from colonoscopies or transurethral resections of the prostate to give a Tens machine or massage a go. They're knocked out quicker than you can say “bob's your uncle”.

While interviewing a patient in Western Australia, it came to my attention that there is a growing movement in Australia to follow a UK trend (which took root mainly as part of NHS cost-cutting measures) to conduct all hysteroscopies with no pain relief at all.

A hysteroscopy is an examination of the inside of the uterus, during which a doctor may remove polyps or fibroid tumours from the uterine wall. The patient I interviewed to was told by the public hospital treating her that “85% of patients get through it OK”. What about the other 15%? Well they don’t make it though to the end due to the pain, apparently.

The patient I spoke to waited seven months to have the procedure. She was told she could have anaesthesia but that she would have to go back on the waiting list for an undefined period to wait for an anaesthetist, while living with the associated chronic pain caused by her submucosal fibroid. She was convinced to go ahead without anaesthetic.

“It was excruciating,” she told me. “It was like something from the middle ages, like, but by the time they’re doing it you, just like let’s just get it over with. It lasted a really long time. My body was just convulsing with pain. It was it was absolutely horrific.”

In the UK, this trend led to the founding of a campaign group called Campaign Against Painful Hysteroscopy and a petition called “End barbaric NHS hysteroscopies with inadequate pain-relief” which had attracted [almost 57,000 signatures at the time of writing](#).

I see little to no research or discussion of this or the risks to non-male patients by a system that doesn’t take their pain properly, doesn’t believe them when they present at emergency rooms with life-threatening conditions like heart attacks or pressuring them into “natural” births because it’s more convenient and cheaper for the hospital, but simply not what the parent wants.

While the report in itself may not be “incorrect” in any way, it feels like the lowest hanging, cheap-as-chips fruit. Context is everything and, in a world where people who aren’t men are fighting for their right to be treated with

care, equality and compassion, the release of this report in this way was deeply ill-advised and made for painful reading.

- Isabelle Oderberg is a journalist and media professional and is writing her first book on the topic of miscarriage and early pregnancy loss
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/31/linking-nitrous-oxide-to-climate-risk-is-yet-another-example-of-the-disdain-shown-to-womens-pain>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.05.31 - Around the world

- [Taiwan Jets scramble as China makes major incursion into air defence zone](#)
- [Health Coffee drinkers 'may be at lower risk of early death'](#)
- [Mongolia State under pressure to align with Russia and China](#)
- [US Austin resolution aims to 'decriminalize' abortion if Roe v Wade is overturned](#)
- [The Pacific project Outcry as China stops Pacific journalists questioning Wang Yi](#)

## Taiwan

# Taiwan scrambles jets after China makes largest incursion into air defence zone since January

China has almost doubled its incursions this year, as it attempts to keep island under pressure



A Taiwanese fighter jet flying next to a Chinese bomber (top) off the coast of Taiwan in February 2020. China has almost doubled its incursions this year. Photograph: Taiwan's Defence Ministry/AFP/Getty Images

*Agence France-Presse*

Tue 31 May 2022 01.36 EDT

China has made the second largest incursion into Taiwan's air defence zone this year with Taipei reporting 30 jets entering the area, including more than 20 fighters.

Taiwan's defence ministry said late on Monday it had scrambled its own aircraft and deployed air defence missile systems to monitor the latest Chinese activity.

In recent years, Beijing has begun sending large sorties into Taiwan's defence zone to signal dissatisfaction, and to keep Taipei's ageing fighter fleet regularly stressed.

Self-ruled democratic Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by [China](#), which views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

The US last week accused Beijing of raising tensions over the island, with secretary of state Antony Blinken specifically mentioning aircraft incursions as an example of "increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity".

Blinken's remarks came after US president Joe Biden appeared to break decades of US policy when in response to a question on a visit to Japan [he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily](#) if it was attacked by China.

But the White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene has not changed.

Monday's incursion was the largest since 23 January, [when 39 planes entered the air defence identification zone](#), or ADIZ.

The ADIZ is not the same as Taiwan's territorial airspace but includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defence identification zone and even includes some of the mainland.

A flight map provided by the Taiwanese defence ministry showed the planes entered the south-western corner of the ADIZ before they looping back out again.

Last year, Taiwan recorded 969 incursions by Chinese warplanes into its ADIZ, according to an AFP database – more than double the roughly 380 carried out in 2020.

The highest number of aircraft China has sent in a single day was 56 on 4 October 2021. That month saw a record 196 incursions, mostly around China's annual national day celebrations.

So far in 2022 Taiwan has reported 465 incursions, a near 50% increase on the same period last year. The sheer number of sorties has put the air force under immense pressure, and it has suffered a string of fatal accidents in recent years.

On Tuesday local media reported that a pilot had died after crashing a trainer jet in southern Kaohsiung. It is not the first deadly crash this year – in January one of Taiwan's most advanced fighter jets, an F-16V, [plunged into the sea](#).

Last March, Taiwan grounded all military aircraft after a pilot was killed and another went missing when their fighters collided mid-air in the third fatal crash in less than six months.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/taiwan-scrambles-jets-after-china-makes-largest-incursion-into-air-defence-zone-since-january>

## [Coffee](#)

# Coffee drinkers may be at lower risk of early death, study suggests

Even people who take sugar seem at lower risk, say experts, but results may be due to coffee drinkers being more affluent



Coffee drinkers who consumed 2.5 to 4.5 cups a day, without sugar, had a 29% lower risk of death than non-coffee drinkers, in a seven-year study.  
Photograph: Anthony Devlin/PA

*[Nicola Davis](#) Science correspondent*

*[@NicolaKSDavis](#)*

Mon 30 May 2022 17.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 00.10 EDT

People who drink coffee – whether with or without sugar – appear to have a lower risk of an early death, although experts caution the finding may not be down to the brew itself.

About 98m cups of coffee are drunk every day in the UK, according to the [British Coffee Association](#), with the National Coffee Association revealing that in the US the figure is about 517m cups.

Previous studies have suggested the beverage may be beneficial to health, with coffee drinking associated with a lower risk of conditions ranging from [chronic liver disease](#) to certain cancers and even [dementia](#).

Now researchers in China have found people who consumed a moderate amount of coffee every day, whether sweetened with sugar or not, had a lower risk of death over a seven-year period than those who did not.

Similar results were found for instant, ground and decaffeinated coffee.

The study, published in the [Annals of Internal Medicine](#), is based on data from more than 171,000 participants of the UK BioBank – which has collected genetic, lifestyle and health information from more than 500,000 people since it began in 2006, including details of participants' coffee-drinking habits.

The team used data from death certificates to track the participants for a median period of seven years from 2009, during which 3,177 people died.

After taking into account factors including age, sex, ethnicity, educational level, smoking status, amount of physical activity, body mass index and diet, the team found that, compared with those who did not drink the brew, people who consumed unsweetened coffee had the lowest risk of death.

The greatest reduction, a 29% lower risk of death, was seen for those drinking between 2.5 and 4.5 cups a day.

Reductions in the risk of death were also seen for coffee sweetened with sugar, at least for those drinking between 1.5 and 3.5 cups a day. The trend was less clear for people who used artificial sweeteners.

However, the study questioned participants about coffee drinking and other habits only once, and relied on self-reporting. Most of those who used sugar

added only a spoonful to their drink – meaning it is unclear if the results would hold for speciality coffees with a high sugar content.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Naveed Sattar, a professor of metabolic medicine at the University of Glasgow who was not involved in the work, cautioned that the findings – while intriguing – were not clear-cut.

“The observational nature of this new study means these conclusions are far from definitive,” he said.

“This is because coffee drinkers are in general more affluent and have healthier lives than non-drinkers and I remain unconvinced whether these factors can be overcome in observational studies.” Prof Sattar added that genetic evidence did not link coffee to any important health benefits.

“I would suggest people stick to coffee or tea, preferably without sugar, which most people can adapt to, and try to do all the other things we know keep you healthy – move more, eat and sleep better.”

In an accompanying editorial, Dr Christina Wee, deputy editor of the journal, agreed the findings were not conclusive. But, she added, it did appear that drinking coffee, whether unsweetened or with modest amount of sugar, was probably not harmful for most people.

“So drink up – but it would be prudent to avoid too many caramel macchiatos while more evidence brews,” she wrote.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2022/may/30/coffee-drinkers-may-be-at-lower-risk-of-early-death-study-suggests>

## Mongolia

# Mongolia under pressure to align with Russia and China

Landlocked state is pursuing neutrality despite neighbours' efforts to create triangle of anti-western cooperation



Half of Mongolia's 3.5 million citizens live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar.  
Photograph: Byambasuren Byamba-Ochir/AFP/Getty Images

*[Patrick Wintour](#) Diplomatic editor*

Tue 31 May 2022 05.51 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 07.22 EDT

Mongolia, a squeezed outpost of democracy in north-east Asia, is under renewed pressure from its authoritarian neighbours, Russia and China, to shed its independence and form a triangle of anti-western cooperation in the wake of the war in Ukraine.

The country is doggedly pursuing a path of neutrality, coupled with a policy of economic diversification designed to keep its unique culture and still

relatively recent independence alive, according to Nomin Chinbat, its culture secretary.

A Soviet satellite state until 1990, and heavily dependent on [China](#) as a market and conduit for its copper and coal exports, Mongolia has to tread carefully. It is three times the size of France but has a population of only 3.5 million, half of whom live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar.

So far it has dodged a definitive position on [Ukraine](#) by abstaining in major UN votes. However, its governing Mongolian People's party is attending briefings given by United Russia, the biggest party in Russia – which has been interpreted in Russia as support for the war.

Doubtless all this is a disappointment to Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the Ukrainian president, who spent four of his childhood years in the Mongolian town of Erdenet as the son of a Soviet mining specialist.



Nomin Chinbat and US deputy secretary of state, Wendy Sherman, visit the Choijin Lama Temple Museum in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, July 2021. Photograph: Byamba-Ochir Byambasuren/EPA

Chinbat, a graduate of the University of East Anglia, is a model of diplomacy when she points out the term ambassador was invented in

Mongolia. “Abstaining was a decision that our country had to make because of our geopolitical location,” she said. “We have had very healthy and manageable relationships with our two neighbours, but we also have a third neighbour policy that allows us to develop a multi-pillar international relationships with other countries.

“We have survived where we are, and our sovereignty has been respected by our neighbours. But democracy is what will keep us developing further.”

Chinbat, who has been tasked with attracting foreign investment to her country – whether from film-makers, industrialists or tourists – said there had been a generational shift among Mongolians, over 60% of whom are under 35. The outlook of younger people, she said, is less defined by relations with the country’s neighbours and more by Mongolia’s own development.

Nevertheless, if there is a prolonged war Mongolia’s ultimate political orientation may once again be up for grabs, especially if China and [Russia](#) genuinely form the long-discussed anti-western alliance, making it harder for Mongolia to play its two powerful neighbours off one another.

One path for the country is to form the third part of a Russian-Chinese triangle, largely becoming a transport hub between the two superpowers, and supplier of raw materials, while the other option is to try to acknowledge the two countries’ economic importance, while exploiting Mongolia’s own mineral resources to diversify the economy and modernise. The visit in May of the UK Asia minister, Amanda Milling, is a sign that Britain and the US will try to coax it along the latter course.



Nomin Chinbat. Photograph: World Economic Forum

Some claim Mongolia in reality has already chosen the Sino-Russian option, since four days after the invasion it signed a memorandum of understanding to press ahead with the long-planned trans-Mongolian gas pipeline deal. This pipeline would increase Mongolia's dependence on Russia by taking gas from Siberia's Yamal fields and allowing Russia to transport gas originally destined for [Europe](#) to find a new market in China.

As a landlocked country, its vulnerability to China has been exposed by the prolonged Chinese border closures caused by Covid, slowing a planned rise in Mongolian energy exports to Chinese ports due to be enabled by a network of new freight lines that will cut journey times by a third.

Chinbat said the government had invested heavily in a wider economic policy of privatisation, tourism, climate and rural development policies, which will allow it to diversify its economy over the next 20 years. The plan needs to succeed: in April, young people took to the streets to protest against the impact of inflation on their lives.

Once in charge of one of her country's largest independent broadcasters, Chinbat said Mongolia would not backslide from democracy. "We have free media and democracy. It is one of the beauties of Mongolia: that we have

this ability to have so much different media, from black and white to middle ground.”

Chinbat acknowledged that Mongolia’s culture of ubiquitous citizen journalists operating in a society that is not particularly media literate could be frustrating, but said: “Media should be challenging – that is what I fought for in my period in the media industry. Democracy and freedom of speech keeps our society lively and upright.”

A bigger problem Chinbat identified was keeping younger people committed to the nomadic lifestyle, when parents sometimes want to send their children to be educated in the city.

Chinbat said that at the heart of the nomad mentality was a respect for nature, a skill to survive in extreme weathers and a neighbourliness that means doors are left open in case herdsmen get lost. Mongolian politicians will require all that tact and resourcefulness in the years ahead.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/mongolia-under-pressure-to-align-with-russia-and-china>

## [Texas](#)

# Austin resolution aims to ‘decriminalize’ abortion if Roe v Wade is overturned

Group of city council members seeks to protect patients from criminal prosecution if supreme court ends abortion rights



Protesters march near the supreme court to demand an end to gun violence and call for abortion rights protection on Saturday. Photograph: Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images

*[Jessica Glenza](#)*

*[@JessicaGlenza](#)*

Tue 31 May 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 10.57 EDT

A group of Austin, Texas, city council members is preparing a resolution to “decriminalize” abortion there in the event the [US supreme court](#) overturns

Roe v Wade, a landmark case decided nearly five decades ago that protects the federal right to terminate a pregnancy.

An unprecedented leaked supreme court [draft decision](#) showed a conservative majority of the nine justices are open to reversing Roe v Wade entirely. If that happened, [26 states](#) would be certain or likely to ban abortion, including in Texas. The state has a [“trigger” ban](#) that would almost immediately ban abortion.

A final supreme court decision is expected in June.

“The resolution does two things – one, [it] restricts city funds from being used to essentially investigate any kind of alleged abortion crimes,” said José “Chito” Vela, an [Austin](#) councilman. “The other thing it does is to make the investigation of any abortion-related crime the lowest priority for our police department.”

The resolution seeks to protect patients and medical professionals from criminal prosecution and would also advise Austin police not to assist other law enforcement, such as state police, in such investigations.

Texas has already proven to be a legal pioneer in restricting abortion. The state banned abortion after [six weeks gestation](#), before most women know they are pregnant, through a novel law that allows citizens to sue anyone, anywhere who “aids or abets” a woman in terminating a pregnancy.

“We need them focusing on historically classic criminal activity – not politically disfavored groups that factions in the government want to harass and punish,” said Vela. “That’s the real core of what we’re trying to do.”

Mainstream anti-abortion groups have long argued they oppose prosecution of women and cast women as victims of abortion providers. Similarly in [Texas](#), the trigger ban would make the performing of an abortion a first-degree felony punishable by up to 99 years in prison, an article likely to have a impact on medical providers.

However, a vocal minority of [abortion “abolitionists”](#), a word appropriated from anti-slavery campaigners, have also recently pushed lawmakers to

classify abortion as murder.

In May, Louisiana lawmakers considered a bill to charge women who have abortions with homicide. “We all know that it is actually very simple – abortion is murder,” one of the bill’s supporters, [state representative Danny McCormick](#)told colleagues, according to CBS News. The bill was pulled after it failed 65-26.

Although many anti-abortion groups say they oppose prosecution of women, anti-abortion restrictions and rhetoric have nevertheless resulted in more than 1,600 instances of women since 1973 being, “arrested, prosecuted, convicted, detained, or forced to undergo medical interventions that would not have occurred but for their status as pregnant persons,” National Advocates for Pregnant Women said in a [recent brief to the supreme court](#).

At least one recent, high-profile example from Texas, 26-year-old woman Lizelle Herrera was charged with murder via “[self-induced abortion](#)”, a criminal statute that does not appear to exist. Charges were dropped after public outcry. The prosecutor apologized.

Austin’s Guarding the Right to [Abortion](#) Care for Everyone or “Grace” Act is still in draft form, and text is not expected to be immediately released. Vela said the council would probably consider the act after the supreme court releases its final decision in the highly anticipated abortion case.

It is a [case out of Mississippi](#), formally called Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization, in which the southern state has argued that the court should use the case to overturn Roe.

“Whatever your thoughts on abortion, criminal prosecution of women who have abortions is absolutely unacceptable and abuse by the criminal justice system,” said Vela.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/31/texas-austin-resolution-decriminalize-abortion>

[The Pacific project](#)[Press freedom](#)

## Outcry as China stops Pacific journalists questioning Wang Yi

Beijing's foreign minister signing bilateral deals with leaders but reporters are blocked, sometimes physically, from asking questions



China's Wang Yi with Frank Bainimarama, the Fijian prime minister, in Suva. Photograph: Leon Lord/AFP/Getty Images

Supported by



# Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas

[About this content](#)

[Kate Lyons](#)

[@MsKateLyons](#)

Tue 31 May 2022 00.13 EDT Last modified on Tue 31 May 2022 01.01 EDT

Journalists covering the Chinese foreign minister's tour of the Pacific say they have been blocked from filming or accessing events, and that not a single question from a Pacific journalist has been allowed to be asked of Wang Yi.

The allegations raise serious press freedom concerns and alarm about the ability of Pacific journalists to do their jobs, particularly as the relationship between the region and [China](#) becomes closer.

Wang is midway through a marathon trip visiting eight countries in 10 days. He has held bilateral meetings in Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Fiji to date, with trips to Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste to come.

At each stop, Wang has signed bilateral deals but he is yet to take a single question from a Pacific journalist, who are instructed at the beginning of the press conferences that no questions will be permitted.

Lice Movono, a Fijian journalist who has written for the *Guardian*, said that during the Fiji leg of the tour she witnessed multiple attempts by Chinese officials to limit journalists' ability to cover the event.

"From the very beginning there was a lot of secrecy, no transparency, no access given," she said.

She said that media who had been granted permission to cover the visit – including her – had their media passes revoked without explanation, and that she and her camera operator were ordered by police to leave the lobby of the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, where they were set to film the beginning of the meeting between Wang and Fiji's prime minister, Frank Bainimarama, on Monday.

On Sunday, as media set up to film the arrival of Wang at the Pacific Islands Forum building for a meeting with its secretary general, Henry Puna, the ABC was blocked from filming, despite having been given permission to do so. The Pacific Islands Forum intervened to allow the filming to continue, but Movono said that Chinese officials stood in front of the camera, trying to block the shot.

Movono said that the joint press conference from Wang and Bainimarama on Monday afternoon was managed by Chinese officials.

"The media briefing itself was run by the visiting government, the press passes were issued by the Chinese government," she said. "They instructed us we would not be allowed to ask questions. When some of us yelled out questions anyway a Chinese government official yelled out to stop."

Movono said that when a journalist had called out questions, he was ordered to leave the room and a minder attempted to escort him out before fellow journalists stepped in to defend him.

"I was quite disturbed by what I saw," said Movono. "When you live in Fiji you kind of get used to the militarised nature of the place, but to see the Chinese officials do that was quite disturbing ... To be a journalist in Fiji is to be worried about imprisonment all the time. Journalism is criminalised.

You can be jailed or the company you work for can be fined a crippling amount that can shut down the operation ... But to see foreign nationals pushing you back in your own country, that was a different level.”

At Wang’s first stop in Solomon Islands, the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) boycotted coverage of the visit because many journalists were blocked from attending Wang’s press conference, with Covid-19 restrictions cited as the reason.

There were only two questions permitted, one from a Solomons journalist to the islands’ foreign minister, and one from Chinese media to Wang.

At Wang’s stops in Kiribati, Samoa and Fiji, no questions have been allowed at the press events held by the political leaders announcing bilateral deals.

Georgina Kekeia, the president of MASI, said the lack of access given to journalists during the visit raised serious concerns about press freedom, which she said had typically been quite strong in Solomon Islands.

“It’s quite worrying for us, we really have good freedom to do our work, but when it comes to these events, they seem to be blocking us,” she said. “Anything to do with China, it seems like everyone is going behind closed doors with it ... It’s very frustrating.”

Shailendra Singh, associate professor of journalism at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, said the lack of access raised many questions. “The lack of journalists access to the foreign minister is deeply troubling. It goes against the democratic principles of the countries in the region and role of the media in a free society.

“Are our governments keeping the media out on their own accord, or on the request of the Chinese? What next? Will media also be barred from asking our local politician and leaders questions? ... It’s a worrying trend that needs to stop.”

---

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Headlines thursday 2 june 2022

- [Politics Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, Patel tells MPs](#)
- [Live Priti Patel tells Tory MPs calling for Boris Johnson to resign to 'forget it'](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war latest: Zelenskiy says 243 children killed in war; Merkel condemns 'barbaric war of aggression'](#)
- [Queen's birthday honours PM's critic Jeremy Wright recognised alongside Lewis, Foster and Ferdinand](#)
- [Euan Blair From PM's son to £700m business and an MBE](#)

## Conservative leadership

# Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, Patel tells MPs

Home secretary urges everyone to 'rally behind' celebrations, as letters of no confidence believed to near trigger point



On a visit to the Mall, Priti Patel said: 'This is about Her Majesty the Queen – I think that's where all the focus should be.' Photograph: James Manning/PA

*[Matthew Weaver](#)*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 04.40 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 04.56 EDT

Priti Patel has suggested Tory plotters against the prime minister risk overshadowing the Queen's jubilee celebration in the latest intervention from Boris Johnson's cabinet supporters to try to head off a confidence vote in the prime minister.

Speaking to the Daily Mail, the home secretary urged those pushing for Johnson to resign to “forget it” and warned that writing letters against him was a “sideshow”.

She added: “This weekend is going to be all about the longstanding dedicated service that Her Majesty the Queen has given that nation. Everyone should rally behind that.”

The number of letters submitted by Tory MPs to Sir Graham Brady, chair of the backbench 1922 Committee, is believed to be close to the 54 needed to trigger a confidence vote.

On a visit to the Mall Patel tried to equate rallying behind the prime minister with jubilee celebrations. She said: “Events like this are about celebrating our country, our nation, our values and our monarchy. This is about Her Majesty the Queen – I think that’s where all the focus should be.”

She added: “This isn’t about a parade [of leadership candidates] or a contest of letters. We need to concentrate on doing our jobs. Our job is to deliver on the people’s priorities. They won’t thank the Conservative party for talking about itself at a time when people have anxieties, concerns, apprehensions.”

Johnson is under increasing pressure from Tory MPs to consider his position in the wake of Sue Gray’s report on lockdown parties in Downing Street.

Simon Fell, elected Conservative MP for Barrow and Furness in 2019, was the latest to be reported to have raised concerns and criticised the “corrosive culture and a failure of leadership” that allowed the incidents to happen.

The deputy prime minister, Dominic Raab, led the counterattack on Wednesday by insisting that questions around whether Johnson broke the rules for ministers “have been answered”, as he backed the prime minister’s assertion that he did not intend to breach Covid laws.

Raab said he did not believe the prime minister would face a confidence vote next week, as the prospect of a leadership challenge loomed.

Johnson, in an [interview with Mumsnet released on Wednesday](#), was initially told he was considered to be a “habitual liar”. The prime minister replied: “First of all, I don’t agree with the conclusion with the question asked or the premise of the question.”

Told a teacher would have lost their job if they had broken the law and asked why the same did not apply to him, Johnson replied: “If people look at the event in question it felt to me like a work event, I was there for a very short period of time in the Cabinet Office at my desk and, you know, I was very, very surprised and taken aback to get an FPN but of course I paid it.

“I think that on why am I still here, I’m still here because we’ve got huge pressures economically, we’ve got to get on, you know, we’ve got the biggest war in Europe for 80 years, and we’ve got a massive agenda to deliver which I was elected to deliver.

“I’ve thought about all these questions a lot, as you can imagine, and I just cannot see how actually it’d be responsible right now – given everything that is going on simply to abandon … the project which I embarked on.”

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the treasurer of the 1922 Committee, said Conservative MPs needed to consider which “crimes” Johnson had “actually committed” before launching a leadership coup.

So far, more than 25 MPs have publicly called on the prime minister to stand down – although not all of them have said whether they have written to Brady.

The culture secretary, Nadine Dorries, told BBC Radio 4’s World at One programme that efforts to topple the prime minister were being coordinated by “one or two individuals” for reasons of “personal ambition”.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[Skip to key events](#)

[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)[Politics](#)

## Angela Rayner calls for ethics commission and says Johnson unfit to uphold standards in public life – as it happened

Latest updates: Labour's deputy leader says her party would clean up politics and restore standards in public life

- [Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, says Patel](#)
- [Ethics watchdog says PM has failed to allay fears he is above the rules](#)

Updated 3d ago

[Nicola Slawson](#)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 12.03 EDTFirst published on Thu 2 Jun 2022 04.25 EDT



Boris Johnson poses for the Queen's jubilee outside Downing Street.  
Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

[Nicola Slawson](#)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 12.03 EDTFirst published on Thu 2 Jun 2022 04.25 EDT

## Key events

- [3d agoSummary](#)
- [3d agoHome Office threatens hunger strikers with faster deportation to Rwanda](#)
- [3d agoTory MP sparks Brexiter backlash with call to rejoin EU single market](#)
- [3d agoAngela Rayner calls for ethics commission and says Boris Johnson unfit to uphold standards in public life](#)
- [3d agoFull story: Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, Patel tells MPs](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 3d ago

[07.09](#)

**Angela Rayner calls for ethics commission and says Boris Johnson unfit to uphold standards in public life**

Aubrey Allegretti

**Angela Rayner** has repeated calls for the introduction of an ethics and integrity commission.

Last night [The Guardian reported](#) that Jonathan Evans, the chair of the committee on standards in public life, had criticised a planned overhaul to the way the ministerial code is policed, saying they undermined the role of Boris Johnson's ethics adviser, Christopher Geidt.

He accused Boris Johnson of failing to allay fears that he and his ministers consider themselves above the rules.

Responding to the story, the deputy leader of the Labour party said:

Boris Johnson has shown himself unfit to uphold high standards in public life and is lowering the bar each and every day he clings to office, trying to rig the rules as he faces investigation for deliberately misleading Parliament.

The chair of the committee on standards in public life joins the prime minister's own ethics adviser in criticising his cherry-picking of changes to the Ministerial Code and ethical scrutiny of government.

It's time to stop the rot. Labour will clean up politics and restore standards in public life.

She said a Labour government would "clean up politics and restore standards" in public life, starting by introducing an Ethics and Integrity Commission.

•  
•

Updated at 07.35 EDT

[3d ago](#)[12.29](#)

This blog is closing now, thanks for following today's developments

•  
•

[3d ago](#)[12.03](#)

## Summary

Here's a roundup of the key developments from the day:

- A Tory MP and arch critic of Boris Johnson has sparked a backlash from Brexiters after suggesting Britain rejoin the EU's single market to help ease the cost of living crisis. Tobias Ellwood's [comments were seized upon by allies of the prime minister](#) as evidence that deposing him would threaten the country's more distant relationship with Brussels.
- A powerful standards watchdog has accused Boris Johnson of failing to allay fears that he and his ministers consider themselves above the rules, as his support continued to ebb away in the wake of the Partygate scandal. Jonathan Evans, the chair of the committee on standards in public life, criticised a planned overhaul to the way the ministerial code is policed, saying they undermined the role of Boris Johnson's ethics adviser, Christopher Geidt.
- Angela Rayner has repeated calls for the introduction of an ethics and integrity commission and says Boris Johnson is unfit to uphold standards in public life. The deputy leader of the Labour party said: "Boris Johnson has shown himself unfit to uphold high standards in public life and is lowering the bar each and every day he clings to office, trying to rig the rules as he faces investigation for deliberately misleading Parliament."
- Boris Johnson, his wife Carrie, members of the cabinet as well as representatives of the opposition were spotted in the audience for this morning's Trooping the Colour, which kickstarted the Queen's jubilee celebrations. Earlier Johnson tweeted his congratulations to the Queen. He said: "The whole country, Commonwealth and world thank you for your unwavering duty and service. Vivat Regina Elizabetha! God Save The Queen!"
- Priti Patel has suggested Tory plotters against the prime minister risk overshadowing the Queen's jubilee celebration in the latest intervention from Boris Johnson's cabinet supporters to try to head

**off a confidence vote in the prime minister.** Speaking to the Daily Mail, the home secretary urged those pushing for Johnson to resign to “forget it” and warned that writing letters against him was a “sideshow”.

- **Republican campaigners have applauded a decision by Scottish Green MSPs to boycott a Scottish parliament debate celebrating the platinum jubilee by walking out en masse.** All seven Scottish Green MSPs, including two government ministers – Patrick Harvie and Lorna Slater – left the Holyrood chamber as Nicola Sturgeon, the first minister and Scottish National party leader, led celebrations of the Queen’s 70 years as monarch.
- **The UN refugee agency has said “a clear majority” of people arriving in the UK by small boats across the Channel should be considered to be refugees, in a challenge to the home secretary, Priti Patel.** Patel told MPs and peers last year that 70% of people making the crossing were “single men who are effectively economic migrants”, and the government has repeatedly referred to them as “migrants”.
- **Asylum seekers who went on hunger strike over plans to send them to Rwanda have been threatened with faster deportation by the Home Office if they do not eat.** At least 17 people from Syria, Egypt and Sudan, who are being held at the Brook House immigration removal centre near Gatwick airport, began the protest when they were told they would be sent to Rwanda on 14 June as part of a controversial new scheme.
- **It was “disingenuous” for the transport secretary to speak out about chaotic scenes at Britain’s airports as issues with staffing “have been on the radar for a long time,” Andy Prendergast, national secretary of the GMB union, said.** Grant Shapps said on Wednesday the aviation industry must “do their bit” to resolve problems which have led to the disruption.

Thanks so much for joining me today. I’ll be back again tomorrow.

You can follow our Russia-Ukraine war liveblog here:

•  
•

[3d ago](#) [12.02](#)

## Home Office threatens hunger strikers with faster deportation to Rwanda

Asylum seekers who went on hunger strike over plans to send them to Rwanda have been threatened with faster deportation by the [Home Office](#) if they do not eat.

At least 17 people from Syria, Egypt and Sudan, who are being held at the Brook House immigration removal centre near Gatwick airport, began the protest when they were told [they would be sent to Rwanda on 14 June](#) as part of a controversial new scheme.

In a letter seen by the Guardian, one was threatened with deportation even sooner if they did not stop their hunger strike.

In a warning that could be interpreted as a threat to the wider group, it said: “Your refusal of food and/or fluids will not necessarily lead to your removal directions being deferred. In the interests of your health and safety we may prioritise your removal from detention and the UK.”

The letter said the welfare of the person was “of real concern to the Home Office”.

In a statement, some of the hunger strikers said they had been detained in Libya but had not expected the same treatment in the UK.

One said:

I just want to be safe and free. I’m not a criminal. Why did the UK put me in prison. I have no connection with Rwanda. Why would the UK send me there?

Read the full story from my colleagues **Diane Taylor** and **Matthew Weaver** here:

- 
- 

[3d ago](#) [11.16](#)

**Boris Johnson**, his wife Carrie, members of the cabinet as well as representatives of the opposition were spotted in the audience for this morning's Trooping the Colour, which kickstarted the Queen's jubilee celebrations.

Have you seen Carrie's 'anti Boris hat'? [pic.twitter.com/549CIqZhv3](#)

— Martin Holland (@DutchieMartin) [June 2, 2022](#)

Earlier Johnson tweeted his congratulations to the Queen.

He said:

The whole country, Commonwealth and world thank you for your unwavering duty and service. Vivat Regina Elizabetha! God Save The Queen!

Here are a few more pictures from the day:



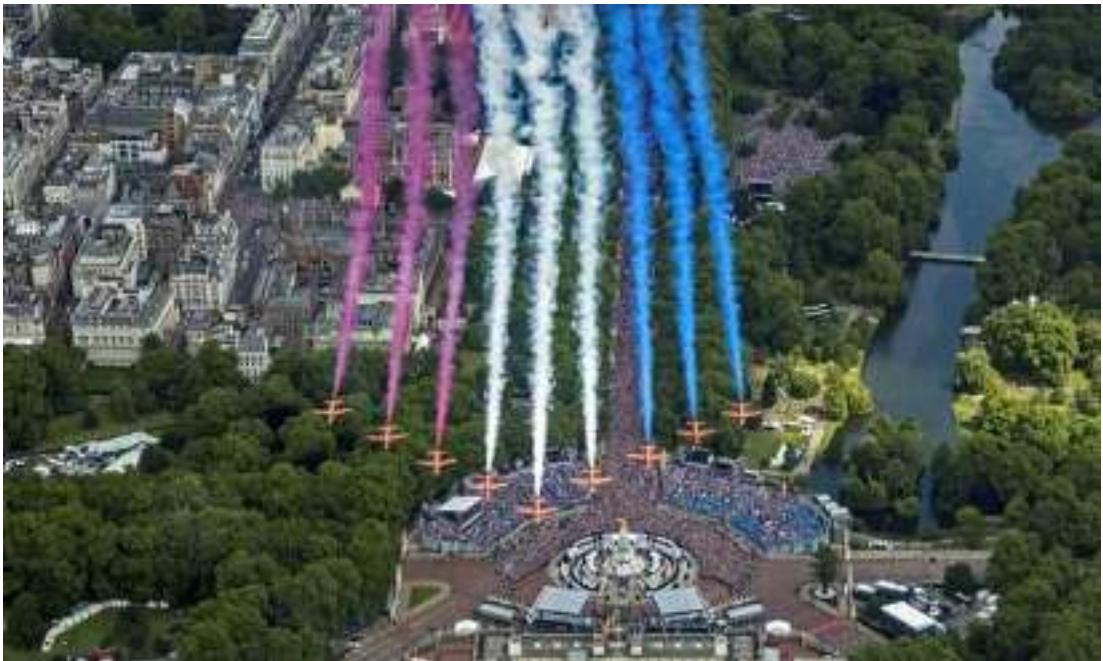
Members of the public fill The Mall as they walk towards Buckingham Palace. Photograph: Chris Jackson/AFP/Getty Images



Prince Louis steals the show on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. Photograph: Chris Jackson/Getty Images



The Queen watches a flypast by the Britain's RAF from Buckingham Palace balcony following the Trooping the Colour parade. Photograph: Reuters



The Red Arrows during a flypast after the Trooping the Colour ceremony in London. Photograph: RAF SAC Sarah Barsby/AP



A group of protesters calling for the reclamation of Royal Land rush onto the Mall as a military band lead the Trooping the Colour parade.  
Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

- 
- 

[3d ago](#)10.50

**Prince Andrew** has tested positive for Covid and will no longer attend the Queen's jubilee service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday, Buckingham Palace has said.

A palace spokesman said:

After undertaking a routine test the duke has tested positive for Covid and with regret will no longer be attending tomorrow's service.

It is understood Andrew saw the Queen in the last few days but has been doing regular testing, and has not seen her since he tested positive.

-

•

### 3d ago 10.32

A former army major running for the Lib Dems in Tiverton and Honiton has claimed if the Tories lose that by-election it could be the end of Boris Johnson.

Richard Foord is hoping to win on 23 June in the former constituency of Neil Parish, the Tory MP who resigned after admitting he watched porn in the Commons.

Foord told [the Mirror](#): “A lot of Conservative opinion will crystallise in opposition to Johnson if we can achieve a win here in Tiverton and Honiton.”

•

•

### 3d ago 10.12

The Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood has sparked a backlash from Brexiteers after urging the government to rejoin the single market to ease the cost of living crisis (see [13.50](#)).

His idea has got some - not very surprising - backing from Labour MP Stella Creasy, who said the UK must work with the EU to secure jobs, peace and equality:

For sake of jobs, peace and equality, UK must discuss our future with Europe. Can't do that in sound and fury with which Boris Johnson approaches negotiating with our neighbours. As Chair of [@labour4europe](#) pleased Tory MPs like [@Tobias\\_Ellwood](#) speaking out <https://t.co/uSNtV356w4>

— stellacreasy (@stellacreasy) [June 2, 2022](#)

•  
•

### 3d ago09.55

Prendergast also encouraged travellers to only take hand luggage on their holidays to beat long queues at the airport.

The national secretary of the GMB union told The Daily Telegraph: “If individuals can check in online and don’t take luggage, that limits the disruption. It’s not a magic bullet however it does scale back the prospect of there being issues.”

•  
•

### 3d ago09.14

It was “disingenuous” for the transport secretary to speak out about chaotic scenes at Britain’s airports as issues with staffing “have been on the radar for a long time,” **Andy Prendergast**, national secretary of the GMB union, said.

**Grant Shapps** said on Wednesday the aviation industry must “do their bit” to resolve problems which have led to the disruption.

Prendergast told BBC Radio 4’s World at One programme on Thursday:

This unfortunately was a foreseeable problem, it was one we warned about at the point at which the mass redundancies were made.

We asked the government to look at the aviation industry as a special case and they refused. And now, quite frankly, for Grant Shapps to come out as he has in the last 24 hours is a little bit disingenuous considering these problems have been on the radar for a long time.

The aviation industry is suffering from staff shortages after letting thousands of people go during the coronavirus pandemic.

Airlines and airports repeatedly called for sector-specific financial support during the Covid-19 crisis as government travel restrictions suppressed demand, PA News reports. They are now struggling to recruit new workers and have their security checks processed.

- 
- 

3d ago08.50

## Tory MP sparks Brexiter backlash with call to rejoin EU single market

Aubrey Allegretti

A Tory MP and arch critic of **Boris Johnson** has sparked a backlash from Brexeters after suggesting Britain rejoin the EU's single market to help ease the cost of living crisis.

**Tobias Ellwood**'s comments were seized upon by allies of the prime minister as evidence that deposing him would threaten the country's more distant relationship with Brussels.

In a call for more radical thinking to “energise our economy through these stormy waters”, Ellwood said the government should “better maximise our Brexit fortunes”.

Drawing on his six years serving in the army, Ellwood wrote in an [article](#) for the House magazine that “if an army general, mid-battle, is mature enough to finesse his strategy to secure mission success, then government should do the same” and added there was vast room for improvement in economic relations with the EU.

His argument that exports to Europe have shrunk by £20bn, with fishers and farmers facing particular hardship and the unresolved issue of the Northern Ireland protocol, was used by Johnson’s allies to suggest the attempt to force a confidence vote next week was evidence of an anti-Brexit bias.

**David Frost**, the UK's chief negotiator during the divorce talks, said Ellwood's intervention "shows Brexit really is not safe in his hands or his allies".

A senior MP also said Ellwood had "let the cat out of the bag" and added: "After all the pain we went through on Brexit, he's still hell bent on trying to drag us back into the EU and he's willing to sacrifice the prime minister who delivered Brexit to get there."

Some of those seeking to oust Johnson responded speedily to distance themselves from Ellwood's comments, fearful they would be seized on by No 10.

**Mark Harper**, a senior Conservative MP who has submitted a no confidence letter in Johnson, said he categorically disagreed and was clear that Brexit "meant leaving the single market and putting an end to freedom of movement – the end".

He admitted there were issues with the protocol but said the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, and the Northern Ireland secretary, Brandon Lewis, were working to deal with those issues.

Read the full story here:

•  
•

[3d ago08.04](#)



Severin Carrell

Republican campaigners have applauded a decision by Scottish Green MSPs to boycott a Scottish parliament debate celebrating the platinum jubilee by walking out en masse.

All seven Scottish Green MSPs, including two government ministers – **Patrick Harvie** and **Lorna Slater** – left the Holyrood chamber as **Nicola Sturgeon**, the first minister and Scottish National party leader, led celebrations of the Queen's 70 years as monarch.

The most overtly pro-republican demonstration yet seen in Holyrood was heavily criticised by Scottish Conservative MSPs. **Sharon Dowey**, the Tories' culture spokesperson, said every other party had joined in thanks for the Queen's service.

She said:

The Greens' refusal to do so is petty, student politics at its worst. Their transparent attempt to woo anti-monarchy voters will frustrate the vast majority of Scots who recognise [the] celebrations as a chance to show our gratitude for Her Majesty's tireless dedication.

**Graham Smith**, the director of the anti-monarchist campaign group Republic, said the Greens' actions were symptomatic of growing republican sentiment, particularly among younger voters and in [Scotland](#).

He said:

I think it's quite extraordinary. There are big political changes across the whole of the UK and certainly in Scotland. It wouldn't have happened 10 years ago.

The Scottish Green MSPs decline requests to discuss their walkout, but a spokesperson said on Wednesday that the party believed Scotland needed an elected head of state.

We respect others hold different beliefs. Our MSPs decided to absent themselves from today's short debate and instead spend their time serving their constituents.

Celebrations of the jubilee in Scotland appear more muted than in other parts of the UK. While central London is festooned in union flags and vast crowds gather for the weekend's pageantry, there are no mass-participation events planned in Scotland.

Read more here:

•  
•

[3d ago](#)[07.09](#)

**Angela Rayner calls for ethics commission and says Boris Johnson unfit to uphold standards in public life**

Aubrey Allegretti

**Angela Rayner** has repeated calls for the introduction of an ethics and integrity commission.

Last night [The Guardian reported](#) that Jonathan Evans, the chair of the committee on standards in public life, had criticised a planned overhaul to the way the ministerial code is policed, saying they undermined the role of Boris Johnson's ethics adviser, Christopher Geidt.

He accused Boris Johnson of failing to allay fears that he and his ministers consider themselves above the rules.

Responding to the story, the deputy leader of the Labour party said:

Boris Johnson has shown himself unfit to uphold high standards in public life and is lowering the bar each and every day he clings to office, trying to rig the rules as he faces investigation for deliberately misleading Parliament.

The chair of the committee on standards in public life joins the prime minister's own ethics adviser in criticising his cherry-picking of changes to the Ministerial Code and ethical scrutiny of government.

It's time to stop the rot. Labour will clean up politics and restore standards in public life.

She said a Labour government would "clean up politics and restore standards" in public life, starting by introducing an Ethics and Integrity Commission.

•  
•

Updated at 07.35 EDT

[3d ago](#) [06.10](#)

**Full story: Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, Patel tells MPs**



Matthew Weaver

**Priti Patel** has suggested Tory plotters against the prime minister risk overshadowing the Queen's jubilee celebration in the latest intervention from **Boris Johnson**'s cabinet supporters to try to head off a confidence vote in the prime minister.

[Speaking to the Daily Mail](#), the home secretary urged those pushing for Johnson to resign to "forget it" and warned that writing letters against him was a "sideshow".

She added: "This weekend is going to be all about the longstanding dedicated service that Her Majesty the Queen has given that nation. Everyone should rally behind that."

The number of letters submitted by Tory MPs to **Sir Graham Brady**, chair of the backbench [1922 Committee](#), is believed to be close to the 54 needed to trigger a confidence vote.

On a visit to the Mall Patel tried to equate rallying behind the prime minister with jubilee celebrations. She said: "Events like this are about celebrating our country, our nation, our values and our monarchy. This is about Her Majesty the Queen – I think that's where all the focus should be."

She added: “This isn’t about a parade [of leadership candidates] or a contest of letters. We need to concentrate on doing our jobs. Our job is to deliver on the people’s priorities. They won’t thank the Conservative party for talking about itself at a time when people have anxieties, concerns, apprehensions.”

Johnson is under increasing pressure from Tory MPs to consider his position in the wake of [Sue Gray’s report on lockdown parties in Downing Street](#).

**Simon Fell**, elected Conservative MP for Barrow and Furness in 2019, was the latest to be reported to have raised concerns and criticised the “corrosive culture and a failure of leadership” that allowed the incidents to happen.

The deputy prime minister, **Dominic Raab**, led the counterattack on Wednesday by insisting that questions around whether Johnson broke the rules for ministers “have been answered”, as he backed the prime minister’s assertion that he did not intend to breach Covid laws.

Raab said he did not believe the prime minister would face a confidence vote next week, as the prospect of a leadership challenge loomed.

Johnson, in an [interview with Mumsnet released on Wednesday](#), was initially told he was considered to be a “habitual liar”. The prime minister replied: “First of all, I don’t agree with the conclusion with the question asked or the premise of the question.”

Told a teacher would have lost their job if they had broken the law and asked why the same did not apply to him, Johnson replied: “If people look at the event in question it felt to me like a work event, I was there for a very short period of time in the Cabinet Office at my desk and, you know, I was very, very surprised and taken aback to get an FPN but of course I paid it.

Read more here:

•  
•

[3d ago05.49](#)

**Jonathan Evans**, chairman of the independent Committee on Standards in Public Life, said questions must be raised over whether proper standards are being upheld in government, given recent events.

Lord Evans also said it is up to **Boris Johnson**'s ethics adviser, **Lord Geidt**, to decide his next move after the PM insisted his partygate fine did not constitute a breach of the ministerial code because he did not intend to break Covid laws.

Asked if he believes proper standards are being upheld in Government in the round, Lord Evans told BBC Radio 4's Today programme:

I think you've got to raise questions when you see the outcome of the police investigations and the Sue Gray report, and one or two of the other issues that have come up - I was outspoken myself in regard to the Owen Paterson business.

So, there has been a lot of public disquiet about standards over the last six months. It's one of those things that comes up from time to time and it's really important to reassure people that we want to continue to maintain decent standards in this country.

On Lord Geidt, he said:

He's made his position very clear, that he felt in his report that was published this week that it was important that the prime minister should recognise that the partygate allegations and the outcome of that do have implications for the application of the ministerial code. And that's what he said in his report.

Of course, the prime minister has subsequently written to him explaining why he believed that he didn't breach the ministerial code in that regard. So, obviously, Lord Geidt will be giving consideration to what has been said. But obviously that's a decision for him, to make up his mind on where he goes with this next.

- 
-

[3d ago](#)**04.50**

Former Northern Ireland first minister **Arlene Foster** has welcomed a Sinn Fein move to write to the Queen on the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee.

Sinn Fein vice president **Michelle O'Neill** wrote to the Queen to praise her “significant” contribution to the peace process and to acknowledge her “dedicated public service to the British people” during her 70 years on the throne.

O’Neill thanked the Queen for her “warmth and unfailing courtesy” on the occasions when the pair have met and wrote of the “value and respect” she had for the monarch’s contribution to reconciliation.

Former DUP leader Foster praised O’Neill’s gesture, telling BBC Radio Ulster: “Obviously, I very much welcome it.”

Foster, who served alongside O’Neill at the head of the Stormont Executive, said the Platinum Jubilee celebrated three things – the Queen’s public service and dedication; the institution of the monarchy; and the concept of Britishness.

I think for republicans, like Michelle O’Neill, like Nicola Sturgeon, they have recognised in Her Majesty the Queen the first of those, the fact that she has given so much service to the country.

They’re recognising that and I think that that is something that is to be welcomed.

•  
•

[3d ago](#)**04.47**

A powerful standards watchdog has accused **Boris Johnson** of failing to allay fears that he and his ministers consider themselves above the rules, as his support continued to ebb away in the wake of the Partygate scandal.

**Jonathan Evans**, the chair of the committee on standards in public life, criticised a planned overhaul to the way the ministerial code is policed, saying they undermined the role of Boris Johnson's ethics adviser, **Christopher Geidt**.

His remarks came as two more Tory MPs wrote to their constituents condemning the prime minister's conduct during the pandemic.

Downing Street announced the changes last week, after Evans's committee made a string of proposals earlier this year.

The changes slated by the government include allowing ministers to escape resignation for minor infractions – but not giving Geidt the power to launch his own investigations without the prime minister's permission, as the committee on standards had urged.

Evans, a former head of MI5, said it was “highly unsatisfactory” that Johnson had only accepted part of the package of reforms, and the plans as they stood would not “restore public trust”.

Unless Geidt can launch his own investigations independently, he said, “suspicion about the way in which the ministerial code is administered will linger.”

Johnson defended his conduct in a tough interview with the online forum Mumsnet, which kicked off with the question, “Why should we believe anything you say when it’s been proven you’re a habitual liar?”

During the exchange, Johnson said he was “very, very surprised and taken aback” to be fined by the Metropolitan police for his surprise birthday party, which he called a “miserable event”.

He said he was not considering resigning. “I just cannot see how actually it would be responsible right now, given everything that is going on, simply to abandon … the project on which I embarked, to level up.”

**Read more from my colleagues Heather Stewart, Rajeev Syal and Jessica Elgot here:**

- 
- 

[3d ago](#) [04.25](#)



Nicola Slawson

Tory MPs pushing for the prime minister to resign should “forget it”, **Priti Patel** has said.

The home secretary said writing letters of no-confidence in **Boris Johnson** was a “sideshow” and the party should be focused on “real challenges that we have to find solutions to”.

Speaking to the [Daily Mail](#), she said:

This isn’t about a parade (of leadership candidates) or a contest of letters. We need to concentrate on doing our jobs.

Look at what is going on in the world right now, look at the challenges that we face domestically. We can’t ignore those.

Our job is to deliver on the people's priorities. They won't thank the Conservative Party for talking about itself at a time when people have anxieties, concerns, apprehensions.

Patel also said she thought leadership rows should not overshadow the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

She also praised Johnson's role on the international stage.

'Look at our standing in the world when it comes to Russia and Ukraine,' she said. 'Look at the leadership that has been provided.'

Our job is to deliver on the people's priorities. They won't thank the Conservative Party for talking about itself at a time when people have anxieties, concerns, apprehensions. Our job is deliver for them.

She added:

[Johnson] is the man that won us the election, a man that has worked hard to deliver for us right now. There's no question about that. But on top of that, he's a man that's focused on the people's priorities and this government is focused on the people's priorities.

Welcome to today's liveblog. I'll be updating you throughout the day. Do drop me an email on [nicola.slawson@theguardian.com](mailto:nicola.slawson@theguardian.com) or send me a tweet [@Nicola\\_Slawson](https://twitter.com/Nicola_Slawson) if you think I'm missing something or if you have a question.

•  
•

Updated at 04.25 EDT

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[Skip to key events](#)  
[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

## Ukraine has had ‘some success’ in the battles in Sievierodonetsk, Zelenskiy says – as it happened

This live blog is now closed, you can find our [latest coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war here](#)

Updated 2d ago

[Samantha Lock](#) (now), [Maya Yang](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#) (earlier)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 20.55 EDTFirst published on Thu 2 Jun 2022 01.36 EDT



A police expert walks among the ruins of a school partially destroyed by a rocket in Kharkiv. Photograph: Sergey Bobok/AFP/Getty Images

[Samantha Lock](#) (now), [Maya Yang](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#) and [Martin Belam](#) (earlier)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 20.55 EDTFirst published on Thu 2 Jun 2022 01.36 EDT

## Key events

- [2d agoSummary](#)
- [2d agoSummary](#)
- [2d agoUN aid chief Martin Griffiths arrives in Moscow to discuss grain exports](#)
- [2d agoCivilians urged to evacuate Sloviansk as Russia bombing intensifies](#)
- [3d agoEuropean Parliament bans Russian lobbyists from premises](#)
- [3d agoSummary](#)
- [3d agoToday so far...](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 2d ago

[15.47](#)

## Civilians urged to evacuate Sloviansk as Russia bombing intensifies

The bombing in eastern [Ukraine](#) is becoming more intense and, with no water or electricity, 100 people or so heeded the mayor's call on Thursday to evacuate the city of Sloviansk which sits in Russia's crosshairs, Agence France-Presse reports.

“The situation is getting worse, the explosions are stronger and stronger and the bombs are falling more often,” **18-year-old student Goulnara Evgaripova** told AFP.

Outside an administrative office, she boarded one of five minibuses earmarked to take people out of the city in the Donetsk region that Moscow wants to control.

One Russian strike killed three people, wounded six and left a trail of damage on Tuesday in Sloviansk, witnesses told AFP.

**Mayor Vadim Liakh**, spoke of a fresh bombardment on Thursday that damaged electricity lines on the edge of the city which boasted a population of 100,000 before the late February invasion.

“There is no electricity, the water supply is down,” Liakh posted on the Telegram messenger service.

“The best solution in this situation, is to evacuate.

“Take care of yourselves. Pack your bags,” he urged.

In 2014, when Russia grabbed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine, Moscow-backed separatists also seized Sloviansk, before Ukrainian forces regained control.



Residents wait as they evacuate the city of Sloviansk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas on June 2, 2022. Photograph: Aris

Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

- 
- 

2d ago20.55

That's all from me, Samantha Lock, for now. Please join me a little later when we launch our new live blog covering all the latest developments from [Ukraine](#).

In the meantime you can follow all the latest news from our reporters on the ground [here](#).

- 
- 

2d ago20.38

## Summary

- **Russian forces are currently occupying about 20% of Ukraine's territory, president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video address to the Luxembourg parliament.** The [front lines of battle stretch across more than 1,000km \(620 miles\)](#), the Ukrainian president said, adding that 100 Ukrainians are dying on a daily basis in eastern Ukraine, and another 450-500 people are wounded.
- **Ukraine has had “some success” in the battles in Sievierodonetsk** but it is too early to tell, according to Zelenskiy. “The situation there is the hardest now. Just as in the cities and communities nearby - Lysychansk, Bakhmut and others. Many cities are facing a powerful Russian attack,” he said in his latest national [address](#).

- Some 60% of the infrastructure and residential buildings in Lysychansk, one of only two cities in the east still under at least partial Ukrainian control, have been destroyed from attacks, according to a local official. Oleksandr Zaika, head of Lysychansk City Military-Civil Administration, said 20,000 people are left in the city, down from a pre-war population of 97,000.
- About 800 people, including children, are hiding underneath the Azot chemical factory in the key eastern Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk, according to Serhiy Haidai, the governor of Luhansk region. The UK's ministry of defence said Russia has taken control of most of Sieverodonetsk, which has come under intense Russian shelling.
- Civilians are being urged to evacuate the eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk as Russia bombing intensifies. With no water or electricity, 100 people heeded the mayor's call on Thursday to evacuate.
- Pro-Russian officials in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine said a decree has been issued to “nationalise” state assets in the south-eastern region. The deputy head of the Moscow-imposed administration, Andrei Trofimov, said the nationalisation would affect land, natural resources, facilities in strategic sectors of the economy, as well as property owned by Ukraine as of 24 February.
- Ukraine more than doubled interest rates to 25% on Thursday in a move to try to stem double-digit inflation and protect its currency, which has collapsed since Russia's invasion. In the first interest rates intervention since Vladimir Putin's troops attacked on 24 February, the

Ukrainian central bank's governor, [Kyrylo Shevchenko](#), increased the benchmark interest rate from 10% to 25%.

- Nato's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said the alliance was in touch with Turkey to find a “united way” forward to address Ankara's concerns over Sweden and Finland's bid to join the pact. [Stoltenberg's latest remarks come](#) after he told reporters yesterday that he would convene senior officials from Finland, Sweden and Turkey in Brussels in the coming days to discuss the issue.
- The White House announced a fresh round of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, targeting Russian government officials and elites as well as several yachts linked to Vladimir Putin. [The sanctions](#) were announced as Ukraine's foreign minister, [Dmytro Kuleba](#), said he was “grateful” to the US and its secretary of state, [Antony Blinken](#), for a new \$700m weapons package for Ukraine.
- EU ambassadors dropped the leader of Russia's Orthodox church, Patriarch Kirill, from a proposed blacklist, according to diplomats. [The removal of Patriarch Kirill from the list of sanctioned individuals](#) allows the EU to agree on a new round of sanctions after opposition from Hungary.
- Russia has accused the son of a Conservative MP of involvement in the killing of a Chechen brigade commander in Ukraine. Russia's National Guard said one of its commanders, the Chechen fighter Adam Bisultanov, was killed on 26 May in a clash with [a “group of mercenaries from the UK and the USA”](#) that included the “son of a British parliamentarian,” Ben Grant.

- European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has said it's in the European Union's strategic interest but also "our moral duty" to make it possible for [Ukraine](#) to join the 30-nation bloc. "In a few weeks - we are waiting for the answer of the European Union on the issue of candidate status for Ukraine. We are very much looking forward to it," Zelenskiy said in his latest national address.
- UN aid chief Martin Griffiths is in Moscow on Thursday and Friday to [discuss](#) clearing the way for exports of grain and other food from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Since the invasion, Ukrainian grain shipments from its Black Sea ports have stalled and more than 20m tonnes of grain are stuck in silos, while Moscow says the chilling effect of western sanctions imposed on Russia has hurt its fertiliser and grain exports.
- Ten Russian servicemen who looted the property of Bucha residents have been [identified](#) and reported on suspicion of violating the laws and customs of war. "Pre-trial investigation in criminal proceedings is carried out by investigators of ... the National Police of Ukraine," said Ukraine's prosecutor general in a statement on Thursday.
- 
- 

[2d ago](#)[20.04](#)

**European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has said it's in the European Union's strategic interest but also "our moral duty" to make it possible for [Ukraine](#) to join the 30-nation bloc.**

Von der Leyen made her remarks on Thursday at an international security conference in Slovakia's capital.

Zelenskiy has asked for more weapons for Ukraine's armed forces to be able to prevail over the invading Russian military, called for more EU sanctions against Russia, and repeated his country's request to become "a full-fledge member of the united [Europe](#)."

It is very important that now - in a few weeks - we are waiting for the answer of the European Union on the issue of candidate status for Ukraine. We are very much looking forward to it," he said in his latest national address.

Von der Leyen says Ukraine must meet all necessary standards and conditions to be able to join but she has called on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goal.

She said: "Supporting Ukraine on its path to the European Union, it is not a burden, it is our historic responsibility."

•  
•

[2d ago](#)[19.43](#)

**The United States and its allies will support international investigations into atrocities in [Ukraine](#)** to hold Russia accountable for crimes committed by its forces since they invaded Ukraine on 24 February.

A UN Security Council [meeting](#) held on Thursday discussed strengthening accountability and justice for serious violations of international law.

US Undersecretary of State Uzra Zeya said the United States is working with its allies to support a broad range of international investigations into atrocities in Ukraine.

We have witnessed Russian forces bombing maternity hospitals, train stations, apartment buildings and homes, and civilians killed even as they bicycled down a street.

We have received credible reports of Russian forces torturing and committing execution-style killings of people with their hands bound behind their back.

We have received reports of women and girls being raped, some publicly, and children taken away to Russia and put up for adoption. And we know that Russian forces continue to deny safe passage to civilians fleeing violence and to humanitarian organisations trying to reach those in need ...

Those who perpetrated these crimes must be held to account. Our message to Russia's military and political leadership is this: the world is watching you, and you will be held accountable.”

Our work to strengthen democracy & counter authoritarianism is as critical today as it was 40 years ago when President Reagan delivered his Westminster Speech. Thank you [@ReaganInstitute](#) & [@RogerZakheim](#) for a great discussion yesterday. [#StandWithUkraine](#) <https://t.co/JWDLxTEDJL> [pic.twitter.com/88pgrtiqtx](https://pic.twitter.com/88pgrtiqtx)

— Under Secretary Uzra Zeya (@UnderSecStateJ) [June 2, 2022](#)

- 
- 

[2d ago](#)[19.27](#)

**Ukraine has had “some success” in the battles in Sievierodonetsk** but it is too early to tell, according to president Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

“The situation there is the hardest now. Just as in the cities and communities nearby - Lysychansk, Bakhmut and others. Many cities are facing a powerful Russian attack,” he said in his latest national [address](#).

Zelenskiy added that the “absolutely senseless” shelling of Ukraine’s border northern regions, in particular Chernihiv, continues.

“Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, the Kharkiv region were shelled. The entire temporarily occupied territory of our state is now a zone of total catastrophe, for which [Russia](#) is fully responsible.”

- 
- 

[2d ago](#)[19.00](#)

## Summary

It's 2am in Kyiv. Here's where things stand:

- Some 60% of the infrastructure and residential buildings in Lysychansk, one of only two cities in the east still under at least partial Ukrainian control, have been [destroyed](#) from attacks, a local official said Thursday. Oleksandr Zaika, head of Lysychansk City Military-Civil Administration, said 20,000 people are left in the city, down from a pre-war population of 97,000.
- Ukrainian forces have had some success fighting Russians in the city of Sievierodonetsk but the overall military situation in the Donbas region has not changed in the last 24 hours, Volodymyr Zelenskiy [said](#) on Thursday. He also thanked US president Joe Biden for promising to send missiles and said he expected good news about weapons supplies from other partners.
- UN aid chief Martin Griffiths is in Moscow on Thursday and Friday to [discuss](#) clearing the way for exports of grain and other food from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Since the invasion, Ukrainian grain shipments from its Black Sea ports have stalled and more than 20m tonnes of grain are stuck in silos, while Moscow says the chilling effect of western sanctions imposed on Russia has hurt its fertilizer and grain exports.
- The bombing in eastern [Ukraine](#) is becoming more intense and, with no water or electricity, 100 people or so [heeded](#) the mayor's call on Thursday to evacuate the city of Sloviansk which sits in

**Russia's crosshairs.** Mayor Vadim Liakh, spoke of a fresh bombardment on Thursday that damaged electricity lines on the edge of the city which boasted a population of 100,000 before the late February invasion.

- **10 Russian servicemen who looted the property of Bucha residents have been identified and reported on suspicion of violating the laws and customs of war.** “Pre-trial investigation in criminal proceedings is carried out by investigators of ... the National Police of Ukraine,” said Ukraine’s prosecutor general in a statement on Thursday.
- **The European Parliament announced on Thursday that it has banned all Russian lobbyists from its premises to prevent them spreading Moscow “propaganda” about Russia’s war in Ukraine.** “Effective immediately, Russian company representatives are no longer allowed to enter European Parliament premises,” the European Parliament president Roberta Metsola said.
- **Ukraine’s state-run nuclear power operator, Energoatom, on Thursday denied it might shut down a major atomic power plant that lies in Russian-occupied territory if Kyiv loses control of operations at the site.** In a statement, Energoatom said the plant “cannot be turned off from a technical, security, economic or political point of view”.

*That's it from me, Maya Yang, today as I hand the blog over to my colleague in Australia, Samantha Lock. I'll be back tomorrow, thank you.*

- 
- 

Updated at 19.08 EDT

2d ago **18.04**

**Some 60% of the infrastructure and residential buildings in Lysychansk, one of only two cities in the east still under at least partial Ukrainian control, have been destroyed from attacks, a local official said Thursday, the Associated Press reports.**

**Oleksandr Zaika**, head of Lysychansk City Military-Civil Administration, said on an “information telemarathon” cited by the Unian news agency that non-stop shelling had knocked out electricity, natural gas, telephone and internet service.

One of the most critical pathways for supplies and evacuations, the Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway, is still open but under constant bombardment.

Humanitarian supplies are still reaching the city, where shrapnel and mines dot the landscape, he said.

Zaika said 20,000 people are left in the city, down from a pre-war population of 97,000.

Lysychansk is separated by a river from the other city in the region that's still under at least partial Ukrainian control, Sievierodonetsk. It, too, is under Russian siege.



A local resident walks, as his neighbour's house burns after shelling, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Lysychansk, Luhansk region Ukraine June 2, 2022. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

•  
•

Updated at 18.19 EDT

2d ago 17.35

**Pedestrians pass by empty yellow school busses where stuffed toys symbolizing each of the 243 killed Ukrainian children are displayed on seats during an action marking the International Children's Day, in Lviv, Agence France-Presse reports.**

Pedestrians pass by empty yellow school busses where stuffed toys symbolizing each of 243 killed Ukrainian children are displayed on seats during an action marking the International Children's Day, in Lviv.

□ Yuriy Dyachyshyn [#AFP pic.twitter.com/0jmSeTcx4v](#)

— AFP Photo (@AFPphoto) [June 2, 2022](#)

•  
•

Updated at 18.19 EDT

2d ago 17.12

**Ukrainian forces have had some success fighting Russians in the city of Sievierodonetsk but the overall military situation in the Donbas region has not changed in the last 24 hours, Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Thursday, Reuters reports.**

In a late night video address, Ukraine's president thanked the **US president, Joe Biden**, for promising to send missiles and said he expected good news about weapons supplies from other partners.



Ukraine residents of Sievierodonetsk, Lugansk Oblast, wait hidden in their basement during the heavy shelling by Russian forces and Russia-backed separatists on February 28, 2022. Photograph: Anatolii Stepanov/AFP/Getty Images

•  
•

Updated at 18.18 EDT

[2d ago 16.25](#)

## **UN aid chief Martin Griffiths arrives in Moscow to discuss grain exports**

**UN aid chief Martin Griffiths is in Moscow on Thursday and Friday to discuss clearing the way for exports of grain and other food from Ukraine's Black Sea ports, Reuters reports.**

Griffiths will meet Russian officials days after another senior UN official, **Rebecca Grynspan**, had “constructive” talks in Moscow with **Russia’s first**

**deputy prime minister, Andrei Belousov**, on expediting Russian grain and fertilizer exports.

**The UN secretary-general, Antonio Guterres**, is trying to broker what he calls a “package deal” to resume both Ukrainian food exports and Russian food and fertilizer exports, which were disrupted by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February.

“The situation remains fluid. The Secretary-General, and the two main people he has tasked to work on this, Rebecca Grynspan and Martin Griffiths - we will do and go anywhere we need to go to push this project forward,” **UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric** said.

Russia’s defence ministry said on Thursday that vessels carrying grain can leave Ukraine’s ports in the Black Sea via “humanitarian corridors” and Russia is ready to guarantee their safety, Interfax news agency said.

Russia’s war in Ukraine has fuelled a global food crisis with prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertilizer soaring. Russia and Ukraine account for nearly a third of global wheat supplies. Russia is also a fertilizer exporter and Ukraine is a major exporter of corn and sunflower oil.

Since the invasion, Ukrainian grain shipments from its Black Sea ports have stalled and more than 20m tonnes of grain are stuck in silos, while Moscow says the chilling effect of Western sanctions imposed on Russia has hurt its fertilizer and grain exports.

**The US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield**, said on Tuesday that the United States is prepared to give “comfort letters” to shipping and insurance companies to help facilitate exports of Russian grain and fertilizer.

But she also said: “Russia is able to get its oil out, and that’s sanctioned. They should be able to get their grain out that’s not sanctioned.”



Seeds are seen in a grain silos destroyed after it was shelled repeatedly, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in Donetsk region, Ukraine May 31, 2022.  
Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

•  
•

Updated at 18.06 EDT

[2d ago](#)[15.47](#)

## Civilians urged to evacuate Sloviansk as Russia bombing intensifies

The bombing in eastern [Ukraine](#) is becoming more intense and, with no water or electricity, 100 people or so heeded the mayor's call on Thursday to evacuate the city of Sloviansk which sits in Russia's crosshairs, Agence France-Presse reports.

"The situation is getting worse, the explosions are stronger and stronger and the bombs are falling more often," **18-year-old student Goulnara Evgaripova** told AFP.

Outside an administrative office, she boarded one of five minibuses earmarked to take people out of the city in the Donetsk region that Moscow wants to control.

One Russian strike killed three people, wounded six and left a trail of damage on Tuesday in Sloviansk, witnesses told AFP.

**Mayor Vadim Liakh**, spoke of a fresh bombardment on Thursday that damaged electricity lines on the edge of the city which boasted a population of 100,000 before the late February invasion.

“There is no electricity, the water supply is down,” Liakh posted on the Telegram messenger service.

“The best solution in this situation, is to evacuate.

“Take care of yourselves. Pack your bags,” he urged.

In 2014, when Russia grabbed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine, Moscow-backed separatists also seized Sloviansk, before Ukrainian forces regained control.



Residents wait as they evacuate the city of Sloviansk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas on June 2, 2022. Photograph: Aris

Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

- 
- 

3d ago15.10

**10 Russian servicemen who looted the property of Bucha residents have been identified and reported on suspicion of violating the laws and customs of war, Euromaidan reports.**

10 Russian servicemen who looted the property of Bucha residents have been identified and reported on suspicion of violating the laws and customs of war

The suspects will be declared on the international wanted list, Prosecutor General reported □ <https://t.co/5faollXwoP>  
[pic.twitter.com/hX72wMNO08](https://pic.twitter.com/hX72wMNO08)

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) June 2, 2022

“According to the investigation, from February 24 to March 31, 2022, servicemen of the military unit of the National Guard of the Russian Federation during the occupation of Bucha looted the valuables of the local population. For the sole purpose of personal gain, the Russian military confiscated private property of citizens that could not be used for military purposes: from underwear and clothing to large household appliances,” the office of Ukraine’s Prosecutor General said in a statement on Thursday.

“Pre-trial investigation in criminal proceedings is carried out by investigators of...the National Police of Ukraine,” the statement added.

- 
-

Updated at 15.12 EDT

3d ago14.35

## European Parliament bans Russian lobbyists from premises

**The European Parliament announced on Thursday that it has banned all Russian lobbyists from its premises to prevent them spreading Moscow “propaganda” about Russia’s war in [Ukraine](#), Agence France-Presse reports.**

“Effective immediately, Russian company representatives are no longer allowed to enter European Parliament premises,” **the European Parliament president Roberta Metsola** said on Twitter.

Effective immediately, Russian company representatives are no longer allowed to enter [@Europarl\\_EN](#) premises.

We must not allow them any space to spread their propaganda & false, toxic narratives about the invasion of [#Ukraine](#).

We will remain united & strong against autocrats.

— Roberta Metsola (@EP\_President) [June 2, 2022](#)

Metsola urged all other EU institutions, including the European Commission and the European Council, to follow suit.

A parliament spokesman said the ban was a response to “Russia creating and spreading false narratives about the war in Ukraine through multiple channels, including through state-owned companies”.

The prohibition applies to Russian companies listed as employing lobbyists to the EU as well as those on the bloc’s sanction blacklist.

The parliament in 2015 had already banned Russian diplomats from its premises, which include chambers and annexes in Brussels and the French city of Strasbourg, in response to Moscow banning several EU politicians vociferous over its annexation of Crimea.

**German MEP Erik Marquardt, of the Greens**, welcomed the ban saying that “especially oil and gas lobbyists” working on behalf of Russian companies had been trying to “spread propaganda and disinformation” in recent months.



President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola holds a press conference ahead of EU Leaders' Summit in Brussels on May 30, 2022.  
Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

•  
•

[3d ago14.18](#)

**Ukraine's state-run nuclear power operator, Energoatom, on Thursday denied it might shut down a major atomic power plant that lies in Russian-occupied territory if Kyiv loses control of operations at the site, Reuters reports.**

The Zaporizhzhia facility in southeast Ukraine is Europe's largest nuclear power plant. Russian troops have taken over the plant, but Ukrainian specialists are still running it.

Russian news agency Interfax cited a Ukrainian presidential aide as saying the plant could be shut down if Kyiv lost all control.

But in a statement, Energoatom said the plant "cannot be turned off from a technical, security, economic or political point of view."

Ukraine's state-owned grid operator last week dismissed as "physically impossible" the suggestion by a Russian official that the plant would supply Russia with electricity.



A picture taken during a visit to Mariupol organized by the Russian military shows Russian servicemen on guard in front of the main entrance of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station in Enerhodar, southeastern Ukraine, 01 May 2022. Photograph: Sergei Ilnitsky/EPA

- 
- 

Updated at 14.28 EDT

[3d ago](#) [14.00](#)

## Summary

It's 9pm in Kyiv. Here's where we stand:

- Pro-Russian officials in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine said a decree has been issued to “nationalise” state assets in the south-eastern region. The deputy head of the Moscow-imposed administration, Andrei Trofimov, said the nationalisation [would affect land, natural resources, facilities in strategic sectors of the economy,](#) as well as property owned by Ukraine as of 24 February.
- Ukraine more than doubled interest rates to 25% on Thursday in a move to try to stem double-digit inflation and protect its currency, which has collapsed since Russia’s invasion. In the first interest rates intervention since Vladimir Putin’s troops attacked on 24 February, the Ukrainian central bank’s governor, [Kyrylo Shevchenko, increased the benchmark interest rate from 10% to 25%](#).
- Nato’s secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said the alliance was in touch with Turkey to find a “united way” forward to address Ankara’s concerns over Sweden and Finland’s bid to join the pact. [Stoltenberg’s latest remarks come](#) after he told reporters yesterday that he would convene senior officials from Finland, Sweden and Turkey in Brussels in the coming days to discuss the issue.
- Russian forces are currently occupying about 20% of Ukraine’s territory, Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video address to the Luxembourg parliament. The [front lines of battle stretch across more than 1,000km \(620 miles\),](#) the Ukrainian president said, adding that 100

Ukrainians are dying on a daily basis in eastern Ukraine, and another 450-500 people are wounded.

- Zelenskiy said 243 children have been killed, 446 have been wounded and 139 are missing so far in the war in Ukraine. Some 200,000 children have been forcefully taken to Russia, he claimed, including children from orphanages, children taken with their parents and those separated from their families.
- The White House announced a fresh round of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, targeting Russian government officials and elites as well as several yachts linked to Vladimir Putin. The sanctions were announced as Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said he was "grateful" to the US and its secretary of state, Antony Blinken, for a new \$700m weapons package for Ukraine.
- EU ambassadors dropped the leader of Russia's Orthodox church, Patriarch Kirill, from a proposed blacklist, according to diplomats. The removal of Patriarch Kirill from the list of sanctioned individuals allows the EU to agree on a new round of sanctions after opposition from Hungary.
- About 800 people, including children, are hiding underneath the Azot chemical factory in the key eastern Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk, according to Serhiy Haidai, the governor of Luhansk region. The UK's ministry of defence said Russia has taken control of most of Sieverodonetsk, which has come under intense Russian shelling.

- **Russia has accused the son of a Conservative MP of involvement in the killing of a Chechen brigade commander in Ukraine.** Russia's National Guard said one of its commanders, the Chechen fighter Adam Bisultanov, was killed on 26 May in a clash with a “group of mercenaries from the UK and the USA” that included the “son of a British parliamentarian,” Ben Grant.

*That's it from me, Léonie Chao-Fong, today. I'll be back tomorrow. My colleague, Maya Yang, will be here shortly to bring you the latest developments from the war in Ukraine.*

- 
- 

Updated at 16.58 EDT

[3d ago](#)[13.50](#)

**Pro-Russian officials in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine said a decree has been issued to “nationalise” state assets in the southeastern region.**

The decree has been signed by officials installed by Moscow and applies to strategic firms, land and natural resources, the RIA news agency quoted the administration as saying.

The “liberated” region of Zaporizhzhia will “nationalise” the state property of Ukraine, a member of the region’s pro-Moscow military-civilian administration, Vladimir Rogov, wrote on Telegram.

The deputy head of the Moscow-imposed administration, Andrei Trofimov, said the nationalisation would affect land, natural resources, facilities in strategic sectors of the economy, as well as property owned by Ukraine as of 24 February – the day when Russia invaded.

Trofimov said:

The decree was signed in order to meet state needs related to improving the overall efficiency and social orientation of the economy, as well as to preserve the national heritage for residents of the Zaporizhzhia Region.

Russia claimed full control of the Kherson region in March and holds parts of the Zaporizhzhia region to the northeast.

In May, Putin signed a decree simplifying the procedure for residents of the regions of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson to apply for Russian citizenship.

- 
- 

[Newest](#)[Newest](#)

[Previous](#)

1  
of  
5

[Next](#)

[Oldest](#)[Oldest](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2022/jun/02/russia-ukraine-war-latest-zelenskiy-says-243-children-so-far-killed-in-war-russia-claims-latest-us-weapons-package-is-direct-provocation-live>

## Queen's birthday honours list

# Boris Johnson critic Jeremy Wright knighted in birthday honours

Euan Blair is awarded MBE, Arelene Foster becomes dame, and Rio Ferdinand and Damian Lewis recognised



The Conservative MP Jeremy Wright has called on Boris Johnson to resign.  
Photograph: Kirsty O'Connor/PA

*[Caroline Davies](#)*

Wed 1 Jun 2022 17.30 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 00.12 EDT

The Conservative former attorney general Jeremy Wright, who this week [called on Boris Johnson to resign](#), becomes a knight in the birthday honours list, while Euan Blair, the multimillionaire son of the former prime minister Tony Blair, is awarded an MBE.

Also on the list, released before the Queen's platinum jubilee, is Arlene Foster, the former first minister in Northern Ireland, who becomes a dame. The football commentator [Rio Ferdinand](#) and the actor Damian Lewis are among sports and arts figures to be recognised.

Two of the most senior figures in the NHS, who became familiar faces on TV briefings during the pandemic, are given high honours. Prof Stephen Powis, the NHS England national medical director since 2018, is knighted, while the chief nursing officer in England, Ruth May, is made a dame. The chief executive of the pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca, Pascal Soriot, said he was "truly humbled" to be given a knighthood.



Arlene Foster, the former first minister of Northern Ireland and former leader of the DUP, has been made a dame for political and public service.  
Photograph: Liam McBurney/PA

A record proportion of honours go to women – 51.5%, slightly higher than the previous record of 51.2% in 2015. The proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds is 13.3%, down from 15% last year.

The oldest recipient is Angela Redgrave, 104, a dance teacher for 70 years and the founder of the Bristol School for Dancing, who receives a British Empire Medal (BEM). Elena and Ruben Evans-Guillen, 11-year-old twins

from Warrington, Cheshire, are the youngest ever recipients and receive BEMs after raising £50,000 for the NHS over the past three years.



Angela Redgrave, 104, from Bristol, has been awarded a British Empire Medal. Photograph: Redgrave family/PA

Wright, the MP for Kenilworth and Southam, is honoured for political service which, according to the citation, “helped the government steer through many thorny issues”, including Brexit. The announcement comes after he published a lengthy statement on Monday on his personal website saying the Partygate scandal was likely to cause “real and lasting damage” to the government’s reputation, and concluded “with regret” that Johnson should resign.

Euan Blair, 38, the founder and chief executive of the apprentice company Multiverse, which matches young people with apprenticeship routes into work, is awarded an MBE for services to education. He said: “It’s a real honour to receive this recognition, but it’s on behalf of an organisation full of people who are working tirelessly to build a truly outstanding alternative to university. Multiverse’s growth is testament to the power of apprenticeships to widen access to top jobs and give employers the skilled talent they need.”



Euan Blair, the founder and chief executive of Multiverse, has been awarded an MBE for services to education. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

Blair, a Yale graduate, reportedly has a fortune of more than £160m.

Foster, the former DUP leader and a “big royalist”, said she was “hugely surprised and really delighted” at the honour. She did not expect people to call her by her new title, she said. “I’ll always be Arlene from Fermanagh.”

The highest awards of Companion of Honour go to the author Sir Salman Rushdie, the illustrator Sir Quentin Blake, and Dame Marina Warner, the lecturer, historian, critic and novelist who in 2017 became the first woman elected president of the Royal Society of Literature.



Sir Salman Rushdie has been made a Companion of Honour for services to literature. Photograph: Matt Crossick/PA

Rushdie, 74, the author of *The Satanic Verses* and *Midnight's Children*, expressed “surprise and delight” at the “extraordinary honour”. Blake, 89, best known for his collaboration with the author Roald Dahl, said it was an “enormous privilege” and meant he would set about new projects with “renewed effort and enthusiasm”.

Ian Rankin, best known for his novels featuring the fictional detective John Rebus, becomes a knight. The 62-year-old writer said it was “amazing to be honoured in this way”, though he added it “may not make writing my next book any easier”.

The fashion designer Stella McCartney receives a CBE for services to fashion and sustainability. There is also a CBE for Elisabeth Murdoch, an Arts Council member, for services to diversity in the arts and to charity. Also knighted is Nicholas Coleridge, chairman of the V&A Museum, co-chair of the platinum jubilee pageant and former chair of Condé Nast Britain.



Stella McCartney has been awarded a CBE for services to fashion and to sustainability. Photograph: Ian West/PA

Dame Susan Ion, a global expert in nuclear engineering, is awarded a GBE for fostering the next generation of engineers from underrepresented groups.

The Labour MP Stephen Timms is knighted for political and public service 12 years after he was stabbed at a constituency surgery, and said he continued to work with “undiminished enthusiasm”. Among other political figures recognised are the former minister and Conservative MP for Basingstoke, Maria Miller, and the Labour MP for Llanelli and shadow minister for international trade, Nia Griffith, who are made dames.

There is an MBE for the campaigner Tina Leslie, from Leeds, the founder of Freedom4Girls which tackles period poverty, who said the honour would make more people aware of the problem and that periods were still “a massive stigma and taboo”.

The abortion reform campaigner Sarah Ewart is awarded an OBE. She pressed for the liberalisation of Northern Ireland’s strict abortion laws after being denied a termination in the region following a diagnosis that her unborn child would die in the womb or shortly after birth.



The abortion reform campaigner Sarah Ewart has been awarded an OBE.  
Photograph: Niall Carson/PA

The honours list was released on the eve of the platinum jubilee celebrations. In a jubilee message, the Queen said: “Thank you to everyone who has been involved in convening communities, families, neighbours and friends to mark my platinum jubilee, in the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth. I know that many happy memories will be created at these festive occasions.

“I continue to be inspired by the goodwill shown to me, and hope that the coming days will provide an opportunity to reflect on all that has been achieved during the last 70 years as we look to the future with confidence and enthusiasm.”

Johnson said: “This historic platinum jubilee is not only a celebration of the monarch but of the qualities she possesses. The honours she confers this week reflect many of those qualities that have been invaluable from all different walks of life and to communities across the UK. I pay tribute to all of this year’s winners. Their stories of courage and compassion are an inspiration to us all.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/01/boris-johnson-critic-jeremy-wright-knighted-in-birthday-honours>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Queen's birthday honours list

# Euan Blair: from PM's son to £700m business and an MBE

Co-founder of Multiverse believes 'obsession with the academic' is holding some people back

- [Boris Johnson critic Jeremy Wright knighted in birthday honours](#)



Euan Blair has said he 'didn't love studying', but that when he left school, going to university was seen as the only route to a top job. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

*[Rupert Neate](#) Wealth correspondent*

*[@RupertNeate](#)*

Wed 1 Jun 2022 17.30 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 00.13 EDT

He is the son of a former prime minister, the proud new owner of a £22m home in west London, and at 38 years old, Euan Blair was on Wednesday

awarded an MBE for services to education.

Tony Blair's eldest child made headlines as a teenager for being [found by police “drunk and incapable” in Leicester Square](#) after celebrating the end of his GCSEs in 2000.

More recently, he has called on the government to consider scrapping the exams, and university degrees too, for many people. As the founder of an apprenticeship training business valued at £700m in its last private funding round, he has a financial interest in education policy.

“We definitely have to make sure we are tracking people’s progress throughout the classroom, but that doesn’t have to exist through this current obsession with GCSEs,” he told the Times Education Commission summit last month. “You end up doing mock after mock, and this becomes the end in itself rather than actually learning.”

Blair’s father was elected prime minister in 1997 after promising that his three priorities would be “education, education, education”, and later set a target of getting 50% of school leavers into university. The target was not hit until 2019.

But Blair Jr argues that the nation’s “obsession with the academic as a marker of potential and talent” is holding back people from minority groups and failing to serve the needs of employers in a digital age.

“When you look at the 50% target, the belief was, the more people go to university, the more people can access great opportunities, the more we would transition people fairly from full-time education to full-time employment,” he told the Telegraph. “It has not worked out that way. Lots of students end up in jobs deemed to be low-skilled that would not need a degree in the first place. Getting a degree does not guarantee you a job.”

Blair, who studied ancient history at the University of Bristol before going on to Yale, has said he “didn’t love studying”, but when he was growing up, going to university was seen as the only route to a top job. He says he hit

upon the idea of setting up his training provider, Multiverse, after his first job at the investment bank Morgan Stanley.

“I often say to people: ‘I started my career in investment banking structuring corporate debt and derivatives, armed with a degree in ancient history and a master’s in international relations that did not teach me how to do the job,’ he told London Rising, a conference discussing ideas about how to help the capital bounce back from the pandemic, last year. “I effectively did an apprenticeship as I learned everything I knew about that job on the job.”

His business, co-founded with his friend Sophie Adelman in 2016, offers what he claims is “a genuine, credible alternative that can compete with university”.

Multiverse matches school leavers with more than 300 employers including Google, Facebook, Morgan Stanley and Depop, and provides on-the-job training tailored to the needs of employees as well as personal coaching and extracurricular activities and societies akin to those at university.

The training is funded by a 0.5% levy placed on all companies with an annual payroll bill of more than £3m. This can be spent on their own training costs or transferred to other organisations, such as Multiverse.

Blair, a lifelong Liverpool FC fan, claims that some young people have even turned down places at Oxford to join his scheme.

It has also proved popular with venture capitalist investors, including Google’s VC division, which have pumped millions into the business. Late last year, a third round of funding valued Multiverse at \$875m (£700m). Blair is understood to own just under 50% of the shares, which means his stake could be worth up to £350m – far more than his dad’s estimated £60m fortune.

He recently splashed some of his cash on a five-storey west London townhouse for a reported £22m. The seven-bedroom residence, which he shares with his wife, Suzanne Ashman, and their two children, features a two-storey “iceberg” basement with an indoor pool, gym and multi-car garage.

He set foot on the property ladder early when his mother, Cherie Blair, bought a £265,000 flat for him to live in while he was studying at Bristol University.

Blair prefers to dress in the relaxed style of a Silicon Valley tech CEO, in Multiverse-branded T-shirts or hoodies paired with jeans and often multicoloured trainers. He once said he had a branded top in almost every colour “so I can wear a different one every day”.

He has been praised for prioritising social mobility at Multiverse, where 53% of apprentices are people of colour and 36% come from poorer backgrounds. Last year he was appointed to a government taskforce aiming to improve socioeconomic diversity in financial services.

Blair’s life mission, he says, is to “make sure the best jobs the next decade don’t just go to the same people who got the best jobs for the last decade”.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/01/euan-blair-from-pms-son-to-700m-business-and-an-mbe>

## 2022.06.02 - Spotlight

- [Out of office? How working from home has divided Britain](#)
- [Film From The Fly to A History of Violence: our writers pick their favourite Cronenberg movies](#)
- [Television Borgen review – this antidote to real-life politics is like The West Wing 2022](#)
- ['What do I have to lose?' The desperate long Covid patients turning to 'miracle cures'](#)

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Working from home](#)

## Out of office? How working from home has divided Britain



Out of office ... UK workers are less keen to return to commuting than their European counterparts. Illustration: David Biskup/The Guardian

More than a third of the UK's office-based workforce is still working from home to the anger of some bosses – and politicians. Is hybrid working the

new normal, or can firms tempt employees back full-time?



Rupert Neate

@RupertNeate

Thu 2 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 07.06 EDT

Julie worked “crunching numbers” for the government from home for most of the pandemic, before recently returning to her desk in Whitehall two days a week. The civil servant, in her late 20s, says she was enjoying “the camaraderie of being back working with colleagues”. But then she found a message had been left on her desk while she was at a meeting with her bosses.

Jacob Rees-Mogg is leaving this note for civil servants who aren’t at their desks... [pic.twitter.com/7KzBcGKVJP](https://pic.twitter.com/7KzBcGKVJP)

— Dino Sofos (@dinosofos) [April 22, 2022](#)

“Sorry you were out when I visited,” read the note left by Jacob Rees-Mogg, the minister for Brexit opportunities and government efficiency. “I look forward to seeing you in the office very soon. With every good wish.”

Over a post-work grapefruit gin and tonic at the Two Chairmen, a Westminster pub favoured by civil servants, she says receiving Rees-Mogg's note has made her reconsider her dream of a long career in public service. "I'd love to tell him where to shove his good wishes," she says. "We've all been working our socks off throughout the pandemic and now he's leaving notes implying we're not working if we're not at our desks.

"And, this from [the multimillionaire MP who \[appeared to have\] nodded off in parliament](#)," Julie (not her real name) says to the agreement of colleagues. They are drinking outside the pub on a recent Wednesday evening – which has become the new night for after-work drinks with so many people only in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays (sparking the acronym Twats).

Battles similar to that between Rees-Mogg and civil servants are being played out in offices across the country. While many staff are happy to return to the office, managers in some companies are trying to cajole or pressurise workers back to their desks full-time.

It is now four months since [Boris Johnson told civil servants that they “need to show a lead and make sure ... everybody gets back to work”](#). But more than a third of the UK's office-based workforce is still working from home (at least for part of the time), according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Fewer than one in 10 say they want to return to their desks five days a week. Hybrid is officially the new normal, according to the government's statisticians.

The ONS said the most common reason given for home working was because it had become "part of workers' normal routine", suggesting they "have adopted home working long-term".

This stuff about us not working properly unless we're in the office is disproved by the research

*Nick Bloom*

Going back to the office is less popular in the UK than in Europe, according to travel figures compiled by Google's Mobility report. It showed that last

week UK commutes were down 22% compared with pre-pandemic levels, while nearly all Europeans seem to be back at their desks, with Spain and France commutes down 9%, Germany 7% and Italy 6%.

Workers in London appear to be the most sluggish about returning. South Western Railway, which runs commuter-heavy trains from Surrey and Hampshire into London Waterloo, the UK's busiest railway station, says that rush-hour arrivals have only recovered to 50% of the number pre-pandemic. The number of passengers on the tube remains at 70% of pre-Covid levels, according to Transport for London figures. Across the country, rail passenger numbers have returned to about three-quarters of pre-coronavirus levels, according to the latest Department for Transport data.

Even train industry bosses are still working from home. The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) is the industry body “encouraging businesses and commuters to take the train and get the country back on track”. Yet as of 1 June on its website, it continued to tell its own staff: “All we ask is that you do a minimum of two days a week in the office; the rest of your time can be working from home.”

A recent newspaper report said that the RDG’s chief executive, Jacqueline Starr, had been taking the train to the body’s London headquarters just twice a week on average, spending most of her time working from home in Somerset. The RDG disputes this. A spokesperson said that “some weeks [Starr] works from the office three, four or even five days a week”.

Bosses say they want staff back within sight because they are more productive in the office and it’s harder to collaborate and be creative with colleagues over endless video calls. Many workers, however, say they get much more done at home without gossiping and other office distractions.



Office work can mean more interactions – or distractions. Illustration: David Biskup/The Guardian

Three-quarters of people polled by the ONS said working from home has improved their work-life balance, as well as allowing greater flexibility for working parents and big savings on commuting (in money and time). There is an age divide, with younger people and recent hires more likely to be keen to be in the office to learn from more experienced colleagues and to make it easier to get noticed. Older people who are more established in their careers are, generally, less concerned about presenteeism.

“Hybrid working is not in principle wrong, but unfortunately we see problems with the Passport Office, we see problems with DVLA [the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency], some government services not being provided in the way they should be,” Rees-Mogg told the Guardian during a tour of border controls at Eurotunnel in Folkestone. “And so getting people back, getting people to work to their contractual terms, to ensure that we are providing the services that the British voter expects is important, or we don’t need the office space.”

It is certainly not just the government re-evaluating its property portfolio. A survey by the flexible office space provider Regus found that 69% of companies are planning to reduce their office footprints – which would

imply most have accepted the future of work is hybrid. The City of London has announced plans to “repurpose” office buildings left empty by the pandemic into at least 1,500 new homes by 2030. The new homes would represent a 20% increase on the current 7,850 residential units and mark a sharp change in direction. Just seven new homes were built in the Square Mile between April 2017 and March 2018.

One person who thinks this shift to hybrid work is no bad thing is Nick Bloom, a professor of economics at Stanford University in California, who has been studying the efficiency of home working since well before the pandemic struck. He says the science shows working from home makes staff more productive – and happier.

“Many bosses want everyone back in the office every day because they think that staff are most efficient when all in together,” he says. “All this stuff Rees-Mogg and Boris [Johnson] are saying about people not really working properly unless they’re in the office is disproved by the research.”

As early as 2015, he published research showing that in a study of 16,000 call centre staff, those who worked from home were 13% more efficient than their office-based colleagues. [The paper](#) in the Quarterly Journal of Economics found that the WFH team were more productive as they took fewer breaks, were sick less often and put in more calls an hour as they didn’t get distracted by tea breaks and water-cooler moments.

Yet the prime minister told the Daily Mail, which has been running a campaign against creeping WFH culture, that his “experience of working from home is you spend an awful lot of time making another cup of coffee and then, you know, getting up, walking very slowly to the fridge, hacking off a small piece of cheese, then walking very slowly back to your laptop and then forgetting what it was you’re doing”. Bloom, who previously worked in Whitehall, says this is “pure dog-whistle politics”.

“They [Rees-Mogg and Johnson] are playing to the crowd. I assume they have sat down with advisers and figured out attacking WFH is popular with voters they need,” he says. “It’s popular rhetoric with Brexit supporters and non-graduates who are likely to be working frontline jobs.”

The pandemic has led to a permanent change in working practices and the office as form of control is gone for ever

*Victoria Robinson*

The Trades Union Congress (TUC), the unions' umbrella body, has warned that working from home risks creating a “new class divide” as frontline workers in supermarkets and hospitals, mechanics and other customer-centric jobs do not have the option to work from home. Frances O’Grady, the TUC general secretary, says: “Everyone should have access to flexible working. But while home working has grown, people in jobs that can’t be done from home have been left behind. They deserve access to flexible working, too. And they need new rights to options like flexitime, predictable shifts and job shares.”

The ONS found this week that 23% of workers earning £40,000 or more are still working from home five days a week and a further 38% are in a hybrid pattern, splitting their time between the office and home. But just 6% of people earning £15,000 or less are working from home every day, and only 8% have hybrid working privileges.

Victoria Robinson, a partner at PwC, who advises firms on adapting to WFH and hybrid working, says it’s “unrealistic and unwise” for employers to force workers back to the office full-time.

“This is not a temporary blip; the pandemic has led to a permanent change in working practices and the office as a form of control is gone for ever,” she says. “We’re in the midst of a ‘great resignation’, with more a fifth of workers expecting to change jobs in the next year.

“The war for talent has well and truly arrived,” she says, and it is employers who have to make sure they have an “attractive employee value proposition” to retain and attract the best workers. “Employees are telling us in one of the largest ever surveys of the workforce that what they really want is more flexibility,” she says. “Granting that keeps staff happy.”

While PwC was one of the first big companies to give staff a cash incentive of £1,000 to encourage people to come back to the office last autumn, the

firm is now promoting an “empowered flexibility” model in which employees are expected to spend 40-60% of their time “co-located with colleagues”. All its 22,000 UK staff have also been given Friday afternoons off throughout the summer.

However, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the industry body for human resources managers, warns that while WFH can work for many employees, it can hinder companies and prove frustrating for managers. Claire McCartney, the CIPD’s resourcing and inclusion adviser, says “many employees are reporting productivity improvements, but there are drawbacks for many organisations. The bottom line is there isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach; companies and employees need to work together to find the right balance,” she says. “Now is the time to get teams to all agree on some principles of how much home working is appropriate.”

There are also concerns about the potential mental health impacts of working from home. Research by management consultancy firm McKinsey found that working from home had actually increased “burnout” rates among all employees as they struggled to juggle their careers and family lives, and this was particularly the case for women. The survey of 65,000 employees found that the gap between male and female burnout rates nearly doubled, with 42% of women reporting burnout compared to a third of men.

The big global banks Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan were among the most dogmatic in ordering all staff back to the office after complaining that it was impossible to “hustle” from home. But the banks’ bosses have struggled to enforce the policy and have been forced to relent over fears of losing top talent.

Goldman Sachs’s chief executive, David Solomon, said “remote work is not ideal for us, and it’s not a new normal”, and predicted in February 2021 that it would be “an aberration that we’re going to correct as quickly as possible”.

A year later, however, less than half the bank’s employees were regularly turning up to its New York headquarters, forcing Solomon, who is [a club DJ in his spare time](#), to again plead with staff to come back.

“The secret sauce to our organisation is, we attract thousands of really extraordinary young people who come to Goldman Sachs to learn to work, to create a network of other extraordinary people, and work very hard to serve our clients,” he said in an interview with Forbes magazine. “Part of the secret sauce is that they come together and collaborate and work with people that are much more experienced than they are.”

The solution is to make the office a nice place. The big reason people want to come back is to socialise with colleagues

*Nick Bloom*

Jamie Dimon, JP Morgan Chase’s chief executive, said working from home “doesn’t work for spontaneous idea generation. It doesn’t work for culture.”

The wife of one of his top bankers “sent me a nasty note about: ‘How can you make him go back?’”, Dimon told a Wall Street summit in May 2021. “But that’s life.” But JP Morgan also struggled to persuade bankers in New York and London back to their desks, despite tracking swipecard logs and managers reportedly “putting the fear of God” in people who didn’t turn up enough. Dimon finally relented last month and said 40% of the bank’s 270,000 employees could work as few as two days a week from the office. In his [annual letter](#) to shareholders, he said “it’s clear that working from home will become more permanent in American business”.

The London law firm Stephenson Harwood is allowing its staff to work from home 100% of the time – but only if they take a 20% pay cut. “Like so many firms, we see value in being in the office together regularly, while also being able to offer our people flexibility,” a spokesperson said.

On the popular law industry website RollOnFriday, one Stephenson Harwood lawyer said the “100home80pay” policy was “a total gamechanger”. “I get to live in Bath and work for a City firm”, earning more than at their former regional firm “even after the 20% discount”.



Working from home can mean being there for more bath times. Illustration: David Biskup/The Guardian

“The best bit, though, is that I can be a better dad to my daughter and a better husband to my wife. For context, I work in the PE [private equity] team and spent the last week working hard to get a transaction over the line but I did not miss a single bath time – neither my daughter’s nor my own!” However, other Stephenson Harwood lawyers complained that it was unfair to pay people different amounts for doing the same amount of billable hours.

Google went for the carrot – rather than stick – tactic to get its employees back to work at its vast Googleplex headquarters in Silicon Valley by hiring the R&B artist Lizzo to perform a private concert.

“We’ve had a long two-and-a-half years of protecting others and ourselves but also being very disconnected,” [Lizzo told the thousands of Googlers](#), who had been ordered to go back to the office three days a week. “Thank you for being back. Thank you for surviving. Google: we back, bitch.”

Bloom, the Stanford professor, says early reports show Google workers are mostly following the mandate. “Getting Lizzo works, but it’s hardly a permanent solution. What next: Taylor Swift or Justin Bieber?” he asks.

“The big reason people want to come back is to socialise with colleagues. Really, the best solution is to make the office a nice place.”

This article was amended on 2 June 2022 to include a Rail Delivery Group response to a sentence saying the RDG’s chief executive was commuting to the office two days a week.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jun/02/how-working-from-home-has-divided-britain>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[David Cronenberg](#)

## From The Fly to A History of Violence: our writers pick their favourite Cronenberg movies



Stills from Dead Ringers, The Fly, Maps to the Stars, A History of Violence and Cosmopolis. Composite: 20th Century Movies/Fox/Dimension Films/Everett/Warner Bros/Focus Features/Entertainment One Films

With the release of the director's latest body horror Crimes of the Future, Guardian writers have singled out their most-loved Cronenberg offerings

[Scott Tobias](#), [Jordan Hoffman](#), [Charles Bramesco](#), [AA Dowd](#), [Guy Lodge](#), [Benjamin Lee](#), [Catherine Shoard](#), [Radheyen Simonpillai](#), [Veronica Esposito](#) and [Jesse Hassenger](#)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 02.05 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 10.17 EDT

## The Brood



Photograph: Canadian Film Development Corporation/Sportsphoto/Allstar

Cronenberg's horror films could be described as unnerving and unsettling, or majestically gross, but they're almost never scary in the traditional sense. The Brood is a blood-curdling exception, unleashing a small army of half-formed dwarf-children with murderous intent. Written in the wake of Cronenberg's bitter divorce and custody battle, The Brood is a raw expression of anger and psychic distress, which manifests itself in the bodily mutations that often find their way into his work. Only here the little monsters are literally the product of broken marriage, asexual offspring that the mother, Nola (Samantha Eggar), spawns while undergoing an intensive New Age therapy.

The Brood follows Nola's husband, Frank (Art Hindle), as he tries to gain custody over their young daughter, but they're stalked at every turn by the girl's freakish siblings, who are small enough to squeeze through windows and strong enough to wield blunt instruments of death. Cronenberg builds to one his most notoriously grotesque images, but the film has a pulpy intensity throughout that's unusual for the director, tied to personal emotions that don't feel as intellectualized as his other work. It's a war of the heart – nasty, brutish and short. *Scott Tobias*

## Scanners



Photograph: Metro-goldwyn-mayer/Sportsphoto/Allstar

“All right. We’re gonna’ do it the Scanner way – I’m gonna’ suck your brain dry.”

So says Michael Ironside’s evil telepath Darryl Revok in David Cronenberg’s *Scanners* before beginning one of the most bonkers showdowns in film history. Revok and Cameron Vale (Stephen Lack), our hero looking to prevent, or at least understand, a dangerous pharmacological conspiracy, stare each other down and *think* at each other. Like every kid who has tried to use the Force, their faces twitch, their arms shake, their eyes

go bug out. Because this is a movie, the blood begins to spray, the flesh pulls apart, and everyone goes “ewwww”.

Scanners was Cronenberg’s last film financed by Canadian tax shelters, and was enough of a hit to get him on Hollywood’s radar. It has the action, plot twists, and gore to hook a mainstream audience, but is also still fundamentally subversive. It has the dying gasps of late 60s radicalism wearing early 80s Space Shuttle-era clothing.

I’ve seen the movie 10 times and still can’t decide if Patrick McGoohan’s Dr Paul Ruth is a villain. I do know, however, that the brutalist Canadian architecture, enormous lab computers, and the Lyle Mays-esque keyboards and fortissimo strings in Howard Shore’s score are magnificent. The movie’s still-shocking early kill – that exploding head – has also come in handy as a GIF for reacting to surprising emails and texts over the years, too. *Jordan Hoffman*

## Videodrome



Photograph: TCD/Prod.DB/Alamy

Even if it wasn’t the source of “long live the new flesh”, the closest thing to a mission statement for David Cronenberg’s entire oeuvre; even if it didn’t

give us the character name Brian O'Blivion, or an all-timer performance from Debbie Harry at her most dizzyingly gorgeous; even if it didn't presage the brain-melting nightmare of the Internet one media revolution ahead of schedule, predicting the unlimited stream of sadism on LiveLeak and the like; even if it was stripped of the thousand little things that make it a master's crowning achievement, Videodrome would still be an immaculately assembled thriller from a director operating on an intellectual plane no one else can access.

In his creepily prescient vision of a dystopian future in which moving images have saturated the public's brains to the point of causing tumors, Cronenberg advanced his pet themes of technologies run amok and permeable bodies to hallucinatory new highs, situating what could've been a simple gross-out exercise in a larger, more ambitious framework of political turmoil. We have not been desensitized by accident. The numbing effect of overexposure to what we now understand as 'content' is deliberate, the conscious doing of nefarious institutional powers who want to control our thoughts. Just look at star James Woods – now a fringe ideologue wingnut, like a living cautionary tale for failing to heed his own warnings. *Charles Bramesco*

## The Fly



Photograph: 20 Century Fox/Sportsphoto/Allstar

More than 35 years later, [The Fly](#) remains the biggest hit of David Cronenberg's career. Which makes sense, as it also may be his most accessible: a remake of a 1950s B-movie that twists all the director's body-horror preoccupations into the shape of a state-of-the-art creature feature. But far from losing himself in the Hollywood machine, Cronenberg fused his outré preoccupations to the demands of a plum studio gig.

The Fly has it all: comedy, romance, scares, the unforgettably disgusting Chris Walas effects work used to transform Jeff Goldblum into a mistake of science that would make Mary Shelley proud. The film-maker's true coup is smuggling an all-too-relatable tragedy into the multiplex under the guise of goopy pulp. Even the winks to the source material ("Help me" gets brilliantly repurposed) reveal how Cronenberg has transformed it, finding the real horror of ageing and disease in the hubristic teleporter mishap of a cocky scientist. The result is one of the grossest, saddest box-office sensations of all time – and proof that there's no corrupting Cronenberg's creative DNA, even when it's been spliced with the squarer interests of 20th Century Fox. *AA Dowd*

## Dead Ringers



Photograph: Morgan Creek Entertainment/Allstar

Made on the back of Cronenberg's unprecedeted box office success with *The Fly*, *Dead Ringers* was an object lesson in how not to sell out to the mainstream. Relative to anything he had made previously, however, this was the Canadian's idea of a prestige drama, the grungy grotesquerie of his previous body-horror milestones replaced with sleek surgical-steel cool, confining many of its grisliest ideas to the interior realm. Still, there was a richly salacious undertow to this story of identical twin brothers who share a gynaecological practice – and take creepy advantage of their physical interchangeability in their dealings with women. Roger Ebert, not a fan, likened it to “a collaboration between med school and a supermarket tabloid”, as if that very description isn’t catnip to Cronenbergians: the film balances complex psychological ideas of masculine impulses and sexual power-plays with a witty, nasty B-movie sensibility.

That conflict is also contained in Jeremy Irons’s extraordinary dual performance in the lead(s), which put him on the Hollywood map after stars like Robert De Niro and William Hurt turned it down, and won him a number of major US critics’ awards. The Oscars, of course, were too squeamish to nominate him, and two years later, when Irons won for *Reversal of Fortune*, he thanked Cronenberg in his speech. “Some of you may understand why,” he said: 30-odd years later, Cronenberg’s shivery, slithery masterpiece has eclipsed the role he won for. *Guy Lodge*

## eXistenZ



Photograph: PictureLux/The Hollywood Archive/Alamy

Released in the spring of 1999, just weeks after *The Matrix*, there was never going to be quite the same breakout appeal for Cronenberg's similar but smaller sci-fi reality-bender *eXistenZ* (less Keanu, more fish guts). But the huge, and hugely unexpected, zeitgeist-grabbing success of the Wachowskis' franchise-starter pushed its darker, weirder cousin even further into the shade, where it's unfairly remained ever since. For me, it's the far more arresting concoction, a strange, dreamy thriller that sees the director replaying some of his greatest hits without any lethargic laurel-resting. It's the rare film about gaming that's aged with barely any wrinkles, over two decades later, its view of the obsessive, all-consuming nature of the industry and our corrupting desire for other more immersive realities feels ever-contemporary.

It's thankfully not the techno-blasting, gross-out horror [the lurid mis-sell of a trailer promised](#), but its gristly vision of umbilically linked, spinally inserted game pods still seeps its way under the skin. Jude Law and Jennifer Jason Leigh's flirty, all-chips-in players alternate between arousal and unease and so do we, a weirdly graphic film about sex without a single sex scene.  
*Benjamin Lee*

## Spider



Photograph: Photo 12/Alamy

Before Kings Cross got scrubbed up, it was the go-to location for directors in search of proper London grime. It had it all: railways, sidings, soot, gas works, pubs, canal, alleys, cobbles, the enveloping sense of crime. One of the last films shot in those lovely, rotten old days was Cronenberg's 2002 adaptation of the Patrick McGrath psycho-horror about a disturbed man (Ralph Fiennes) over-optimistically released from an institution who begins to have flashbacks to his childhood, while holed up in Miranda Richardson's boarding house. Richardson does double duties here, also playing Spider's late mother, who frequently feels the need to call on Gabriel Byrne's well-equipped plumber.

From the first shot to the last, Spider is tense as spun silk. Fiennes, rocking a hairdo inspired by Beckett, is on top repellent form but it's the sleek narrative lines and filthy production design which steal the show. Cronenberg, the cast, the producers all made it just for fun, no salaries involved. You can see why: it's rare to be happy that something so horrible is so hard to shake. *Catherine Shoard*

## A History of Violence



Photograph: New Line Cinema/Allstar

The genius of David Cronenberg's most "accessible" movie is the way the Canadian director's perversities creep into that all-American genre, the western, corrupting it from the inside like the parasite in *Shivers*.

Viggo Mortensen – coming straight off the bloom from his Lord of the Rings run into the first of four collaborations with Cronenberg – stars as Tom Stall, a diner owner living the American dream with an impossibly perfect family in a sleepy midwest town. Their manicured facade crumbles when Tom protects his community from two visiting baddies like a rancher in a classic John Ford narrative. Cronenberg seduces audiences with explosive bursts of movie action that meet his standard; there are smashed heads and shredded cartilage. But then he lives in those celebrated acts of heroic violence long enough to let discomfort and anxiety settle in.

The "heroism" causes a fissure. The kids act out. Domestic sex between Tom and his wife Edie (a brilliant Maria Bello) goes from innocent cheerleader cosplay to a carnal, aggressive and masochistic bout on a stairwell (the Cronenberg of *Crash* gets his moment in the midwest). And more villains pull up. The bad guys don't bring violence to this small town. The simple and evergreen point [A History of Violence](#) so elegantly makes is that it was always there, hiding in plain sight. *Radheyen Simonpillai*

# Cosmopolis



Photograph: TCD/Prod.DB/Alamy

Cosmopolis is far from the most-loved of Don DeLillo's novels, and it's safe to say the same about Cronenberg's 2012 cinematic adaptation. That's a shame, because this piece of intellectual malarky centered around a Bezos-rich twentysomething stands out among the auteur's post-millennial movies. Also, in an era where lone angry men committing acts of gun murder has become commonplace, the film is sadly relevant and prophetic.

Cosmopolis takes place across a single day, as billionaire man-child Eric Packer rides in his limo across New York City to get a haircut. He faces increasingly direct threats to his life, although appears unconcerned, or even welcoming of the potential violence as a novelty. With the plot all but a red herring, the texture of Cosmopolis takes center stage. The limo itself is one of Cronenberg's slickest, strangest simulated realities, and I can't imagine many film-makers exceeding the job Cronenberg does of rendering DeLillo's unique dialogue – blending absurdism, stark humor, pop cultural currency, and postmodern theory-speak – into brilliant repartee that's at once sardonic, ludicrous, and deep. The film can be scrutinized for insight into how massive, transnational flows of money warp our sense of body and ethics, or it can just be enjoyed as a stupidly entertaining romp, complete

with a subplot of rats – one of New York City’s most plentiful natural resources – becoming the latest trendy currency (crypto-bros take note). Ultimately a tale of a murder in search of a justification, in which the victim seems in cahoots with his assassin, it is singular Cronenberg. *Veronica Esposito*

## Maps to the Stars



Photograph: Caitlin Cronenberg/Allstar

Though David Cronenberg has made a Stephen King adaptation, a big hit remake, and an Oscar-nominated drama, he's not really associated with the ins and outs of Hollywood studio film-making – which makes the sort-of satire *Maps to the Stars* both an unusual project for the film-maker and an admittedly strange pick for a favorite. In truth, it's not Cronenberg's absolute best; my far more basic choice would be *The Fly*, that aforementioned hit remake. But I've returned to *Maps* repeatedly, puzzling out why I respond so warmly to the entanglements of Havana (Julianne Moore), an aging actor; Agatha (Mia Wasikowska), her mysterious personal assistant; Jerome (Robert Pattinson), a limo driver; and Benjie (Evan Bird), a child actor, among others.

Part of it is Cronenberg's talent for teasing darkness out of the sunshine. Though it's not precisely a horror film, *Maps* is full of gothic touches, like the gloves Agatha wears to cover her extensive burns, the various characters' hallucinatory encounters with ghosts, or the ghastly family secrets eventually unveiled. Typical Hollywood-satire talking points are sidestepped in favor of depicting a vivid sense of rot, and even some common logistical compromises – shooting parts of this Los Angeles-set movie in Canada – emphasize the industry's disconnected, alien qualities. Mostly, I love *Maps to the Stars* because Cronenberg seems to be spending the movie thoughtfully considering whether to burn the whole city down – the perfect prelude to the eight-year break he took after making it. *Jesse Hassenger*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/02/from-the-fly-to-a-history-of-violence-our-writers-pick-their-favourite-cronenberg-movies>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[TV review](#)[Television](#)

## Borgen review – this antidote to real-life politics is like The West Wing 2022



Troubled waters ... Signe Kragh (Johanne Louise Schmidt) and Birgitte Nyborg (Sidse Babett Knudsen) in Borgen series four. Photograph: Mike Kollöffel/Netflix

The Danish political drama is a breath of fresh air, given the unbearableness of Westminster. How lovely to have it back



[Stuart Jeffries](#)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 12.22 EDT

Now we know why [Donald Trump wanted to buy Greenland](#). In the Netflix premiere of the Danish political drama *Borgen* – returning with a fourth series after nearly a decade away – oil has been found on the world's biggest island. Fingers crossed, Denmark's ambassador to the Arctic tells a foreign ministry briefing, the field will be as big and lucrative as Ekofisk. You remember Ekofisk: the oilfield funded by Norway to secure the economic future of its citizens for generations while we Britons, sad face, did nothing so sensible with our North Sea revenues.

Just a second, you might well interject. Could you fill us in on Greenland's political status? Of course. Greenland was a Danish colony from 1814 until 1953, when it became part of Denmark. Home rule was established in 1979 and it voted for further self-governing powers in 2008. That said, not a few of Greenland's 56,000-strong population yearn to become independent and use any oil to fund that project. Aren't you glad you asked?

Borgen may be a near-homonym for boring – and even I know that the episode that dealt with political machinations over who should become Denmark's next EU commissioner is an hour I would have better spent bathing in ass's milk with cucumber slices over my eyes – but this opening episode whistles along.

It cuts fast and furious between cabinet crises, ratings issues at the TV1 news channel and the personal and political issues of our heroine, Birgitte Nyborg, while re-acquainting us with my pale, male – if not yet stale – role models, Søren Malling's grumpy news editor, Torben Friis, and Lars Mikkelsen's bad boy economics sage, Søren Ravn.



Meet the press ... Nyborg as foreign minister. Photograph: Mike Kollöffel/Netflix

Back to the plot. A government bean counter calculates that if Greenland's oilfield yields 100m barrels over a 30-year period, that would produce an income stream of \$285bn. That money would pay for a lot of teachers, the finance minister, Helle Holst, tells a cabinet meeting. But hold on: Denmark can't be party to drilling for oil, counters our heroine, who is the foreign minister and thus Copenhagen's answer to Liz Truss. Despite all the other stuff going on in her life – hot flushes, a son dedicated to pig liberation, the pregnancy of her ex's new partner – she is the most clear-sighted cabinet

member. Copenhagen, she points out, signed [the Paris agreement](#) and vowed to go carbon neutral by 2050.

True, says pragmatic Helle, but that gives Denmark 28 years to exploit the new oil source without breaking that promise. It is a remark that would make Greta Thunberg and [George Monbiot](#)'s forehead veins throb so much that, if those sources of green energy could be plugged into the National Grid, we might not need oil to make our kettles boil.

How far, this new series of *Borgen* asks, should politicians stand by their ideals? Should we sacrifice our principles on the altar of economic stability?

The questions become more vexed when we find out that Russians have bought up the Canadian stake in the company that is drilling for oil. Worse yet, the head of that company is Putin's buddy. Can the Danish government really endorse such a project at the very moment western sanctions are being imposed on the Kremlin for invading Ukraine? If you answered yes, you are probably [Sergei Lavrov](#).

It cuts fast and furious between cabinet crises, TV ratings issues and the issues of our heroine, Birgitte Nyborg

Much has changed since we last visited *Borgen*, in 2014. Britain's Scandi love affair is over. No one accessorises wellies with Faroe Isle jumpers any more. I have stopped answering my phone with a cheery: "Saga Norén, Malmö CID." Denmark has elected a second female prime minister, [Mette Frederiksen](#). It had elected none when the show, about Nyborg's rise to the top job, began.

As discussed, though, Nyborg's career has taken a downwards turn – yet she still wields power as part of a coalition led by Signe Kragh. Effectively, she is Nick Clegg to David Cameron, if Clegg and Cameron had been women and inspiring.

But if the future is female (the title of the first episode), there is no sisterly solidarity. Kragh finds out that Nyborg has turned all Dominic Cummings, briefing against her boss because of the PM's unconscionable pro-oil stance.

“You’re alone on an ice floe,” snarls Kragh when she finds out what Nyborg has been doing behind her back. “Let’s hope it doesn’t melt under your feet.” Now that, boys and girls, is how to make a threat.

If, like me, you yearn for democratic politics to be carried out with machiavellian sophistication and attention to principle and policy detail – in other words, in a manner inimical to Westminster’s practices – you will agree that it is lovely to have Borgen back. Like a 2022 version of [The West Wing](#), it is a fictional antidote to unbearable reality.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2022/jun/02/borgen-review-this-antidote-to-real-life-politics-is-like-the-west-wing-2022>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

## ‘What do I have to lose?’: desperate long Covid patients turn to ‘miracle cures’



Composite: The Guardian/Getty Images

Few of the 23 million Americans with lingering symptoms are getting answers – in this dangerous void, alternative providers and wellness

companies have created a cottage industry

*Katie Thornton*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 02.00 EDTLast modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 13.20 EDT

Robert McCann, a 44-year-old political strategist from Lansing, Michigan, sleeps for 15 hours – and when he wakes up, he still finds it impossible to get out of bed. Sometimes he wakes up so confused that he's unsure what day it is.

McCann tested positive for Covid in July 2020. He had mild symptoms that resolved within about a week. But a few months later, pain, general confusion and debilitating exhaustion returned and never fully left. McCann's symptoms fluctuated between grin-and-bear-it tolerability and debilitation. After a barrage of doctor's appointments, MRIs, X-rays, blood work, breathing tests and Cat scans, he had spent more than \$8,000 out of pocket – all with no answers. Nearly a year and a half since his symptoms returned, on some days it can take him upwards of three hours to get out of bed.

"I don't want to say they don't care, because I don't think that's right," McCann told me. "But ... you just feel like you're just part of a system that isn't actually concerned with what you're dealing with."

When McCann was recently offered an appointment at a long Covid clinic through the University of Michigan, they were booked 11 months out. Without answers or possible courses of action from medical professionals, he has turned to online platforms, like Reddit's nearly 30,000-member forum where "longhaulers" share the supplements and treatment protocols they've tried. He says he's skeptical of "miracle cures". But, after about 17 months of illness and no relief from doctor's visits, he's desperate. "I'll just be frank," he told me, "if someone has mentioned on the Subreddit that it's helped them, I've probably bought it and tried it."

Long Covid is not yet widely understood, but already has the dubious distinction of being a so-called "contested" condition – a scarlet letter often applied to long-term illnesses wherein the physical evidence of patients'

reported symptoms is not yet measurable by allopathic medicine (and therefore, by some doctors, deemed not to be real). While I don't have long Covid, I received a diagnosis of a contested condition in 2015 after a similarly disheartening experience of being left to fend for myself.

Today, up to 23 million Americans have lingering symptoms that could be described as long Covid – and few are getting answers. And in this dangerous void, alternative providers and wellness companies have created a cottage industry of long Covid miracle cures. Some doctors ply controversial blood tests that claim to identify evidence of the elusive disease. Other practitioners speak assuredly about the benefits of skipping breakfast and undergoing ozone therapy, or how zinc can bring back loss of taste or smell. Some desperate patients have gone overseas for controversial stem cell therapy. Over the next seven years, the global complementary and alternative medicine industry is expected to quadruple in value; analysts cite alternative Covid therapies as a reason for growth.

You just feel like you're just part of a system that isn't actually concerned with what you're dealing with

*Robert McCann*

Many long Covid patients I spoke with, like Colin Bennett of southern California, have already put their bodies on the line – and have sometimes spent a fortune – for a chance at feeling better through alternative therapies. The former professional golfer, who was 33 when he was infected last summer, says he woke up with a “crazy burning” all over his body after about two weeks of mild Covid symptoms. “My entire chest was on fire. It felt like somebody was standing on my chest. I had numbness down my entire left arm,” he said. He initially thought he was having a heart attack. But when he went to the emergency room, all of his tests came back normal. After being prescribed only anxiety medication by his doctor, he turned to private clinics.

In less than a year, he has spent an estimated \$60,000 of his savings on alternative therapies and doctor's visits that weren't covered by his Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan – an insurance option that allows access to more providers, but often carries a hefty price tag. Suffering with

symptoms ranging from tremors and blurry vision to soaring heart rate and exhaustion, Bennett has tried everything from hyperbaric oxygen chambers to a extracorporeal blood oxygenation and ozonation machine – which draws your blood out of your body through a needle stuck in one arm, runs it through a filter, and returns it to your body through a needle in the other arm.

With the help of a “doctor friend”, he’s even had stem cells shipped to him from Mexico and inserted into his body by IV. None of it has helped.

Bennett said the lack of evidence behind these treatments is more or less irrelevant to him. “When you’re like this, you, I have no fear,” he said. “I mean, what do I have to lose? I’m so messed up, who cares?” For desperate patients, the longing to get better can render the difference between double-blind studies and anecdotal successes meaningless.

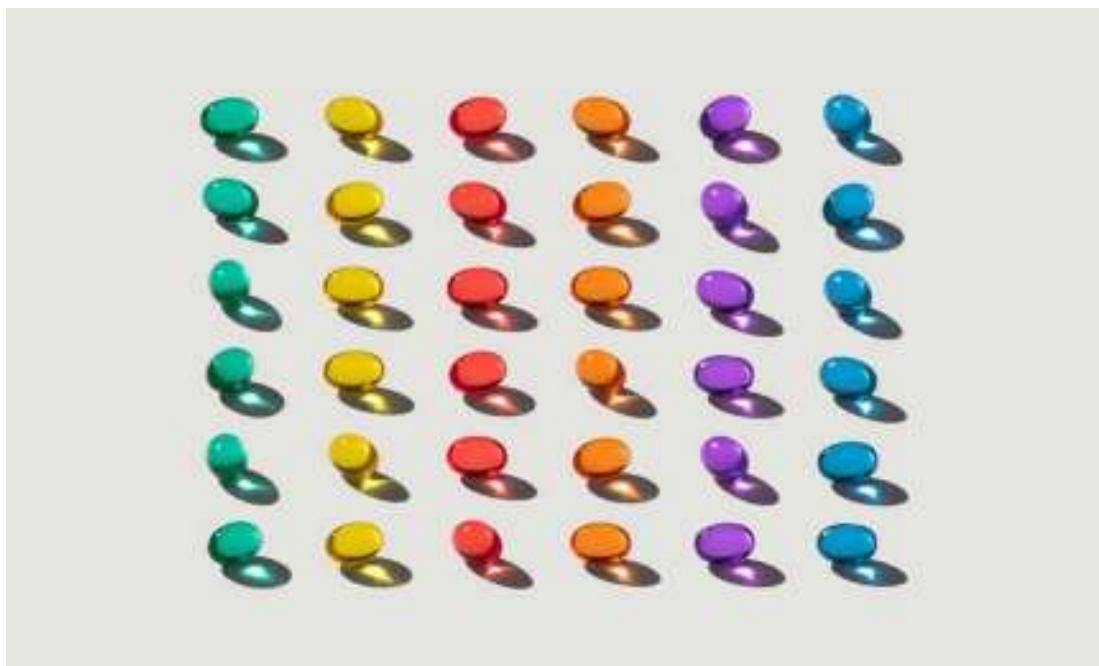
For longhaulers seeking answers outside of mainstream sources, it can be hard to come by information showing which treatment options have scientific backing. Sometimes that information is nonexistent. In the US, our supplement and alternative healthcare industries flourish without much oversight. Every year, Americans spend about \$35bn on supplements alone. That’s thanks largely to a little-known law called the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA), which ensures manufacturers of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbs and botanicals are unencumbered by any burden of proof as to their product’s effectiveness. The deregulatory law was championed by former senator Orrin Hatch of Utah – who had familial ties to the supplement industry – and industry groups who used scare tactics like distributing brochures to patients reading “Write to Congress today or kiss your supplements goodbye!” and “Don’t let the FDA take your supplements away!”

The industry exploded after DSHEA, with the number of available products increasing nearly eightfold in just over a decade. According to an industry trade group, Americans’ trust in the supplement industry has increased substantially during this global pandemic in which doubt has flourished.

It isn’t just supplements that have been touted as cures; some doctors (many of whom cannot accept patients’ insurance) have prescribed existing FDA-

approved drugs like azithromycin and ivermectin for off-label uses – even when the benefit of such use has been anecdotal at best, and handily disproven but buoyed by political conspiracies at worst.

A Mother Jones investigative report from earlier this year highlighted one particularly costly and controversial long Covid treatment, whose company IncellDX's eyebrow-raising approaches include “offering medical advice and recruiting patients on YouTube and social media, failing to disclose financial conflicts of interest, and reports of inconsistencies in lab results”. Patients have paid many hundreds of dollars for IncellDX's unproven long Covid diagnostic test (a whopping 95% of which have come back positive), as well as treatment recommendations, which often include medications currently approved for HIV and cholesterol. Though the company claims 80-85% of their patients have shown improvement, they have yet to put their treatment protocol through clinical trials.



For years, many of us with chronic and contested illnesses have felt we have nowhere to turn but to minimally regulated, expensive, and potentially dangerous treatments. Photograph: MirageC/Getty Images

I have sympathy with those willing to try just about anything. I've paid for many such controversial interventions, diagnostic procedures, and supplement cocktails since I became a contested illness patient in 2015.

With some support from family, I've contributed an estimated \$12,000 to the supplements market in the last seven years – and at least another \$10,000 in out-of-pocket visits to doctors who would recommend a specific course of non-FDA-approved action. The industry is kept afloat, in part, by money from the pockets of people like me: sick people longing for respite, whose skepticism of a for-profit wellness industry has been bested only by a dire need for some gesture at recovery.

My medical woes began in earnest in 2012, long before most of us knew the word coronavirus, around the time of my 19th birthday, with a bladder infection. Seemingly inconsequential at first, I took antibiotics only to find that the squirming discomfort didn't abate. Within six months, a series of cascading, debilitating symptoms (breathtakingly painful stabs through my back and hip, a radiating ache in my left shoulder, et cetera) barged in and didn't leave. By my early 20s, I had grown accustomed to the icy, metallic dye of MRIs coursing through my veins, to being unceremoniously handed paperwork prodding questions I spent my waking hours trying to ignore ("On a scale of one to ten, how would you feel if you had to live the rest of your life with your symptoms as they are today?"), to walking with a cane on bad days.

I was told repeatedly that nothing was wrong. My test results were normal. As one doctor at the Mayo Clinic told me, "We've told you before that we don't have anything else for you here. And I think you need to put a period at the end of that sentence."

After three years of exhausting my treatment options at hospital after hospital, a private clinic in a strip mall outside of Minneapolis offered another chance at salvation. Inside the nondescript storefront that made up the Minnesota Institute of Natural Medicine, I was led down a stout hallway to the sun-filled office of Dr Chris Foley – a cool, confident mid-60s man with dark brown hair and medium build who shook my hand with a near swagger. In Dr Foley's office, there were no blank stares of doubt, no glances at the clock.

A few months after my visit, when my bloodwork came back, Dr. Foley called me at work to tell me I had Lyme disease. I was eager to dive into the recommended two-year course of herbal tinctures and supplements that I

would take at seven different times throughout the day. It wouldn't be cheap, and my insurance wouldn't cover it – these treatments weren't approved by the FDA. But, I was assured, many patients had great luck with this protocol. I bought myself a bottle of wine. "Do not drink until Lyme treatment is over," I wrote on the brown paper bag, and drew a heart.

I never "got better". Some ill-defined combination of time, treatments, reducing inflammation and a large degree of acceptance has given me a great deal of my life back. I don't use my cane any more; I can even take the occasional slam at a skatepark. But – like many long Covid patients – I still manage unexplained pain, as well as cardiac and pulmonary symptoms. Until recently, I took about 70 pills a day – mostly herbs and supplements. Almost seven years since my diagnosis, that bottle of wine still sits in my basement.

In early 2022, I turned on my radio in the middle of a local news story about a beloved doctor who had practiced alternative medicine. This doctor, fit and only 71, had died the week prior of Covid-19, the reporter said. He was unvaccinated. And in the months before his death, he used his medical practice to push dangerous falsehoods about masks and vaccines. I left Dr Foley's practice in late 2016, but before the reporter could even say the name of the doctor, I knew it was him.

During the pandemic, Foley published blogposts on his clinic's website claiming that the vaccine would probably make Covid worse, that masks offered little protection and were dangerous, that vitamin D was as effective as the vaccine, and that the seaweed extract carrageenan and ivermectin were proven to prevent and treat Covid. He prescribed ivermectin to multiple patients despite the fact that the medication had not and has not been shown to have meaningful benefit in treating Covid-19. In March 2021, he referred to Covid as a "so-called pandemic".

He followed his own convictions, and possibly died because of it – and his trusted advice may have killed others.

With a long history of vaccine skepticism running through alternative medicine circles, I didn't feel surprised by his conspiratorial leanings. I just felt sadness that my medical journey left me, and so many others, feeling

like we had nowhere to turn but to doctors who may be prone to flirt with conspiracy.

When people have been let down by the healthcare system ... alternative routes may provide hope and comfort

*Dr Jessica Jaiswal*

According to Dr Jessica Jaiswal, assistant professor of health science at the University of Alabama, medical falsehoods may be particularly dangerous coming from alternative medicine doctors, who may hold trusted esteem in the eyes of sometimes-desperate patients. “This may especially be the case if providers offering alternative options validate patients’ feelings of helplessness and frustration,” Jaiswal says, “and spend the kind of time that physicians in most conventional settings are not able to give due to structural constraints.”

This was certainly my experience – and I’m not alone: according to medical journals, craving more time with a doctor and feeling that a doctor wasn’t interested in their case are among the reasons patients report seeking out alternatives. Though such medical dismissal can happen to anyone, it happens disproportionately to people of color and women, who are statistically and systematically less likely to be treated for their pain. And people living with chronic illness – like long Covid sufferers – are more likely to pursue alternative medicines than those without. “When people have been let down by the healthcare system, whether by neglect, dismissal or systemic exclusion,” says Jaiswal, “alternative routes may provide hope and comfort but also may feel like the only way to exercise agency and power in a chaotic, disempowering situation.”

Renee McGowan, 52, is no stranger to elusive medical conditions and scant, dismissive treatment. In 2019, she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, which manifested as unrelenting pain, balance issues and neuropathy. She was referred to psychotherapy and physical therapy, but said she never felt satisfied with the narrow scope of her treatment protocol. So when McGowan began displaying signs of long Covid in 2020, she wasn’t surprised at the response. “I felt completely and utterly disbelieved,” McGowan told me. “I bring my husband with me because he lends

credibility to a middle-aged woman who is complaining about pain or racing heart rate,” she says.

McGowan lost her sense of smell in mid-February 2020 after a visit to New Jersey. She had difficulty breathing, and coughed so much that she prolapsed her bladder. Because her illness occurred many weeks before Covid tests were available in her small South Carolina fishing village of just over 9,000 people, she never got a test. Two months after her symptoms began, her heart started pounding rapidly in her chest, and her vision grew so blurred and hazy that she often couldn’t read or drive. She couldn’t eat, could barely sleep, and had bouts of rage that terrified her. She eventually started walking with a cane, and fractured her knee in one of many falls. In the summer of 2020, when McGowan suggested to her doctor that her symptoms might be some remnant of Covid-19 (even bringing a printed-out study to the appointment, which McGowan said her doctor did not look at), her doctor referred her to a psychologist.

The response was the same with other doctors and specialists she saw. Eventually McGowan stopped seeking care in the formal medical system. Unable to afford many of the costly alternative treatments she saw other longhaulers discussing online, she spent nearly a year with YouTube and Twitter as her primary care providers, experimenting with different herbs and supplements. It wasn’t until February 2022, nearly two years after her first symptoms, that McGowan was able to see a rheumatologist, who prescribed a low dose of an opioid blocker that has been shown to mitigate chronic pain. That medication, McGowan says, has allowed her to phase out her use of the opioid-like and potentially habit-forming over-the-counter botanical product kratom – which she began using after she had very adverse reactions to the only prescriptions her doctor recommended for her pain: antidepressants Cymbalta and Gabapentin.

In her years in the depths of long Covid social media and Twitter, McGowan says she’s seen practitioners peddling alternative miracle cures that she is leery of. And while there are certainly doctors exploiting the legitimate disenfranchisement of patients, there needn’t be any malice on the part of the alternative providers – many of whom may have left mainstream medicine after seeing their patients languishing in that system. “Allopathic medicine and medical schools have gotten very good at saving people’s lives,” says Dr

David Scales, an assistant professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. “If you have a problem that’s *not* about saving your life, we’re much less good.” For these doctors working to treat chronic debilitation, there isn’t always much evidence to call on.

Medicine – whether allopathic or alternative – is a guessing game, a series of individualized games of trial and error. Allopathic medicine is far from all-knowing, and some traditional and plant-based knowledge is demonstrably and provably curative. But in today’s minimally regulated alternative medicine industry, patients who feel like they have hit walls in allopathic clinics are often met with a plethora of healing products – a fact so enticing that it can overshadow the reality that those “cures” have less demonstrated proof of their efficacy. Between costly supplements and a host of non-FDA-approved medical interventions that doctors can legally recommend, the potential for healing appears to be bound only by our wallets. And, hell, if and when we have the privilege, you can’t blame patients for trying.

For years, many of us with chronic and contested illnesses have felt we have nowhere to turn but to minimally regulated, expensive and potentially dangerous treatments. Now, thousands of longhaulers are joining our ranks. Part of me wants to warn them about the messy road they are about to go down, to encourage them to do everything they can to find a mainstream doctor who takes their insurance who is willing to try to treat their symptoms – even if those doctors can’t yet tell them more about the nature of the new disease that is wreaking havoc on their bodies. But at the same time, I find myself sizing up these patients to glean possible treatment ideas. I make unconscious mental notes about medications and treatments they’ve tried that I haven’t yet done. Despite spending a small fortune and years of my life on largely unfruitful alternative treatments and a theoretical dedication to evidence-based medicine, I too still struggle – and sometimes that struggle threatens to supersede my convictions.

At this point, I know that the parameters have changed. I don’t expect to ever be “done” with this disease. But I still hope. Not for a miracle cure – but for patients of contested illnesses like long Covid and Lyme disease to have our medical concerns believed and addressed by doctors who can accept our insurance. For treatments that are backed up by statistical evidence and double-blind studies with large sample sizes – including, if

research finds them truly effective, those treatments that are currently available only to those who can afford exorbitant out-of-pocket costs. I hope for continued and increased investment in long Covid research. Without it, we risk the livelihoods of hundreds of our friends, our neighbors and perhaps our future selves.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/02/long-covid-patients-alternative-medicine-coronavirus-cures>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.06.02 - Opinion

- For 50 years, governments have failed to act on climate change. No more excuses
- The Amber Heard-Johnny Depp trial was an orgy of misogyny
- The rejection of China's deal shows the Pacific will not be used as a geopolitical pawn
- She takes an age to walk now, but I love my old dog, smells and all

## OpinionUnited Nations

# For 50 years, governments have failed to act on climate change. No more excuses

[Christiana Figueres](#), [Yvo de Boer](#) and [Michael Zammit Cutajar](#)

Conflict and Covid make these troubling times, but national leaders must cooperate and take action now



Leaders agreed to cooperate on threats faced in common at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, 1972. Photograph: Pressens Bild/AFP/Getty Images

Thu 2 Jun 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 07.41 EDT

At the end of February this year, the world's governments signed on to a statement that was startling in its strength and clarity. "The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and planetary health," reads [the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#). "Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global

action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.””

You might think that political leaders could have no higher priority than securing a “liveable and sustainable future”. Is that not what all of us, in every country, need and want for ourselves and for future generations? It is true that other issues are causing grave concern in many societies: governments worldwide are tackling poverty and hunger, wars and civil conflicts, the rising cost of food and energy, health systems and economies crippled by Covid-19.

But as three former UN climate chiefs, let us be clear: as the world’s first major environment summit - the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment - recognised, the crises in security, health, development and the environment are linked. They are loading stress upon stress, especially in the most fragile and conflict-torn parts of the world. The myriad reports of extreme weather we have witnessed in 2022 suggest there is no time to waste.

The further climate change progresses, the more we lock in a future featuring more ruined harvests and more food insecurity along with a host of other problems including rises in sea level, threats to water security, drought and desertification. Governments must act against climate change while also dealing with other pressing crises. We recall the Barbados prime minister, Mia Mottley’s [words at Cop26](#): “The leaders of today – not 2030, not 2050 – must make this choice.”

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [was adopted 30 years ago](#). In our time leading its secretariat, we have witnessed commitments and pledges that have not been fully honoured. While developed countries accepted the convention’s principle of equity and thus their responsibility to lead climate action, their performance has been disappointing, not least in reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases and in mobilising financial support for developing countries that need it.

In the 2015 Paris agreement, all governments agreed to “pursue efforts” to limit global warming to 1.5C (2.7F). We are entitled now to ask where their

efforts have reached, where they are heading and how genuine they are. Science shows action this decade to reduce all greenhouse gases is critical. But the sum total of policies in place now will take us to a world hotter [by 2.7C and perhaps a catastrophic 3.6C](#) above pre-industrial levels.

If science has not persuaded most governments to act, perhaps economics will. [The IPCC provides clear evidence](#) that societies will be more prosperous in a world where climate change is constrained, than in one left to burn. In the energy sector, evidence of the zero-carbon transition is all around us. Wind and solar generation [shows compound growth of about 20% a year](#) and is cheaper almost everywhere than the alternatives. Electric car sales doubled between 2020 and 2021.

Unless one is invested in fossil fuels, there is now no reason not to take the clean energy path. Many corporate actors understand the need for early action on this front. But governments still need to incentivise the transition. The evolving [Just Energy Transition packages](#) may yet offer an investment pathway that can accelerate deployment in emerging and developing countries. Corporate action towards other targets such as reduction of methane emissions, also needs to be encouraged.

If economics should give us hope for accelerating action despite the host of other issues menacing our times, then so should history. Fifty years ago the international community faced a similar litany of troubles: depletion of natural resources, desertification, the legacy of atom bomb testing, mercury contamination, cold war proxy conflicts. Geopolitics split the world. Yet at the 1972 [Conference on the Human Environment](#) in Stockholm, leaders agreed to cooperate on threats faced in common.

Now, with geopolitics made frosty by superpower disagreements and with nations bleeding from Covid and conflict, the world's people need their leaders once more to work together. Governments have acknowledged that their window of opportunity to avert dangerous climate change is closing and have admitted the perils that failure will bring. Rapidly changing economics mean that a climate-safe future is also a more prosperous one. The will of the public – especially among young people – to see climate change constrained is clear.

As we recall the Stockholm conference on its [50th anniversary](#) this week, we need national leaders to recall what it demonstrated about the potential of cooperative action even in disturbed times. We need to see leaders delivering on their climate change promises, in the interests of people, prosperity and the planet.

- Christiana Figueres was executive secretary of UNFCCC from 2010 to 2016, Yvo de Boer was executive secretary of UNFCCC from 2006 to 2010, and Michael Zammit Cutajar was executive secretary of UNFCCC from 1991 to 2002

This article was amended on 2 June 2022. A temperature change of 1.5C is equivalent to a change of 2.7F, not 34F as an earlier version said; that is the equivalent of the temperature of 1.5C.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/for-50-years-governments-have-failed-to-act-on-climate-change-no-more-excuses>

[Opinion](#)[Johnny Depp](#)

## The Amber Heard-Johnny Depp trial was an orgy of misogyny

[Moira Donegan](#)



The backlash to #Me Too has long been under way. But this feels like a tipping point



‘In text messages to friends, Johnny Depp fantasized about murdering his then-wife, the actress Amber Heard.’ Photograph: Reuters

Wed 1 Jun 2022 16.33 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 06.46 EDT

In text messages to friends, Johnny Depp fantasized about murdering his then-wife, the actress Amber Heard. “I will fuck her burnt corpse afterwards to make sure she’s dead,” [Depp wrote](#). In other texts, he disparaged his wife’s body in luridly misogynist terms. “Mushy pointless dangling overused floppy fish market,” he called her.

The texts became public as part of Depp’s defamation suit against Heard, now at trial in a Virginia court. Ostensibly, Depp is suing over a [2018 article](#) that Heard published in the Washington Post, titled “I spoke up against sexual violence – and faced our culture’s wrath.” In the piece, the actress writes, “Two years ago, I became a public figure representing domestic abuse.” The article does not mention Depp, but his lawyers say that the piece was about him – and was defamatory. For those 11 words, Depp sought \$50m.

A jury thought he deserved \$15m. On Wednesday, the case’s verdict came in, finding that Heard defamed Depp, acting with “malice,” when she described herself as a victim of domestic abuse. Bizarrely, the same jury

found that one of Depp's lawyer's defamed Heard when he accused her of staging a "hoax" scene of abuse to which police were called at the couple's home. The verdict came after a trial that was televised – an extremely rare situation for a proceeding that concerns allegations of domestic violence – and which was subject to almost inescapable media coverage, nearly all of it in favor of one litigant, even as the jury was not sequestered. The strange, illogical, and unjust ruling has the effect of sanctioning Depp's alleged abuse of Heard, and of punishing Heard for speaking about it. It will have a devastating effect on survivors, who will be silenced, now, with the knowledge that they cannot speak about their violent experiences at men's hands without the threat of a ruinous libel suit. In that sense, women's speech just became a lot less free.

Over the past six weeks, as the trial was live-streamed online, many of those who have tuned in to watch have treated Heard with the same contempt that Depp did in his texts. A broad consensus has emerged online that Heard must be lying about her abuse. She has been accused of faking the photos of her injuries from Depp's alleged beatings, painting bruises on with makeup. She's been accused of convincing the multiple witnesses who say Depp abused her to lie – repeatedly and under oath – for years. These conspiracy theories are unsupported by the facts of the case, but that has not stopped them from spreading. Online, the case has taken on a heady mythology, and belief in Depp's righteousness persists independent of the evidence.

In the service of this myth, any cruelty can be justified. When Heard took the stand, she became emotional as she recounted how Depp allegedly hit her, manipulated and controlled her, surveilled her and sexually assaulted her. Afterwards, ordinary people, along with a few celebrities and even brands like [Duolingo](#) and [Milani](#), took to social media to mock or undermine Heard. They took screenshots of her weeping face and made it a meme. Many performed mocking re-enactments of her testimony, lip-syncing along as she recounted the alleged abuse. The audio of her crying became a TikTok trend. This cruelty has now been joined in and compounded by the jury, who have gone beyond mocking her for telling her story, and now declared that she actually broke the law by doing so.

This is not the first time Depp has sued over the allegations. In 2020, a British court heard Depp's lawsuit against the British tabloid the Sun, which

Depp sued for defamation after an article referred to him as a “wife beater”. UK courts are much more amenable to defamation claims than American ones, but Depp still couldn’t prevail: the British judge found that the Sun’s characterization of Depp was “substantially true”. That same trial found that Depp physically abused Heard on at least 12 occasions. Yet the actor and his fans claim that it was Heard, not Depp, who was the abuser in their marriage.

The trial has turned into a public orgy of misogyny. While most of the vitriol is nominally directed at Heard, it is hard to shake the feeling that really, it is directed at all women – and in particular, at those of us who spoke out about gendered abuse and sexual violence during the height of the [#MeToo movement](#). We are in a moment of virulent antifeminist backlash, and the modest gains that were made in that era are being retracted with a gleeful display of victim-blaming at a massive scale. One woman has been made into a symbol of a movement that many view with fear and hatred, and she’s being punished for that movement. In this way, Heard is still in an abusive relationship. But now, it’s not just with Depp, but with the whole country.

Since she published her Post piece, Heard’s life has been consumed by the rage and retaliation of Depp and his fans. Lost in the scandal and spectacle of the lawsuit has been this reality: it is Heard, not Depp, who has been put on trial, and she is on trial for saying things whose truth is evidenced by the very fact of the lawsuit itself. Depp’s frivolous and punitive suit, and the frenzy of misogynist contempt for Heard that has accompanied it, have done a great deal to vindicate Heard’s original point: that women are punished for coming forward. What happens to women who allege abuse? They get publicly pilloried, professionally blacklisted, socially ostracized, mocked endlessly on social media and sued. Wrath, indeed.

But mainstream coverage of the trial has not seemed to grasp this. Instead, there’s been tremendous focus on Heard’s mistakes and worst moments over the course of her relationship with Depp. As is typical of domestic abuse victims, Heard does seem to have done things many of us would not be proud of. She fought back. Depp’s outbursts and insults left Heard resentful and angry with him, and sometimes, she told him so. Many are quick to point out that Heard is not a perfect victim. But no woman is. We are told

that the lawsuit is “complicated.” But the lawsuit is not complicated. It is abuse. Now, that abuse has been sanctioned by a jury.

Maybe the persistence of this notion that Heard is somehow equally culpable for what happened to her is why people like the New York Times’ [Michelle Goldberg](#) have characterized the trial as “the death of Me Too”: it shows how easily a victim can still be blamed and isolated, how easily what happened to her can be taken as a failure of her personal character, rather than as part of a social pattern. Not all women are alike, but feminism was supposed to let us see how we are all similarly vulnerable – both to gendered abuse and to the gendered application of double standards and unjust blame. No victim is perfect. No victim should have to be. After all, if a man cannot be considered abusive towards an imperfect woman, then just how perfect does a woman need to be before it becomes wrong to beat her?

For their part, Depp’s fans seem to not so much deny Depp’s alleged violence against Heard, but to approve of it. “He could have killed you,” says [one viral Tiktok supporting Depp](#), the text superimposed over photos of Heard’s bruised face. “He had every right.” The post has more than 222,200 likes.

The backlash to #Me Too has long been under way. Critics of the movement painted women’s efforts to end sexual violence as excessive and intemperate from the start, claiming #MeToo had “gone too far” before it really got under way at all. And yet the Heard trial does feel like a tipping point in our culture’s response to gender violence. The forces of misogynist reaction are perhaps even stronger now for having been temporarily repressed. Where once women refused, en masse, to keep men’s secrets, or to remain silent about the truth of their own lives, now, a resurgence of sexism, virulent online harassment, and the threat of lawsuits, all aim to compel women back into silence – by force.

In some ways, one could see the defamation suit itself as an extension of Depp’s abuse of Heard, a way to prolong his humiliation and control over her. The only difference is that now, the legal system and the public have been conscripted to take part. This seems to be at least partly how Depp sees it. In 2016, as their marriage broke apart, Depp [texted](#) his friend Christian

Carino, vowing revenge against Heard. “She is begging for global humiliation,” Depp wrote. “She is going to get it.”

- Moira Donegan is a Guardian US columnist
  - This article was amended on 3 June 2022 to specify the defamation count on which the jury ruled for Amber Heard, and to give the sum awarded to Johnny Depp by the jury as \$15m (later reduced by the judge to \$10.35m, as the punitive-damages element exceeded Virginia’s state limit.)
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/01/amber-heard-johnny-depp-trial-metoo-backlash>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## The Pacific projectPacific islands

# The rejection of China's deal shows the Pacific will not be used as a geopolitical pawn

Henry Ivarature

Pacific leaders have sent a strong message that countries who want to partner with them must treat them with respect and take action on climate change



China's foreign minister Wang Yi and Fiji's prime minister Frank Bainimarama co-host a meeting of Pacific foreign ministers in Suva, at which Pacific leaders rejected a sweeping economic and security deal with China. Photograph: Xinhua/REX/Shutterstock

Supported by



# Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas

## About this content

Wed 1 Jun 2022 16.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 23.32 EDT

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi is nearing the end of a marathon tour of eight Pacific states. By Saturday, he will have visited Solomon Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.

While Wang will come away with multiple bilateral economic and development agreements, he will not return to China with the big prize – [a comprehensive security treaty, which would have seen a reconfiguration of the political landscape in the Pacific](#), which 10 Pacific states declined to sign at a virtual meeting on Monday.

Pacific leaders deliberated the Chinese proposal in the Pacific consensus decision-making way; carefully and sensitively weighing their decision, and – much to the relief of traditional partners – [declined the proposal](#).

Clearly, [China](#) underestimated the collective response of the Pacific to an agreement that sought to secure their signatures lock, stock and barrel.

Some observers have attributed this to Australia's new foreign minister Penny Wong's intervention in Fiji on the tail of Wang's stop-over.

The Chinese have said the blame lies with “a few people in these countries, under the pressure and coercion of the US and former colonizer”, which many have interpreted as aimed at the president of the Federated States of Micronesia who warned other Pacific leaders of the potential erosion of sovereignty and regional instability if they signed the deal.

But what the rejection of the deal by Pacific leaders really showed was an unequivocal display of not wanting to be used as pawns in a geopolitical contest, and a strong message to other actors to treat them with respect and work on the region’s key security threat: climate change.

Fiji’s prime minister Frank Bainimarama has been very blunt about this point, tweeting his thanks to both Wang and Penny Wong after her visit last week, while in the same breath pointedly urging China and Australia to act more decisively on the climate crisis.

“Geopolitical point-scoring means less than little to anyone whose community is slipping beneath the rising seas,” he said.

China, obviously, has not given up. And the region should expect a second diplomatic wave from Beijing.

China’s unprecedented economic growth has enabled a dictatorial state to extend its global influence across the world, and the Pacific is an integral part of its expansionist agenda. Pacific island countries’ economic exclusion zones (EEZ) account for roughly 28% of the world’s EEZs, meaning they have rights over a huge amount of the world’s marine resources, which we know clearly from the proposed regional deal China is very interested in.

Attempting to force a regional consensus the China-way, also ignored the role of the Pacific’s regional political body, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Things are currently tense within the forum. Last year, Micronesian members threatened to leave the region’s key diplomatic body, and China’s attempt to get 10 of the Pacific countries onboard with this deal – leaving out the Pacific countries that recognise Taiwan, mostly Micronesian countries – could have further widened the regional rift.

[Samoa's prime minister](#) has said that China's regional agreement ought to have been tabled at PIF and not at a sub-meeting, but one understands why China sought to circumvent this process: unlike Australia and New Zealand, China is not a PIF member, and if the deal was brought before all PIF countries, including those that diplomatically recognise Taiwan, the deal was even less likely to pass.

But it should not come as a surprise if we see China attempt to bring up this deal, or one like it, at the upcoming PIF meeting next month.

Australia should prepare for the next Chinese diplomatic wave in the Pacific, and work on building stronger, meaningful, and respectful relations with the Pacific.

Australia needs a more considered approach to the Pacific. It should let the dust created by Wang's visit settle, and then build on Penny Wong's visit by identifying opportunities for relationship-building in consultations with the Pacific. Pacific Islanders can tell their Australian and New Zealand friends what they need.

Australia must really learn to listen and listen well. Australia does not need to throw baskets of money into the Blue Pacific. I think for Pacific Islanders, it is relationships that matter and Australia needs to look to areas where its relations with the Pacific can grow and flourish. Australia should recognise China's intensified engagement as an opportunity to rebuild its relations with Pacific, and a lesson not take the Pacific for granted.

- Henry Ivarature is a Pacific Fellow at the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University.

**OpinionDogs**

## **She takes an age to walk now, but I love my old dog, smells and all**

[Chitra Ramaswamy](#)



Rescuing a staffie is high on the list of the best things I've ever done. She is getting older, but to me, she is still best in show



Dog day afternoon ... a staffie among the flowers. Photograph: Aleksandr Tarlokov/Alamy

Thu 2 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 14.41 EDT

Our dog, Daphne, is now 11 and sports a magisterial grey muzzle. She can usually be seen trundling around the local park like a rickety cocktail trolley, but like most dog owners, I still think she could take best in show. Nevertheless, there remain those who cross the road or, worse, pick up their own dogs when they see her. The anti-staffie propaganda is real. And as anyone who loves a staff knows, they're the most misunderstood of breeds. The one that loves people the most. The one most likely to be abused and abandoned by them.

There is something particularly moving – often literally so, due to the smell – about old dogs. As the lockdown mania for puppy acquisition has abated and charities have experienced the accompanying grim rise in abandonment, my Daphne has aged with grace. So, too, have her neuroses. By which I mean they've grown like a mole sprouting a whisker. Her fears used to be skateboards, fireworks, being left alone and the buzzers on University Challenge. These days we must add to the list the spin cycle on the washing machine, rain lashing against the Velux bathroom window, the window cleaner, football on the telly, cairn terriers, the flying fox in the play park ... and, well, I could go on.

Rescuing a dog is high on the list of the best things I've ever done. For her, and me. As she staffie-wiggles into her twilight years, the joy of adopting increases with every sniff of aged pee. Which is also a thing. Old dogs stop more to smell the roses, just as their puppy selves once did. It takes an age to walk her now and she trots behind me rather than ahead, but I no longer drag her on. We stop and start, turn back if – God forbid – we encounter a skateboarder. Because she deserves it, and life is short.

Chitra Ramaswamy is a Guardian columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/chitra-ramaswamy-older-dogs>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.06.02 - Around the world

- ['Not resonating' Muted reception for Queen's platinum jubilee in Jamaica](#)
- [US Four killed in shooting at Tulsa medical building, police say](#)
- [Pacific islands China's Wang Yi heads to Papua New Guinea amid tensions over election](#)
- [China West demands publication of UN's long-awaited Xinjiang report](#)

## Queen's platinum jubilee

# 'Not resonating': muted reception for Queen's platinum jubilee in Jamaica

Questions over whether all Commonwealth realms, particularly those with slave legacy, share enthusiasm for 70th anniversary



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at a military parade in Kingston for service personnel during their tour of the Caribbean on behalf of the Queen to mark her Platinum Jubilee. Photograph: Jane Barlow/PA

*[Miranda Bryant](#)*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 00.25 EDT

Boris Johnson has claimed that the Queen's platinum jubilee will see people celebrating "unabashed" across the Commonwealth.

But, speaking on the eve of Britain's four-day commemoration of the anniversary, critics said celebrations in many places were expected to be muted or nonexistent.

The jubilee is expected to be particularly ignored in the Caribbean, where an ill-judged tour by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge of Belize, [Jamaica](#) and the Bahamas in March was met with protests, calls for slavery reparations and for the Queen to be removed as head of state.

Rosalea Hamilton, a campaigner for the Advocates Network who organised slavery reparations protests in Jamaica, said she has not seen any focus or attention on the jubilee, which she said is “not resonating” in Jamaica. The founding director of Jamaica’s Institute of Law and Economics at the University of Technology said the country is “not in a jubilant mood”.

She said there’s “nothing to celebrate” and that for 70 years the country has been “dealing with the legacies of our colonial history” that still continue today.

“I’ve not heard of any celebrations being done and if it’s being done it’s a few people. It’s not resonating. It’s not in the air, it’s not in the atmosphere,” she said.

Calling for the Queen to use the jubilee as an opportunity to apologise for Britain’s role in the slave trade and redefine the role of the monarchy, she said: “The best gift she could give Jamaica and really provide a rationale for celebration is an apology.”

The heightened publicity around the monarchy as a result of the jubilee has only acted as “a reminder of the absence of an apology”, she said.

Tyrone Reid, associate editor of Jamaican newspaper the Gleaner, said : “The calls are increasing for the Queen to be removed and calling for reparations.” The sentiment had not changed, he said, but people felt more empowered to speak out than they had in the past.

He called for the UK to sit down with Jamaica and have a conversation about reparations. “It’s not a mere matter of sentiment,” he said.

Peter Espeut, a deacon and a columnist the paper, who was born the same year as the Queen’s coronation, said longevity was nothing to celebrate and

he had not heard of any parties, dinners or celebrations, saying it was not something people were “going to throw a party over” – especially in Jamaica.

Researchers for the Visible Crown Project in the UK and the Caribbean have struggled to find evidence of many celebrations in the Caribbean.

Prof Philip Murphy, director of history and policy at the Institute of Historical Research, said while there would be some celebrations across the Commonwealth, they would be “pretty low key” and that much of the Caribbean is moving towards republicanism.

He said the combination of the Black Lives Matter movement after the police murder of George Floyd in the US, the recent “ill-fated” royal visits of the Cambridges and Prince Edward and Sophie, calls for reparations and the fallout after the departure of the UK by Duke and Duchess of Sussex had all contributed to a lack of interest in celebrating the Queen.

“The big event to mark the jubilee in the Caribbean were these two ill-timed and rather ill-fated visits, first by the Cambridges then by the Wessexes.”

More than 600 jubilee lunches are planned in more than 80 countries across the Commonwealth, where beacons will also be lit, and the rest of the world.

But Dr Velma McClymont, a writer, scholar and activist who was born in Jamaica and was five when the country gained independence, said once the celebrations were over, the same questions – over the transatlantic slave trade, an apology for slavery and reparations – would remain.

“Going forward she [the Queen] does understand that countries like Jamaica want to move away.”

The mood is also shifting in other Commonwealth countries.

Just this week, Australia’s new prime minister, Anthony Albanese, a longtime republican, created an “assistant minister for the republic” – prompting enthusiasm among those who want the Queen removed as head of state.

Gareth Parker, host of the 6PR Breakfast radio programme in Perth, said that while there was interest, it was “nowhere near the fervour in Britain”.

Mostly, he said, it would be a “media event”.

“There is a bit of a generational split, the royals are generally more beloved by older Australians, who grew up in an era before the republican debates of the 1990s and many of whom have their own childhood memories of royal visits,” he added.

“Perhaps the institution is not so relevant for younger Australians, especially those who grew up or whose parents grew up in non-Commonwealth countries.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/02/not-resonating-muted-reception-for-queens-platinum-jubilee-in-jamaica>

## Oklahoma

# Four killed in shooting at Tulsa medical building, police say

Authorities say the shooter is also dead, apparently from a self-inflicted wound, with several others injured



Emergency personnel at the scene of the shooting in Tulsa. Photograph: Michael Noble Jr./Reuters

*Guardian staff and agencies*

Wed 1 Jun 2022 21.47 EDTFirst published on Wed 1 Jun 2022 19.40 EDT

Four people were killed in a shooting at a Tulsa medical building on Wednesday, according to a police captain who described a “catastrophic scene”.

Eric Dagleish, deputy chief of the Tulsa police department, confirmed that four people were dead, not including the shooter, who apparently died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

It was unclear what prompted the deadly assault. However, the unidentified gunman fired both a handgun and a rifle during the attack, Dalgleish said.

Police responded to the call three minutes after dispatchers received the report and made contact with the gunman one minute later, authorities said.

Capt Richard Meulenberg also said multiple people were wounded and that the medical complex was a “catastrophic scene”.

Police and hospital officials said they were not ready to identify those killed.

The motive and circumstances of the deadly assault were still unclear on Wednesday evening. The unidentified gunman carried both a handgun and a rifle during the attack, authorities said.

In [a statement posted](#) to Twitter, the governor of Oklahoma called the killings a “senseless act of violence and hatred” and thanked first responders for their “quick and brave actions”.

“I have offered Mayor GT Bynum any state resources that may be needed, and I ask all Oklahomans to come together in support of the Saint Francis health system community,” said Kevin Stitt.

The shooting marks another incident of gun violence in a nation still reeling from last week’s attack in [Uvalde, Texas](#), where 19 children and two teachers were killed in one of the worst school shootings in US history. Just days before, a gunman in Buffalo, New York, was accused of fatally shooting 10 people at a supermarket. On Wednesday, that shooter [was charged](#) with domestic terrorism and murder.



Two people hug as they are reunited after being evacuated from the health system campus. Photograph: Ian Maule/AP

The recent Memorial Day [weekend](#) also saw multiple mass shootings nationwide.

St Francis health system locked down its campus on Wednesday afternoon because of the situation at the Natalie Medical Building. The Natalie building houses an outpatient surgery center and a breast health center.

Aerial footage from a TV helicopter appeared to show first responders wheeling someone on a stretcher away from the hospital building.

Dozens of police cars could be seen outside the hospital complex, and authorities shut down traffic as the investigation went on.

A reunification center for families to find their loved ones was set up at a nearby high school. Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were also at the scene, a spokesperson said.

Nicholas O'Brien, a Tulsa resident whose mother was in a nearby building when the shooting occurred, told reporters that he had hurried to the scene.

“They were rushing people out. I don’t know if some of them were injured or just have been injured during the shooting, but some of them couldn’t walk very well. But they were just kind of wobbling and stumbling and getting them out of there,” he said.

“I was pretty anxious. So once I got here and then I heard that she [his mother] was OK, the shooter had been shot and was down, I felt a lot better. It still is horrible what happened,” O’Brien said.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/01/tulsa-shooting-natalie-medical-building>.

## [Papua New Guinea](#)

# China's Wang Yi visits Papua New Guinea amid tensions over election

Ex-PM Peter O'Neill criticises timing of foreign minister's visit, saying no agreements should be signed with Beijing before poll



China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, drinks kava during his visit to Vanuatu's capital city, Port Vila, on Wednesday. Photograph: Ginny Stein/AFP/Getty Images

*Vincent Ni* China affairs correspondent

Thu 2 Jun 2022 06.07 EDTFirst published on Wed 1 Jun 2022 23.59 EDT

China's top diplomat has begun his visit to [Papua New Guinea](#) in the midst of the island's national election as Beijing races to salvage a controversial deal in a battle of influence with Australia and other western powers.

The visit of Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, came a few days after a proposed economic and security deal collapsed on Monday. But his visit has

also been criticised by the former Papua New Guinea prime minister Peter O'Neill, who is campaigning to take back the top job, in a series of media interviews, during which he said no agreements should be signed with [China](#) before the national election.

O'Neill told local press on Thursday that tensions between China and western powers had driven foreign leaders to “give a high amount of attention to the Pacific”, but it would be “improper” for China to donate security equipment or offer security support for the upcoming election. Earlier, the Australian broadcaster [ABC reported Beijing would offer 2,000 body armour kits to police](#) during Wang’s visit.

Resource-rich [Papua New Guinea](#) has defence ties with its close neighbour Australia, which has agreed to upgrade a naval base there. But in recent years, Port Moresby has been seeking increased sales to China from its liquid natural gas project.

Wang is on a tour of eight Pacific island nations with which he has signed a series of bilateral agreements on trade, fisheries, infrastructure and the supply of police equipment.

Controversies surrounding China’s influence have erupted in the region since Beijing signed a security agreement with Solomon Islands in March. Critics fear [China](#) would take advantage of the region to ultimately expand its military prowess.

Several Pacific nations said they opposed the proposed joint regional deal or needed more time to consider its regional implications. “There has been resentment over Pacific agreement on security matters,” Papua New Guinea’s foreign affairs secretary, Elias Wohengu, was quoted as saying by the Post Courier.

He indicated that Papua New Guinea was unlikely to sign a security deal. “On the security status of PNG, we will deal with it ourselves.”

Since the proposed deal collapsed earlier this week, Chinese media and Beijing’s diplomatic services have highlighted a series of documents, articles

and social media posts, reiterating its intentions in the region, sending a message that China's increased presence is mutually beneficial in nature.

On Monday, Beijing released a [position paper](#) on its relations with Pacific island countries. The document – “China’s position paper on mutual respect and common development with Pacific Island countries” – did not mention security or policing cooperation.

“China has dispatched medical teams to eight Pacific Island countries having diplomatic ties with China, benefiting several hundred thousand local residents,” it said, adding: “China is committed to deepen its comprehensive strategic partnership featuring mutual respect and common development with Pacific Island countries.”

The document contrasted with an earlier leaked version of the controversial deal, which covered topics ranging from a free trade area to security matters. The leak pointed to China’s intention to be involved in cybersecurity, training of the police force and greater access to natural resources – all of them raising eyebrows among western allies.

In the last few days, state-owned Chinese media have also been highlighting the diplomatic achievements between the two sides, with outlets such as [Xinhua publishing a photo gallery](#), showing a successful and booming relationship – and in particular showcasing how China had helped the island nations when they need it most.

Overseas embassies, in places such as London, also posted a list of talking points from China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, reiterating how China pledges to strengthen cooperation with the countries in the region.

Chairing the 2nd China-Pacific Island Countries FM’ Meeting, State Councilor and FM Wang Yi pledged to strengthen cooperation w/ PICs in

- political communication
- shared development
- pandemic fighting
- climate action

-people-to-people exchanges  
-int'l solidarity & coordination

— Chinese Embassy in UK (@ChineseEmbinUK) [May 31, 2022](#)

Australia's foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, on Thursday arrived in Samoa, and will also visit Tonga on Friday, days after Wang visited them both.

While China's charm offensive aims to highlight its positive contributions to one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions, Beijing also directly criticised New Zealand and its prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, for expressing Wellington's "shared concern" over China's influence in the region with the US.

"The hype-up of relevant issues in the joint statement by the US and New Zealand is out of ulterior motives to create disinformation and attack and discredit China," the foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, said on Wednesday.

The state-owned tabloid the Global Times on Wednesday directly pointed at Ardern, quoting a Chinese expert as saying she "can't resist the growing pressure from the US and Australia as the US has been anxiously drawing its allies to its side to maintain hegemony". The expert also said the prime minister "has to politically take the side and trade for goods".

Beijing believes the recent collapse of the proposed deal has to do with the persuasion by the US and Australia in the region. "Since 2006, China and Pacific Island nations have intensified relations," said Prof Zhao Shaofeng of the Pacific Islands Research Centre at Liaocheng University in China's Shandong province. "The situation we are seeing today has the support of the US, which operated from behind the scenes."

One of the concerns of many western allies is that if China were to succeed in expanding its influence in the region, Beijing would sooner or later increase its military presence. But Zhao said that from China's perspective, Beijing "doesn't need to build military bases there, because they'll disrupt

regional order”, adding: “And I have not heard Beijing has any plans to build these bases in the region.”

*Reuters contributed to this report*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/02/chinas-wang-yi-heads-to-papua-new-guinea-amid-tensions-over-election>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## [Xinjiang](#)

# West demands publication of UN's long-awaited Xinjiang report

Michelle Bachelet's report on alleged rights abuses in China's Uyghur region remains under wraps despite recent six-day tour



Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, speaking to journalists during a virtual press conference in Guangzhou at the end of her six-day visit to China. Photograph: Ohchr Handout/EPA

*[Vincent Ni](#) China affairs correspondent*

Wed 1 Jun 2022 19.05 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 14.02 EDT

Pressure to release a long-awaited Xinjiang report is mounting on the UN's rights head, as her recent [six-day visit to China](#) left activists, western governments and commentators unsatisfied.

The report, which [Michelle Bachelet](#) said was being finalised late last year, is believed to contain evidence of China's alleged human rights abuses of its

Uyghur ethnic minority group in Xinjiang.

In a press conference on Saturday, Bachelet promised to “follow up” on instances of China’s human rights abuse, calling for the authorities in Beijing to review their counter-terrorism policies in the Uyghur minority region. She also appealed for information about missing [Uyghurs](#).

But her diplomatic dance with one of the UN system’s most significant stakeholders drew the ire of western governments. The US said China had “restricted” and “manipulated” Bachelet’s visit, while the UK’s Foreign Office vowed to increase international pressure on China to “immediately cease its appalling human rights violations in [Xinjiang](#), and release those unjustly detained”.

Activists accused Bachelet – [who herself is a survivor of torture in her native Chile](#) – of “diminishing” the credibility of her office and called her visit “a betrayal”.

Rayhan Asat, an Uyghur advocate and human rights lawyer [whose brother is jailed in Xinjiang](#), said: “The majesty of her role as the UN human rights commissioner is to document atrocities and produce the findings that galvanise the international community to stand up for the impacted community.

“Bachelet should release the report immediately. I’m hoping this is her second chance to set the record straight.”

Sophie Richardson, Human Rights Watch’s [China](#) Director, made a similar call for the report’s publication.

“This is the factual basis that would have significantly strengthened her hand going into her China visit, and that now is critical to reinstating the urgent priorities of justice and accountability,” she said. Since last year, Richardson has been on Beijing’s sanctions list for her advocacy work.

The call to release Bachelet’s report on Xinjiang has also been echoed by European governments from Britain to the EU.

“We look forward to the high commissioner’s long-awaited report on the situation in Xinjiang,” the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) said in a 30 May statement in response to Bachelet’s visit.

The EU’s foreign affairs spokesperson said the bloc “encourages the office of the UN high commissioner for human rights to release the already announced, remote-monitoring report on the human rights situation in Xinjiang as a matter of priority”.

Immediately after Bachelet’s visit, her report has become the political hot potato that put the former Chilean president under the spotlight.

Beijing accused London, for example, of “colluding” with the US in criticising China on its human rights record. The Chinese government has also consistently denied detaining and torturing its Uyghur population, calling the accusations “lies of the century”.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Bachelet’s office has been contacted by the Guardian for comments on her recent China visit as well as on the timetable of the report’s release.

It is not immediately clear what Bachelet had discussed with the Chinese government during her meetings with the officials.

Senior Chinese officials said her visit was an opportunity “to observe and experience first-hand the real Xinjiang” – a line that led activists to fear Beijing was capitalising on her visit for propaganda purposes.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/02/west-demands-publication-of-uns-long-awaited-xinjiang-report>

## Headlines friday 3 june 2022

- [Exclusive Met police profiling children ‘on a large scale’, documents show](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war: UK warns of Russian tactical success in Donbas as war enters 100th day](#)
- [Platinum jubilee Queen leads lighting of beacons but will miss St Paul’s service](#)
- [‘History maker’ How the papers covered the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations](#)
- [EastEnders Prince Charles and Camilla appear in jubilee episode](#)
- [Prince Andrew Queen's son to miss jubilee service with Covid](#)

## Metropolitan police

# Met police profiling children ‘on a large scale’, documents show

Exclusive: force says Project Alpha scours social media to identify offenders and fight serious violence



A Met document seen by the Guardian says the project ‘will carry out profiling on a large scale’ Photograph: Tejas Sandhu/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

*[Wil Crisp](#) and [Vikram Dodd](#)*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 00.10 EDT

Metropolitan police documents say the force has been collecting “children’s personal data” from social media sites as part of a project to carry out “profiling on a large scale”.

The Met says the scheme, known as [Project Alpha](#), helps fight serious violence, with the intelligence gathered identifying offenders and securing

the removal of videos glorifying stabbings and shootings from platforms such as YouTube.

The unit, comprising more than 30 staff and launched in 2019 with Home Office funding, scours social media sites looking at [drill music videos](#) and other content.

A Met document, seen by the Guardian, says the project “will carry out profiling on a large scale”, with males aged 15 to 21 a focus of the project. After questioning, the force said both of these were a mistake.

Met blunders over [an earlier anti-gangs database](#) helped fuel concerns about Project Alpha, the privacy of children, and police focusing on young black children for signs of criminality.

Stafford Scott, a veteran community campaigner, said he feared the project was part of a continued assault on young black people. “Young people use social media to magnify their lived experience. It is a tool for projection, you can’t rely on it for detection,” he said. “It is racially motivated, racially driven and involves racial stereotypes.”

The Met says it scoured the scheme for signs of racial bias in an equalities impact assessment and found none.

Project Alpha started in June 2019 and is supported by the Home Office, which has provided almost £5m. While heavily redacted, the new document dated December 2020 provides fresh details.

It is a data protection impact assessment and comprises questions examining compliance with data protection laws and principles, and answers from those running the scheme. It was first obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request from the investigative organisation [Point Source](#).

The document says males aged 15 to 21 will be targeted and promises not to share information about young people without a “compelling” reason.

Asked “will there be systematic monitoring or profiling on a large scale, or in a public place?”, the response is “yes” but the rest of the answer is mostly

blanked out.

Asked “will the project carry out profiling on a large scale?”, the box for “yes” was ticked by the Met. The answer continues: “The meaning of large scale is not defined in the Data Protection Act 2018. But this may include activities such as using existing data to identify [an] individual for operational purposes(s) or review.”

Asked whether the project will “process children’s personal data for profiling or automated decision making … or for marketing purposes …”, the police reply “yes” and add: “The project is focused on reducing serious youth violence and many of those involving directly or indirectly are under the age of 18.” A full name and gang affiliation is to be recorded, it says.

In its first statement to the Guardian about the document, the Met said: “The inclusion of the demographic 15-21 year[s] old was an error. As we do not ‘profile on a large scale’ we cannot provide any demographic of individuals who are involved in uploading harmful content online. We do not seek to identify personal information about those posting the videos and as such we hold limited personal data (predominantly just the videos themselves).”

Asked why officers had ticked “yes” to a box asking if the project would “carry out profiling on a large scale”, the Met added: “The checking of the yes box at point 10 of this early response is incorrect.”

The force declined to give the number or ages of those Alpha looks at, or broad criteria such as whether suspicion about an individual is needed.

The document says the scheme has been designed to “combine, compare, or match data from multiple sources” and uses new technologies or the “novel use of existing technologies”.

It says gangs are responsible for four out of 10 non-domestic and terrorist killings, six out of 10 shootings and one in five non-domestic stabbings where the victim is aged 25 or under.

In the document, police justify their decision not to tell young people they are “subject to [the] interest of Project Alpha as this may impact on their

behaviour and result in more offending”.

Trust in the Met was damaged after the information commissioner [criticised it for its gangs matrix](#) and issued an enforcement notice in 2018. The matrix, [listing alleged gang members](#) and their risk of committing violence or being a victim, was branded [racist by Amnesty International](#) and after pressure the Met said it had changed it.

Emmanuelle Andrews of the human rights group Liberty said: “This surveillance and monitoring of young people and children is deeply worrying, impacting their right to express themselves and to participate in friendship and community networks. It can have serious consequences for their futures, such as their ability to access housing, education and work.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

“Police monitoring of the kind done by the Met under Project Alpha and the gangs matrix doesn’t tackle the causes of serious violence – it only serves to criminalise and harass young people, in particular young black men and boys.”

In an interview with the College of Policing, the head of Project Alpha, PC Michael Railton, [hailed its benefits](#). “Having decoded the hyper-local context of the lyrics, hand gestures and symbolism of the visual content used by aspiring rappers, we have identified threats and proactively intervened to prevent escalation of violence,” he said.

The Met [told the information commissioner](#) that Alpha helped identify intelligence about violence gleaned from social media and of people committing offences as well as tracing wanted offenders: “The team collect ‘open source’ information that is information gathered from social media accounts (private and open), websites and mainstream media. They also collect post-event information, such as where gang-related incidents have occurred and relevant online commentary.

“The project to date has brought to light threats and risk that would otherwise not have been identified through other policing methods.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/03/met-police-project-alpha-profiling-children-documents-show>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

---

[Skip to key events](#)  
[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

# Ukraine forces ‘recapture 20% of territory lost in Sievierodonetsk’ – as it happened

This live blog has now closed, you can find our new [Russia-Ukraine live blog here](#)

Updated 1d ago

[Maya Yang](#) (now); [Léonie Chao-Fong](#),[Martin Belam](#) and [Samantha Lock](#) (earlier)

Fri 3 Jun 2022 19.38 EDTFirst published on Fri 3 Jun 2022 01.42 EDT



Members of foreign volunteers unit, which fights in the Ukrainian army, near Sievierodonetsk. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

[Maya Yang](#) (now); [Léonie Chao-Fong](#),[Martin Belam](#) and [Samantha Lock](#) (earlier)

Fri 3 Jun 2022 19.38 EDTFirst published on Fri 3 Jun 2022 01.42 EDT

## Key events

- [1d ago Summary](#)
- [1d ago 14 million Ukrainians forced to flee since February, says UN](#)
- [1d ago Ukrainian forces recapture 20% of territory lost in Sievierodonetsk, says Ukraine](#)
- [2d ago ‘Critical’ situation at Russian-held nuclear plant, says Ukraine](#)
- [2d ago EU bans most Russian oil, sanctions Putin’s alleged girlfriend and Bucha and Mariupol ‘butchers’](#)
- [2d ago Today so far...](#)
- [2d ago Zelenskiy declares ‘victory will be ours’ on 100th day of war](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 1d ago

[15.33](#)

## Ukrainian forces recapture 20% of territory lost in Sievierodonetsk, says Ukraine

Ukrainian forces have recaptured around 20% of the territory they lost in Sievierodonetsk since Russia’s invasion, according to Ukrainian officials.

“Whereas before the situation was difficult, the percentage (held by Russia) was somewhere around 70%, now we have already pushed them back by approximately 20%,” **Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the eastern region of Luhansk**, announced on national television on Friday.

Gaidai said that Russian forces were attacking and advancing upon Ukrainian positions for hours, only to be driven back by defenders who were not injured.

“This is how they are moving forward, step-by-step, because with artillery, aircraft, mortars, they are simply destroying everything,” he said.

“But as soon as we have enough Western long-range weapons, we will push their artillery away from our positions. And then, believe me, the Russian infantry, they will just run.”

Since the invasion, Russian forces have swarmed into the city in attempts to capture it in order to achieve its stated aim of controlling the entire Luhansk province. On Thursday, **Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy** announced that Ukrainian forces have had some recent successes in the region.



Members of a foreign volunteers unit which fights in the Ukrainian army take positions, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk region Ukraine June 2, 2022. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

•  
•

Updated at 15.34 EDT

[1d ago](#) [19.41](#)

This blog is closing now. We'll be back in a few hours with more rolling coverage of the war in [Ukraine](#).

In the meantime, you can find all our coverage of the conflict [here](#) and this is a full report on the key developments of the last 24 hours.

•  
•

[1d ago](#) [19.04](#)

## Summary

It's 2am in Kyiv. Here's where things stand:

- **14 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, the majority women and children, [said](#) the United Nations Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine Amin Awad on Friday.** In a [statement](#) released on the 100th day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Awad spoke of displaced Ukrainians, describing the “scale and speed of [their] displacement not witnessed in history.”
- **Moscow will help restore and rebuild Luhansk and Donetsk, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin [announced](#) on Friday after a visit to Luhansk.** Approximately 1,500 specialists from various departments of the Moscow municipal economy complex and 500 pieces of equipment have arrived in Luhansk, said the mayor.
- **Ukraine's ambassador to Ankara, Vasyl Bodna, [accused](#) Russia of “stealing” and sending Ukrainian grain abroad to countries**

**including Turkey.** “Russia shamelessly steals Ukrainian grain and sends it overseas from Crimea, including to Turkey,” Bodna said in a tweet on Friday.

- European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) that [Ukraine](#) must meet all the necessary standards and conditions for accession. The president went on to call on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goals.
- Macky Sall, the African Union head and Senegalese president, [said](#) he was “reassured” after meeting with Putin regarding global food shortages caused by the Russian invasion of [Ukraine](#). In addition to global food shortages, other issues discussed between the two leaders included grain supplies that are stuck in Ukrainian ports.
- “Victory shall be ours,” Ukrainian president [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#) [said](#) in a video featuring the same key ministers and advisers who appeared with him in a defiant broadcast on 24 February, the day his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, launched his unprovoked assault. “The armed forces of Ukraine are here. Most importantly, our people, the people of our country, are here. We have been defending Ukraine for 100 days already ... Glory to Ukraine,” he added.
- Ukrainian forces have recaptured around 20% of the territory they lost in Sievierodonetsk since Russia’s invasion, [according](#) to Ukrainian officials. “Whereas before the situation was difficult, the percentage (held by Russia) was somewhere around 70%, now we have already pushed them back by approximately 20%,” Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the eastern region of Luhansk, announced on national television on Friday.
- French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday [said](#) his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin had committed a “historic and fundamental error” by invading [Ukraine](#) and was now “isolated”. “I think, and I told him, that he made a historic and fundamental error for his people, for himself and for history,” he said in an interview with French regional media.
- Switzerland’s government on Friday [rejected](#) a request by Denmark to send nearly two-dozen Swiss-made armored personnel carriers to [Ukraine](#). Switzerland’s executive Federal Council confirmed the decision on Friday after Denmark requested Switzerland

transfer 22 Swiss-made Piranha III wheeled armored personnel carriers, which Denmark had obtained and stored in Germany, to Ukraine.

•  
•

Updated at 19.38 EDT

1d ago 18.57

## **14 million Ukrainians forced to flee since February, says UN**

**14 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, the majority women and children, said the United Nations Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine Amin Awad on Friday.**

In a [statement](#) released on the 100th day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Awad spoke of displaced Ukrainians, describing the “scale and speed of [their] displacement not witnessed in history.”

Awad went on to add:

This war has taken an unacceptable toll on people and engulfed virtually all aspects of civilian life. This war has and will have no winner. Rather, we have witnessed for 100 days what is lost: lives, homes, jobs and prospects. We have witnessed destruction and devastation across cities, towns and villages. Schools, hospitals and shelters have not been spared.

More than 3 million children saw their education suspended – an entire generation of children whose future hangs in the balance. All over the country, hundreds of thousands of people do not have access to water and electricity, and millions do not know where their next meal is coming from. 15.7 million people are in need of humanitarian support now, with numbers growing.

One hundred days on, the war ravages unabated especially in the east of the country. And with winter coming, millions of civilian lives could be in peril.

The United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners in Ukraine continue supporting those whose lives have been shattered by war. In the past 100 days, we have provided immediate humanitarian aid to some 8 million people across the country, including in besieged cities in the east of Ukraine.”



Oleg (R), who decided to remain in Irpin, passes his son Maksim over a fence to his wife Yana, before the arrival of an evacuation train to the city of Kiev (Kyiv), at the train station in Irpin, Ukraine, 04 March 2022. Photograph: Roman Pilipey/EPA

- 
- 

[1d ago](#) [18.20](#)

**Moscow will help restore and rebuild Luhansk and Donetsk, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced on Friday after a visit to Luhansk.**

Writing on his official Telegram [channel](#), Sobyanin said:

“On behalf of the President of Russia, Moscow will provide humanitarian assistance and assistance in restoring the social and engineering infrastructure of two cities – Lugansk and Donetsk.

We signed agreements on cooperation and twinning between Moscow and Lugansk. We outlined plans to restore a normal peaceful life.

About 1,500 specialists from various departments of the Moscow municipal economy complex and 500 pieces of equipment are already in Lugansk.

We began to restore schools, houses, utilities. The plans include the improvement of the streets, the Avangard stadium, and the city park.

It is important to quickly eliminate the consequences of hostilities and prepare the city's infrastructure for the autumn-winter period.

I am confident that we will implement all plans through joint efforts and with the support of residents.”



Police officers speak with a local resident as his house burns following shelling, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Lysychansk, Luhansk

region Ukraine June 2, 2022. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

- 
- 

[1d ago](#)[17.46](#)

**Ukraine's ambassador to Ankara, Vasyl Bodna, accused Russia of "stealing" and sending Ukrainian grain abroad to countries including Turkey.**

"Russia shamelessly steals Ukrainian grain and sends it overseas from Crimea, including to Turkey," Bodna said in a tweet on Friday.

6□ " [#Rusya](#) utanmaz ve benzeri görülmemiş bir şekilde [#Ukrayna](#) tahilini çalışıyor ve onu işgal altındaki Kırım'dan çıkarıyor. Bu tahili [#Türkiye](#) dahil yabancı ülkelere götürüyor. Bu sorunun çözülmesinde yardım emesi için Türkiye'ye başvurduk."

— Ukraine in Türkiye (@UKRinTR) [June 3, 2022](#)

"We have asked for Turkey's help to resolve the issue," he added in a message on Twitter.

Prior to Russia's invasion earlier this year, Ukraine was a major exporter of wheat and sunflower oil.

Turkey, a NATO member, has provided combat drones to Ukraine while attempting to serve as a mediator in the conflict which reached its 100th day on Friday. Nevertheless, Turkey has refrained from imposing sanctions on Russia as it relies on it for grain and energy.

At the request of the United Nations, Turkey has offered to assist in securing maritime corridors for Ukrainian grain export.

**Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** will be in Turkey on Wednesday to discuss the issue.



Vasyl Bodnar, Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey, speaks during a rally, in Ankara, Turkey in May, 2022. Photograph: Burhan Özbilici/AP

•  
•

Updated at 17.49 EDT

[1d ago](#)[17.12](#)

**European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that Ukraine must meet all the necessary standards and conditions for accession but called on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goals, the Kyiv Independent reports.**

⚡ Von der Leyen: Ukraine's admission to the EU is the bloc's 'moral duty.'

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that Ukraine must meet all the necessary standards and conditions for accession but called on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goals.

— The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [June 3, 2022](#)

•  
•

[1d ago](#)[16.36](#)

**AU head said he is “reassured” after talks with Russian president Vladimir Putin on food shortages.**

**Macky Sall, the African Union head and Senegalese president**, said he was “reassured” after meeting with Putin regarding global food shortages caused by the Russian invasion of [Ukraine](#).

Putin hosted Sall at his Black Sea residence in Sochi on Friday, which also marked the 100th day of Moscow’s military campaign in Ukraine. In addition to global food shortages, other issues discussed between the two leaders included grain supplies that are stuck in Ukrainian ports.

“I found Vladimir Putin committed and aware that the crisis and sanctions create serious problems for weak economies, such as African economies,” Sall said to reporters, adding that he was “very reassured and very happy with our exchanges”.

In a televised interview in the evening, Putin accused the west of “bluster” by claiming Moscow was preventing grain exports from Ukraine.

“There is no problem to export grain from Ukraine,” he said, suggesting several possible routes.

Putin said that exports could transit through the Russian-controlled ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk, or the Ukrainian-held port of Odessa as long as Ukraine “cleared” the waters around it of mines. He added that other options include the Danube River via Romania, Hungary or Poland.

“But the simplest, the easiest, the cheapest would be exports via Belarus, from there one can go to Baltic ports, then to the Baltic Sea and then anywhere in the world.”

But Putin said any export via Belarus would be conditional on the “lifting of sanctions” by the west against Minsk, allied to Moscow.



Macky Sall, the president of Senegal, said he was ‘reassured’ after meeting with Putin regarding global food shortages caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Photograph: Mikhail Klimentyev/KREMLIN POOL/SPUTNIK/EPA

- 
- 

Updated at 17.06 EDT

[1d ago 16.03](#)

“Victory shall be ours,” Ukrainian president [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#) said in a video featuring the same key ministers and advisers who appeared with him in a defiant broadcast on 24 February, the day his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, launched his unprovoked assault.

“Our team is much bigger,” Zelenskiy declared on Friday. “The armed forces of Ukraine are here. Most importantly, our people, the people of

our country, are here. We have been defending Ukraine for 100 days already ... Glory to Ukraine.”

‘Victory will be ours’: Zelenskiy marks 100th day of war – video

•  
•

[1d ago](#)[15.33](#)

## **Ukrainian forces recapture 20% of territory lost in Sievierodonetsk, says Ukraine**

Ukrainian forces have recaptured around 20% of the territory they lost in Sievierodonetsk since Russia’s invasion, according to Ukrainian officials.

“Whereas before the situation was difficult, the percentage (held by Russia) was somewhere around 70%, now we have already pushed them back by approximately 20%,” **Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the eastern region of Luhansk**, announced on national television on Friday.

Gaidai said that Russian forces were attacking and advancing upon Ukrainian positions for hours, only to be driven back by defenders who were not injured.

“This is how they are moving forward, step-by-step, because with artillery, aircraft, mortars, they are simply destroying everything,” he said.

“But as soon as we have enough Western long-range weapons, we will push their artillery away from our positions. And then, believe me, the Russian infantry, they will just run.”

Since the invasion, Russian forces have swarmed into the city in attempts to capture it in order to achieve its stated aim of controlling the entire Luhansk

province. On Thursday, **Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy** announced that Ukrainian forces have had some recent successes in the region.



Members of a foreign volunteers unit which fights in the Ukrainian army take positions, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk region Ukraine June 2, 2022. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

•  
•

Updated at 15.34 EDT

1d ago**14.54**

**French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday said his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin had committed a “historic and fundamental error” by invading [Ukraine](#) and was now “isolated”.**

Agence France-Presse reports:

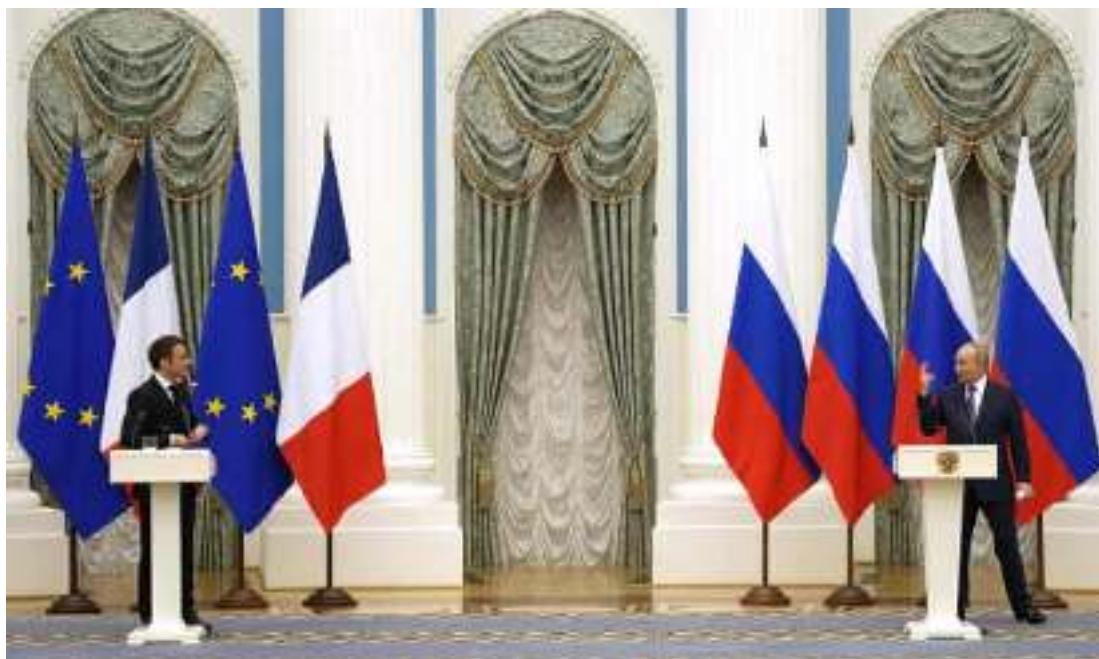
“I think, and I told him, that he made a historic and fundamental error for his people, for himself and for history,” he said in an interview with

French regional media.

“I think he has isolated himself,” Macron said. “Isolating oneself is one thing, but being able to get out of it is a difficult path.”

The French president repeated that Russia should not be “humiliated... so that the day the fighting stops we can pave a way out through diplomatic means”.

Macron also said he did not “rule out” a visit to Kyiv.



Emmanuel Macron said on Friday that Vladimir Putin had committed a ‘historic and fundamental error’ by invading Ukraine. Photograph: Thibault Camus/AP

•  
•

Updated at 15.03 EDT

[2d ago 14.30](#)

**Switzerland’s government on Friday rejected a request by Denmark to send nearly two-dozen Swiss-made armored personnel carriers to**

## [Ukraine](#)

Switzerland's executive Federal Council confirmed the decision on Friday after Denmark requested Switzerland transfer 22 Swiss-made Piranha III wheeled armored personnel carriers, which Denmark had obtained and stored in Germany, to Ukraine.

Friday's decision also comes as the Swiss government announced that it would allow the transfer of certain military equipment to Germany and Britain as they stock up on supplies that they have previously sent to Ukraine.

Switzerland's War Materiel Act, also known as the country's "neutrality law," prohibits the transfer of Swiss-made weapons systems, ammunition and other war material to countries that are involved in international conflicts.

The country has previously refused a German request to send Swiss-made 35mm ammunition for Gepard anti-aircraft guns to Ukraine.

•  
•

Updated at 14.31 EDT

[2d ago](#)[14.01](#)

It's 9pm in Kyiv. Here's where we stand:

- **Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, marked the 100th day of war with a video message in front of the presidential office in Kyiv where he pledged that "victory will be ours".** Flanked by some of his closest allies, including prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, and presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, [Zelenskiy echoed a similar defiant video](#) published shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine. [European and world figures tweeted their support for Ukraine](#) to mark the 100th day since Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to invade the country.

- The European Union has formally adopted a ban on most Russian oil imports as part of a sixth round of sanctions since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine. The bloc also announced sanctions on [Alina Kabaeva, a former Olympic gymnast long rumoured to be Vladimir Putin's girlfriend, as well as Russian military commanders](#) who it said led troops involved in atrocities in Ukraine.
- Europe's largest nuclear power plant, which is located in the Russian-occupied south-eastern Ukrainian region of Zaporizhzhia, is facing a critical shortage of spare parts, according to Ukraine's military intelligence agency. The Zaporizhzhia plant [has been occupied by Russian troops since shortly after Moscow launched its invasion,](#) but the facility is still being operated by Ukrainian technicians.
- Ukrainian police have opened 16 criminal investigations into allegations of sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers against civilians, according to Ukraine's deputy interior minister, Kateryna Pavlichenko. [About 50 complaints of sexual violence by troops against civilians](#) have been received by the police, Pavlichenko said.
- Two Reuters journalists were wounded and their driver killed after their car came under fire in eastern [Ukraine](#), a spokesperson for the news agency said. The driver of the vehicle was killed and the two journalists “sustained minor injuries” while en route to the key eastern Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk, [Reuters said in a statement.](#)
- The Kremlin said Russia will continue its military “operation” in Ukraine until all its goals have been achieved. [“Certain results have](#)

been achieved,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters 100 days after Moscow sent troops into its neighbour.

- **The head of the African Union, Sengalese president Macky Sall, urged Vladimir Putin to consider the suffering of African countries from food shortages caused by Russia’s military campaign in Ukraine.** During a visit to Sochi, Sall said due to western sanctions against Russia “we no longer have access to grain from Russia and especially fertiliser”. A German foreign ministry spokesperson said Putin was responsible for the risk of famine in Africa, not the west. Putin denied Moscow was preventing Ukrainian ports from exporting grain, claiming that “no one is stopping it”.
- **The Belarusian president, Alexander Lukashenko, said Minsk was ready to discuss the possible transit of Ukraine’s grain via Belarus, with some “compromises”.** Belarus will allow the transit of Ukraine’s grain to Baltic Sea ports if it is allowed to ship Belarusian goods from these ports, Lukashenko reportedly told the UN’s secretary general, António Guterres.
- **The scale of destruction in Ukraine “defies comprehension”, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a statement to mark the 100th day of the conflict.** ICRC’s director, Robert Mardini, urged all parties to allow access to prisoners of war, adding that “it would be hard to exaggerate the toll that the international armed conflict in Ukraine has had on civilians.”

*That's it from me, Léonie Chao-Fong, today as I hand the blog over to my colleague in New York, Maya Yang. Thank you.*

- 
-

Updated at 14.02 EDT

2d ago[13.57](#)

**Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, denied Moscow was preventing Ukrainian ports from exporting grain, claiming that "no one is stopping it".**

Putin suggested the best solution would be to ship the grain through Belarus, as long as sanctions on Minsk were lifted, Reuters reports.

The Russian leader's remarks came after his Belarusian counterpart, Alexander Lukashenko, said Minsk was ready to allow the transit of Ukraine's grain to Baltic Sea ports if it is allowed to ship Belarusian goods from these ports.

Speaking on national television, Putin said reports of a Russian export ban were "a bluff" and that western countries were trying to cover up their own policy mistakes by blaming Russia for problems on the global food market.

Putin said:

If someone wants to solve the problem of exporting Ukrainian grain - please, the easiest way is through Belarus. No one is stopping it. But for this you have to lift sanctions from Belarus.

He warned that problems with the global food market were set to worsen because of British and US sanctions on Russian fertilisers.

•  
•

2d ago[13.48](#)

**Luxembourg's prime minister, Xavier Bettel, said he was "really upset" over the removal of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, from the EU's latest round of sanctions.**

The EU announced [a new package of sanctions](#) against Russia, including a phased embargo on Russian oil imports as well as sanctions against Russian military commanders who it said led troops involved in atrocities in Ukraine, and Vladimir Putin's alleged girlfriend, Alina Kabaeva.

One name that did not appear on the blacklist was Patriarch Kirill, after Hungary, led by prime minister Viktor Orbán, insisted he be taken off the list.

Speaking at a conference today, Bettel said the dropping of Patriarch Kirill was “not acceptable”. He said:

I have to tell you I'm really upset. I'm sorry to tell you that yesterday we found an agreement about the sanctions because we said to Viktor Orban, ‘OK, we take Patriarch Kirill off the list’. This is not acceptable.

He was on the list and afterwards they threaten to refuse everything because of the presence of Kirill.

•  
•

[2d ago 13.32](#)

**European and world figures have been tweeting their support for Ukraine to mark the 100th day since Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to invade the country.**

The president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said the EU stands with Ukraine and that the bravery of its people “commands our respect and our admiration”.

100 days ago Russia unleashed its unjustifiable war on Ukraine.

The bravery of Ukrainians commands our respect and our admiration.

The EU stands with Ukraine.

Today in Paris, I will discuss with [@emmanuelmacron](#) [@Europe2022FR](#) the EU's current & future support to the country.

— Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) [June 3, 2022](#)

The EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said the EU would continue to stand by Ukraine until its victory "over Russian aggression".

100 days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. 100 days of EU strongly supporting Ukraine

100 days causing thousands of deaths and 6.8 million refugees

100 days of senseless destruction with billions worth of damages

100 days of blocked ports & bombed fields, 22M t of grain blocked  
[pic.twitter.com/GxQ5rmN6K2](#)

— Josep Borrell Fontelles (@JosepBorrellF) [June 3, 2022](#)

Estonia's prime minister, Kaja Kallas, condemned Russia's "expanded, genocidal" war in Ukraine and said support must continue until "justice prevails".

100 days of [#Russia](#)'s expanded, genocidal war in [#Ukraine](#).

100 days of brave Ukrainians tirelessly fighting for freedom and democracy.

100 days of unprecedented support from people around the globe.

We can't get tired. We must continue until Ukraine wins and justice prevails. [pic.twitter.com/nikwgmFqL0](#)

— Kaja Kallas (@kajakallas) [June 3, 2022](#)

Moldova's deputy prime minister, Nicu Popescu, said his country stood "firmly" with Ukraine in support of "its sovereignty and territorial integrity".

It's been 100 days of Russia's invasion of [#Ukraine](#); 100 days of war, suffering, loss of life and destruction. [#Moldova](#) strongly condemns Russian aggression. We stand firmly with Ukraine, support its sovereignty & territorial integrity and provide safety for its many refugees. [pic.twitter.com/iOyPng5RBd](https://pic.twitter.com/iOyPng5RBd)

— Nicu Popescu (@nicupopescu) [June 3, 2022](#)

Georgian president, Salome Zourabichvili, said Ukraine had demonstrated that it can "defeat a power once perceived as invincible", and that "Europe and the civilised world have shown unity in the face of challenge".

100 days since Russia launched its [#unjustified](#) aggression against Ukraine

100 days that Ukraine has shown that it can [#defeat](#) a power once perceived as invincible

100 days that Europe and the civilized world have shown [#unity](#) in the face of challenge [#StandWithUkraine](#)

— Salome Zourabichvili (@Zourabichvili\_S) [June 3, 2022](#)

Swedish foreign minister, Ann Linde, pledged that "pressure on Russia will increase until aggression has ended".

100 days since ⚡ full-scale invasion of ⚡. ⚡ stands strong and has our full support. Pressure on ⚡ will increase until aggression has ended. Aggression & war crimes have no place in the 21st century.

— Ann Linde (@AnnLinde) [June 3, 2022](#)

The UK's prime minister, Boris Johnson, said support for Ukraine "will never waver" until the time when Ukrainians can "enjoy the peace and freedom that their heroism deserves".

In the 100 days since Putin's barbaric invasion, Ukrainians have fought back with supreme courage and dignity.

Our support for Ukraine will never waver until Ukrainians enjoy the peace and freedom that their heroism deserves.

[pic.twitter.com/BnNVHusMoM](https://pic.twitter.com/BnNVHusMoM)

— Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [June 3, 2022](#)

Iceland's foreign minister, Thórdís Gylfadóttir, said the past 100 days of Russia's "evil and destruction" had been met with "heroic resistance" by the people of Ukraine.

Today marks 100 days since Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia's 100 days of evil and destruction have been met with 100 days of heroic resistance by the people of Ukraine. 100 days of sacrifice and 100 days of hope and pride. Iceland stands with Ukraine - Ukraine must prevail and win [pic.twitter.com/cIB8HiJlt5](https://pic.twitter.com/cIB8HiJlt5)

— Þórdís Kolbrún Reykfjörð Gylfadóttir (@thordiskolbrun) [June 3, 2022](#)

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, lauded Ukraine's "bravery and determination" in defending itself against Russia's invading forces.

Today marks 100 days of Ukraine's bravery and determination in defending its freedom against Russia's invading forces. We want to see a democratic, independent, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine with the means to defend itself. [#UnitedWithUkraine](#)

— Secretary Antony Blinken (@SecBlinken) [June 3, 2022](#)

Canada's foreign minister, Mélanie Joly, said simply that 100 days of war was "too many".

100 days too many. <https://t.co/IjMVmz7MXv>

— Mélanie Joly (@melaniejoly) [June 3, 2022](#)

•  
•

[Newest](#)  
[Newest](#)

[Previous](#)

1  
of  
5

[Next](#)

[Oldest](#)  
[Oldest](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2022/jun/03/russia-ukraine-war-latest-moscow-now-controls-a-fifth-of-ukrainian-territory-zelenskiy-live>

## [Queen's platinum jubilee](#)

# Queen leads lighting of jubilee beacons but will miss St Paul's service

Monarch attended event at Windsor Castle after pulling out of Friday's thanksgiving ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral

Queen leads lighting of jubilee beacons at Windsor Castle – video

*[Caroline Davies](#)*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 17.38 EDTFirst published on Thu 2 Jun 2022 17.15 EDT

The Queen symbolically led the lighting of thousands of platinum jubilee beacons as it was announced she would [no longer be attending the national service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral](#) after experiencing “some discomfort” during trooping the colour.

Buckingham Palace said the monarch, 96, was missing the service on Friday “with great reluctance” having experienced episodic mobility problems throughout the day on Thursday at the start of her [jubilee celebrations](#).

But she was able to perform the fanfare lighting of the beacon chain, comprising more than 3000 beacons across the UK and Commonwealth, during a ceremony at Windsor Castle at dusk on Thursday.

A Buckingham Palace statement on Thursday evening said: “The Queen greatly enjoyed today’s Birthday Parade and flypast but did experience some discomfort. Taking into account the journey and activity required to participate in tomorrow’s national service of thanksgiving at St Paul’s Cathedral, Her Majesty with great reluctance has concluded that she will not attend.

“The Queen is looking forward to participating in tonight’s beacon lighting event at Windsor Castle and would like to thank all those who made today

such a memorable occasion.”

It means the Prince of Wales will now officially represent his mother at the service. With no Queen procession, the timings of the royal party will have to be adjusted, with [Prince Charles](#) and the Duchess of Cornwall, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, arriving 10 minutes later than previously planned.

The decision to cancel was seen as regrettable but sensible, given the journey from Windsor Castle to St Paul’s and the physical demands a service at the cathedral inevitably involves. It is understood that it was always the Queen’s hope to attend rather than a firm commitment.

The Duke of York is also unable to attend, having [tested positive for Covid](#).

As dusk fell on the first of four days of jubilee celebrations, the Queen symbolically led the lighting of the principal jubilee beacon by touching the Commonwealth Globe of Nations, created for the beacons project, in the quadrangle at Windsor Castle.



Prince William (right) at the ceremony for the lighting of the principal beacon at Buckingham Palace. Photograph: Chris Jackson/Getty Images

That was the signal for [Prince William](#), 22 miles away at Buckingham Palace, to convey the Queen's command to illuminate the 3,500 lights on the beacon centrepiece, a 21-metre Tree of Trees sculpture.

The ceremony, part of a long tradition of celebrating jubilees, weddings and coronations with the lighting of beacons, dates back hundreds of years when beacon chains were used as communication tools. Today, they symbolise togetherness at key moments of national significance.

On mountain and cliff tops, on village greens and town squares, a chain of more than 3,000 beacons were set ablaze across the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK overseas territories. For the first time beacons were lit in all 54 Commonwealth capitals.

Sites included the Tower of London, Hillsborough Castle and the Queen's estates of Sandringham and Balmoral, and on top of the UK's four highest peaks.<sup>[5]</sup> The first beacons to be lit were in Tonga and Samoa in the South Pacific, and the final one in the Central American country of Belize.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS foundation trust's sustainable beacon has been made of old and broken hospital beds which have been melded into a crown shape.<sup>[6]</sup> It will be illuminated in a light display.

Several English cathedrals – Durham, Ely, Lichfield, Peterborough and Rochester – will light up in red, white and blue, while London's BT Tower will also be celebrating the occasion.

Scouts and Girlguiding are each starting at least 70 beacons in tribute to their patron, the Queen.<sup>[7]</sup> Walking With The Wounded will light the beacons on top of the four highest peaks of the UK – Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, Snowdon (*Yr Wyddfa*) and Slieve Donard.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## UK news

# ‘History maker’: How the papers covered the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations

Front pages are awash with red, white and blue, as well as images of Prince Louis – aka the ‘prince of wails’ – being deafened by Red Arrows

- [Queen’s platinum jubilee: live coverage](#)



How some of the UK papers reported the beginning of the Jubilee celebrations. Composite: UK newspapers/Twitter

*Martin Farrer*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 23.57 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 08.30 EDT

The Queen’s Jubilee celebrations were splashed across the front pages of most British newspapers on Friday, as large [crowds gathered in London](#) to catch a glimpse of the monarch on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

For the **Express**, the whole occasion was “Incredible”, taking its headline from remarks the Queen reportedly made to a “teary Prince Charles” at the sight of the “rapturous crowds” thronging the Mall. “Oh, how incredible,” she is said to have uttered to her heir.



Photograph: Daily Express

“Didn’t we give her a deafening cheer!” says the **Mail**, with a picture of the Queen’s great-grandson Prince Louis – son of Prince William – holding his hands over his ears as the RAF Red Arrows roared over the Palace.

Friday's [@DailyMailUK's](#) [#MailFrontPages](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/aZ cwdzm0kw](https://pic.twitter.com/aZ cwdzm0kw)

— Daily Mail U.K. (@DailyMailUK) [June 2, 2022](#)

The young royal also provides the angle for the **Telegraph’s** Allison Pearson, whose column takes pride of place on the paper’s front page: “A glorious day, even for the prince of wails”.

□ The front page of tomorrow's Daily Telegraph:

'A glorious day, even for the prince of wails'[#TomorrowsPapersToday](#)

Sign up for the Front Page newsletter<https://t.co/x8AV4Oomry>  
[pic.twitter.com/Tvmh0j8ycD](https://pic.twitter.com/Tvmh0j8ycD)

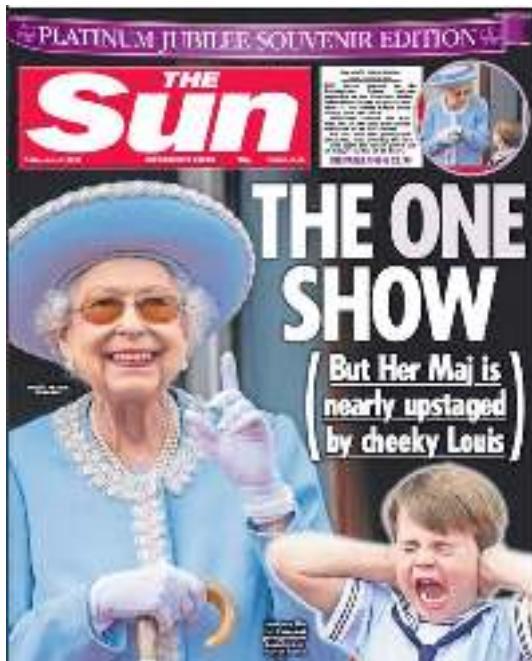
— The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [June 2, 2022](#)

The next generation of royals is also irresistible for the **Mirror**, which has a similar picture of the four-year-old and the headline “Wow... What a racket, Great-granny”.

Tomorrow's front page: Wow... What a racket, Great-granny  
[#TomorrowsPapersToday](#) <https://t.co/wnKqJ5CM0t>  
[pic.twitter.com/w1S5nf5nJz](https://pic.twitter.com/w1S5nf5nJz)

— The Mirror (@DailyMirror) [June 2, 2022](#)

“The One Show”, puns the headline on the front of the Sun, with a smiling Queen and gurning Prince Louis.



Photograph: The SUN

The **Times** has a picture of a smiling monarch and the matching headline “Beaming Queen gets her party started”, but also has the news that she will miss Friday’s Jubilee service at St Paul’s cathedral after experiencing “some discomfort” during Thursday’s ceremonies.



Times front page 3 june 2022 Photograph: The Times

The **i** calls the Queen “History maker” in its splash headline, saying that she is the first monarch to sit on the throne for 70 years.



Photograph: The i paper

The **Guardian** carries a balcony picture of the royals watching the flypast but its main story is “Alarm at NHS failings over women’s health”.

Guardian front page, Friday 3 June 2022: Alarm at NHS failings over women’s health [pic.twitter.com/NZ1fUCgcjV](https://pic.twitter.com/NZ1fUCgcjV)

— The Guardian (@guardian) [June 2, 2022](#)

The **FT** also goes with a picture of the royal family on the palace balcony but its lead is on the worldwide energy crisis: “Opec lifts output to cool oil price rally”.

Just published: front page of the Financial Times, international edition, Friday 3 June <https://t.co/ezqtMCRHXf> [pic.twitter.com/pIf2xTFD05](https://pic.twitter.com/pIf2xTFD05)

— Financial Times (@FinancialTimes) [June 2, 2022](#)

“Lovely Jubilee” says the **Record** at the top of its front page, while underneath its main story is “Summer of chaos” at airports.

Friday's Daily Record front page: Scots are facing chaos at airports this summer because of a chronic staff shortage, a union has warned.  
[#TomorrowsPapersToday #scotpapers](#) [pic.twitter.com/QXKqS0fejx](https://pic.twitter.com/QXKqS0fejx)

— The Daily Record (@Daily\_Record) [June 2, 2022](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/03/history-maker-how-the-papers-covered-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-celebrations>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Queen's platinum jubilee

# Prince Charles and Camilla appear in special jubilee episode of EastEnders

The royal couple played cameo roles as guests of honour at a street party in the BBC soap's Albert Square

- [Queen's platinum jubilee: live coverage](#)



The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall filmed the scenes in March when they visited the new Elstree set and met the EastEnders cast and crew. Photograph: BBC/PA

*[Tom Ambrose](#)*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 16.10 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 08.31 EDT

Prince Charles and Camilla have appeared in a special episode of EastEnders to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee.

The royal couple's unlikely cameo appeared to stun the residents of Albert Square when they were announced as guests of honour at a street party organised by Mick Carter, played by [Danny Dyer](#).

During the episode, Charles and Camilla were given a tour of fictional east [London](#) suburb Walford and were introduced to some of the long-running BBC soap's characters.



Charles and Camilla took part in the street party scene. Photograph: BBC/PA

In somewhat stilted scenes, the Prince of Wales met fruit and veg stall owner Martin Fowler, chatting briefly about his admiration for London markets.

“That’s the wonderful thing about London, all the different markets and stalls where people inherit them over the generations,” Charles said.

He also told Frankie Lewis, played by the Strictly Come Dancing winner [Rose Ayling-Ellis](#), that “you lip-read very well” before meeting other residents of the square.

EastEnders stalwart Patrick Trueman, played by Rudolph Walker, even managed to tempt Charles and Camilla to a “tipple” of rum, prompting Charles to quip: “I thought you’d never ask.”

Meanwhile, the Duchess of Cornwall tied a ribbon to commemorate “all the victims of domestic abuse” during her appearance in Thursday night’s episode.



Charles and Camilla met the residents of Albert Square. Photograph: BBC/PA

In the poignant scene Camilla was introduced to Karen Taylor, played by Lorraine Stanley, whose on-screen daughter Chantelle Atkins was murdered in a domestic abuse storyline.

The duchess took a purple ribbon and tied it around a tree in her memory, adding: “It’s very important that she is remembered. My heart goes out to you, I know a lot of people who have lost children.”

The platinum jubilee visit by Charles and Camilla is not the first time royalty has graced Albert Square. In 2001, the Queen visited the EastEnders set, where she stepped behind the bar at the Queen Vic and strolled around Albert Square and through the street market, meeting stars of the show.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

**Prince Andrew**

## **Prince Andrew to miss jubilee service with Covid**

Queen's son will not attend service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral, palace says



Prince Andrew, pictured last year, has tested positive for Covid. Photograph: Steve Parsons/AP

**Caroline Davies**

Thu 2 Jun 2022 10.42 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 00.27 EDT

The Duke of York has tested positive for Covid and will no longer attend the Queen's jubilee service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday, Buckingham Palace said.

A palace spokesperson said: "After undertaking a routine test the duke has tested positive for Covid and with regret will no longer be attending tomorrow's service."

It is understood Andrew saw the Queen in the last few days but has been doing regular testing, and has not seen her since he tested positive. The Queen, 96, tested positive for Covid in February and later said it left her exhausted.

Andrew had been expected to join the family at the event despite not being invited to the [trooping the colour ceremony](#) at Horse Guards Parade on Thursday. He didn't join other members of the royal family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace for the RAF flypast afterwards either.

The Queen decided in advance that only working royals would be on the balcony. Andrew has been stripped of his HRH title, royal patronages and affiliations after [paying millions](#) to settle a civil case in the US brought by Virginia Giuffre, who was trafficked by the paedophile billionaire Jeffrey Epstein, and who accused the prince of sexually assaulting her when she was 17. The duke denied the claims.

He stepped down from public life after a disastrous [2019 Newsnight interview](#) over his friendship with Epstein.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/02/prince-andrew-to-miss-jubilee-service-with-covid>

## 2022.06.03 - Spotlight

- ['All is not lost!' Yeah Yeah Yeahs return with riffs, risks and radical optimism](#)
- [You be the judge Should my wife clear out her old books?](#)
- [Farming The regenerative farm working to improve soil without fertilisers](#)
- ['A certain stigma' Spain's hospitality sector hit by waiter shortage](#)

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Yeah Yeah Yeahs](#)

Interview

## **‘All is not lost!’ Yeah Yeah Yeahs return with riffs, risks and radical optimism**

[Hermione Hoby](#)



‘Don’t take the tongue out of the cheek!’ ... (*from left*) Brian Chase, Karen O and Nick Zinner of Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Photograph: David Black

The darlings of 00s indie sleaze shook jaded audiences into life with their raucous rock'n'roll. Twenty years later, facing ecological catastrophe and middle age, can they do it again?

Fri 3 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 15.20 EDT

When the pandemic hit in 2020, Karen Lee Orzolek set about constructing what she thought of as a “portal” in a closet at the foot of her stairs. Orzolek, better known as Karen O, the spectacularly charismatic frontwoman of [Yeah Yeah Yeahs](#), was experiencing the locked-down contraction of her world along with everyone else. Unlike everyone else, however, Orzolek is a rock star in the truest sense of the word – a woman used to selling out huge venues with a triple-Grammy-nominated band whose driving spirit these past 22 years comes from a swirl of notions that now seem almost antiquated: that rock music might set you free, that defiance can change the world, that transcendence through art is possible.

Remembering that odd year spent at home in Los Angeles, Orzolek, 43, thinks first of worms: “My son was really into worm-hunting in our backyard; I remember life shrinking down to going on worm hunts with him,” she says with a smile. Second, she thinks of the concerts she did in that closet, mini broadcasts over Instagram for which she would transform her tiny space into “a different world” each time. Balloons, streamers, whatever it took – the band’s gleeful DIY spirit prevails.

Those peak-pandemic months were the first time since she was a child that Orzolek experienced time as irrelevant: “Isn’t it so fascinating how these fraught times can bring so much revelation?” Now, nine years after the last Yeah Yeah Yeahs record, that sense of revelation thrums through their triumphant fifth album, *Cool It Down*. Finely calibrated between widescreen emotion and sonic precision, it sounds ready to sweep the jaded out of their stupor, and is the band’s best testament yet to their idealist spirit.

It is mid-May, and Orzolek has arrived early to the sun-drenched terrace of a Los Angeles hotel wearing a sky-blue jumpsuit that makes her look like a chic garage attendant. A stylish older woman leaps up from a neighbouring

table to tell her it's incredible: did she make it herself? Orzolek thanks her and tells her no, her best friend did. This is designer Christian Joy, whose outre costumes shaped the band's iconography from the start. By phone, Joy recalls the first one she made for Orzolek: "It was this really ugly, shredded blue prom dress that said 'Yeah Yeah Yeahs' all over it and had all these plastic flowers hanging off it. It was ugly and she rocked it."

In September 2020, Orzolek once again enlisted Joy. The band were turning 20 and Orzolek wanted to celebrate with a closet performance that would be some sort of transmission of love. For this, she needed an outfit that recalled the messy exuberance of their 2003 debut album, *Fever to Tell*. The concept, Joy says, went something like: "Crazy mom at a kids' party who'd walked away with the whole table." She sometimes wonders when Orzolek will "reach the point where she's like: 'OK, I can't wear this stuff any more.' I mean, we're all in our 40s now ..."

In the clip, [Orzolek appears against a backdrop of shiny rainbow streamers](#), wearing a spangly headdress bristling with balloons and a dress made from a shower curtain studded with dollar-store party tat. Then, with drummer Brian Chase and guitarist Nick Zinner beamed in via video, she sings their most indelible love song, *Maps*. It seems a sweet irony that a band known for not giving a damn should have this raw-hearted distillation of longing be their most famous song. Yet both *Maps* and the carnival-like disinhibition of the live shows seem to come from the same source: a refusal of self-consciousness.

Zinner is next to arrive on the terrace: pale, clad in black, and wincing from the sun, he murmurs drily about being "a diva" as he seeks the shadiest corner of the table. His demeanour, that of a bewitched Tim Burton character, makes him an endearing foil to the labrador-like enthusiasm of Chase, who pulls up a chair with an: "All right! Los Angeles!" Chase, 44, is the lone NYC holdout; Orzolek moved to LA in 2004, and Zinner, having gone back and forth between the two cities, finally moved in 2020. People still assume, Orzolek says good-naturedly, that they all still live in New York.



Karen O performing at T in the Park, near Kinross, in 2013. Photograph: PA Images/Alamy

As much coffee and kale is ordered, I sense the magnitude of these three people having known each other for so long. “When we started out in 2000 we were inspired by music that came out in 1980,” says Zinner in quiet wonderment. “You know, ESG or New Order … and I can’t wrap my head around the fact that the beginning of our band is the mid-point between those things.”

Both Chase and Orzolek are parents now, yet all three still seem like the awkward, occasionally awestruck art-school kids who came together in New York. When I suggest that silliness is at the band’s core, Orzolek agrees seriously, then gazes at the table to let a thought coalesce: “God, give me a second because this is huge …” Still thinking, she offers a throwaway line: “Don’t take the tongue out of the cheek!”

“Did you just come up with that?” says Chase, impressed. “That’s brilliant.”

She laughs this off. The creative ideal, for Orzolek, is “if you can forever be in the sandbox. For one thing, it’s disarming.” This was something she tried to figure out in the band’s earliest days. “I mean, New York’s a tough crowd. It’s a lot of somewhat jaded people who’ve seen it all.” It was a question,

then, of: “How do I disarm this crowd of their own self-consciousness?” The answer was by summoning a welter of sexuality and absurdity and angst, ridding herself of self-awareness. “It sets me free! And the idea is if it sets me free, it sets everyone else free. And it sets Brian and Nick free! I mean, holy shit, the three of us when we’re up there: it really does feel like radical freedom.”

“Performing with this band,” Zinner says simply, with full eye contact, “is the greatest thing in the world.”



The band in 2022. Photograph: David Black

After the release of 2013’s *Mosquito*, however, it was by no means certain there would be another Yeah Yeah Yeahs record. The band had fulfilled their contract with Universal and thus freed from a cycle of writing, recording, touring. A couple of years later, Orzolek had a son, Django, with her husband, Barnaby Clay, a director. “I’m glad I was able to squeeze one out,” she says. “And then I was rubble for a couple of years after that.” The band remained in close touch but it wasn’t until late 2019 that they started talking about new music. In early 2020 came what they refer to as “the Black Dragon conversation”.

“Karen and I had dinner and were hanging out and drinking this sake called Black Dragon,” Zinner explains. It resulted, Orzolek says, in the worst hangover of her life. But that night was also the first time she expressed a readiness to start writing again.

“They’ve been extremely patient in waiting for me to come round,” she says of her bandmates. The Black Dragon conversation acknowledged the trauma of the Trump years, plus “the baggage and pressure of just 20 years of being a family”, ultimately leaving all three with one governing question: “How can we do this in the most joyful, pressure-free sort of way?”

Soon after Zinner sent Orzolek a folder of ideas, the pandemic arrived. Not long after that, wildfires began raging through LA and Orzolek was reminded of “this ticking clock” of ecological doom. Confused by hearing so much music that seemed merely escapist, she longed to hear her emotions reflected – not least the vertigo of parenthood, and “ushering a new life into a world that feels so uncertain”. The mood of the album’s first track, Spitting Off the Edge of the World, is one of defiance – in particular, “defiance of ruin. It was me wanting to convey to my child that all’s not lost.”

You have to be so open and almost innocent ... Making music in this band, that's the safe haven for big feelings

### *Karen O*

“There’s what I describe as a zoom-in, zoom-out quality to living right now,” says Chase. “The more I zoom out, the more I realise how problematic life is. Which sphere do I place myself in? Do I keep things in the immediate, or how much do I obligate myself to concern with the larger circumstances?”

“I’m just stumbling through that every day,” says Orzolek. “In order to write music you have to be great friends with mystery and uncertainty. When Nick and I initially go in to ‘jam’ or whatever, we have this affinity and trust with the mysterious process of how music arrives. You have to be so open and almost innocent. I know I’m good at it when it comes to making music in this band – that’s the safe haven for big feelings.”

The songs flowed out faster than ever before, with Orzolek seized by an urgency she hadn't experienced since *Fever to Tell*. The result is a bombastic studio record, conveying a sense of cosmic awe with a punk sneer: when guest artist Perfume Genius sings on the euphoric opening track about the sun "melting houses of gold", it's both a spitting "fuck you" to capitalist greed and an arms-wide "I love you" to our planet. Cool It Down is also, Orzolek notes, "the most peaceful record between Nick and I – it just felt so simpatico".

"Just to see these things emerge from Karen, seemingly instantly ..." murmurs Zinner, "it was so cool."



Yeah Yeah Yeahs in 2001. Photograph: Allstar Picture Library/Alamy

Yeah Yeah Yeahs' very first show in 2000 was as the first of three openers for a little-known outfit called the White Stripes. "To play a show at the Mercury Lounge, to play a show in New York City – that was it!" says Orzolek. Beyond that, they had little or no ambition. "I don't know if the Strokes did, or anyone did. Everyone was just doing it because they wanted to do it; it just happened to be the right place at the right time."

The grimy, heedless glamour of that moment is now undergoing a resuscitation. There's the forthcoming documentary adaptation of Lizzy

Goodman's oral history Meet Me in the Bathroom, which memorialises the rise of Yeah Yeah Yeahs and their cohort – the Strokes, LCD Soundsystem, TV on the Radio. We are also witnessing the so-called “indie sleaze” revival, whereby all the sweat, glitter and spilt beer of an early 2000s subculture is being reclaimed by a generation who weren’t born at the time: Orzolek and her iconic bowl cut feature prominently on the Instagram account [indiesleaze](#). When the US songwriter [Lucy Dacus](#) (of Boygenius) first heard Yeah Yeah Yeahs in high school, Karen O “opened up a world of possibility,” she tells me. Dacus was seized by Orzolek’s “wild confidence ... her showing up in a way that felt reserved for rock legends. She was like, ‘Actually *I’m* a rock legend.’”

There are, Orzolek will readily admit, two different Karens: the self-effacing one at this table, just a shy girl from New Jersey, and then the onstage force that is international rock goddess Karen O, howling and yelping into a mic.

“I really revelled in there being little to no precedent or legacy for me,” she says. “I felt like because there are so few [women] and they’re all fucking crazy mavericks – Janis Joplin, Grace Slick, Patti Smith, Debbie Harry – all they taught me was you make it up as you go along. So I felt incredibly liberated in that sense.”

I was a hot mess, man. The amount I wanted to please the crowd through self-destruction was escalating and escalating

### *Karen O*

It is one reason she felt fairly unscathed by the sexism of that time. “But yeah, the shots up the fucking skirt ... That sucked.” It also annoyed her that people paid more attention to the spectacle than to the songwriting. “I was a hot mess, man,” she says. “The amount I wanted to please the crowd through self-destruction was escalating and escalating.” After she [fell off a stage](#) in Australia and injured herself in 2003, “I really had to reconfigure the way I performed. I had to understand that I didn’t need to destroy myself up there in order to reach some sort of transcendence.”

On the band’s forthcoming tour, they will be supported by [Japanese Breakfast](#), whose songwriter Michelle Zauner is Korean-American, and

youthful punk band the Linda Lindas, who identify as half-Asian, half-Latinx. Orzolek, who is half Polish-American and half-Korean, is gratified by the “Asian-American representation blossoming” in music. “I feel like I’ve been waiting all my life for that. It’s crazy, man, how things like that change all of a sudden.”

It is also life-affirming in a different way, she adds: “It feels like, ‘Man, we’re cool enough for these cool bands to open for us!’” The astonishment in her voice goes some way, I think, in explaining Yeah Yeah Yeahs’ enduring coolness – because what’s cooler than wonder? Here are three people still not taking a thing for granted, whether it’s worms or the vast mysteries of the creative process.

Now, ahead of their shows for Cool It Down, Orzolek is puzzling over how she might “arrive as who I am right now in this moment” – with vulnerability and courage. “There’s going to be a new performer up there,” she says. “I just haven’t met her yet.”

Cool It Down is released 30 September on Secretly Canadian

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/jun/03/yeah-yeah-yeahs-return-karen-o-radical-freedom>

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[You be the judge](#)[Life and style](#)

## You be the judge: should my wife clear out her old books?



Illustration: Joren Joshua/The Guardian

He says her book collection is out of control; she wants to keep them for ‘generations’. You decide who’s right in this war of words

[Find out how to get a disagreement settled or be a You be the Judge juror](#)

*Interviews by [Georgina Lawton](#)  
[@georginalawton](#)*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 21.11 EDT

## **The prosecution: Andy**

*Sally keeps all her books, even old school textbooks. They're scattered in piles all over the house*

Sally and I met at school in 2015, and after four years of dating we got married last year. She's always been a big reader and while I enjoy a book now and again, I don't read as much as her.

I also get rid of my books once I've read them. I don't think that you need to keep every single book you've ever read on the shelf for the rest of your life. Sally's books take up space across all the shelves, and accumulate in little piles all over the house – on the countertop, around the bed, by the sofa, on the coffee table. It's annoying as I like a tidy house.

We have a massive bookshelf in our bedroom, another in our office and more in the living room. But it's not enough. Every year Sally will get books for her birthday and Christmas. They add up quickly.

I'm fine with Sally keeping books that are meaningful to her

I'm fine with Sally keeping books that are meaningful to her, but there are probably only five or 10 books in that category. And of course some books that should never be thrown out – things like dictionaries. Coffee-table books about, say, photography or travel, can stay, as they are decorative.

But other than that, pretty much every book should live in our house only temporarily. They are replaceable and should be updated regularly to make space for newer titles. When we had a clear-out recently, Sally grumbled

about having to throw her books away. But does she really need to keep her GCSE textbooks? We're in our twenties and don't need to hang on to those.

Sally says she loves having a large collection of books in case she wants to reread them or lend them, but that never really happens. Besides, we are lucky and live close to a great library, and also have access to a university library through our work. There's also the option of audiobooks.

Sally needs to learn to throw or give books away, have regular clear-outs and adopt a one-in-one-out policy when buying books. Besides, a book is easy to source again should she change her mind. It's time Sally learned to part with books that are gathering dust in our home.

## The defence: Sally

*I don't buy that many books and they live on mounted bookshelves – so what's the problem?*

Andy thinks our house is getting too cluttered because I like to keep all the books I read. But it's not like we keep books piled up on the floor – they have a home on our bookshelves. We recently took a big box of my books to the charity shop, which I found very sad. I didn't like parting with my books – I had some of them for 15 years.

He once said if I authored a book, we could keep it permanently in the house, but that books bought and sold aren't really of any sentimental value so should be recycled. I think this view is drastic and a little bit psychotic. Who throws away perfectly good books?

He thinks I should start listening to audiobooks instead of buying books. But I don't buy that many books, maybe one a month, if that. And I really love curling up on the sofa with a real book – audiobooks and Kindles just aren't the same.

Keeping our books for generations could be a great investment

Most of my books don't take up any space because they live on mounted bookshelves. So really, what's the issue? I can see why he thinks we need a clear-out, but I think we should start by throwing away other things.

Andy likes doing DIY and has a couple of shoeboxes full of wires and old parts that he uses to make things from scratch. But he never bins any of his half-finished electronics projects. I'm not sure why we need to focus on my books. They're valuable and sentimental, and if we have kids I'd like to pass some of my books on to them instead of buying them toys. Keeping our books for generations could be a great investment.

I like being the person with a great collection. I love lending books to people, too.

Andy's parents have given me a book subscription for my birthday, so I don't think the book-collecting habit is going to get any better. He's now saying that I should adopt a one-in-one-out policy. But I am going to ignore it. And I definitely won't be throwing any books out – at least not until the house is absolutely overflowing.

Sign up to our Inside Saturday newsletter for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the magazine's biggest features, as well as a curated list of our weekly highlights.

## The jury of **Guardian** readers

### **Should Sally get rid of her old books?**

Sally isn't guilty. Books look great, and Andy could get involved in organising them. Sally could also help by borrowing books from the library and only buying those she really loves.

**Eleanor, 31**

Sally is definitely not guilty. You can never have too many books. A book collection is like a chart of your life so far – they contain memories and emotions from when and where they were acquired. A house with books is a house with soul and depth.

**Hamish, 47**

Sally is an intellectual and stylish individual who has caught on early to the growing “bookcore” trend of whimsical homes flooded with piles of cascading books. Many millennials would kill for the aesthetic that Andy is complaining about. I imagine that Sally could make a killing on Pinterest.

**Elliot, 23**

Sally is guilty. At a conservative estimate, she’s added 36 books to her collection in the past three years, and admits to owning some of them for 15 years. I suggest that Sally use the Marie Kondo method to declutter.

**Leona, 57**

Andy seems pretty authoritarian in his approach to books, and his choice of words when describing the situation is telling. He should lighten up, read a few books to calm himself down, learn about relationships, and compromise; otherwise, there will be trouble ahead!

**Simon, 50**

## You be the judge

So now you can be the judge. In our online poll below, tell us: should Sally clear out her old books?

We’ll share the results on next week’s You be the judge.

**The poll will close on 9 June at 9am BST**

## Last week’s result

We asked if Zara should iron and fold the laundry – including the tea towels – something which drives her flatmate Rita crazy.

**72% of you said no – Zara is innocent**

**28% of you said yes – Zara is guilty**

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Farming

# The regenerative farm working to improve soil without fertilisers

As the Ukraine war and climate crisis act as a wake-up call for the industry, one UK farm is leading the way



Regenerative farmer Marina O'Connell says the rise in the cost of nitrogen fertilisers has made farmers respond to the urgency of climate change.  
Photograph: Karen Robinson/The Observer



*Joanna Partridge*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT

Lettuces are sprouting, the wildflowers are in bloom and a buzzard is circling above the meadow on a sunny spring day at Huxhams Cross Farm near the village of Dartington in Devon. From the top of a hill, Marina O'Connell can survey most of the 15 hectares (37 acres) she has dedicated the past six years to transforming.

When she took over running the farm in 2015, she recalls, the farm contractor called this a “miserable bit of land”. Now the fields and hedgerows buzz with wildlife, and young farm workers chat as they sow carrot seeds and plant out early spinach. Further downhill, chickens peck about near polytunnels full of vegetables and soft fruit.

This idyllic spot has been completely redesigned, and indeed reborn, since it was bought by the charitable community benefit society the Biodynamic Land Trust, with the goal of creating a sustainable and [“regenerative” agricultural system](#).

Regenerative farming usually refers to an approach that involves improving the health of soil and water, while reducing tilling, growing a diverse range

of plants and produce, and keeping organic matter in the soil to help crops grow.

While such farms are still few and far between, more and more food producers are considering whether it is an idea whose time has come, as many of them are buffeted by cost headwinds, loss of subsidies and soaring costs. The “three Fs” – fertiliser, animal feed and fuel – have all surged in price since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Unlike regenerative farming, other modern farming systems rely on synthetic fertiliser to restore nutrients and pesticides to rid plants of pests and disease. Farmers will soon pay much more for these inputs amid the biggest shake-up in agriculture in a generation, as the EU farm subsidy scheme – known as the common agricultural policy – is replaced post-Brexit.



The soil at Huxhams Cross. It took two years to restore the soil biome at the farm through regenerative methods. Photograph: Karen Robinson/The Observer

The government’s new environmental land management schemes will focus more on the impact of agriculture, as farmers are increasingly encouraged to consider the climate, biodiversity and their stewardship of nature.

“We’ve got climate change in real time now and I think farmers are also aware the weather is changing,” says O’Connell. “The increase in nitrogen fertilisers has just woken up everybody to the urgency of it. So what was a transition that was going to happen over maybe 10 years, has suddenly been accelerated.”

Before 2015, Huxhams Cross was nominally part of a dairy farm owned by the Dartington Hall Trust; barley was grown on half of the fields for feeding cattle, while the wetland meadows were effectively abandoned. The new owners called on O’Connell, involved in sustainable farming since the 1980s, with the challenge to create a financially independent farm, and nurse the land back to health.

She and her family moved from Essex to pursue the project. “It had been farmed using chemicals and the soil was essentially dead,” O’Connell says. “We spent two years repairing the soil biome,” she adds, the ecosystem of plants, animals and microbes living below the surface.

As an illustration, O’Connell proffers two plastic food containers. One contains a pale, hard, desiccated ball of earth that she collected on arrival at the farm, while another is filled with the soil now: aerated, dark brown and made up of different size particles.

One of the first jobs for O’Connell and her team was planning the workflow on the future farm, and the crop layout, planting rows of trees across the sloping land and installing a rainwater-harvesting system.



Lettuces grow at Huxhams Cross. Photograph: Karen Robinson/The Observer

They planted legumes and clovers, which fix nitrogen in the earth, to start restoring the soil. These “green manures” are grown for a couple of years before crops can be sown, ideally grazed by animals who add their own droppings. At Huxhams Cross, the henhouses are wheeled across the field each week, while the farm’s two cows, Daffodil and Daisy, act as “giant lawnmowers”.

Such a time-consuming process might disappoint farmers looking for a quick fix to free themselves from rocketing fertiliser costs. “It’s really a two-year transition phase in my experience,” O’Connell explains. “It’s got to be planned for. If you’ve got a large farm, you would probably want to make a transition one block at a time rather than the whole, because it would cause a cashflow problem.”

This is one criticism of regenerative farming, which O’Connell concedes: on farms where fields are left empty for perhaps one year in three, the yield is lower than those farmed in more industrial ways with crops fed by synthetic fertilisers. If all food was produced in this way, critics say, [people could go hungry](#).

Indeed, the global risk of food shortages has once again reared its ugly head, particularly after Russia's invasion of [key agricultural producer Ukraine](#). The dangers of a rushed agricultural transition have been highlighted in recent months in Sri Lanka, after last year's sudden and unexpected ban on all chemical fertilisers by the country's president, leading to warnings from farmers of [financial ruin](#) and reliance on foreign food imports.

"If you switch from one system to another suddenly, it is going to create problems," says Jules Pretty, professor of environment and society at the University of Essex. Despite this, he is convinced that regenerative farming should be taken seriously: "Taking a mix of old principles, having a diverse and compelling system with lots of elements and modern design components to make it work."



Regenerative farm workers at Huxham Cross in Dartington, Devon.  
Photograph: Karen Robinson/The Observer

The fruit, vegetables, eggs and wheat grown at Huxham Cross now fill the plates of 300 families each week, and are mostly sold locally at Totnes farmers' market. The farm is financially self-sufficient; the food production is profitable and employs six people along with three apprentices, while its finances are bolstered by a wellbeing centre, providing therapy to children, run by O'Connell's psychologist husband.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Advocates of regenerative farming believe such systems could feed the UK without problems if people were to eat a diet containing more fruit and vegetables, and less meat, especially from cows fed on grain rather than grass.

The National Farmers' Union has the ambition of reaching net zero food production by 2040, and said its members are working to do more to work the land in a climate-friendly way. As it stands, Pretty says, there are only an estimated 2,000 farmers practising the technique in the UK.

Back at Huxhams Cross, O'Connell is taking stock of all they have achieved in the first five years. "We are what they call carbon negative, so we sequester five tonnes of carbon per year, over and above what we use. Our biodiversity levels have gone up, we've got 400% more worms, 30% more bird species."

And the word seems to be getting out: O'Connell now runs courses on regenerative farming methods and proudly tells how one local dairy farmer in his 50s has just made the switch. "A lot of it is just about having the confidence to understand how it works and to make the leap."

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/03/the-regenerative-farm-working-to-improve-soil-without-fertilisers>

## [Spain](#)

# ‘A certain stigma’: Spain’s hospitality sector hit by waiter shortage

Despite huge national unemployment, restaurants owners are struggling to fill vacancies. Why?



Wait staff were forced to look for work elsewhere when Covid restrictions hit hospitality. Photograph: Westend61 GmbH/Alamy

*[Stephen Burgen](#) in Barcelona*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 05.20 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 10.24 EDT

After a two-year drought, tourists are flooding back to [Spain](#), but just as the hospitality industry begins to recover from the pandemic, it faces a new crisis – a shortage of waiters.

From Mallorca to Madrid, restaurateurs are crying out for waiters with tens of thousands of jobs waiting to be filled. The Hard Rock hotel in Ibiza is so desperate it is offering staff a €200 (£170) bonus to find suitable employees.

The paradox is that unemployment in Spain is running at 13.4% – more than double the EU average of 6.2% – yet there are more than 100,000 job vacancies, with as many as half of those in hospitality, even though the national statistics office says 85,000 bars and restaurants closed permanently in the first year of the pandemic.

“People come to me for interviews and they say: ‘I’ve got three offers already,’” says Albert Cabanos of the hospitality employment agency camareros.com. “We used to tell an applicant, we’ll call you if there’s anything. Now they say, I’ll call you if I’m interested. Or they say, I only want to work Monday to Friday.”



Staff and customers at a cafe and tapas bar in the old quarter of Valencia.  
Photograph: DB Pictures/Alamy

So where have all the waiters gone? Many are immigrants and some went home, preferring to sit out the crisis with family and friends. Not all have returned, and now the government is proposing changes to the immigration law to make it easier for immigrants to legally join the workforce.

Many more waiters were forced to look for work elsewhere as Covid restrictions hit hospitality much harder than any other sector and have stuck

with their new jobs, finding advantages to them they did not have in their previous lives.

Jeffrey Feliz Jiménez worked as a waiter and chef for eight years in Almería in southern Spain but has given it up for the regular hours of work in a furniture warehouse. “No one respects contracts and you never know what your hours are,” he says. “You have to work till closing time but you don’t know when that is and you end up working a lot of unpaid hours.”

Even when lockdown ended, bars and restaurants suffered a series of restrictions on opening hours and seating capacity that in many areas remained in force until January of this year. According to government figures, only 10% of hospitality workers are on permanent contracts and many were not entitled to furlough payments.

Workers simply could not afford to wait for business to resume as hotels and restaurants clung on until tourists returned, which they did not in any numbers until Easter, fully two years since the first lockdown was imposed.

Other sectors such as construction and logistics [recovered sooner and faster](#) than hospitality. “No one ever imagined that tourism would come to a stop so suddenly,” Cabanos said. “People in hospitality had to rethink their careers and they discovered ways of living that are much more compatible with family life.

“In hospitality you get Monday off and that’s that. But if you work as, say, a house painter, maybe you don’t make more money but you have the weekend off, you don’t work over Christmas and Easter.”

Over the past 20 years, employment in the sector has doubled from 900,000 to 1.8 million. One result is owners complain that it is increasingly difficult to find professional waiters, with fewer young people seeking a career in hospitality. According to the UGT trade union, the average monthly salary in the sector is €1,264, not a lot more than Spain’s €1,000 minimum wage.

“There’s a certain stigma attached to being a waiter, as though it isn’t a proper job, even though you’re in the business of making people happy,” says Patrick Pescetto who runs the Buenas Migas chain of cafes in

Barcelona. “It’s getting harder to find professional waiters rather than students who are just trying to make a bit of money.”

Lockdown also gave a lot of people a chance to take stock of their lives. “The furlough scheme gave people a chance to think about what’s important in life and whether they were happy doing what they were doing before,” says Paige Tad, whose family run four pubs in the resort town of Benidorm.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Tad’s businesses mostly employ Britons and they have had to close one pub for lack of staff. “It’s the knock-on effect of Brits moving back to England during the pandemic and on top of that, Brexit, which means that it’s not that easy for Brits to live and work here now.”

Monica Zajac, who moved to Barcelona from Poland seven years ago, worked as a barista in speciality coffee bars before taking an office job at the electrical appliance company Dyson that gives her more time to study for a new career as a psychotherapist.

“Working in hospitality can be difficult,” she said. “You have a lot of contact with the public which sometimes isn’t as pleasant as you’d like it to be. Life is short and you’ve got to follow your dreams.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/03/spain-hospitality-sector-waiter-shortage>

## 2022.06.03 - Opinion

- Ukraine is desperate for peace, but we won't sign up to a bogus Russian deal
- No, Top Gun: Maverick's success isn't down to being pro-America and anti-woke
- Africa will be the world's ashtray if big tobacco is able to get its way
- What did Blackout Tuesday change? Not much – TV boardrooms are still very white

## OpinionUkraine

# **Ukraine is desperate for peace, but we won't sign up to a bogus Russian deal**

[Andriy Zagorodnyuk](#)

Kissinger is wrong: surrendering territory to appease Russia would have terrible consequences for the whole world

- Andriy Zagorodnyuk is a former Ukrainian defence minister



‘With more equipment and ammunition, pushing Russia back is a realistic prospect.’ Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, right, meets a soldier in Kharkiv. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Fri 3 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 05.37 EDT

We Ukrainians want peace more than anyone in the world. For about 100 days, we have been fighting Russian forces on the ground, in the sky, on the sea, and in cyber and information spaces. Defence experts originally gave us

little hope of success. They changed their position when we showed our ability to resist. Now we need to demonstrate the strength to hold our course and resist the temptations of a false resolution.

In this existential battle for our future, ostensibly friendly or consoling pundits and politicians persistently suggest we should surrender to achieve peace more quickly. Of course, we do not want a war to take longer than necessary, but we will not get trapped into a bogus deal which will only make things worse.

Among those who advised a quick fix was the former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, who suggested we should cede territory in exchange for ending the war. His intervention was appalling and, for a well-known strategic thinker, he was amazingly non-strategic. Conceding territory will not end the war. It will reinforce it. Russia has not abandoned its primary objective of getting rid of Ukraine, wiping us off the map. Any concessions would reward and legitimise its strategy. Far from stopping Russia's pursuit of its broader military goals, it would feel emboldened.

Responding to force with territorial concessions would also have tragic global consequences. It would open the door to similar cases around the world. We do not want to live in a world where brute force decides which country we live in and which regime we belong to. We do not want to live in a world where only large countries can be truly sovereign.

Receiving that suggestion from a renowned expert was very surprising. However, the idea was immediately picked up by the Russians, who cynically blamed Ukraine for a desire to continue an unnecessary war. Some media commentators also started to debate the need for a compromise to secure peace. This is manipulative and wrong.

Imagine the harrowing scenario of your home being invaded by a street gang which then occupied part of your house. What peaceful compromise is possible? None. You would expect the police to deal with it. Suggesting that compromising with a criminal act leads to peace is ridiculous. It is similarly absurd in the case of the Russian invasion.

Many armed conflicts do end with a compromise, but it would be illogical to assume all of them should. The only reason for this invasion was Putin's obsession with subjugating Ukraine. What compromise is possible when your adversary's goal is that you should not exist? The unspeakably brutal way in which Russians treat our occupied towns and villages is known throughout the world. True peace can only be secured when the invader leaves our country.

As the old saying has it, the night is darkest just before the dawn. Russia is now applying maximum available force, but the evidence of 1960s tanks being dusted off for battle, use of conscripts and the patching up of new military units without collective training demonstrate that it has exhausted its options. That is why Russia is pushing the idea of a compromise. It needs a pause to show gains to the Russian public and to give itself time to recover before moving on further with its attempt to subjugate Ukraine.

Ukraine's forces are more efficient than Russia's. With more equipment and ammunition, pushing Russia back and out of the country is a realistic prospect. The flow of western help is only beginning and will increase. Putin's desperate attempts to intercept the supplies from the west by [bombing rail lines](#) and [fuel depots](#) are strikingly similar to Hitler's attempts to attack allied convoys in the Atlantic. But they are failing to affect the overall situation, and equipment is successfully getting to the frontline. US weapons from the unprecedented [\\$40bn aid package](#), which we expect will include much-needed multiple rocket launch systems, will start arriving soon.

The free world has decided to stop accepting Russia's bullying behaviour, but it must be consistent in its application of that approach. For many years, western leaders tolerated Russian aggression: invading Georgia; invading Ukraine; occupying Crimea; occupying the Black Sea; carrying out targeted assassinations in the UK; carrying out cyber-attacks; allegedly meddling with elections; abusing human rights. Every time it was said: "It is Russia. It has always been like that."

It is time to stop accepting such injustices. How often have people been told to tolerate something because "it has always been like this"? Racial

discrimination, sexual abuse, domestic violence, corruption, social inequality and organised crime have been endemic in societies. The only time things have changed is when people have challenged the old ways and refused to accept them any more.

We cannot allow past approaches to dominate the way we live now. Kissinger may have played a significant role in creating the world as it was – a less than perfect world, I must say. But no longer we will accept an unjust and unfair past defining our future.

- Andriy Zagorodnyuk is a chairman of the Centre for Defence Strategies, and a former Ukrainian defence minister
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/03/ukraine-peace-bogus-russian-deal-surrendering-territory-russia-terrible>

## [Top Gun: Maverick](#)

# No, Top Gun: Maverick's success isn't down to being pro-America and anti-woke

[Jesse Hassenger](#)

Rightwing pundits have tried to claim the sequel's box office success as *their* success but there are enough examples to show that this isn't the case



Tom Cruise in Top Gun: Maverick. Photograph: Entertainment Pictures/Alamy

Fri 3 Jun 2022 02.11 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 10.44 EDT

[Top Gun: Maverick](#) is poised to [continue its epic box office run this weekend](#); with no major competition at US multiplexes, it'll soon zoom past the \$250m mark in domestic grosses alone, with \$400m or more still well within its sights. It could wind up the highest-grossing movie of the year, at least until [Avatar 2](#) drops. If you read the analysis of certain right-leaning

pundits, Top Gun: Maverick's triumph is their triumph, and a rebuke of "woke culture" – by which is meant, movies and TV shows that do not exclusively feature white men in their leading roles.

It is indeed true that [Top Gun: Maverick](#) does not go out of its way to celebrate inclusion and diversity in the sometimes-cloying, corporate way most closely associated with various Disney properties. (If there's no "first gay character in Top Gun" that we know of, that's OK; Disney will continue assigning similar designations to minor and/or desexualized characters for years to come!) It stars Tom Cruise, reprising his role as white man extraordinaire Pete "Maverick" Mitchell, fighter-pilot hero of the first Top Gun, training a new generation of recruits for a suspiciously Star Wars-like mission behind unspecified enemy lines. Many, though not all, of the trainees who get the most screen time are also white men.

That outlets like the Daily Wire, Breitbart, and their lockstep followers at Fox News have described the release of Top Gun: Maverick [as both a rare occurrence and a rare win for Hollywood is both absurd and telling](#). Of course people like Tomi Lahren need to emphasize the "traditional" (read: white and male-skewing) nature of Top Gun: Maverick; it's in their best interests to gin up outrage, and sometimes real-world violence, based on the idea that white people are being replaced – and that "real Americans" won't stand for it. Somehow, a hit sequel to a hit movie from 35 years ago affirms everything the right wing has been saying about popular culture – or, really, the whole world.

Of course, there's been no actual shortage of movies boasting either white men (Spider-Man: No Way Home, the biggest hit in years, imported white guys from two other franchises) or traditional values (The Batman may pay lip service to class warfare, but it's pretty pro-cop; [Dog](#) is literally about a military man and his dog). Nor is there much indication that audiences are yearning specifically or exclusively for military-centric displays of "traditional" patriotism. Asian and Asian-American casts led last year's big hit Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, and this year's indie smash [Everything Everywhere All at Once](#). The average gross for that new trilogy of Star Wars movies that any of those pundits could (and in some cases did)

describe as unrepentant wokefests is right around \$700m in North America, putting their average popularity at around fifth place of all time (or, adjusted for inflation, merely as popular as Forrest Gump). The rightwing cultural-warrior audience considers a military-cooperating, entirely middle-of-the-road (and extremely successful) production like Captain Marvel equivalent to an encroaching Marxist revolution.

All that said, Top Gun: Maverick does have a conservative skew; it's just a more streamlined version of the conservatism of (contrary to these ding-dongs' assertions) so many movies with blockbuster aspirations. Despite some scenes where Maverick reflects on his past and his legacy, especially a touching moment with his former rival Iceman (Val Kilmer), the movie is a sleek empty vessel that defaults to endorsing the status quo. Cruise's Maverick was the best, is the best, and, given Cruise's aversion to ever dying on-screen, will remain the best for the foreseeable future. A few characters may call out Cruise as a relic of another time, but he remains the exception to every rule. What really keeps the movie from feeling like a paean to American exceptionalism is how otherworldly [Tom Cruise](#) comes across these days.

In other words, [Top Gun](#) 2 is studiously “apolitical” in the way that rightwingers love, because it allows them to claim just-plain-folks victory where white male/military dominance have no sociopolitical dimension – they’re the default, the normal thing. Pleas to keep “politics” out of movies have an implicit definition of politics that includes radical concepts like “non-white actors” and “more than one woman”. Some leftwingers inadvertently play into this too, when we detect the insidious conservative agenda in movies with ideological or provocative ambiguities.

It was fascinating, then, to see self-described leftists who look askance at Marvel for crypto-fascist propaganda surrender to the apparently value-neutral showmanship of Top Gun: Maverick. But that’s also anecdotal evidence of Maverick’s appeal reaches beyond the traditionalists who have claimed it as their own. It’s just something a whole lot of people can agree on – sort of like Black Panther (though Maverick may not make quite that sum of money in the end). It’s delusional to treat it like the Last Hit Movie; Doctor Strange 2, a sequel to a far less beloved movie, raked in plenty of cash just weeks earlier. Moreover, rightwingers misread the real unity

behind Top Gun: Maverick, which is far stranger: for at least a little while longer, the United States is One Nation, Under Cruise.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/03/no-top-gun-mavericks-success-isnt-down-to-being-pro-america-and-anti-woke>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

[\*\*A common condition\*\*](#)[\*\*Global health\*\*](#)

## **Africa will be the world's ashtray if big tobacco is able to get its way**

Rachel Kitonyo and Jeffrey Droke

Smoking in the west is declining, so the industry is turning to untapped markets, where governments must act to stop it



A woman selling tobacco in Nairobi. Cigarettes are often sold singly in many developing countries. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Supported by

THE LEONA M. AND HARRY B.  
**HELMSLEY**  
CHARITABLE TRUST



[About this content](#)

Thu 2 Jun 2022 08.15 EDT Last modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 10.50 EDT

For decades, smoking has been on the rise, driving more than [100m deaths in the 20th century alone](#) and [creating health and other costs of about \\$1,500bn a year](#) that have hampering global growth. According to a report from the global health policy organisation [Vital Strategies](#) and the University of Illinois Chicago in the latest edition of the [Tobacco Atlas](#), the era of big tobacco is coming to an end: there is an unequivocal drop in global smoking rates, to 19.6% in 2019 from 22.6% in 2007.

Concealed in the figures, however, is a plan to turn tobacco back into a growth industry by focusing on [Africa](#).

Global progress against the “tobacco epidemic” is driven by large declines mostly in nations that have raised taxes on tobacco, limited marketing, mounted hard-hitting public information campaigns, and banned smoking in many public places. Our research shows that the decline in smoking in Africa has been small, and adult prevalence increased in 10 of the continent’s countries between 1990 and 2019.

[Quick Guide](#)

## A common condition

Show

The human toll of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is huge and rising. These illnesses end the lives of approximately 41 million of the 56 million people who die every year – and three quarters of them are in the developing world.

NCDs are simply that; unlike, say, a virus, you can't catch them. Instead, they are caused by a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors. The main types are cancers, chronic respiratory illnesses, diabetes and cardiovascular disease – heart attacks and stroke. Approximately 80% are preventable, and all are on the rise, spreading inexorably around the world as ageing populations and lifestyles pushed by economic growth and urbanisation make being unhealthy a global phenomenon.

NCDs, once seen as illnesses of the wealthy, now have a grip on the poor. Disease, disability and death are perfectly designed to create and widen inequality – and being poor makes it less likely you will be diagnosed accurately or treated.

Investment in tackling these common and chronic conditions that kill 71% of us is incredibly low, while the cost to families, economies and communities is staggeringly high.

In low-income countries NCDs – typically slow and debilitating illnesses – are seeing a fraction of the money needed being invested or donated. Attention remains focused on the threats from communicable diseases, yet cancer death rates have long sped past the death toll from malaria, TB and HIV/Aids combined.

'A common condition' is a new Guardian series reporting on NCDs in the developing world: their prevalence, the solutions, the causes and consequences, telling the stories of people living with these illnesses.

**Tracy McVeigh, editor**

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

As outlined [in research](#) from the University of Bath, a partner in the tobacco industry watchdog, Stopping Tobacco Organisations and Products (Stop): “To protect their profits, transnational tobacco companies (TTCs) began shifting their business to relatively untapped markets in parts of the world where the opportunity for growth is largely unrestricted ... Nowhere is this underexploited prospect as ripe for the picking as Africa. TTCs are expanding into African countries, where, excluding South Africa, the tobacco market grew by almost 70% through the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century.”

Taxation is the most effective way to control tobacco use but Africa has a poor record in this area. Tobacconomics’ [cigarette tax scorecard](#) rates nations on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 indicating the best performance. Compared with leaders such as New Zealand or Ecuador (4.63), which are making rapid progress, countries such as Kenya (0.88), Zimbabwe (1.38), Chad and Central African Republic (both at 0.75) show that tobacco is lightly taxed across most of the continent.

Less than 2% of all development aid goes to non-communicable disease prevention and the figure is even more dismal for Africa

Cheap cigarettes suit international tobacco multinationals. As profits are choked off in the west, big tobacco has homed in on African communities, and especially their young people, as incubators for deadly new initiatives. The [Africa Centre for Tobacco reported](#) in 2016 how shops and pushcarts peddling cigarettes alongside sweets were operating near schools in Cameroon and Burkina Faso. The Tobacco Atlas lays out stark data on the industry’s global youth focus, finding smoking rates among 13- to 15-year-olds increasing in 63 countries.

Ironically, keeping cigarettes affordable for poor people has been used by industry lobbyists as an argument against taxation. However, it ignores the fact that those groups are more sensitive to price, and the health, social and economic benefits of higher taxes – fewer people starting to smoke and more

quitting – accrue much more to these groups. The positive impact can also be amplified by governments that use tobacco tax revenues for the benefit of those same groups, such as supporting programmes to help people stop smoking.

Another industry argument is that tobacco cultivation in many east and southern African countries is an important part of the economy. The tobacco industry lobbies governments to stall action for fear of hurting farmers, but the Tobacco Atlas identifies recent research that demonstrates that most tobacco growers are impoverished and governments would serve them better by helping them transition to more profitable crops.

We cannot let Africa be the world's ashtray. Governments should act now to raise tobacco taxes to at least World Health Organization-recommended levels, restrict marketing to young people, create policies that control access to tobacco products, and protect policymaking from interference by the tobacco industry. Smoking rates on the continent are still relatively low, and the tobacco epidemic that has already scarred the US and Europe will not inevitably take off in Africa if we act now to protect the next generation.

African economies remain vulnerable; the vestiges of colonialism are still at play. We can work together to ensure that global corporations based in high-income countries don't siphon profits out of lower-income countries at the cost of their people's health. Less than 2% of all development aid is dedicated to non-communicable disease prevention and the figure is even more dismal for Africa – an oversight leading to preventable premature deaths and increased costs, as well as leaving populations more vulnerable to health shocks such as Covid. Financial and technical aid for tobacco control should be readily available to protect Africa's one billion people from being the next growth market.

It is heartening to see tobacco's influence on the wane anywhere in the world, but this edition of the Tobacco Atlas exposes an industry hard at work to make Africa the new frontier for smoking. It will take a concerted effort to implement established tobacco control measures to resist the powerful multinationals looking to profit at the expense of people's health. As high-

income countries act to ensure tobacco-free futures, we need to use those same policy measures to prevent tomorrow's health crises across Africa.

- Rachel Kitonyo is regional manager, based in Nairobi, for the Australia's [McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer](#). Jeffrey Droke is a research professor at the [University of Illinois Chicago](#).

***Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)***

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/tobacco-smoking-africa-worlds-ashtray-acc>

## OpinionGeorge Floyd

# What did Blackout Tuesday change? Not much – TV boardrooms are still very white

[Michelle Kambasha](#)

Despite successful shows like Top Boy, I May Destroy You and Pose, executive roles are mostly out of reach for Black creatives



Ashley Walters as Dushane and Kane Robinson as Sully in the second series of Top Boy, on Netflix this year. Photograph: Chris Harris/Netflix

Thu 2 Jun 2022 08.30 EDTLast modified on Thu 2 Jun 2022 09.24 EDT

The last two years have been a test of how western societies treat their most underrepresented communities. The murder of George Floyd, as well as other forms of violence such as the treatment of Asian Americans during the pandemic, encouraged underrepresented people to speak out, once again, about how structural racism manifested in their respective industries.

[Blackout Tuesday](#) was an initiative by two Black women working in the music industry that called on companies to carve out a day (2 June 2020) for honest reflection, and to forge plans to implement long-lasting change. Radio stations and TV channels [altered their schedules](#) to include moments of silence and discussion about diversity. It was an impressive show of support. But two years on, has anything actually changed?

It's worth noting that before the social unrest of 2020, some substantial industry initiatives were already under way. Three years earlier, Netflix had started [Strong Black Lead](#) in order to amplify its content for audiences of colour. Since 2020, the channel has created Asian, LGBTQIA and Latin American counterparts called Golden, Most and Con Todo respectively. In 2016 UK Music launched the UK Music Diversity Report, an industry-wide survey that sought to accurately collect and publish the industry's gender and ethnicity data.

But Blackout Tuesday called for more radical initiatives – a gutting and restructuring of the entire industry to make it more equitable. Expansive promises were made by the most powerful figures in TV and music. In music, the big three major record labels promised \$225m to racial and social injustice organisations. The [Black Music Coalition](#) was founded by four leading Black music industry executives whose manifesto included “progression for Black employees” (in a response to the relative lack of Black people in senior positions) and “eradicating the pay gap” as it pertained to Black employees. In collaboration with YouTube, Spotify and the Musicians’ Union, the PRS Foundation created [Power Up](#): a long-term initiative to support music creators and other industry professionals. Each year it funds as many as 20 Black music creators for up to £15,000 each, with access to mentoring and marketing support.

TV has had some success stories, but not without their own limitations. Channel 4 looked at its internal structure and external output in tandem. Collaborating with [We Are Parable](#) – a Black-owned company that consults media outlets, film festivals and other cultural organisations to platform Black cinema and TV – they introduced the [Black to Front](#) project: a day where new, original programming would feature predominantly Black cast members, writers, producers and directors. The programming included an

episode of the sitcom Big Age, written by Bolu Babalola, and reality TV show Highlife, which featured wealthy Nigerian-British millennials. The day's news coverage won a Bafta award.

Some [criticised](#) Black to Front, mainly on the basis that it was just one day. Much like some aspects of Black History Month, it risked being tokenistic; a public relations project to make the station look good rather than provide lasting change. But perhaps the criticism was premature. Teaming up with We Are Parable once again, in February 2022 Channel 4 announced a new scheme, [Momentum](#), to train and mentor 60 Black filmmakers.

As well as Netflix's existing initiatives, in late 2020 a flurry of Black sitcoms were added to the streamer, including Sister, Sister, Moesha and the Kelsey Grammer-produced Girlfriends. Most significantly, [Netflix has pledged \\$63m](#) for original content to fund its South African market, given the success of titles like Blood & Water, Savage Beauty and food show The Ultimate Braai Master. It's a nice touch given that conversations on Black cinema often centre on Black western diasporas.

But in 2022, the streamer has seemingly fallen short on diversity behind the screen. At the beginning of the year, Netflix reported an upswing in Black executives in its diversity and inclusion report, most notably in senior positions – a jump from 10.7% to 13.3%. However, it's evident that the company has been shaken by a significant loss of subscribers in the first quarter of 2022, at 200,000 – its [first loss](#) in a quarter in 10 years. A loss of a [further 2 million](#) is predicted in the second quarter. Since the loss, Netflix has cut around [150 jobs](#), with a reported 60 to 70 of them being from its diversity initiatives, including the aforementioned Strong Black Lead. This has undermined its diversity efforts, and sent a message that Black people who work behind the scenes know all too often – that our projects are often the first to be closed down in failing companies.

However, the proof is there that Black stories on TV can be huge successes – take Netflix's own [Top Boy](#), the crime drama When they See Us and other shows like I May Destroy You and Pose. Meanwhile, the popularity of Black music is stratospheric – genres such as R&B, hip-hop and urban contemporary music make up a large portion of popular culture.

All this poses a question: why has the growth of Black stories on screen and in music been exponential, but behind the scenes so stunted or slow to progress? It's a tale as old as time. Black art in its many forms – be it music, art, cinema or TV – is easily absorbed then commodified by a diverse audience (and crucially white audiences) to the extent that it can become dominant in popular culture. But all the while, industry gatekeeping stubbornly resists internal change.

This isn't to say that true change is impossible, and there have been a number of schemes created to help balance what we see on our screens and what goes on behind the scenes. For now, it's important to champion the leaps that culture has made in sharing Black stories, but to remain vigilant and curious to the demographics in the boardrooms. Until white people are ready to loosen their grip on the industry, real change will remain out of reach.

- Michelle Kambasha works in the music industry
  - *Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/blackout-tuesday-tv-boardrooms-still-very-white>

## 2022.06.03 - Around the world

- [Tiananmen Square massacre Hong Kong police warn anniversary gatherings will break the law](#)
- [US Florida supreme court declines to rule gerrymandered voting map unconstitutional](#)
- [Elon Musk Return-to-office threat to Tesla staff sparks Twitter spat with Australian billionaire](#)
- [US Justice Department could be zeroing in on Trump lawyers, experts say](#)
- [Depp-Heard trial Verdict condemned as a ‘toxic catastrophe’ for women](#)

## [Hong Kong](#)

# Hong Kong police warn Tiananmen anniversary gatherings will break the law

Hong Kong has commemorated 1989 crackdown for decades, but national security law imposed in 2020 has put a stop to annual vigils



A woman holding candles in the Causeway Bay district of Hong Kong a year ago after police closed a venue where people traditionally gather to mourn the victims of China's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. Photograph: Isaac Lawrence/AFP/Getty Images

*[Helen Davidson](#) and agencies  
[@heldavidson](#)*

Thu 2 Jun 2022 23.30 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 01.44 EDT

Hong Kong police have warned that people risk breaking the law if they gather on Saturday to commemorate China's Tiananmen crackdown -

particularly in the city's Victoria Park, the site of a once annual candlelit vigil.

Discussion of the 4 June 1989 crackdown, when the Chinese government set troops and tanks on peaceful protesters, is forbidden in mainland China. For decades Hong Kong exercised its semi-autonomy and freedom of speech [to hold an annual candlelit memorial](#) for the victims. But after the national security law was brought in in 2020, that came to an end.

For the last two years authorities have banned gatherings at Victoria Park on the anniversary, citing pandemic restrictions which many said were being misused to silence the vigil. Last year thousands of riot police were put on standby.

This year, Hong Kong police have warned people they risk breaching laws against unlawful assembly and incitement if they try to mark the anniversary on Saturday, regardless of numbers.

"When there are other people there, and you share a common goal to express some appeals, that's already sufficient to make you a member of an unlawful assembly," said senior superintendent Liauw Ka-kei on Thursday.

Asked if residents can wear black clothes, bring flowers or candles and appear near the park at all, he said: "If that person makes us feel that his or her purpose of appearance is to incite others, we of course will search for evidence."

He said police had noticed calls on social media to gather at the park on Saturday, but did not give details.

Liauw also said any person who promoted an unauthorised assembly in Victoria Park, even if they themselves did not show up, will have contravened the law. Gatherings in other locations would receive similar treatment, he added.

Since the security law came into force in 2020, a drive to remove all trace of Tiananmen has swept through the city.

Dozens of lawmakers and activists – including many connected to the vigil – are in jail. The Hong Kong Alliance, the most prominent Tiananmen advocacy group and the vigil organiser, was prosecuted as a “foreign agent” over incitement to subversion. Last September its leaders were arrested, [their museum closed after a police raid](#), and digital records deleted overnight.

Last December [Hong Kong University removed its “Pillar of Shame,”](#) a sculpture commemorating the victims of the massacre and which had stood on the site for two decades.

The crackdown has cast a chilling shadow across the remaining pro-democracy advocates, as well as media, the arts, and the legal profession. Many have been targeted by pro-Beijing newspapers, [published on lists of accused subversives](#), while [human rights lawyers have been cast as suspicious](#) for representing clients.

This year for the first time, the city’s Catholic Diocese – whose 90-year-old cardinal Joseph Zen is currently in jail awaiting trial on charges of collusion with foreign forces - decided against holding memorial masses because of safety fears.

Liauw said police had not received any application to organise an assembly in the park on 4 June this year but officers would be guarding the area anyway.

Four of six soccer pitches in the park have been booked from early morning all the way to around midnight “by individual citizens for the purpose of playing soccer”, Hong Kong’s Leisure and Cultural Services Department said. The two other pitches have been sealed for “maintenance” since early May.

Asked if lighting a candle on a private balcony was unlawful – a move many have adopted over the past two years in the absence of other options – Liauw said he could not see any law banning that.

*With Agence France-Presse*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/03/hong-kong-police-warn-tiananmen-anniversary-gatherings-will-break-the-law>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## [US news](#)

# Florida supreme court declines to rule gerrymandered voting map unconstitutional

Governor Ron DeSantis' map dismantles the state's largely Black fifth congressional district into four new ones



The congressional map was redrawn by DeSantis and dilutes the power of Black voters. Photograph: Stephen M Dowell/AP

*[Sam Levine](#) in New York*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 04.42 EDTFirst published on Fri 3 Jun 2022 03.00 EDT

Florida's supreme court has [declined to hear](#) a request to rule on whether the state's new congressional map was unconstitutional, a decision that means it will probably be more difficult for Black voters in north Florida to elect their preferred candidates to represent them.

The state's congressional map, drawn by Governor Ron DeSantis, [dismantles the state's fifth congressional district](#), which stretches from Jacksonville to Tallahassee and is 46% Black.

The district is currently represented by Al Lawson, a Black Democrat, but the new map chops up the district into four new districts, each with a much smaller population of Black voters, that would lean towards Republicans.

Last month, a circuit court judge [said the map](#) violated the state's constitution because "it diminishes African Americans' ability to elect candidates of their choice" and ordered a new configuration of districts in northern Florida. An appeals court later paused that ruling and the supreme court, in a 4-1 decision, said it would not intervene in the case yet.

"They are losing representation that is so key and vital to the state where we are Blacker and browner. And we have a state that is hurling more racist and oppressive policies every single day," said Jasmine Burney-Clark, the founder of Equal Ground, one of several civic engagement groups that challenged the maps. "Our only recourse against that is voting and they're taking that away by diluting that power."

DeSantis has railed against the current version of the fifth congressional district, saying that it was illegally drawn to consider race. The map he drew would probably give Republicans an additional four seats in Congress, giving them a 20-8 advantage in the state's congressional delegation.

Three of the four justices who joined Wednesday's ruling were appointed by DeSantis. Two justices recused themselves. Justice Jorge Labarga wrote the court's sole dissent, saying the court had the authority to intervene now because it was likely to do so in the future. At stake in the case, he said, were protections against gerrymandering that [Florida](#) voters overwhelmingly voted to add to the state constitution in 2010.

"They are making a decision not to move forward. As the dissent said, there's a pathway," said Cecile Scoon, the president of the Florida chapter of the League of Women Voters, which was also involved in the challenge to the map.

Part of that language makes it illegal to draw districts that “diminish” the ability of minority groups to elect their preferred candidates. DeSantis has brushed aside concerns that the map may violate the state constitution, saying that anti-gerrymandering language may wind up being struck down.

The supreme court’s decision also underscores how difficult it has been for voting rights groups to get courts to strike down maps before the 2022 midterms. In Alabama, a three-judge panel issued an extensive decision in January explaining why the state’s congressional plan discriminated against Black voters and ordered it to come up with a new plan. But the US supreme court intervened and paused that ruling. While the full court didn’t explain its reasoning, Justice Brett Kavanaugh said it was too close to Alabama’s May primary to draw new maps, reasoning that was deeply specious because election day was months away at the time.

In Ohio, the state supreme court has rejected five different proposals for state legislative maps over the last several months, saying that they all violated the state’s constitution. But a federal court allowed one of those unconstitutional plans to go into effect for this fall’s elections, saying time was running out to get a map in place.

“Our supreme court has done exactly what our legislature just did. They abdicated their role of power and they left it in the hands of one man, and that’s our governor. They completely took away the checks and balances process that we have in this state,” Burney-Clark said.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/03/florida-supreme-court-map-unconstitutional>

## [Australia news](#)

# Elon Musk's return-to-office threat to Tesla staff sparks Twitter spat with Australian billionaire

Atlassian boss Scott Farquhar says he'd be happy to poach Musk's employees for remote jobs at his software company, which allows staff to work from home

- [Get our free news app; get our morning email briefing](#)



Atlassian co-founder Scott Farquhar (left) tweeted that Elon Musk's demand that Tesla staff return to the office for at least 40 hours a week 'feels like something out of the 1950s'. Composite: AAP/Getty

*[Josh Taylor](#)  
[@joshgnosis](#)*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 05.05 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 05.50 EDT

Elon Musk's order that Tesla workers return to the office has sparked a Twitter spat with Australian billionaire Scott Farquhar, after the Atlassian CEO suggested he would be happy to poach Musk's staff for remote working positions.

In [a memo sent to staff](#), headlined "Remote work is no longer acceptable" [sic], the Tesla CEO wrote that "anyone who wishes to do remote work must be in the office for a minimum (and I mean \*minimum\*) of 40 hours a week or depart Tesla. This is less than we ask of factory workers".

In a reply to a [Twitter](#) follower asking for "additional comment to people who think coming into work is an antiquated concept", Musk wrote: "They should pretend to work somewhere else."

By contrast, software giant Atlassian [told employees in mid-2020](#) they never needed to come back into the office. The company later reported the work-from-home option had helped attract talent in a labour market that had tightened during the pandemic due to skilled workers not being able to enter Australia on work visas.

On Thursday, Farquhar tweeted that Musk's demand that staff return to the office for at least 40 hours a week "feels like something out of the 1950s" and allowing people to choose where and how they want to work had been a successful strategy for [Atlassian](#).

"This is the future of how we will work. Highly distributed, highly flexible. Yes, right now it's not perfect, but we have to experiment to get it right," he tweeted.

"In the past year alone, 42% of our new hires globally live 2 or more hours from an office. There is great talent all over the world – not just within a 1hr radius of our offices."

He tweeted a link to Atlassian's careers page, asking if any [Tesla](#) employees were interested.

The thread earned the ire of Musk, who replied: “The above set of tweets illustrate why recessions serve a vital economic cleansing function.”

Farquhar did not reply to Musk or the legions of reply guys who follow the billionaire’s every tweet, but he later tweeted “hard to believe it’s been 20 years since we started Atlassian (in a recession), but we’re just getting started!”

Atlassian’s [careers page](#) now has a banner that reads: “Welcome Tesla friends, we’re Atlassian and we work from anywhere. Apply now.”

Musk is still in the process of attempting to take over Twitter, which has itself allowed employees to continue to work from home despite reopening the company’s offices.

Musk suggested Twitter’s San Francisco office could be turned into a “homeless shelter since no one shows up anyway”.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jun/03/elon-musks-return-to-office-threat-to-tesla-staff-sparks-twitter-spat-with-australian-billionaire>

**Donald Trump**

## **US Justice Department could be zeroing in on Trump lawyers, experts say**

Subpoenas for information on Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman's roles in the fake electors scheme were issued in April



John Eastman gestures as he speaks next to Rudy Giuliani at the January 6 Trump rally. Photograph: Jim Bourg/Reuters

**Peter Stone** in Washington DC

Fri 3 Jun 2022 05.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 11.17 EDT

Legal experts believe the US Justice Department has made headway with an important criminal inquiry and could be homing in on top Trump lawyers who plotted to overturn Joe Biden's election, after the department wrote to the House panel investigating the January 6 Capitol attack seeking transcripts of witness depositions and interviews.

While it's unclear exactly what information the DoJ asked for, former prosecutors note that the 20 April request occurred at about the same time a Washington DC grand jury issued subpoenas seeking information about several Trump lawyers including [Rudy Giuliani](#) and John Eastman, plus other Trump advisers, who reportedly played roles in a fake electors scheme.

Giuliani, Trump's former personal lawyer, worked with other lawyers and some campaign officials to spearhead a scheme to replace Biden electors with alternative Trump ones in seven states that Biden won, with an eye to blocking Congress' certification of Biden on January 6 when a mob of Trump loyalists attacked the Capitol.

Deputy attorney general Lisa Monaco announced early this year that the justice department had begun investigating fake elector certificates at the behest of some state attorneys general including Michigan's.

The House committee's sprawling investigation, which has interviewed more than 1,000 people, has focused on top Trump loyalists including Eastman and Giuliani. Last month, Giuliani testified virtually for more than seven hours but reportedly asserted privilege and dodged many questions about his contacts with Trump House allies.

Ex-prosecutors also caution that while the justice department may want to obtain more evidence from the House select committee about the fake electors scheme and lawyers including Giuliani, there are other top Trump allies who sought to overturn Biden's win, plus central figures in the Capitol attack who have drawn scrutiny from both the panel and justice, whom prosecutors may now have in their sights.

It will substantially advance the DoJ investigation into the role played by higher-level architects of the insurrection

*Michael Bromwich*

A grand jury in Washington DC, for instance, also began issuing subpoenas a few months ago seeking information about Trump allies involved in the planning and financing of the large Trump rally that preceded the Capitol attack, as the Washington Post first reported.

Further, other recent grand jury activity in Washington indicates a widening justice inquiry into top Trump allies including a subpoena last month to Peter Navarro, Trump's former top trade adviser, for testimony and some of his written communications with Trump. Navarro has responded with a lawsuit to block the subpoena.

In addition, several months ago the House sent the justice department a criminal contempt of Congress referral about Mark Meadows, Trump's former chief of staff, who played central roles in efforts to overturn Biden's win, and was not fully cooperative with the panel's requests for documents and testimony.

In replying to the justice department's letter, the January 6 panel chair Bennie Thompson stressed that the committee's inquiry is continuing and that "we told them that as a committee, the product was ours, and we're not giving anyone access to the work product ... we can't give them unilateral access" and called the DoJ request "premature."

But Thompson also told reporters last month the committee may allow some materials requested to be reviewed in the panel's offices.

Former prosecutors say Thompson's response, albeit mixed, seems to augur well for more cooperation in the future and pointed to several ways that the overture to the House panel could substantially benefit current inquiries.



Rudy Giuliani listens as Donald Trump delivers remarks to the City of New York Police Benevolent Association in 2020. Photograph: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

“The DoJ request for the fruits of the House committee investigation was inevitable but is still very important,” former justice inspector general Michael Bromwich said.

“It will substantially advance the DoJ investigation into the role played by higher-level architects of the insurrection,” Bromwich added. “It will save DoJ time and resources in pushing the investigation forward. It’s very much like having a large second investigative staff that has been working in parallel rather than at cross-purposes with the criminal investigators. Because the House committee has not immunized any witnesses, the legal obstacles for using that testimony don’t exist.”

Despite Thompson’s initial guarded response, Bromwich said he expects “they will comply promptly”, adding that the panel “is probably irritated that the request didn’t come earlier, rather than at a time its members are swamped with prep for public hearings and is well into drafting its report”.

Likewise, Barbara McQuade, a former US attorney for the eastern district of Michigan, told the Guardian that outreach to obtain transcripts from the

House panel could prove a boon to prosecutors.

“Obtaining the transcripts directly from the committee is a way to maximize efficiency,” said McQuade, now a professor of practice at the University of Michigan Law School. “Investigators can see what witnesses have said before and decide whether they need to be interviewed again. They can use the transcripts to eliminate witnesses who don’t have much light to shed on the matters under investigation.”

McQuade noted that months ago, “Monaco confirmed that DoJ had received evidence from state AGs about alternate slates of electors and was investigating. It appears that DoJ is now issuing subpoenas regarding this episode. They will likely ask questions about why and how this plan was carried out and who was involved. The answers to those questions will guide the investigation. One could imagine each link leading to the next and possibly all the way to [Donald Trump](#).<sup>10</sup>”

One could imagine each link leading to the next and possibly all the way to Donald Trump

*Barbara McQuade*

As of late May, the justice department had charged over 830 people for crimes related to their roles in the January 6 Capitol attack which followed a Trump rally where he urged a large crowd to “fight like hell.” The federal charges range from illegal entry to seditious conspiracy involving Proud Boys and Oath Keepers members, some of whom have pleaded guilty.

On another front, a CNN report in late May revealed that FBI agents had recently conducted interviews in Georgia and Michigan with individuals who initially signed up to be Trump electors but then bowed out, asking specific questions about their contacts with Trump campaign officials and others.

As DoJ has ramped up its inquiry into Trump’s fake electors, ex-prosecutors see more benefits that DoJ’s request to the House committee could produce.

“One expects that the main purpose is to check the consistency of critical accounts – which is valuable and does signal that DoJ is moving forward amid signs that it is increasingly examining the conduct of Giuliani and Eastman,” ex-prosecutor Paul Rosenzweig said.

In another investigative twist, Paul Pelletier, the former acting chief of the fraud section at DoJ said: “DoJ’s public acknowledgment of their interest in the January 6 transcripts may well be only the tip of the iceberg.

“While Chairman Thompson has deferred a formal response to the government’s inquiry, they likely have been informally sharing evidence for some time as is common in these investigations.”

Looking forward, other former prosecutors sound bullish the House panel will extend cooperation to DoJ.

“The panel is sure to cooperate because they are patriots,” former federal prosecutor Dennis Aftergut told me. “They know the importance of January 6 criminal accountability. That is the DoJ’s department, not theirs,” but predicted that the committee “will cooperate on their schedule”.

Aftergut stressed that the committee has done a “bang-up job” with its wide ranging investigation, but probably wants to keep the public’s attention focused on their upcoming hearings which Democratic Representative Jamie Raskin has predicted will “blow the roof off the House”.

Still, he added, “Chairman Thompson calling cooperation now ‘premature’ signals that it’s coming.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/03/us-justice-department-trump-lawyers-criminal-inquiry>.

[Johnny Depp](#)

## Depp-Heard trial verdict decried as ‘symptom of a culture that oppresses women’

Heard’s lawyer says verdict sends ‘a horrible message’ while sexual violence experts say it reveals a system that doesn’t guarantee equal protection



Amber Heard waits for the verdict in Fairfax, Virginia, on Wednesday.  
Photograph: Evelyn Hockstein/AFP/Getty Images

[Edward Helmore](#) in New York

Thu 2 Jun 2022 11.47 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 14.31 EDT

A day after Johnny Depp [largely won](#) his defamation lawsuit against Amber Heard, Heard’s lead attorney said “lopsided” social media posts about the trial turned the courtroom into a “zoo” and influenced the jury’s verdict.

Speaking to NBC, Elaine Bredehoft [said](#) the verdict sent “a horrible message”, adding that she believed the seven-member jury was not able to escape the social media frenzy that enveloped the six-week trial.

“How can you [escape it]?” she asked. “They went home every night. They have families. The families are on social media. We had a 10-day break in the middle because of the judicial conference. There’s no way they couldn’t have been influenced by it.

“It’s like the Roman colosseum, you know? How they viewed this whole case. I was against cameras in the courtroom and I went on record with that and argued against it because of the sensitive nature of this. But it made it a zoo.”

Jurors found that Depp and Heard defamed each other. But they substantially found in Depp’s favor, with all three of his claims supported to one of three claims by Heard. The parties were awarded \$10.35m and \$2m respectively.

Johnny Depp wins defamation case against Amber Heard – video

Heard’s attorneys [said they would appeal](#).

Outcry built on Thursday. Tarana Burke, co-founder of the #MeToo movement, said in a [statement](#): “The way in which #MeToo has been co-opted and manipulated during the Johnny Depp v Amber Heard trial is a toxic catastrophe and one of the biggest defamations of the movement we have ever seen.”

Bredehoft said Heard told her she felt she had let down women.

“One of the first things she said is, ‘I am so sorry to all those women out there. This is a setback for all women in and outside the courtroom.’ She feels the burden of that.”

Some experts in the field of sexual and domestic violence said the verdict should be a wake-up call to women, to redouble efforts in a system that does not guarantee equal protection.

“This is a symptom of a culture that has oppressed women since its founding,” Wendy Murphy, a former sex crimes prosecutor, told the Guardian. “This is exhibit one in proof that women need full equality under the law in this country. Without it, we get absurd verdicts like this.”

Murphy said Heard was denied equal protection because the US constitution has denied it to women since 1868, when the [14th amendment](#) guaranteed “equal protection of the laws” without explicitly mentioning women. It wasn’t until 1971 that a supreme court ruling, [Reed v Reed](#), established that dissimilar treatment of men and women was unconstitutional.

“Without constitutional equality, the laws need not be equally enforced on behalf of any woman by any court ever,” Murphy said. “But the idea that this verdict is going to set us back, that women are going to go silent, women are scared, is bullshit.

“Women will respond to this with a vengeance. We will rise up, we will speak out, we will organise and respond.”

Lisa Bloom, a high-profile lawyer, pointed out that one of the counts against Heard concerned the headline of the Washington Post article at issue – “I spoke up against sexual violence – and faced our culture’s wrath. That has to change” – which Heard did not write.

Murphy said the “irrational nature” of the verdict – in which jurors granted Heard’s claim that Depp defamed her when his lawyer described her claim of domestic abuse as “an ambush, a hoax” – will help with any appeal.

“Maybe this was an irrational jury,” she said, “but it’s not unusual for a jury to come up with a verdict where they feel like they’re giving a little bit to both sides.

“But the fact that the jury [first] came back without any damages and were sent back to the jury room is powerful proof that this was just a dumb jury. It doesn’t matter what thing they got hung up on. The issue is why was the jury unable to be rational?

“Why were they unable to see what was right in front of them and instead be subjected to the distortion tactics of Depp’s defense that allowed the evidence to whoosh past them?”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/02/depp-heard-trial-verdict-me-too-sexual-violence-women>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Headlines saturday 4 june 2022

- [Exclusive UK officials in line for immunity in assisting crimes overseas, say critics](#)
- [Live Russia-Ukraine war latest: Ukraine says Russian forces taking ‘huge losses’ as it fights back in Sievierodonetsk](#)
- [At a glance What we know on day 101 of the invasion](#)
- [Queen's platinum jubilee Celebrations enter third day with Party at the Palace](#)
- [Thanksgiving service Queen's absence strikes symbolic note](#)

## Espionage

# UK officials in line for immunity in assisting crimes overseas, say critics

Exclusive: Draft security bill would let spies and ministers enable killings and torture, warn charity and ex-minister



The rules would no longer apply to those making decisions ‘necessary for the proper exercise of any function’ of services such as MI6. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

*[Aubrey Allegretti](#)  
[@breeallegretti](#)*

Sat 4 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 06.44 EDT

Ministers and spies would be given immunity from accusations of assisting crimes overseas under a new national security law to be debated by MPs next week, a human rights charity and former Tory cabinet minister have warned.

The [Home Office](#) was told that the powers being proposed were “far too slack” and would diminish the UK’s moral authority to condemn atrocities such as the killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The concerns centre on a change to the Serious Crime Act, which was passed in 2007 and made it an offence to do anything in the UK to encourage or assist a crime overseas – such as aiding an unlawful assassination or sending information to be used in a torture interrogation.

Under a clause in the national security bill, which is having its second reading in the House of Commons on Monday, this would be disapplied where “necessary for the proper exercise of any function” of MI5, MI6, [GCHQ](#) or the armed forces.

Rerieve, an international human rights charity, said it would effectively grant immunity to ministers or officials who provide information to foreign partners that leads to someone being tortured or unlawfully killed in a drone strike.

Concerns were also raised that the move would restrict victims’ ability to seek civil damages in the courts.

Maya Foa, joint executive director of Reprieve, said it was an unthinkable power to grant ministers and officials that would “risk putting them above the ordinary criminal law” and could even embolden leaders to “commit serious crimes thinking they can do so with effective impunity”.

Foa said that enacting clause 23 of the national security bill would “destroy the UK’s moral legitimacy to condemn similar atrocities by autocratic states” after the murder of Khashoggi, a journalist who US intelligence agencies believe was killed [on the orders of the Saudi ruler, Mohammed bin Salman](#).

The campaign against the move was also supported by the former cabinet minister and civil liberties campaigner David Davis.

Davis said clause 23 was “far too slack in the powers it gives ministers” and was not about granting less contentious national security powers to spy

agencies, such as allowing them to place bugs in foreign embassies.

He added: “This bill is drafted so loosely that it could let ministers off the hook if they authorised crimes like murder and torture from the safety of their desks in Whitehall.

“I urge colleagues to constrain it to actions appropriate to our aims and civilised standards.”

The national security bill was announced in last month’s Queen’s speech, with the intention to support Britain’s spy agencies and “help them protect the United Kingdom”. It will be debated when MPs return from recess next Monday.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The amendment to the Serious Crime Act will only remove the risk of individuals facing criminal liability where they are carrying out authorised lawful activities deemed necessary, in good faith and following proper procedure.

“Put simply, the government believes it is not fair to expect the liability for this action to sit with an individual UK intelligence officer or member of the armed forces who is acting with wholly legitimate intentions.”

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/uk-officials-spies-ministers-impunity-assisting-crimes-overseas-draft-security-bill>

[Skip to key events](#)  
[Ukraine war live](#)[Ukraine](#)

## US supports international inquiry into war crimes in Ukraine – as it happened

US embassy in Kyiv says ‘those responsible for war crimes must face justice’

- [Russia must not be humiliated in Ukraine, says Macron](#)
- [Ukraine ‘fighting back in Sievierodonetsk’](#)
- [Eastern Ukrainians reject their Russian birth language](#)
- [Ukraine ponders how to punish collaborators](#)

Updated 8h ago

[Maya Yang](#) (now), [Nadeem Badshah](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#), [Harry Taylor](#), [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) (earlier)

Sat 4 Jun 2022 19.05 EDTFirst published on Sat 4 Jun 2022 00.26 EDT



Members of a foreign volunteers unit, which fights in the Ukrainian army, in Luhansk. Photograph: Serhii Nuzhnenko/Reuters

[Maya Yang](#) (now), [Nadeem Badshah](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#), [Harry Taylor](#), [Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) (earlier)

Sat 4 Jun 2022 19.05 EDTFirst published on Sat 4 Jun 2022 00.26 EDT

## Key events

- [8h agoSummary](#)
- [10h agoTop US general, in Stockholm, signals support for Sweden and Finland's NATO bids](#)
- [10h agoUkraine says Russia using 'all its power' to capture eastern city](#)
- [16h agoToday so far...](#)
- [17h agoUkraine slams Macron's call not to 'humiliate' Russia](#)
- [18h agoUkraine announces deaths of four foreign military volunteers](#)
- [20h agoMacron: Russia must not be humiliated despite Putin's 'mistake'](#)

Show key events only

## Live feed

Show key events only

From 23h ago

[04.17](#)

**Russia ‘suffering huge losses’ after Ukraine recaptures chunk of Sievierodonetsk, says governor**

**Ukraine now controls around half of the key eastern city of Sievierodonetsk after recapturing 20% of the territory they had lost to**

## **Russian forces, according to the head of the eastern region of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai.**

Russia had “previously managed to capture most of the city”, he said, “but now our military has pushed them back. They are really suffering huge losses”.

Speaking on national television, Haidai said:

They are moving forward step-by-step. They are simply destroying everything with artillery, aircraft, mortars, tanks.

But as soon as we have enough Western long-range weapons, we will push their artillery away from our positions. And then, believe me, the Russian infantry, they will just run.

The situation in the region as a whole remained “difficult”, with Sievierodonetsk “now just a concentration of hostilities” because the Russian army “is throwing all its reserves into this direction”, Haidai said.

It has not been possible to independently verify his claims.

•  
•

[8h ago](#)[19.41](#)

This blog is closing now but we'll be back in a few hours with more rolling coverage.

•  
•

[8h ago](#)[19.05](#)

## **Summary**

It's 2am in Kyiv. Here's where things stand:

- Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska and other officials commemorated 261 children [killed](#) by the Russian war against [Ukraine](#) by hanging bells near St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. The bells symbolize the voices of killed children, Euromaidan Press reports.
- Top US General Mark Milley [said](#) on Saturday that the United States is determined to support Sweden and Finland as the countries pursue Nato membership, a statement underscored by his visit to the USS Kearsarge after it became the largest US warship ever to dock in Stockholm. “It’s important for us, the United States, and it’s important for the other Nato countries to show solidarity with both Finland and Sweden in this exercise,” Milley said ahead of Nato’s annual Baltic Sea naval manoeuvres.
- Ukrainian forces have been managing to push back against Russian troops in fierce fighting in Severodonetsk despite [Russia](#) “throwing all its power” into capturing the key eastern city, Ukrainian officials [said](#) on Saturday. In an interview aired online, Lugansk regional governor Sergiy Gaiday said that the Russian army has taken control over most of Severodonetsk, but that Ukrainian forces were still pushing them back.
- Russian anti-aircraft forces have shot down dozens of Ukrainian weapons and are “cracking them like nuts,” said Russian president Vladimir Putin in an interview that [aired](#) on Saturday. “Russian news agency RIA, which first cited the comments, quoted Putin as responding to a question about US-supplied arms by saying Russia was coping easily and had already destroyed the weapons by the dozen,” Reuters reported.
- The US expressed support for international investigations into war crimes committed in [Ukraine](#), the US embassy in Kyiv announced on Saturday. “Those responsible for war crimes - including direct perpetrators and those who ordered them - must face justice,” the US embassy in Kyiv tweeted on Saturday.
- Western sanctions would not have an effect on Russia’s oil exports, [said](#) Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday. Lavrov also predicted a significant increase in profits from energy shipments this year, Russian news agency Tass reported.

- Some Ukrainian military units have been withdrawing from the key city of Severodonetsk in eastern Ukraine, the Russian army announced on Saturday. “Some units of the Ukrainian army, having suffered critical losses during fighting for Severodonetsk, are pulling out towards Lysychansk,” Severodonetsk’s twin city, which sits just across a river, the defence ministry said in a statement.
- A European Union decision to extend sanctions against Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko to his wife is “irrational” because she has never held Russian citizenship or resided in Russia, a representative for the couple said on Saturday. The EU sanctioned Melnichenko’s wife on Friday as part of a sixth round of sanctions against Russia for waging a war against Ukraine. The EU said Aleksandra Melnichenko “takes good advantage of the fortune and benefits from the wealth of her husband”.

*That's it from me, Maya Yang, today as I hand the blog over to my colleagues in Australia. Thank you.*

•  
•

9h ago18.11

**Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska and other officials commemorated 261 children killed by the Russian war against Ukraine by hanging bells near St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv that symbolize the voices of killed children, Euromaidan Press reports.**

On the Int. Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression, Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska and other officials commemorated 261 children killed by the Russian war against Ukraine by hanging bells near St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv that symbolize the voices of killed children [pic.twitter.com/MrFrilAJ40](https://pic.twitter.com/MrFrilAJ40)

— Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) June 4, 2022

•  
•

[10h ago](#) [17.26](#)

## Top US general, in Stockholm, signals support for Sweden and Finland's NATO bids

**Top US General Mark Milley said on Saturday that the United States is determined to support Sweden and Finland as the countries pursue Nato membership, a statement underscored by his visit to the USS Kearsarge after it became the largest US warship ever to dock in Stockholm.**

Agence France-Presse reports:

*“It’s important for us, the United States, and it’s important for the other Nato countries to show solidarity with both Finland and Sweden in this exercise,” Milley said ahead of Nato’s annual Baltic Sea naval manoeuvres.*

*He was speaking during a joint press conference with Swedish prime minister Magdalena Andersson.*

*The “Baltops 22” naval exercise - set to run from 5 to 17 June and involving 14 Nato countries as well as Sweden and Finland - takes place this year in the shadow of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.*

*That invasion prompted the two Nordic countries to reverse decades of military nonalignment and apply for Nato membership.*

*The presence in Stockholm of the USS Kearsarge, an amphibious assault ship designed to deploy land forces, “demonstrates commitment in a common cause, in the rules-based international order, in the idea that large countries cannot invade small countries at no cost,” said Milley, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.*

*Andersson in turn said the presence in the Swedish capital of the imposing 250-metre-long (840-foot) vessel - with a full complement of helicopters and some 1,200 Marines aboard - "is a concrete expression of the US support and also a very strong political signal at a crucial time in history".*

*"It also shows that the security assurances that President Biden was very outspoken on when I and President (Sauli) Niinisto visited him in the White House, is actually followed with concrete action," the Swedish prime minister added. She and Niinisto met with Biden in Washington on 19 May.*

*"We are very, very grateful" for such support, Andersson said.*



Swedish prime minister Magdalena Andersson and General Mark Milley aboard the USS Kearsarge before the Baltic Operations 'Baltops 22' exercise in Stockholm. Photograph: Tt News Agency/Reuters

- 
- 

Updated at 18.14 EDT

10h ago 16.52

## **Ukraine says Russia using ‘all its power’ to capture eastern city**

**Ukrainian forces have been managing to push back against Russian troops in fierce fighting in Severodonetsk despite [Russia](#) “throwing all its power” into capturing the key eastern city, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday.**

In an interview aired online, **Lugansk regional governor Sergiy Gaiday** said that the Russian army has taken control over most of Severodonetsk, but that Ukrainian forces were still pushing them back.

“The Russian army, as we understand, is throwing all its power, all its reserves in this direction,” said Gaiday.

“Our soldiers have managed to redeploy, build a line of defence,” said the **city’s mayor, Oleksandr Striuk**, in a televised interview broadcast on Telegram Saturday.

“We are currently doing everything necessary to re-establish total control” of the city, he added, while also acknowledging that the current situation is “quite difficult,” due to fierce street fighting and artillery exchanges.

At least seven civilians were reported killed in the Lugansk region where Severodonetsk is located and in the southern city of Mykolaiv, while a revered wooden church was reported to be on fire because of the fighting.



Refugees from Mykolaiv get food and aid after their evacuation at the railway station in Odesa, Ukraine. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

•  
•

Updated at 17.00 EDT

[11h ago 16.05](#)

**Russian anti-aircraft forces have shot down dozens of Ukrainian weapons and are “cracking them like nuts,” said Russian president Vladimir Putin in an interview that aired on Saturday.**

Reuters reports:

Russian news agency RIA, which first cited the comments, quoted Putin as responding to a question about US-supplied arms by saying Russia was coping easily and had already destroyed the weapons by the dozen.

But the clip of an interview to be aired on Sunday made clear that Putin had in fact been responding to a different question, which was not

shown.

“Our anti-aircraft systems are crunching them like nuts. Dozens have been destroyed,” Putin said.

Although the exact kind of weapon was not clear, Russia says it has destroyed both aircraft and missiles fielded by Ukraine.



A Russian SU-35S multi-role fighter aircraft carrying rockets during a combat flight to Ukrainian territory on 11 May. Photograph: Russian Defence Ministry Press Service/EPA

- 
- 

Updated at 16.14 EDT

[12h ago](#)[15.22](#)

**The US expressed support for international investigations into war crimes committed in [Ukraine](#), the US embassy in Kyiv announced on Saturday.**

Those responsible for war crimes - including direct perpetrators and those who ordered them - must face justice. In addition to our direct support to [@GP\\_Ukraine](#), the United States supports international investigations to ensure accountability for atrocities committed in Ukraine. <https://t.co/ELBEUUon8b>

— U.S. Embassy Kyiv (@USEmbassyKyiv) [June 4, 2022](#)

In a separate tweet, **US ambassador Bridget Brink to Ukraine** [wrote](#), “Bearing witness to atrocities committed in Russia’s brutal war, including families killed in their own homes, only strengthens my resolve to do everything we can to hold the perpetrators of these awful crimes to account.”

- 
- 

Updated at 15.24 EDT

[13h ago](#)[14.47](#)

**Western sanctions would not have an effect on Russia’s oil exports, said Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday.**

Lavrov also predicted a significant increase in profits from energy shipments this year, Russian news agency Tass reported.

Considering the price level that has been established as a result of the west’s policies, we have suffered no budgetary losses. On the contrary, this year we will significantly increase the profits from the export of our energy resources,” Tass quoted Lavrov as telling a Bosnian television station.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attends a joint press conference with his Bahraini counterpart (not pictured) following their meeting in Manama, Bahrain, 31 May 2022. Photograph: Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry/EPA

- 
- 

Updated at 15.27 EDT

13h ago**14.07**

**Some Ukrainian military units have been withdrawing from the key city of Severodonetsk in eastern [Ukraine](#), the Russian army announced on Saturday.**

“Some units of the Ukrainian army, having suffered critical losses during fighting for Severodonetsk, are pulling out towards Lysychansk,” Severodonetsk’s twin city, which sits just across a river, the defence ministry said in a statement.

“The Ukrainian authorities, having realised that it was impossible to resist further and to hold on to the industrial zone of Severodonetsk,

ordered a mixed tactical unit to mine the tanks containing nitrate and nitric acid in the Azot factory,” it added.

Russia’s army said the remaining group of Ukrainian fighters that are still in the city includes “survivors” of the 79th Air Assault Brigade and members of the Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces.

The defense ministry went on to claim that the Ukrainian army attempted to contaminate the area and “delay” the Russian military operation.



Smoke and dirt rise in the city of Severodonetsk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas on June 2, 2022 amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.  
Photograph: Aris Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

- 
- 

[14h ago](#)[13.35](#)

A European Union decision to extend sanctions against Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko to his wife is “irrational” because she has never held Russian citizenship or resided in Russia, a representative for the couple said on Saturday.

## **Reuters reports:**

**Aleksandra Melnichenko**, who was born in Belgrade and holds Serbian and Croatian citizenship, will “vigorously contest the unfortunate decision against her”, the representative said in an email statement to Reuters, declining to give a name.

Reuters reported last month that Melnichenko ceded ownership of coal company SUEK AO and fertilizer company EuroChem Group AG to his wife on March 8, a day before the EU put him on a sanctions list.

The EU sanctioned Melnichenko’s wife on Friday as part of a sixth round of sanctions against Russia for waging a war against Ukraine. The EU said Aleksandra Melnichenko “takes good advantage of the fortune and benefits from the wealth of her husband”.

The step could disrupt operations at SUEK and EuroChem because the sanctions include freezing her assets.

A EuroChem spokesperson said that while the company was committed to complying strictly with EU sanctions law, it would also seek to discuss with EU authorities how it could continue supplying fertilisers to farmers.

“EuroChem will engage with the European Commission and table proposals to find solutions that will maintain its operations and provide crop nutrients to its customers around the world at a most critical time of food crisis,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

EuroChem produces roughly 5% of world fertiliser output.

Upon sanctioning Melnichenko in March, the EU accused him of being close to **Russian President Vladimir Putin**.

The Melnichenko family representative said in Saturday’s statement that the businessman has no political affiliations in Russia, calling the decision to sanction him “reckless” and “arbitrary”.



Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko attends a session during the Week of Russian Business, organized by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), in Moscow, Russia February 9, 2018. Photograph: Sergei Karpukhin/Reuters

- 
- 

[14h ago](#)[13.06](#)

Pope Francis said on Saturday he would meet soon with Ukrainian officials to discuss the possibility of a visit to their country.

Francis disclosed the coming meeting in a question-and-answer session with children in one of the Vatican's main courtyards, Reuters reports.

A Ukrainian boy named Sachar asked him: "Can you come to [Ukraine](#) to save all the children who are suffering there now?"

The 85-year-Francis, who has been using a wheelchair because of knee pain, responded that he often thought of Ukrainian children and wanted to visit the country but had to choose the right time.

“It is not easy to make a decision that could do more harm than good to the rest of the world. I have to find the right moment to do it,” he said, according to a Vatican transcript of the event. He did not elaborate.

“Next week I will receive representatives of the Ukrainian government, who will come here to talk, to talk even about an eventual visit of mine there. We’ll see what happens,” Francis said.

- 
- 

[14h ago](#)[12.53](#)

Vladimir Putin, in comments about a US decision to send new arms to [Ukraine](#), said Russia was easily coping and was already destroying American-supplied weapons by the dozen, state-run news agency RIA reported.

Putin made the remarks in an interview with national television which is scheduled to be broadcast on Sunday.

- 
- 

Updated at 13.03 EDT

[15h ago](#)[12.48](#)



Ukrainian emergency service personnel work outside a damaged building following shelling, in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Photograph: Sofiia Bobok/AP

- 
- 

15h ago12.29

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russian artillery hit an early 17th century Ukrainian Orthodox monastery in eastern [Ukraine](#).

Russia's Defence Ministry denied involvement, accusing Ukrainian troops of setting fire to the All Saints Monastery in Donetsk before pulling back, Reuters report.

Flames could be seen ripping through the timber walls of a church with domes in footage posted by Zelenskiy on his official Telegram channel. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the footage.

“Russian artillery struck the Svyatohirsk Lavra in the Donetsk region again today. Destroyed All Saints Monastery. It was consecrated in 1912,” the Ukrainian leader wrote.

“It was first destroyed during the Soviet era. Later it was rebuilt to be burned by the Russian army.”

Zelenskiy called for Russia to be expelled from the United Nations’ cultural agency Unesco and said there had been no military targets present at the site.

He added: “Every church burned by Russia in Ukraine, every school blown up, every destroyed memorial proves that Russia has no place in Unesco.”

•  
•

Updated at 12.49 EDT

[15h ago](#)[12.08](#)

Lugansk regional governor, Sergiy Gaiday, said in an interview that the invading forces had captured most of Sievierodonetsk, but that the Ukrainian military was pushing them back.

“The Russian army, as we understand, is throwing all its power, all its reserves in this direction,” said Gaiday, who on Friday claimed Ukrainian troops had managed to win back a fifth of the city.

Russia’s army however claimed some Ukrainian military units were withdrawing from the city.

The press service of Ukraine’s presidential office said that “street fighting” was continuing in Sievierodonetsk and “assault operations are underway” in an industrial part of the city, AFP reports.

•  
•

Updated at 12.19 EDT

[15h ago](#)[11.51](#)



Jason Rodrigues

As thousands of people have descended on The Mall in London to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, a few hundred pro democracy supporters have assembled further down Whitehall.

“Stop the war, stop Putin”: Ukrainians in the UK have joined a 300 strong rally for democracy taking place opposite Downing Street, London, today [pic.twitter.com/jDEUmgdRfq](https://pic.twitter.com/jDEUmgdRfq)

— Jason Rodrigues (@RodriguesJasonL) [June 4, 2022](#)

•  
•

Updated at 11.55 EDT

[16h ago](#) [11.35](#)

Here are more details about the death of Dmitry Kovtun, one of the two Russian men accused of assassinating the former spy and Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko in London, from coronavirus.

Litvinenko died in 2006, weeks after drinking tea laced with the radioactive isotope polonium 210 at a London hotel, where he met Kovtun and the other suspect, Andrei Lugovoi. The case has since weighed on relations between Britain and [Russia](#). After Litvinenko's death, detectives found polonium in all the hotel rooms where Kovtun and Lugovoi had stayed in London, as well as on Lugovoi's plane seat from Moscow and in numerous other locations including at Arsenal's Emirates stadium.

•  
•

Updated at 12.04 EDT

[16h ago 11.19](#)

Finland and Sweden joining Nato would put [Russia](#) in a difficult military position in the Baltic Sea, top US general Mark Milley said.

The two Nordic neighbours, which both have long borders on the Baltic Sea, applied last month to join the military alliance amid security concerns after Russia invaded [Ukraine](#) in February, although they face objections from Turkey.

Their joining would mean the Baltic Sea's coastline would, bar short strips around Russian cities Kaliningrad and St Petersburg, be encircled by Nato members, Reuters reports.

"So from a Russian perspective that will be very problematic for them, militarily speaking, and it would be very advantageous to Nato," said Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"The Baltic [Sea is] very strategically important, it's one of the great seaways of the world," Milley added.

He was speaking at a joint news conference with his Swedish counterpart, the Swedish prime minister and the Swedish defence minister ahead of an annual Nato exercise in the Baltic Sea that Sweden and Finland take part in.

•  
•

Updated at 12.00 EDT

Newest [Newest](#)

Previous [Previous](#)

1  
of  
4

[Next](#)

[Oldest](#) [Oldest](#)

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2022/jun/04/russia-ukraine-war-latest-ukrainians-fight-back-sievierodonetsk-putin-macron-africans-victims-food-shortages-zelenskiy-eu>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

---

## [Russia-Ukraine war at a glance](#)[Ukraine](#)

# Russia-Ukraine war: what we know on day 101 of the invasion

US general in Finland to back Nato bid; 14 million Ukrainians displaced in conflict, says UN; Macron says Putin isolated after ‘historic error’

- [Russia-Ukraine war: latest updates](#)
- [See all our Russia-Ukraine war coverage](#)



Workers inspect a damaged warehouse on the outskirts of Kharkiv, north-eastern Ukraine, after a strike amid Russia's invasion. Photograph: Iván Alvarado/Reuters

[Maya Yang](#), [Léonie Chao-Fong](#), [Martin Belam](#) and [Samantha Lock](#)

Fri 3 Jun 2022 20.47 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.38 EDT

- Ukrainian forces have recaptured around 20% of the territory they lost in Sievierodonetsk since Russia's invasion, according to Ukrainian officials. "Whereas before the situation was difficult, the percentage [held by Russia] was somewhere around 70%, now we have already pushed them back by approximately 20%," Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the eastern region of Luhansk, announced on national television on Friday.
- Leading US general Mark Milley met Finnish president Sauli Niinisto on Friday to pledge US support for Finland's and Sweden's Nato membership bids, which Turkey is blocking. Milley told reporters it was clear that, if the two countries' applications were approved, "they will bring a significant increase in the military capability of Nato", Agence France-Presse reported. After Helsinki, Milley was expected to visit neighbouring Sweden on Saturday.
- A driver transporting two Reuters journalists in eastern Ukraine was killed and the two reporters lightly wounded on Friday, a company spokesperson said. They had come under fire while en route to Severodonetsk. "They were travelling in a vehicle provided by the Russian-backed separatists and driven by an individual assigned by the separatists," the international news agency said.
- Vladimir Putin says exporting grain from Ukraine is "no problem", after Moscow's invasion raised fears of a global food crisis. The Russian president said in a televised interview on Friday that exporting could be done via Ukrainian ports, via others under Russian control, or even via central Europe. Putin accused the west of "bluster" by claiming Moscow was preventing the grain exports from Ukraine.
- The African Union head and Senegalese president, Macky Sall, said he was "reassured" after meeting with Putin regarding global food shortages caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition to global food shortages, other issues discussed between the two leaders included grain supplies that are stuck in Ukrainian ports.
- Ukraine's ambassador to Ankara, Vasyl Bodna, accused Russia of "stealing" and sending Ukrainian grain abroad. "Russia shamelessly

steals Ukrainian grain and sends it overseas from Crimea, including to Turkey,” Bodna said in a tweet on Friday.

- **14 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, the majority women and children**, the UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine, Amin Awad, [said](#) on Friday. In a [statement](#) released on the 100th day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Awad spoke of displaced Ukrainians, describing the “scale and speed of [their] displacement not witnessed in history”.
- **Moscow will help restore and rebuild Luhansk and Donetsk, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced** on Friday after a visit to Luhansk. About 1,500 specialists from various departments of the Moscow municipal economy complex and 500 pieces of equipment had arrived in Luhansk, the mayor said.
- **European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said that Ukraine must meet all the necessary standards and conditions for accession.** She went on to call on the EU to help Ukraine achieve its goals.
- **“Victory shall be ours,” Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said** in a video featuring the same key ministers and advisers who appeared with him in a defiant broadcast on 24 February, the day his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, launched his unprovoked assault. “The armed forces of Ukraine are here. Most importantly, our people, the people of our country, are here. We have been defending Ukraine for 100 days already ... Glory to Ukraine,” Zelenskiy added.
- **French president Emmanuel Macron says Putin has committed a “historic and fundamental error” by invading Ukraine and is now “isolated”.** “I think, and I told him, that he made a historic and fundamental error for his people, for himself and for history,” Macros said in an interview with French regional media on Friday. “Isolating oneself is one thing, but being able to get out of it is a difficult path”. Macron said he did not “rule out” a visit to Kyiv.

- **Switzerland's government has rejected a request by Denmark to send nearly two-dozen Swiss-made armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine.** Switzerland's executive Federal Council confirmed the decision on Friday after Denmark requested Switzerland transfer 22 Swiss-made Piranha III wheeled armoured personnel carriers, which Denmark had obtained and stored in Germany, to Ukraine.
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-101-of-the-invasion>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Queen's platinum jubilee

# Third day of platinum jubilee celebrations as Queen misses Epsom Derby

Saturday's festivities will culminate in an open-air concert for 22,000 people headlined by Diana Ross

Unseen footage shows Queen in Sandringham feeding horses – video

*[Anna MacSwan](#)*

Sat 4 Jun 2022 09.45 EDTFirst published on Sat 4 Jun 2022 05.15 EDT

Members of the royal family are attending events as the UK marks its third day of platinum jubilee celebrations, with Princess Anne attending the Epsom Derby on the Queen's behalf.

Buckingham Palace announced on Friday that the monarch, 96, would pull out of attending the Epsom Derby, where she is being officially represented by her daughter. [The Queen](#) is expected to watch the event on television instead.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited Cardiff earlier on Saturday, along with Princess George and Princess Charlotte, where they visited rehearsals for a jubilee concert at Cardiff Castle.

William, Kate and their children were to meet performers and crew taking part in the event, including the Welsh singer Bonnie Tyler.



The Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George and Princess Charlotte during their visit to Cardiff Castle. Photograph: Ashley Crowden/PA

About 22,000 people are expected to attend an open-air concert outside Buckingham Palace this evening, featuring Diana Ross, the Italian opera star Andrea Bocelli and the James Bond composer Hans Zimmer. Millions more will be watching from home.

Alicia Keys, Queen + Adam Lambert and the Eurovision 2022 runner-up Sam Ryder will also perform at the two-and-a-half-hour event called Platinum Party at the Palace, and there will be a specially recorded appearance from Elton John.

The Prince of Wales and his eldest son, Prince William, will pay tribute to the Queen, who is not expected to attend in person but will watch on television from Windsor Castle.



Princess Anne at Epsom Racecourse. Photograph: Andrew Redington/Getty Images

Buckingham Palace had previously said she would need to consider which jubilee events she would feel able to attend after experiencing [mobility problems in recent months](#). She cancelled an appearance at Friday's thanksgiving service after experiencing discomfort during Thursday's events.

The Queen made two public appearances to huge crowds from the Buckingham Palace balcony on Thursday and attended a beacon-lighting ceremony at Windsor Castle.

Queen congratulates Australians of the Year via video call – video

Her no-show at Epsom is only the fourth time the keen horse racing fan, rider and breeder has missed the Derby since 1952. Covid restrictions prevented her from attending in 2020.



Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and Sophie, Countess of Wessex.  
Photograph: Charles McQuillan/AFP/Getty Images

Prince Edward, the Queen's youngest son, and his wife, Sophie, have arrived in Northern Ireland, attending events in Belfast and Bangor, which included meeting children taking part in multicultural street performances and people who will share their personal memories of meeting the Queen.

Jubilee celebrations began on Thursday with trooping the colour to mark the sovereign's official birthday.

Friday's focus was a thanksgiving service led by senior royals – and attended by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex – in St Paul's Cathedral.

The third day of celebrations also marks the [first birthday of Harry and Meghan's daughter Lilibet](#), who was named after the Queen's family nickname.

On Sunday more than 10 million people will take part in Big Jubilee Lunch picnics and there will be a musical and creative public pageant involving 10,000 people.

The BBC will broadcast Platinum Party at the Palace live on radio, television and online from 7pm.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/04/jubilee-celebrations-enter-third-day-with-platinum-party-at-the-palace-concert>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Queen's platinum jubilee

# Queen's absence strikes symbolic note as royals gather at jubilee service

Charles stands in for his mother at St Paul's Cathedral in ceremony that pays tribute to her seven-decade reign



Prince William, the Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Charles attend the national service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday.  
Photograph: Reuters

*[Caroline Davies](#)*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 13.17 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 00.13 EDT

The symbolism of a great state service of thanksgiving for an absent Queen was not lost beneath the imposing dome of St Paul's Cathedral. All the more so as the country was paying tribute to her seven decades of public service as Britain's now longest-reigning monarch.

The Prince of Wales was in her stead for the formal procession through a 2,000-strong congregation of prime ministers past and present, parliamentarians, diplomats, a full squad of other royals and 400 members of the public honoured for their community work.

As the archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said in his hastily rewritten sermon, the horse-loving Queen, 96, is “still in the saddle”. But it seemed a moment to recognise that her presence, taken for granted at such grand public events, is no longer guaranteed due to the mobility problems that have plagued her platinum jubilee year.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who had flown in at the Queen’s invitation, made their first public appearance with other members of the royal family since their exit from royal duties and relocation to California two years ago.



A 2,000-strong congregation gathered for the ceremony at St Paul's.  
Photograph: Reuters

Necks craned as the couple walked to their seats, smiling and hand in hand, having arrived to cheers – and some jeers – from the crowd outside. They arrived by car shortly after the long line of other assorted royals who earlier had disgorged from a coach to file into the cathedral.

The prime minister, Boris Johnson, read from the New Testament. As he and his wife, Carrie, had arrived at the cathedral, loud boos, followed by some cheers, could be heard from onlookers outside.

Boris Johnson booed as he arrives at Queen's jubilee thanksgiving service – video

Seeing Charles in his mother's seat was as palpable an image of the quiet transition ongoing behind palace walls as when [he read the Queen's speech](#) at the state opening of parliament.

Harry, in morning dress, wore his medals, including a commemorative platinum jubilee medal, apparently distributed throughout working and non-working royals and funded privately.

Harry and Meghan departed hand in hand too and were seen chatting easily to relatives such as Harry's cousin Zara Tindall and her brother Peter Phillips.

If [Thursday's trooping the colour](#) and Sunday's jubilee pageant provide the spectacle, then this procession at St Paul's, a cathedral to national celebration and commemoration, was the spiritual heart of the jubilee, as it has been for jubilees as far back as George III.

The Queen may have been watching it on TV, many miles away at Windsor Castle, but the rest of the family were out in force.

But for lip-readers and body-language experts hired to mine any morsels on the relations between Harry and Charles, said not to have been enhanced by the accusations of racism and indifference the couple have made in US TV interviews, there was little to go on.

Indicative of their new, more minor position within the royal family, the Sussexes were seated a row behind and on the other side of the aisle from William and Kate, and Charles and Camilla. It did not appear they interacted much throughout the service, though that would have been difficult given the physical distance between them.

Nor did Harry and Meghan join other royals and dignitaries at a Guildhall reception immediately after the service. Instead the couple were seen returning to Frogmore Cottage, their Windsor home.

This was a service of deputies, Charles deputising for his mother, the archbishop of York called upon to deliver the sermon in place of the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, indisposed through Covid. The Duke of York, also due to be present, was also absent after testing positive. Shortly after the service it was announced that the Queen would not attend the Epsom Derby on Saturday. Princess Anne is expected to go in her place.

Cottrell had earlier described his last-minute gig as “slightly terrifying”. He would have hastily redrafted after the announcement on the eve of the service that the Queen would miss it, having experienced “some discomfort” during trooping the colour.

He praised her as an example of “staunch constancy and a steadfast consistency; a faithfulness to God, an obedience to a vocation that is a bedrock of her life”.



Yeomen warders, known as Beefeaters, march at the thanksgiving service.  
Photograph: Reuters

Drawing on her well-documented love of horse racing, he told the congregation that “her long reign reflects the distance of Aintree more than the sprints of Epsom. Certainly, less dressage than most people imagine.”

He said: “Your Majesty, we’re sorry you’re not with us this morning in person, but you are still in the saddle. And we are all glad that there is still more to come. So, thank you for staying the course.” His words were greeted by smiles and nods from the royals present.

Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST

Other attenders included cabinet ministers, the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, former prime ministers, and the first ministers of Scotland and Wales. Key workers, charity volunteers and members of the armed forces were invited in recognition of their contributions to public life.

One of the country’s largest bells, the Great Paul, was rung before the service and after, for the first time on a royal occasion.

After the service, as the congregation filed down the steps of St Paul’s, they passed the spot marking another queen’s absence from her own service. A 78-year-old Queen Victoria was too frail to attend the grand state service for her diamond jubilee inside the building in 1897, so a short second service was conducted on the steps outside while she sat in her carriage.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/03/queen-platinum-jubilee-absence-royals-gather-st-pauls-service>

## 2022.06.04 - Spotlight

- [Escape from Auschwitz The most extraordinary Holocaust story you've never heard](#)
- [Scam-busting, stunts and social media The consumer champions fighting the cost-of-living crisis](#)
- ['I always secretly wonder which of us is the real artist' Sally Rooney in conversation with Patricia Lockwood](#)
- [Blind date 'It was going well until he choked on his dessert and started crying'](#)

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Holocaust](#)

## **Escape from Auschwitz: the most extraordinary Holocaust story you've never heard**



Illustration: Paul Blow/The Guardian

A pair of Jewish prisoners plotted to break out of the death camp and tell the world the true horror of what they'd seen. How did they do it?



[Jonathan Freedland](#)

[@Freedland](#)

Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 15.43 EDT

Escape was lunacy, escape was death. To attempt it was suicide. That much had been taught to Walter Rosenberg early, within a week of his arrival in Auschwitz, aged just 17, at the start of July 1942. One afternoon, he and thousands of others had been forced to stand in silence and watch a public hanging, performed with full ceremony. The SS men had lined up with guns over their shoulders and marching drums strapped around their necks, while out in front stood two mobile gallows, wheeled into position, one for each condemned man.

The stars of the show were announced as two prisoners who had tried and failed to escape. Walter and the others had to watch as the men were brought out; a *Kapo*, one of the prisoners deployed by the SS to do the brute work of enforcement, tied their ankles and thighs with rope, then placed a noose around each of their necks. Afterwards, the inmates were kept there a full hour, forbidden even to look away. They had to stand, in silence, staring at the two dead bodies twirling in the wind. The corpses had notices pinned to their chests, written as if the words were spoken by the dead themselves: “*Because we tried to escape ...*”

Walter understood that the Nazis wanted him and every other prisoner to conclude that escape was futile, that any attempt was doomed. But Walter drew a very different lesson. The danger came not from trying to escape, but from trying and *failing*. From that day on, he was determined to try – and to succeed.

Before long, he had made himself a student of escapology, taking lessons from some of Auschwitz's most battle-hardened inmates – chief among them a grizzled captain in the Red Army – and forging ties with the camp's secret underground resistance, slowly acquiring the knowhow to attempt what no Jew had done before. This yearning to break out was rooted in more than a desire to save his own skin: his aim was much larger than that. For he had come to understand something essential about the death factory that was Auschwitz: that the crime unfolding before him rested on a great and devastating act of deception.

Most Jews were sent on arrival at Auschwitz to the gas chambers, but some, like Walter, were held instead as slave workers. For nearly two years, he remained a prisoner – kept alive by a series of random, accidental twists of fate – and in that time he saw almost every aspect of the Auschwitz slaughterhouse in action. He was never one of the *Sonderkommando*, those Jews compelled to do the most gruesome work of all – retrieving corpses from the gas chambers – but he witnessed every other stage of the process of industrialised murder.



Walter Rosenberg



... and fellow prisoner Fred Wetzler together hatched a daring plan to escape. Photographs: courtesy of Robin Vrba; archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

For 10 months, he worked on the *Judenrampe*, the railway platform where incoming trains pulled in, delivering hundreds of Jews in cattle trucks from all across Europe, like so much livestock. His job was unloading each

transport and, as he did it, he detected a pattern. The Nazis lied to their victims at every step of their journey towards destruction. The people falling out of those stinking cattle trucks had boarded them believing they were being taken to new lives in a new place: “resettlement in the east”, the Nazis called it. The Jews on those trains had packed up their belongings and held on tight to them because they thought they were building a new home, one that would need pots and pans, clothes for their backs and toys for their children. They believed that because that was what the Nazis had told them, and it was what their own friends and families had told them, in the form of postcards home that they did not realise had been written at gunpoint.

The lying carried on the instant the SS men unlocked the wagons. If they were in a hurry, they would be brutal. But if there was time, if the weather was good, the SS men might lay on a different show. They would pretend that the dreadful journey the new arrivals had endured had been some kind of aberration, a mistake that was about to be rectified. “Good God,” they might say, “in what state did those horrible Slovaks transport you? This is inhuman.” Those transported from Paris or Amsterdam, people raised to expect the best of the civilised Germans, were primed to believe that anyway; to feel relief that, at long last, food and drink would be available, that their luggage would be looked after and that order was about to be restored.

If time permitted, the pretence would continue as the new arrivals climbed on to the trucks that would take them to the killing sites. SS men, their manners impeccable, might help the sick clamber aboard. For those heading to the death chambers on foot, there was more reassurance in the form of inquiries about the Jews’ professional qualifications or trades back home. Why would they ask such things if they did not intend to make use of the deportees’ skills?

If anyone asked where they were being taken, the answer came back: “For disinfection.” Given how squalid the journey had been, that made sense. More reassurance came on that trek past the Birkenau section of the camp from the sight of an ambulance – a green military van bright with a red cross – driving slowly behind their ragtag column, occasionally picking up those who could not keep walking by themselves. The vehicle did carry a doctor. But his purpose was not healing the sick or saving lives. The medic inside

was the SS doctor who would supervise the gassing, and the cargo on board consisted of cans of Zyklon B: poison gas. Walter knew all about that: one of his occasional jobs was to load the deadly canisters on to the vans.

These were the Jews' final minutes, but the Nazis lied to them, telling them to believe in a future they did not have

The scene of the crime itself was disguised. The doomed believed they had been brought to a secluded, bucolic spot, a farmhouse alongside two wooden huts for undressing. By crematoria IV and V, there were flower beds. Once there, the deception did not let up. These were the Jews' final minutes, but the Nazis encouraged them to believe in a future they did not have. "What is your trade? A shoemaker?" the officer would ask again. "We need them urgently, report to me immediately after!"

As the victims followed the order to strip off their clothes, the SS would tell them that they were about to bathe, that they should stay calm and that afterwards they would be given "coffee and something to eat". That was when a reminder would come to tie all shoes into pairs: "Afterwards you won't have to waste time finding the other shoe." In fact, the SS knew that the shoes of murdered children would only be of use for German families back home if they came in pairs.

When the Jews were finally pushed inside the gas chamber, the trickery did not end. The sign on the doors read, "To the baths". In crematorium II, the ceiling was dotted with fake showerheads. (Even the gas itself was part of the deception: the manufacturers of Zyklon B had altered their product, ridding it of the almond smell that, previously, had acted as a warning to anyone who got within inhalation distance.)

Walter soon understood that all this was not some cruel and elaborate joke. It had a clear and rational purpose. That much was plain from his own work on the ramp. He and his fellow slaves of the "clearing command" were under the strictest orders not to breathe a word to anybody getting off the trains. There was to be no contact whatsoever. Walter had seen what would happen if that rule were broken.



Hungarian Jews arrive at Auschwitz in June 1944. Photograph: Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images

One night there came a transport from the concentration-camp-cum-ghetto of Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. One of those disembarking was a well-dressed Czech mother, holding the hands of her two small children, and she was clearly relieved to have arrived at last. She said as much to a German officer: "Thank God we're here." She was one of those deportees who believed that the nation of Goethe and Kant would at last bring a measure of sanity to proceedings. That proved too much for one of Walter's young comrades who, as he ran past her, hissed words meant both to scold and warn: "You'll soon be dead."

The woman looked not so much scared as affronted by this intrusion from a ghoulish man in pyjama stripes, his breath foul, his head shaved, a prisoner who was surely therefore some kind of criminal. Instantly, she approached a German officer as if she were the aggrieved patron of a Prague department store, demanding to see the manager. "Officer, one of the gangsters has told me that I and my children are to be killed," she complained, in perfect German.

The SS man, gloved, his uniform creased in all the right places, gave her his most benign and trustworthy smile and said: "My dear lady, we are civilised

people. Which gangster said this to you? If you would be so kind as to point him out." She did as she was asked, and the officer took out his notebook and quietly wrote down the number of the prisoner, visible on the man's tunic. Afterwards, when everything was finished and all the people had gone, the officer sought out that prisoner and had him taken behind the wagons and shot. Walter was among those who carried his corpse back to the camp. At around the same time, the woman who had complained was gassed, along with her two young children.

Running back and forth on the *Judenrampe* for those 10 long months, whether carrying corpses or suitcases, Walter gradually understood why the Nazis were so bent on keeping their victims ignorant of their fate, even to the last. They needed their killing machine to run smoothly and without disruption. Given the time pressure the SS were often under, with another transport coming down the track, there was no room for delay caused by panic or, worse, rebellion.

It was essential that the Jews coming off those trains did not know what fate awaited them. If they did, they might begin to cry out, they might start pushing and shoving, they might refuse to form columns, in neat rows of five, and instead rush for the barbed-wire fences or at their captors. True, they would be overwhelmed eventually: the SS carried submachine guns and their victims had nothing but their own bodies, weakened by hunger and thirst. But, still, there were sometimes a thousand or more people on that platform, outnumbering the Nazis by perhaps 10 to one. If the Jews knew what was coming, what sand might they be able to throw in the gears of the machine that was poised to devour them? They might not stop it, but they could slow it down.

They lay dead still, side by side in the hole. Two Germans approached the hiding place. Walter grabbed his knife

Walter saw it with new clarity. The difference between truth and lies was the difference between life and death. The factory of murder that the Nazis had constructed in this accursed place depended on one cardinal principle: that the people who came to Auschwitz did not know where they were going, or for what purpose. That was the premise on which the entire system was

built. Auschwitz was an abattoir and Walter had seen enough of those in the countryside of his native Slovakia to know that it is much easier to slaughter lambs than it is to hunt deer. If you have to catch animals individually, hunting them down one by one, it is slow, awkward work. It is never as fast or efficient as driving thousands at a time, herded and neatly organised, towards their deaths. The Nazis had devised a method that would operate like a well-run slaughterhouse rather than a shooting party.

Walter understood it well because he was standing every day and every night on the threshold of the abattoir. The sight of it nearly broke him. In those 10 months, there were some fellow prisoners who feared Walter was about to crack. But just at the point when he might have come apart, he was filled instead with a hot and unstoppable urge: he had to act. Somebody had to escape and sound the alarm, issuing the warning that Auschwitz meant death. Around the time he turned 18, Walter concluded that person should be him.

---

On 7 April 1944, after days of delay, weeks of obsessive preparation, months of watching the failed attempts of others, and two years of seeing the depths to which human beings could sink, the moment had finally come. It was time to escape.

The two other prisoners were already there, at the designated spot. Wordlessly, they gave the nod: *do it now*. Walter and fellow inmate Fred Wetzler did not hesitate. They climbed on top of a woodpile, covering a hole that had been prepared by other would-be escapees, found the opening and dropped inside. A second later, their comrades moved the planks into place above their heads. One of them whispered: “Bon voyage.” Then all was dark and silent.



‘The Nazis had devised a method that would operate like a well-run slaughterhouse rather than a shooting party.’ Photograph: Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images

Without delay, Walter set to work. He pulled out the *machorka*, the cheap, Soviet tobacco the Red Army captain had told him about, soaked in petrol and dried, exactly as instructed. Slowly, he began to wedge it into the cracks between the wooden boards, hoping against hope that the Soviet prisoner of war was right, that the scent would be repellent to dogs. If the captain’s confidence was well founded, Walter and Fred should be able to crouch in this bunker beneath the woodpile, silent and undisturbed, for exactly as long as they needed: three days and three nights.

Walter stared at the phosphorescent hands of his watch. Time was crawling. He wanted to stand up, to stretch, but he could do no such thing. It was too risky to talk. At one point, Walter felt Fred, who at 25 was six years older than him – both of them from the same small Slovak town of Trnava – take his hand and squeeze it.

At 6pm that Friday night came the shriek of the siren. It was a howl to make the air vibrate and the blood freeze in your veins, a thousand wolf packs baying in unison. The noise was appalling, but every inmate welcomed it: it meant that at least one of their number had been found missing from the

evening roll call, possibly escaped. That was their cue. Fred and Walter moved out of the main space under the woodpile, which had been built to hold four, and wriggled into a kind of passageway that could accommodate only two. It was intended to be an extra layer of protection: a hiding place within the hiding place. The pair crammed in and lay dead still, side by side.

They knew what the siren would bring. The pounding of close on 2,000 pairs of jackboots, tramping across the ground, the senior men alternately swearing and barking orders, their dogs slavering as they rooted out any sign of frail, quivering human life, 200 of them, trained and primed for this very purpose. The search had begun and it would not let up for three days.

Fred and Walter could be precise about that because the Nazis had a security protocol from which they never deviated. This outer part of the camp, where prisoners laboured as slaves, was guarded only during the daylight hours when the inmates were working. No need to watch over it at night, when every last prisoner was herded back inside the inner camp, with its double lines of electrified wire fences.



Rosenberg, who changed his name to Rudolf Vrba, with his then wife Gerta and daughter Helena in 1953. Photograph: courtesy of Caroline Hilton

There was only one exception to that rule. If an inmate was missing, presumed to have attempted an escape, the SS kept up the outer ring of armed sentry posts for 72 hours as they searched. After that, they would conclude that the escapee, or escapees, had got away: from then on, it would be the responsibility of the Gestapo to scour the wider region and find them. If a prisoner could somehow hide in the outer area, during those three days and nights after the alarm had been sounded – as Walter and Fred were doing now – then he would emerge on the fourth night into an outer camp that was unguarded. He could escape.

Somehow the hours dragged their way through Saturday to reach Sunday. The SS kept up the search. Fred and Walter froze as they heard two men, Germans, a matter of yards away. It was in the early afternoon, and they could pick up every word. “They can’t have got away,” said one. “They must be still in the camp.” The Germans began speculating about Fred and Walter’s likely hiding places. “How about that pile of wood?”

Walter and Fred did not move. The two Germans climbed on top of the woodpile, which they proceeded to dismantle, board by board.

Walter grabbed his knife. Fred did the same. And then, not for the first time, Walter’s life was saved by a random moment of good luck. Far off there was a sudden commotion, the voices distant but excited. Fred and Walter could hear the men just above them pause, their ears seemingly cocked to pick up what was happening. A second passed. Then another. Finally, one of the pair said: “They’ve got them! C’mom ... Hurry.” And, down below, Fred and Walter heard their would-be discoverers scramble away.

Sunday night passed into Monday. The morning shift returned, bringing with it the same din, the same barking, both human and animal, for another 10 hours, each minute passing at the same agonising pace.

At 6.30pm, Walter and Fred finally heard the sound they had longed for. Announced loudly, it rang out: *Postenkette abziehen!* It was the order to take down the *grosse Postenkette*, the outer chain of sentry posts, shouted from one watchtower to the next and then the next, circling the entire perimeter. To Fred and Walter, those words, bellowed out by the men who had enslaved them and murdered hundreds of thousands of their people, sounded like the

sweetest music. It was an admission of defeat by the SS, recognition that they had failed to recapture the two prisoners they had lost.

For Walter, even inching out of the side cavity sent a sharp pain shooting through his arms, legs, trunk and neck. His muscles were stiff and cold, his first movements jerky and uncertain. Finally they were in the main pit. They hugged each other in the darkness.

Sign up to our Inside Saturday newsletter for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the magazine's biggest features, as well as a curated list of our weekly highlights.

Now they took a deep breath and pressed their palms against the roof, trying to give the bottom board a push. But it would not move. They tried another spot. Still it would not budge. Had they accidentally sealed themselves into their own tomb? They had assumed that, if you could pile a plank on, you could take it off. But lifting boards is easy from above. Not so from below, when the weight of the entire stack is pressing down.

Shoving in tandem, grunting with pain, they managed to lift one of the bottom planks no more than an inch. But it was enough to give them purchase. Now they could get hold of it, just enough to shove it sideways. Fred turned to Walter with a smile. "Thank God for those Germans who nearly found us," he whispered. "If they hadn't moved those planks, we'd have been trapped." They summoned their strength again, shifting and shoving the boards until they could, with excruciating effort, haul themselves up and out. At last, they had done it. They were out of that hole in the ground. Exhausted from the exertion and the three days' confinement, the two men paused to take in the night sky. It was clear; the moon was shining.

They needed to get going, but first they put the boards back in their original position. Part of it was a determination to be thorough, to leave no clue for those who would be here the next morning. But part of it was the hope that this concealed hole might serve as an escape hatch for someone else. Fred and Walter were on their way to becoming the first Jews to engineer their own escape from Auschwitz. They did not want to be the last.



Vrba in Frankfurt to testify against accused former SS guards at Auschwitz, 1964. Photograph: Keystone Press/Alamy

Then they headed west, towards the little birch wood that gave Birkenau its name. They advanced not on foot, but on their stomachs, inching along, commando style. They did not get up until they had reached the trees, the same small forest that held the pits that had once burned corpses day and night.

The perimeter fence was not like the ones they had known from the inner camp. It did not have lights attached to each post; the wire was not electrified. Even so, the pair were taking no chances. They had fashioned in advance something that could function as a kind of clothes peg, protecting their hands as, working from the bottom, they lifted the wire above the ground. That made an opening big enough for them to crawl through.

Now they were on the other side of the fence. They would stay close to it, walking a near-complete circuit. Before long, they passed the inner camp, the lights that marked its perimeter warm and glowing. If you did not know better, the sight could almost look cosy, given the barren bleakness all around. Except they did know better. For they could also see the chimneys of the crematoria, pumping out their greenish-blue, oil-refinery flames and

their thick smoke of death. The pair took a last look, as clear as they had ever been that they never wanted to see this place again.

They kept on, walking as stealthily as they could, their limbs still stiff, slowed down by the marshy terrain. At about 2am, crossing open moorland, they reached a signpost with a warning to those coming in the opposite direction: “Attention! This is Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Anyone found on these lands will be shot without warning!”

It had taken them far too long, but they had at last reached the end of the vast “zone of interest” that enveloped the camp. For a moment at least, they could congratulate themselves. On 10 April 1944 they had each achieved what no Jew had done before: they had broken out of Auschwitz. And now they would embark on their true mission: to warn the world of the horrors within.

*After escaping the camp, Walter and Fred went on the run, trekking across the mountains, marshlands and rivers of Nazi-occupied Poland, without a map or compass, to reach their native Slovakia. There, they wrote a 32-page report, the first detailed account of the mass slaughter under way in Auschwitz-Birkenau. It would eventually reach Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and the pope, and by a series of extraordinary moves save 200,000 Jewish lives. While in hiding, Walter adopted an alias – Rudolf Vrba – a name he would keep until his death in Vancouver in 2006, aged 81. His postwar life would take a series of unexpected turns – and include several more escapes – but he never stopped testifying to what he had seen, determined that the world should know the truth of Auschwitz.*

This is an edited extract from The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World by Jonathan Freedland (John Murray Press, £20). [Order a copy for £17.40 from the Guardian Bookshop](#).

Jonathan Freedland talks to Hadley Freeman about the book in a [Guardian Live event](#) at 8pm on 21 June.

---

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

---

[Summer on a budget](#)[Cost of living crisis](#)

## **Scam-busting, stunts and social media – the consumer champions fighting the cost-of-living crisis**

Recently, fighting for consumer rights has become more important than ever. Money heroes Joe Lycett, Jack Monroe, Holly Smith and Kwajo Tweneboa explain what inspired them



From left: Joe Lycett, Holly Smith, Jack Monroe and Kwajo Tweneboa. Hair and makeup: Dani Richardson using Murad and Charlotte Tilbury. Set stylist: Lara Tarroni. All photographs: Pål Hansen/The Guardian



[Elle Hunt](#)

Sat 4 Jun 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 16.42 EDT

## **Joe Lycett, comedy avenger**

*The 33-year-old comedian and television presenter hosts his own consumer comedy hybrid show for Channel 4 called [Joe Lycett's Got Your Back](#), which won the 2021 Royal Television Society Award for best formatted factual. In 2020, Lycett changed [his name by deed poll to Hugo Boss](#) as a protest against the company of the same name sending cease and desist letters to small businesses. Last year he took on oil giant Shell for greenwashing, highlighting their emissions in a [parody advert](#) in which Lycett appeared as CEO Ben Van Beurden “repeatedly shitting out of his mouth”.*



Joe Lycett: ‘If I see someone doing something wrong, I want to expose that in a funny way’

What started me off was seeing the way my parents were treated by the companies they worked for. For most of her working life, my mum worked for Cadbury. It started out as a brilliant company that really looked after their staff – they built [a whole village in Bournville](#), with all sorts of things for wellbeing. But gradually, as Cadbury was sold off to Kraft (now known as Mondelez), all of that started to be eroded. Big corp stripped away what Cadbury made great, and it’s no longer the pride of Birmingham. Frankly, we’re a little embarrassed by it.

Growing up, I had that sense of: “Well, that’s just not good enough!” Our local bus company refused to give change: if you only had a fiver for a £3 journey, they’d just keep the £2. They said it was dangerous for the drivers, and slowed the buses down. So I wrote to every other bus company in the UK, who all offered change, asking: “Why do you give change? It’s dangerous for your drivers and it slows the buses down!” Every single one got back to me with reasons why that was wrong. Eventually, I met the Birmingham company and said: “Here’s every bus company in the UK telling you why your policy is bullshit.” It felt so good, like I was the [Erin Brockovich](#) of the Midlands. I called the campaign: Time for Change. I

actually think they still don't give change, so while a good approach, not the result I was after.

I worry a big part of why I do things is because it's addictive to be right or to show someone up. It's not altruism – though, obviously, I'm delighted to stand up for the little guy. One of the wins I'm most proud of was early on Joe Lycett's Got Your Back: a woman named Claire had been scammed out of thousands by someone pretending to be from her bank, and NatWest were refusing to compensate her. She had been saving up to do a nursing course, which she now couldn't do. We approached it in what was described as a very "Joe" way: NatWest had told her that it couldn't stop scammers pretending to be them, so I set up a Twitter account, pretending to be the NatWest CEO Ross McEwan. I started off with the stuff that you'd expect a bank CEO to tweet, retweeting NatWest with banal statements.

Then, gradually, it was more and more total nonsense, culminating in me tweeting after a couple of pints: "I've got a smelly bum bum." I got a very panicked call from the Channel 4 lawyers saying "DELETE THE TWEET", but it was too late, a journalist had already screengrabbed it. Alas, [NatWest couldn't ignore it](#). We got attention on the case by making a joke. Often, if people start to look silly, they can't keep ignoring you. I loved the panic that Ross McEwan might take legal action against me. I would LOVE to be in court with Ross McEwan trying to prove that he doesn't have "a smelly bum bum".

We try to keep it light, as it is predominantly a comedy show, which happens to get results. I could've gone down the panel show route, but I'm so proud that this is the show with my name on it. I like my jokes to have impact, it's just the way my brain works. If I see someone doing something wrong, I want to expose that in a funny way.

People being scammed doesn't depress me, it makes me cross – it's a motivator, if anything

There are so many different ways in which people are being defrauded, and not just older people: [one in five 16- to 34-year-olds have been scammed](#). We've seen big issues with student letting companies. Some of the dark web

stuff is really scary. There are long lists called “sucker lists” of personal data that people put together and sell. Your passwords, addresses, phone numbers, online shopping history are worth about 20p on the dark web. Sometimes scammers just monitor your emails until you have to make a payment to someone, then set up an email address that looks very similar. I know of one man who was buying a property and lost more than £1m that way. No bank will recover it, it’s just gone. That happens quite regularly.

It doesn’t depress me, it makes me cross – it’s a motivator, if anything. I adhere to the Stoic thing: if somebody nicks your wallet, you should pity them because they’ve lost more morally. It’s harder with corporations, where the sole purpose is profit. I did a programme [about Shell and greenwashing](#): even if the head of this company said, “We’re bad, we’re going to change,” they would just be ousted by the shareholders and replaced by a new puppet. To try to fix a huge, big thing like that is like trying to stop death.

I try to think about how I can help in whichever way I can. My favourite thing is when people message to say, “I was about to be scammed, but because I’ve seen your show, I wasn’t.” That’s the best review.

*Joe Lycett is currently on tour – visit [joelycett.com](http://joelycett.com) for info*

## **Jack Monroe, kitchen revolutionary**

*The food writer and activist came to prominence as “The Bootstrap Cook”, sharing low-cost recipes she devised to feed herself and her young son. Since then Monroe has given evidence to parliamentary inquiries and consulted on the [School Food Plan](#) and the [National Food Strategy](#). In February her tweets highlighting the increasing cost of budget groceries were a factor in [Asda lowering prices](#). In May, she launched a [libel action against Tory MP Lee Anderson](#) for alleging that she profits from the poor. Monroe is now working on a new price index, the [Vimes Boots Index](#), to measure the cost of basic foodstuffs and inflation as it affects those on the lowest incomes. She is also writing a [book on the impact of austerity cuts](#).*



Jack Monroe: ‘I can’t just churn out recipes for 9p burgers without also asking: why on earth does anyone need a 9p burger, in one of the richest economies in the world?’

I started blogging in 2012, about my experiences of being a single mum on benefits. Then it was an organic progression to move from telling my story to incorporating others’. In the beginning, I was quite self-conscious about using my platform – I’m nothing like my more brash tweets might have you believe – but as the years have gone on I’ve become more comfortable with being an advocate.

I write budget recipes to help people navigate their way through crisis, but I also use them as a vehicle to poke the government and say: “Why do people need these in the first place? What are you doing to help?” I was advised by someone early in my career to “drop the politics”, because then I’d be more likely to get stocked in Waitrose. I was like, “You know what? Fuck that,” and dropped that person instead. Ten years later I’m still here writing. I’d probably be richer if I just did the dinners without the difficult questions, but that never sat right with me. I can’t just churn out recipes for 9p burgers without also asking: why on earth does anyone need a 9p burger in one of the richest economies in the world?

Around 2014, supermarkets started providing food-bank donation points. For the first time, a million people received a food-bank parcel in a six-month period. All of those milestone statistics were front-page news; now, food banks have quietly become woven into the everyday fabric of our society. The reliance on the voluntary sector to patch up the tattered social security system is absolutely shocking. Fuel poverty, period poverty, hygiene poverty, food poverty all have the same root cause: people don't have enough money for the basics of day-to-day life.

I have heard from people whose loved ones have died of hunger, or ended their lives due to cuts, changes and delays to benefits

All the evidence is there, yet the government seems to either refuse to hear it, or refuse to act on it. I'm not sure which is worse – but something has to give. I'm a Labour member and supporter, and there are many great MPs working tirelessly every day, but I do feel that as a party the message from the top could be a lot more robustly challenging of the government – that's what they're there for.

I have heard from hundreds of people over the years whose loved ones have died of hunger; or ended their lives due to cuts, changes and delays to benefits; or missed chemo appointments due to unreliable public transport. These stories can be extraordinarily difficult to relay to the people in power, but that's who needs to hear them. Campaigners like me are often met with the same old dismissive response: "There's no such thing as poverty in Britain, people brought it on themselves" – that tired and untrue trope that poverty is a moral failure on the part of the sufferer. In fact, it's the system that is at fault, and the designers and perpetrators of that system are complicit in the tragedies that result.

Sign up to our Inside Saturday newsletter for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the magazine's biggest features, as well as a curated list of our weekly highlights

I receive a couple of hundred direct messages or emails a week, not counting public comments on Twitter. It's important that people feel their experience is validated, and I will try my hardest to help if I can. It's not ego, or some

kind of God complex; I think it's just the way I was raised. My parents were both foster carers and had the attitude that "if you can help, you get on with it". Very often after school there would be another place set at the dinner table for a child who was in crisis. Sometimes they'd stay for the night, sometimes for years. As an adult and parent myself, I'm only just starting to understand the enormity of the commitment they made and the values we learned along the way.

My emotional response swings quite wildly, even throughout the day. Sometimes I feel as though we're making progress – and sometimes I feel as if it's all hopeless and nothing makes a difference. But that's generally short-lived, as there's always something to get stuck into. When you're shouting against a system that's rigged against you, every single voice counts. That's why I keep going – as frustrating and thankless and labour-intensive and exhausting as it is. I think people are starting to get it, especially those who are now finding themselves on the fringes of poverty for the first time, turning off their heating, unscrewing their lightbulbs, putting clingfilm on their windows and going: "Hang on a minute ..." I do feel optimistic that we could be at the tipping point of real social change.

## Kwajo Tweneboa, housing superhero

*The 23-year-old activist and student from south London uses social media to give a voice to social housing tenants and expose the derelict living conditions many are forced to endure. After publicly shaming Clarion, Europe's biggest housing association, into carrying out repairs on his family's flat after a year of inaction, Tweneboa has travelled the country putting pressure on politicians and social housing providers [to improve living standards](#). One tweet, showing a cockroach-infested family home in Lewisham, was seen more than 1m times and led to the family being permanently relocated within 24 hours. Tweneboa has received mentoring and financial backing from Dragons' Den investor [Steven Bartlett](#), and was named Young Campaigner of the Year at the SMK National Campaigner Awards.*



Kwajo Tweneboa: ‘MPs and councillors are just ignoring that people are suffering’

For most of my life, I’ve lived in social housing. I grew up in Mitcham, south London, with my sisters and my dad. For a while we lived in temporary accommodation, most of it falling down from damp and mould. One was a converted garage, still with the garage door on – I’m sure it was illegal. But Eastfields estate was even worse. There was damp and mould, we couldn’t use our kitchen or bathroom. We had mice, cockroaches, flies. It was so dated, too. The kitchen cupboards were ancient.

When we moved in, in early 2018, my dad was ill with stage one oesophageal cancer, but it rapidly progressed to stage four. He went from walking around to relying on a walking frame on the rare occasion that he was forced out of bed. Meanwhile, there was the damp and mould, no water at some points, broken lights, cockroaches running around. We complained and complained to Clarion, the housing association that managed the estate. The last few months of Dad’s life were a lot harder than they needed to be. He passed away in October 2020.

Early in 2020, there had been a major leak in my front room, causing the ceiling to partially collapse. Clarion [Housing](#) pulled the whole thing down. I thought it would be replaced in a couple of weeks: how long can you be

without a ceiling? But I kept phoning and phoning, and couldn't get through. Eventually, in October, they told me that no one would be coming until January. I said: "I'm not going to have a ceiling for Christmas?" They said: "No, we've got two people, and one's on holiday – no one can come out until next year."

I felt that person on the phone was so rude. I remember thinking to myself: "That's my life you're talking about." I'd just lost my dad, and my mental health was all over the place. I wanted to prove a point: that they shouldn't be able to disrespect someone, just for being a council tenant. I had nothing to lose, so I posted photos on social media. It got shared thousands of times and got picked up by local media, then ITV. My housing association was disgraced. They have since carried out more than 700 repairs on my estate, and they're still not done. [Clarion acknowledged the issues on the estate, saying: "We recognise that some repairs and pest control measures have taken too long over the last six months and apologise to all affected residents."]

Unlike the councils, the housing associations have the money: the problem is how they're spending it. Tenants are not the priority. They see building more homes as the priority over the health and safety of their existing tenants. Not only that, the newbuilds are falling apart. I visited one yesterday that was put up in 2012, and it was like a scene from Titanic – pipes were rusted, the whole floor was flooded. It's all too common with a newbuild. These people just don't care. They might deny that they are prioritising finances over tenants, but we can see that they are. People are suffering as a result.

After I went viral, people began contacting me about their issues. I'd go to their houses, post pictures on social media, and get them the help that they needed. MPs and councillors are just ignoring that people are suffering. I've seen emails from people living with damp, mould, collapsed ceilings, raw sewage pouring down their walls, and replies from their local MPs telling them they don't deal with tenants and housing. They think it's acceptable to ignore the living conditions of their constituents when, not long ago, they were begging for their votes. It really frustrates me. None of them can really relate to what tenants are going through – that's why it's not seen as a priority.

I'm beyond disappointed in Keir Starmer. He should be shouting from the rooftops of parliament about the issue of housing

I'm determined that housing will be made a priority at the next election, whether Westminster likes it or not. Michael Gove and the Conservatives have clocked on to the issue, Labour not so much. There are many MPs within the party who have done an amazing job of highlighting housing, who know that there's a problem, so why is the Labour party not talking about it? I'm beyond disappointed in Keir Starmer. He should be shouting from the rooftops of parliament about this issue.

I get thousands of messages and share them in the hope of shaming the local MPs and housing providers. More often than not, the issue gets resolved pretty quickly. One woman had been complaining for a year, and after my post she was moved within 24 hours. Tenants can feel ashamed about their living conditions, then they see other people with the same issues and realise that it's not just them, it is thousands of people around the country.

I've been travelling to different cities, spreading my message about poor quality housing and speaking to residents, showing them that someone is fighting for them. I've been to Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester. Next I'm going to Yorkshire, Scotland and Brighton. Housing associations, councils and MPs are scared whenever they know I'm in their area, because they know that there's only one reason why. I'm glad they're scared – it's about time.

I shouldn't have to be doing this – but people shouldn't have to be living in those conditions. It is stressful at times. I can't respond to everyone, it would be a full-time job and I am still in my final year of university, studying business. But I get a lot of satisfaction. It's actually been helpful for my mental health, because I'm proving that you can't just walk over someone because of their race, their background, their housing status. I think that's the biggest mistake some people in senior roles in councils or housing associations make: they look down on tenants, even treat them like scum. I've been able to show that they cannot keep getting away with it.

## Holly Smith, coupon ninja

The UK's "[coupon queen](#)", Holly Smith cuts thousands of pounds off her shopping and bills every year. The [Extreme Couponing and Bargains UK group](#) she set up on Facebook in 2017 has millions of members, and she is a regular guest on ITV's *This Morning*. She recently published her first book, [Holly Smith's Money Saving Book](#), promising simple savings hacks "to make life a bit easier every day". Smith lives in Great Yarmouth with her husband and their four children: Bonnie, one, Zac, two, Bella, nine, and Mollie, 11.



Holly Smith: 'The government has to do something. People are desperate'

I'm autistic; a lot of people on the spectrum focus on a certain area, and mine was always money-saving. When I was 10 or 11, my mum was ill and she asked me to go down to the local shop and do the shopping – I came back with change. She said: "How'd you get it so cheap?" I said I was paying attention to the prices. When my local library got the internet, I'd go there on my bike and spend my Saturdays hunting down freebies – washing powder, things like that. I just absolutely loved it.

When I was 23, I got my first bone tumour. I've had four removed from my left leg over the years, right up to 2019. I also have an autoimmune disorder, so I've spent a lot of time in hospitals. After my surgery, I couldn't work for

more than a year and had to rely on benefits. That's when I really threw everything at my money-saving, and started entering competitions. I did as many as 300 a week, and won prizes worth £10,000 in that year alone, including one to have a website designed. I decided to use that to make my first money-saving blog. Within six months the [Facebook page](#) had 100,000 followers. Today there are 4 million people across my Facebook page and group. That scares me: it shows how many people are struggling. The government has got to do something. People are getting desperate.

I'm working day in, day out to get this information out. All people have to do is give me a little bit of their time, and I can show them how to save thousands a year. The retail price of my book is £12.99 – for many people, that's several meals. I tell them to borrow it from the library. When I said that on This Morning, they said I was the first author who'd come on to promote their book and told listeners not to buy it. That's how passionate I am. I will stay up until 4am if there's a good deal to tell people about. I lose sleep over it. It can be hard, when you are on the spectrum, to disconnect at the end of the day. I've had to take sleeping pills at times, just because my brain doesn't want to shut off.

In 2015, I got £1,200 worth of shopping completely free. My husband and I were in Tesco for six hours

*Holly Smith*

In December 2015, I got £1,200 worth of shopping completely free. That's the most I've saved with coupons in one go. The record at that time was £600 worth of stuff for 1p – I wanted to beat that. I went to Tesco with my husband, and we were there until it shut. The checkouts broke twice – they're just not built to handle scanning nonstop for six hours. The total showed £1,200, then went right down to £0. I gave the food to the Benjamin Foundation, which takes in teenagers who have been kicked out of home, and they were very happy. I've been thinking about trying to beat my own record.

Since the pandemic, couponing has gone digital – all you need is your smartphone. Apps like Shopmium, CheckoutSmart or GreenJinn show you

all the coupons. You can easily get £30 of free stuff a week, but you never know what you're going to get. It could be Pop-Tarts one week and a bag of salad the next. A lot of people say you never get healthy stuff on coupons, but GreenJinn is for vegan and vegetarian products. It does allow you to try new things. If you swap out meat two days a week, you can save on average £300-350 a year.

If you have a product you really love, reach out to the brand and let them know. Sometimes they come back with some coupons. A lot of people only get in touch to complain, but I like to approach with acts of kindness, telling them how much you love their food. If you write to the complaints address being positive, you're likely to get more coupons than if you complain. Recently my daughter drew a pack of sausages she loves. We sent it off to the brand and they wrote back with £5 of coupons and asked to use her picture on social media. You're helping the brand and they're helping you.

Comments on this piece are premoderated to ensure the discussion remains on the topics raised by the article. Please be aware that there may be a short delay in comments appearing on the site.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jun/04/consumer-champions-cost-living-crisis-joe-lycett-jack-monroe-holly-smith-kwajo-tweneboa>

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Sally Rooney](#)

## **‘I always secretly wonder which of us is the real artist’: Sally Rooney in conversation with Patricia Lockwood**



‘Email is dead?? I’m reeling’ ... Sally Rooney. Photograph: Perry Ogden

The novelists discuss using real life in fiction, email style, and the art of writing sex scenes

Sat 4 Jun 2022 04.00 EDTLast modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 08.22 EDT

Sally and I began this conversation when I was in London, having flown there to attend the Dylan Thomas prize ceremony. My husband, Jason, had experienced a medical emergency on the plane from Los Angeles and had been rushed to Charing Cross hospital as soon as we touched down, so my emails were written under the influence of steroids, cold medicine, and pure adrenaline; Sally's were written under the influence of a little cup of water. Realising, perhaps, that I hadn't looked forward to writing an email for a very long time, I begin by asking her a simple question: when did email die?

**Sally Rooney:** Email is dead?? I'm reeling. Why do people keep emailing me then??

I suppose maybe you mean email is dead in the way that the novel is dead: sort of exhausted as a cultural form. I'm pretty fond of exhausted cultural forms, though. And you have also written a novel, so you surely understand. I think if email were cooler, I wouldn't find it so interesting. I admire its relative neutrality and lack of visual identity. I wonder if this is also true of novels. Both forms effectively consist of blocks of plain text on empty backgrounds. The openness of that arrangement attracts me. Once forms are exhausted or dead, maybe they become more capacious.

I am interested to know what you think of as a "live" form.

**Patricia Lockwood:** I had been saving and saving [Beautiful World, Where Are You](#) because I still have intermittent trouble reading after Covid. Then, seemingly at the second we arrived in London and had to get Jason to hospital, I developed bronchitis and was given prednisolone, which makes reading perfect. I've got about 100 pages left and want to read it this morning on the plane home; once you start it up in the air you should finish it up in the air. So I'll continue on at 30,000ft and send another letter when I return.

It would help me to think of these emails as letters, because it turns out I hate asking direct questions and am never going to do it again. Here's what I'll say – I don't know that Alice and Eileen [in Beautiful World] are writing

emails. We don't get the links, the ahahas, the raccoon videos. They're doing the online equivalent of writing with quill pens – they have to, because this is going in a book. We are given their relationship, the weight of their history, the tendrils of their communication, and the technology does not matter. It struck me, over the cycle of the last few years whenever a book was held up as addressing technology and the modern moment, that this was almost always true: they were more traditional than usual, not less.

A live form, to me, is one that I don't quite know how to use. It is like a new body. Whenever I've found myself in a state of febrile excitement on the internet, it's been when I didn't know what I was doing – I was learning my way around, lifting up limbs and discovering their reflexes, making a place voluptuous. Are you formally comfortable inside the novel, or do you relearn it every time? Do we return because it is capacious enough to hold our ignorance and exploration, not the things we want to fill it with?



Patricia Lockwood in Savannah, Georgia. Photograph: Bailey Davidson/The Observer

**SR:** On email: no. We're going to have a formal disagreement here, and I think it's healthy. In my life online, ahahas and raccoon videos are for messaging and tweets. My emails (in life and in fiction) are formally pure. You say "letters", but I say, no. They're just obviously not letters. They're

emails. They autosave in a drafts folder during composition, they arrive at the instant of being sent, and each one is visible and searchable at all times to both sender and recipient. Back when I was writing my first novel, which was in the first person, I remember thinking of the narrative technique as “email voice”. I wanted the narrative to have an email-like quality. And in this latest book, large parts of the narrative are in fact fictional emails. Now you’re telling me the technology doesn’t matter?? No. It matters, Patricia ... It matters very much.

I’m interested in your question about whether I’m formally comfortable with the novel. The answer is, with caveats, no.

I don’t think writing novels becomes formally easier the more you do it. You might think, when first you toil your way through writing a novel, that you are at least teaching yourself enormously valuable and difficult lessons that you will never have to learn again. But by the time you finish that book and start a new one, those lessons no longer interest you, and you actively try to avoid reusing any of the things you worked so hard to learn before. In this sense, writing a novel is like forcing yourself to acquire a very complicated skill and then, as soon as you’ve succeeded, losing all interest in ever using the skill again.

Everyone who writes, professionally or otherwise, basically already knows this as a matter of instinct. For instance, let’s imagine that I’m someone who really enjoys writing, which I am. I get an idea for a scene, and I write that scene, and then, for technological reasons, the work gets deleted and I have to start again. Depending on how much work has been lost, this can be a very distressing experience. Why? Because I have to do a piece of work again that I supposedly enjoyed doing the first time. If I really enjoyed doing it so much – not the accomplishment of having done it, but the act of doing it – why should it be so painful to have to do it again? (Of course, there are some writers who just hate the whole process of writing, which means they never have to contemplate this contradiction, although there are other downsides to their way of life.) For me, it’s because I already taught myself what I wanted to know the first time. The writing can be enjoyable and exciting when it involves discovery: of character, of language, of technique, etc. But when I’m just typing out something I know already, it’s depressing. So in my experience, there are intrinsic obstacles to growing more formally

comfortable in a given genre. The pleasure of writing is derived from the frisson of discomfort.

I'm going to send you this reply now before it gets any lengthier and more unwieldy! I'm sorry. Are you home yet?

Whenever someone starts disagrees with me I start wondering, in a wrestling match between us, who would win?

*Patricia lockwood*

**PL:** Re: the emails – whenever someone starts disagreeing with me in long paragraphs, even ones as wonderful as yours, I listen at first and then I start wondering, in a wrestling match between us, who would win? I am picturing both of us wearing André the Giant-type singlets, and in this scenario I am more flexible than I am in real life. I will say, that when I read the sections of the book that I will no longer think of as “epistolary”, I thought, with a shiver of personal delight, it sounds just like Sally is writing to me!

I am NOT at home yet because yesterday afternoon, having made it from London to New York, and just as we were about to board our flight home to Savannah, I was sitting at my gate at JFK watching a documentary about the making of The Dark Side of the Moon. I was nurturing a tremendous hard-on for David Gilmour – you have to be horny when you fly or else the plane will never stay up – when Jason collapsed. The paramedics rushed him by ambulance to Jamaica Hospital. He is now stable and the doctor told him he should try to fly home as soon as he can, so we're taking the first flight out this morning.

When we got to the hospital I was going to write you right away, but I was so tired, and I had been writing so many emails that really were emails (wrestling move), that I just started reading your book, as if there were nothing else for me to do in the world. I feel that this experience has tied me to you for ever.

I couldn't stay with Jason because of Covid protocols, so they put me in this empty little conference room that had been abandoned by God. Someone had stuck a bloody plaster to the ceiling, as commentary, and there was a

whiteboard where someone had written “Happy Mother’s Day!” While I was sitting there someone texted me that this was the hospital where Donald Trump had been born, and it really felt like that. I mean, all you want in a hospital waiting room is something to distract you. But because I was alone, and everything was so heightened, I really did feel that I was reading about the world underneath the world.

I thought I was going to be in that room for ever. I thought I was going to die there, with Donald Trump being perpetually born above me. Every so often it would go completely dark, because I was sitting so still that the automatic lights perceived there was no one in there. And I came to these passages of physical description – more of it than in your first two books, I think. It was like you were staking out actual territory, taking us by the shoulders and saying: “You still live here.” Alice and Eileen holding each other, the beautiful world. And maybe it’s just because I’m writing about To the Lighthouse right now, but those passages almost seemed to be observed from that point of view – the sweeping up of the house after the Ramsays are gone, the bright revolution of the eye of the lighthouse, the point of view of nature and time. It watches the four people by the sea almost as if they are dead – but in a peaceful way, not the way Alice feels sure she is dead already as a writer, as a famous figure, as a subject of discourse. It’s like tides lapping up to them as they’re lying on the beach, naturally including them in the catalogue of elements that will be sucked away.

Texts were coming in from friends, giving me the names of surgeons at better hospitals. Jason would occasionally call, sounding half in and half out of the world. I felt that I needed someone to come and put me back into my body. I was not crying at what was happening, but sometimes I cried a little at the book.

I can write sex scenes, kind of, but you can erotically live-tweet Bambi to an audience of millions

*Sally Rooney*

**SR:** I’m very glad you’re home again now and that everything seems to be OK for the moment. If the novel kept you company during such an extreme ordeal, then I’m touched. I feel that everything I write is so small and quiet

that any contact with real crisis might just touch it over into the trivial. But I suppose it depends. I would like to write books from which nothing is excluded. You would be in there, and Jason, and empty conference rooms, motion-sensor lights, text messages about surgeons, wrestling metaphors. I don't want to write books that are cold and stylised and feel closed off from life. Reading your email the second or third time – after we'd been in touch elsewhere and you had let me know that he'd been discharged and you'd arrived home safely – I felt like maybe my mission should be to write novels that can be read by frightened people in hospital waiting rooms. And if I let that principle guide me from now on, then my books might be more serious and sturdier, better equipped for contact with real life. But I'm not even sure if that's true.

As a rule I don't like to endure anything in life that I can't use in my work. If something happens to me in reality that feels too distressing, too ugly, or too confusing to bear any relationship with my work, then I feel that whatever I'm writing must be dishonest. Partly I suppose that's why I wanted Alice's career to resemble mine so closely. It has to do with a principle of honesty that's hard for me to describe exactly. The book would have felt false and meaningless for me if I hadn't found space inside it to accommodate that part of my life, however idiotic it was. And then, inversely, my real life would have felt even more idiotic and painful if I couldn't at least make use of it somehow in my writing. That's not to say that the book describes "real events". I'm terrible at describing real events. But the novel did have real emotional and intellectual experiences, in the form of fictional events and characters. The real catastrophes that have happened to me, like the one your email describes, have all ended up in my books, though almost always unrecognisably.

Every time I talk with you about writing, and we discuss the contrasts in our processes, ideas, preferences, values, I always secretly wonder which of us is the real artist. My work is so mundane and technical, and your work is so unpredictable and extraordinary. I'm sometimes a little bit droll, but you're always hilarious, to a degree that actually becomes confrontational and philosophically challenging. I can write sex scenes, kind of, but you can erotically live-tweet Bambi to an audience of millions. We're interested in some of the same things, but you're capable of throwing yourself courageously into the extremes, and I'm not. I like to drink a glass of tap

water and think my little thoughts. ('What if one of the characters calls another one on the phone?') My admiration for your work, and for you personally, makes me feel doubtful about what seems too great a disparity between us. But maybe it's possible to embrace the dichotomy without wrestling.

Speaking of which: when I was struggling with the ending of the novel, a friend suggested I should read *The Waves*. Sometimes I'll read something that comes in at a particularly unexpected angle to my own thoughts, and that way I can get new ideas. *The Waves* helped me a lot – it's a beautiful book, which I'd never read before, though I love Woolf. So your words about *To the Lighthouse* made me happy. I also read Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* for the first time, while I was writing the novel – another friend sent me a copy as a gift. Like many of James's male characters, the Prince in *The Golden Bowl* has a truly unbelievable level of erotic charisma. He doesn't even have to say anything: his presence alone is mesmerising. I really admire and love the almost hypnotic power of James's characters on the page. Both Woolf and James are master stylists. But the style is always in service of something: that's what I strive for, as I suppose we all do.

Isn't this an email?? Nothing in it matters unless it interests or amuses you. I'm aiming only to seem gently inane and consoling, at best. In real life, I'm thinking of you both and sending love.

**PL:** I don't know either. If I saw someone reading my novel in a hospital waiting room, I would physically take it out of their hands. Actually another woman came in while I was waiting, they were doing chest compressions on her father in the hallway, and I ceased to be a writer at all, but some sort of organisational force, offering tissues and consolation and information. Exactly the same thing you would have done, or anyone. If you tried to write consolation it wouldn't work. What consoles or distracts in those moments is another person's complete and pleasurable absorption in a thing that may not matter at all, the sense that life and the world go on like a river outside you.

I think I know what you mean about using your life in fiction. When I got to the end – even knowing how novels work! – I thought, I hope Sally is not ill, I hope she is not in pain. I hope she was not in hospital with a breakdown. I

thought that at the end of Conversations with Friends as well, I hope Sally doesn't have endometriosis. There is something there that was transmuted into text, so that while you read you reach out as if to try to relieve it. Part of the pain I feel in reading is for the characters, but part of it is always for the writer, what they must have been through.

It's a point of pride that I can refuse to be coerced into being emotionally vulnerable in public

*Sally Rooney*

When you say, "I always secretly wonder which of us is the real artist": this is so funny, and so narcissistic, and exactly the same thing I do. Before we met – we did an event in a church where I stole the priest's cassock – we were both afraid of each other. When I read the unexpected mention of me in Conversations with Friends [Frances says they admire "the poet Patricia Lockwood"], I thought, but she wouldn't like me. She would see right through me, as if that's what you go about doing.

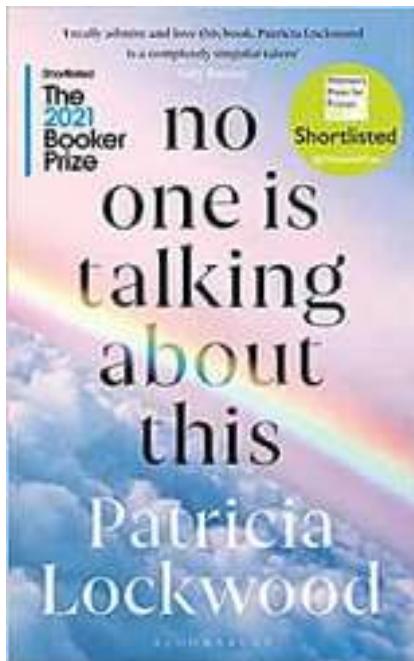
When we were together another time, at a barbecue restaurant, you said something that I found very touching. You were gently impersonating yourself in the writing of a new work, and you made this excited gesture, and you said: "There's this guy, you're gonna love him." And I thought, they are real to her, the characters. They must appear to her in her bedroom at night. She can take them up the stairs, she knows what the wear on their sleeves looks like, and their life is going on underneath hers at all times. And sometimes she is looking at me, and sometimes something flashes to the side of me or just behind, that is the gesture of another hand.

So maybe we are right, that you see through us. But we aren't the point – you are seeing through us to something else you need to see. And I think now, this is the core of you. That you see these things, and it is true of your reading as well, that you walk among characters, in the flesh, in the clothes of the period, with the words in their mouths, and sparkling.

You want a sex scene in the waiting room as well. (I was hoping for one between Felix and Simon [from Beautiful World] and David Gilmour, but it was not to be.) I have thought a lot about why yours are so good, so electric,

and it's because they actually seem to contain the human exchange, the moment of friction that must be played out before you can surrender. I wondered, why am I so shy to ask a direct question? And it's because it was so close to being in one of your bedrooms. It almost borders on that moment – where I step too far, and you rise or rebut or show that core of rigour, and then we must break past it somehow, so something else can happen. And it can't happen here, but maybe somewhere else, just off to the side.

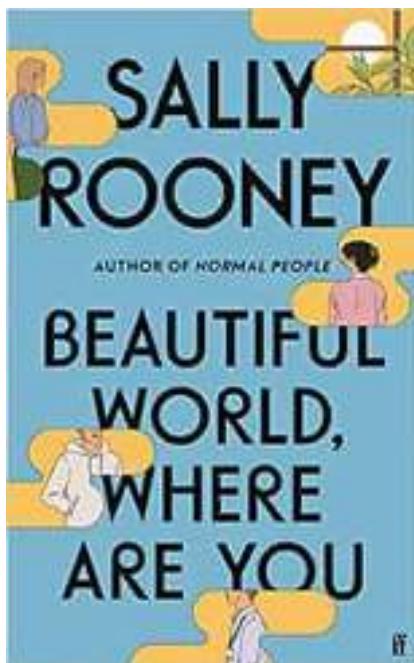
**SR:** When you say you feel pain for the writer, this might touch on the idea of autofiction, and the relation between that idea and what we (respectively) are doing in our work. Of course, when I read your work, I also feel for the character and the writer at the same time – I feel for some conceptual being that seems to unite the character and writer together. And although I write more conventional novels, and I don't ask the reader to imagine that the events of the novel have literally taken place in my real life, the principle of honesty applies.



I suppose that in writing about physical and emotional pain, I'm asking for a certain kind of trust from the reader. Maybe the unspoken agreement is that I don't force my characters to endure levels of pain that go beyond my real experience. If I did that, I would feel that I was violating the reader's trust somehow. I wonder if that's a principle borrowed from autofiction, even

though my work is otherwise more conventionally novelistic. When we read Middlemarch, I don't think we need to feel that George Eliot personally went through some form of suffering that we would consider equivalent to what her characters endure. It's not part of the contract between reader and writer in that case. Maybe in the modernist novel, that concept starts to emerge, and then autofiction takes it to its limit: the integrity of the work would be destroyed completely by that kind of dishonesty. I feel a certain kinship with autofiction, maybe for that reason, although my writing doesn't fit into that tradition at all.

But even though my work does seem to ask something personal of the reader, I don't speak in public about any personal difficulties I may have experienced. I'm fairly guarded by disposition anyway, but much more so in public life. I don't mind talking about my work, if it interests anyone. But I have nothing to say about my life, and especially not the parts of my life that (may) have been difficult or painful.



I do sometimes become curious as to why exactly I take this attitude. It's not – obviously – born of timidity. In fact I think, as you seem to sense also, that it's a kind of aggression on my part. In our line of work, a person can find themselves coerced, contractually or otherwise, into doing a lot of things they don't want to do. I suppose it's a point of pride for me, one of the very

few I have left at this stage, that I can at least refuse to be coerced into being emotionally vulnerable in public. No! As far as my public statements are concerned, I am completely invulnerable, and I have never suffered a day in my life. It may not make any sense, or have any useful consequences, but I would rather die than give them what they want.

Your description at the restaurant sounds like me! By which I mean, very embarrassing. But it's true, I do live with my protagonists as if they're real. What excites me about publishing my work is sharing the characters with other people. My most intense and life-changing reading experiences have always involved deep attachments to fictional characters. And that sort of mystical, almost spiritual, experience of attachment is something I try to accomplish in my novels. All the other aspects of my work – aesthetic or ideological concerns, for instance – are subordinate to that ambition. In a way you might call it an expression of religious belief. When people develop strong feelings about my characters, it makes me feel that I've done the right thing in publishing my books.

On this same topic, I think people who criticise my prose style have a point. I don't think my prose is fantastic. But it's secondary to the characters for me. My novels are not fundamentally about language, they're about people and their lives. If I need to show one of my characters looking thoughtfully at the ceiling, I'm often not interested in finding a new unexpected way of phrasing the gesture. I'm just impatient to get her looking up at that ceiling, so I can get closer to what's really going on for her – intellectually, emotionally, whatever. As a result, my prose can sometimes end up flat and repetitive, and although I try to smooth it out and make it nicer, I don't always succeed.

There are so many things I fail to do in my work. I'd like to be a better writer. But the hardest disappointment is in feeling that I've failed to do justice to my characters. I hate the idea of thrusting them out into the cold hard light of publicity to be jeered at and reviled. They really do mean as much to me as if they were real. It's with foolish but necessary optimism that I say things like: "There's this guy, you're going to love him." In the end, a lot of people won't love him at all, or even notice he's there, through my failings as a writer and through the bizarre state of the discourse around my work. I content myself with the hope that behind all the noise and

distraction, in a quiet interior somewhere, someone is encountering that character, and they do love him. The beauty of that kind of love: that's what makes me want to write novels.

*Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney is published in paperback (Faber). *No One Is Talking About This* by Patricia Lockwood (Bloomsbury) won the Dylan Thomas prize.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jun/04/i-always-secretly-wonder-which-of-us-is-the-real-artist-sally-rooney-in-conversation-with-patricia-lockwood>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

Advertisement

US edition

- [US edition](#)
- [UK edition](#)
- [Australian edition](#)
- [International edition](#)

[The Guardian - Back to home](#)[The Guardian: news website of the year](#)

[Blind date](#)[Relationships](#)

**Blind date: ‘It was going well until he choked on his dessert and started crying’**



Photograph: Andy Hall/The Guardian

Sean, 29, strategy and consulting manager, meets Emma, 25, writer

Sat 4 Jun 2022 01.00 EDT

---

## Emma on Sean



### **What were you hoping for?**

My first five-star review in the Guardian.

### **First impressions?**

Nice, friendly, reassured me that the wine would be on its way soon.

### **What did you talk about?**

We ticked off most of the standard first-date Q&A, then we spoke about our favourite type of butter for 10 minutes. I also asked him if he thought a barge made out of cheese would sink or float!

### **Any awkward moments?**

After convincing me he was a foodie he revealed he didn't know oranges had segments until he was in his 20s.

### **Good table manners?**

It was going well until he choked on his dessert and started crying.

## **Best thing about Sean?**

He gave me some good recipe ideas and let me try some of his main.

## **Q&A**

### **Want to be in Blind date?**

Show

Blind date is Saturday's dating column: every week, two strangers are paired up for dinner and drinks, and then spill the beans to us, answering a set of questions. This runs, with a photograph we take of each dater before the date, in Saturday magazine (in the UK) and online at [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) every Saturday. It's been running since 2009 – you can [read all about how we put it together here](#).

### **What questions will I be asked?**

We ask about age, location, occupation, hobbies, interests and the type of person you are looking to meet. If you do not think these questions cover everything you would like to know, tell us what's on your mind.

### **Can I choose who I match with?**

No, it's a blind date! But we do ask you a bit about your interests, preferences, etc – the more you tell us, the better the match is likely to be.

### **Can I pick the photograph?**

No, but don't worry: we'll choose the nicest ones.

### **What personal details will appear?**

Your first name, job and age.

### **How should I answer?**

Honestly but respectfully. Be mindful of how it will read to your date, and that Blind date reaches a large audience, in print and online.

### **Will I see the other person's answers?**

No. We may edit yours and theirs for a range of reasons, including length, and we may ask you for more details.

**Will you find me The One?**  
We'll try! Marriage! Babies!

**Can I do it in my home town?**

Only if it's in the UK. Many of our applicants live in London, but we would love to hear from people living elsewhere.

**How to apply**

Email [blind.date@theguardian.com](mailto:blind.date@theguardian.com)

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

**Would you introduce Sean to your friends?**

No ... even though a group of them "coincidentally" walked past the restaurant while we were eating.

**Describe Sean in three words.**

Should research oranges.

**What do you think he made of you?**

Talks a lot, a bit too honest, definitely not getting a five-star review in the Guardian.

**Did you go on somewhere?**

Not together. I joined my friends at the Eurovision party, he went to a DJ set. I think that suited us both far better.

**And ... did you kiss?**

No surprises for guessing ... we did not.

**If you could change one thing about the evening what would it be?**

Have a few more interests and values in common other than enjoying the food.

**Marks out of 10?**

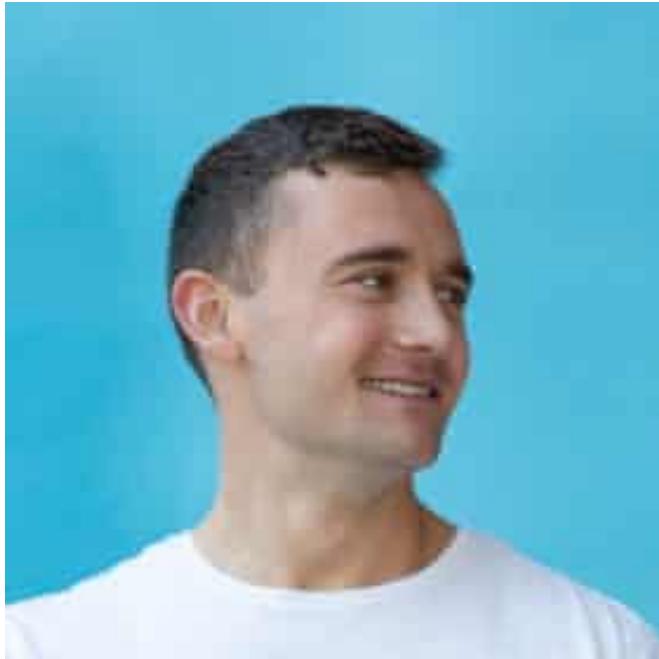
6.

**Would you meet again?**

No.

---

### **Sean on Emma**



**What were you hoping for?**

Great food and flirty conversation.

**First impressions?**

Amazing blue eyes, very confident and extremely easy to talk to.

**What did you talk about?**

Uni. Work. Holidays. Family. Food. Lockdown hobbies. Her love for the theatre. Emma previously worked for the Labour party's chief whip, so I got some hilarious insight into how realistic The Thick of It TV show is, and some gossip on the current government. Fascinating and terrifying.

**Any awkward moments?**

I nearly choked to death on my dessert resulting in an intense coughing fit.

**Good table manners?**

Faultless.

**Best thing about Emma?**

Extremely likable, and her eyes.

**Would you introduce her to your friends?**

As a friend, for sure!

**Describe Emma in three words**

Passionate about theatre.

**What do you think she made of you?**

Hopefully I made a good impression – I will find out soon enough!

**Did you go on somewhere?**

No, we both went to meet our friends separately.

**And ... did you kiss?**

No.

Sign up to our Inside Saturday newsletter for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the magazine's biggest features, as well as a curated list of our weekly highlights.

**If you could change one thing about the evening what would it be?**

I would have eaten my dessert slower to avoid that near-death experience.

**Marks out of 10?**

8 – there weren't any awkward silences, and the conversation flowed naturally, but unfortunately there was no chemistry for me.

**Would you meet again?**

As friends.

*Sean and Emma ate at [Levan](#), London SE15. Fancy a blind date? Email [blind.date@theguardian.com](mailto:blind.date@theguardian.com)*

---

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## 2022.06.04 - Opinion

- This jubilee is not like any other: we look back but can also see the future
- Dear Nadhim Zahawi, do you think curbs on university entrance will be levelling up?
- A Kardashian snub, Harry's return and Andrew gone awol. How's your jubilee weekend?
- A bike, a skateboard or the Elizabeth line? It depends where you want society to go

## OpinionMonarchy

# This jubilee is not like any other: we look back but can also see the future

[Martin Kettle](#)



Where past celebrations have been about unity, empire and nation, this is a preview of a very different Britain



Army cadets Ciaran Cook, Callum Lowther, Edinburgh's Lord Provost Robert Aldridge and the commander of Edinburgh Garrison, Lt Col Lorne Campbell, attend the beacon lighting at Edinburgh Castle, 2 June. Photograph: Andy Buchanan/AFP/Getty Images

Sat 4 Jun 2022 04.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 12.23 EDT

That was the jubilee, that was. Well, almost. The celebration is not over yet. Lots of people had a good time and their enthusiasm overflowed. Lots of others were less bothered but enjoyed the show all the same. For a minority, it was historic and glorious; for a different minority, infantilising and awful. But the official revels now are almost ended. On Monday, it will be back to war in Ukraine, the cost of living and Tory MPs' letters.

How much, if at all, has Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee mattered in the larger scheme of things British? It's easy to wax pompous about this on both sides. Enduring monarchical splendour? Merely bread and circuses? It doesn't help that jubilees are such odd events, contingent and ephemeral. They follow no defined pattern, and have no constitutional significance. Those of us with grey hair are now enjoying, if that's the right word, our fourth royal jubilee in 45 years. But our children and grandchildren may never see another one.

There are, nevertheless, three chewable things to say about royal jubilees. They have all been on display again this week. The first, whether you like it or not, is that jubilees are memorable, shared events for very large numbers of our fellow citizens. The second is that the content and resonance of jubilees have changed in significant ways over the years, and each has a particular character, including this platinum one. Finally, and without necessarily meaning to, jubilees also tell us something about the current state of our country, its institutions and its culture, especially but not solely as reflected in its relationship with the monarchy.

The first of these points has been clear to me since childhood. Although raised in a defiantly non-monarchist household, I never forgot my grandmother's vivid 1960s account of being taken, aged 10, to watch Queen Victoria pass through London on her diamond jubilee in 1897. She said she had never been in so noisy a crowd. She was surprised to see the Queen was so small, which is something that people also say about Elizabeth II today. She remembered being very disappointed that Victoria was not wearing a crown. Most strikingly of all, she claimed that the Queen looked her in the eye as her carriage passed.

Who knows if that last bit was really true? But it is a haunting image – the Empress Queen, riding through London a distant century and a quarter ago, looking straight at a close relative whom I remember extremely well. It feels almost as if I saw the Queen myself. It's hardly surprising that it all made such an impression on my grandmother. For she was not alone in feeling involved. Victoria's [jubilees](#) in 1887 and 1897 were genuinely national events, though probably not in Ireland. They also set templates that survive in some respects today, including the [lighting of beacons](#) across the country and the central role of the outdoor tea party, often provided free by thousands of local parishes.

Where the jubilees of Victoria differed from today was that the British empire was absolutely front and centre. The 1887 jubilee was Britain's first great imperial celebration of itself. Imperial might was again the leading note in 1897, although in a more uneasy guise for some. The historian Robert Ensor, who witnessed both jubilees and who later became a Manchester Guardian leader writer, says that in 1897, with the South African war just around the corner, the imperialism "no longer commanded universal

assent, compromised as it now seemed to many by a rising passion for aggression and conquest".

The empire was still at the centre of George V's silver jubilee of 1935, in which the present Queen, then aged nine, also played a part. According to Ben Pimlott's biography of her, the 1935 jubilee was "an imperial celebration whose splendour presaged that of the 1953 coronation, with which it was often compared". As in the Victorian jubilees, vast military and naval reviews played central roles in the proceedings. This week's flypasts were as nothing by comparison. "Here the Empire was a great family, the gathering a family reunion, the King a paternal head," wrote the prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald.

Imperial legacies still lingered in Elizabeth's silver jubilee in 1977, when the Queen made extensive tours of the Commonwealth as part of the celebrations. But in 2022 the imperial connection is vestigial, as is any attempted parade of British military might. Prince William's ill-starred tour of the Caribbean this spring showed how much has changed. It ought to prompt Prince Charles, if he is smart, to make clear he would be happy to give up being head of any state other than this one.

This jubilee has been a celebration not of the Queen's possessions and dominions, nor of her own dysfunctional family or any supposed family of nations, but simply of herself and her long life as monarch. If all jubilees are to an extent one-offs, this first and possibly only platinum jubilee in British history is even more of a one-off than the others. It is proving to be a very peculiar experience. Unlike its predecessors, even the diamond jubilee of 2012, this one is suffused with the knowledge of the passing of the old order. Everyone, the Queen included, knows it will be the last of her reign, even if she lives to 100.

Tom Nairn wrote in the 1980s that the monarchy allows the British to look into an enchanted glass and imagine that we all still live in the imperial past, even though of course we do not. In much the same way, the 2022 jubilee has been a magic mirror in which we can permit ourselves, if we wish, to imagine the world after Elizabeth, even while Elizabeth still lives. This jubilee has been a kind of soft-focus funeral for an era.

What does it tell us about Britain today? If you read accounts of earlier jubilees, the impression is always of a unified and flag-waving country enthusiastically honouring the long-reigning monarch and the institution of monarchy. There are some who have seen nothing more than that again this week. But it isn't true, is it? Goodwill towards the Queen may be near universal, but it does not extend to her heirs in the same way. Monarchy is less popular now than a decade ago. More people told YouGov last month that they were [not interested](#) in the jubilee than said that they were. Increasingly, the flags we wave – if we wave them at all – are not just those of the union but of its component, straining parts, not to mention those of Ireland and Europe.

That doesn't make us an incipiently republican people, although there's more of it around than some imagine. But it does make us a divided one, and the [boiling of Boris Johnson](#) outside St Paul's yesterday is one small sign of that. It has been a happy jubilee in all kinds of ways, but the inhabitants of this island are struggling more than ever to find a larger and more shareable idea of Britain that we can all embrace.

Martin Kettle is a Guardian columnist

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/04/jubilee-future-celebrations-empire-nation-britain>

[Letter from a curious parent](#)[Access to university](#)

## **Dear Nadhim Zahawi, do you think curbs on university entrance will be levelling up?**

[Michael Rosen](#)



Even the DfE's own assessment has found restricting access to loans would shut out ethnic minority students



An English and maths GCSE will not guarantee future university success.  
Photograph: David Davies/PA

Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.30 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 14.52 EDT

When we look into the fish bowl of politics, it's hard for us on the outside to see where policy comes from. I read articles that describe new proposals coming from the [Department for Education](#), but have no real idea what this means. We are told what "the DfE said ..." and "the government's intention". I might guess this involves you. But there is something foggy and mystifying in the way education policies emerge anonymously and come blinking into the light of day.

I was trying to decipher all this in relation to the idea to introduce minimum GCSE grade requirements to qualify for a student loan to study at university. One proposal is for a minimum grade in English and maths.

I'm glad to say that this has already received quite a bashing, from [university chiefs](#) and others. [Sir Peter Lampl](#), the executive chair of the Sutton Trust education charity, said: "The introduction of any minimum grade requirement is always going to have the biggest impact on the poorest young people, as they are more likely to have lower grades because of the disadvantages they have faced in their schooling."

The [Institute for Fiscal Studies found](#) that restricting loans in this way would have a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority students as well as those who had received free school meals. These thoughts were echoed by the NUS, the University Alliance and the Million Plus Group.

Even the DfE's own [equality impact assessment](#) found that restricting access to loans "would disproportionately affect students who are black and from ethnic minority groups".

Strangely, though, you weren't mentioned in these articles, suggesting that your not-so-cunning method is to sit on the sidelines watching the anonymous authors of a proposal like this fly their kite. If all goes well, you step into the studio lights, presenting us with a nicely polished policy as if it's another great achievement of this government. If it's a duffer, you disown it and claim it was only a draft document anyway.

Perhaps the rails are already being laid down for a backtrack, should it be needed. Another anonymous DfE spokesperson is quoted as saying, "We have not proposed to bar anyone from going to university: rather, we are starting a conversation on minimum entry requirements ..."

Excuse the smile on my face. Anyone with any memory of whatever has come from the DfE in the past 30 years knows that it is rarely the opening lines of a conversation. Instead, schools, teachers, parents and students have been issued with diktat after diktat on everything from 10-year-olds having to learn the subjunctive mood to creating bonanzas for academy bosses.

It will be interesting to see what you and these faceless people at the DfE do with the wave of hostility that this plan has attracted. Your [consultation](#) ended on 6 May. Will you listen or ignore?

Here is my own imperial two penn'orth. First, there is something immoral about hitting people's wallets as a way of making education policy. If you and your department think minimum grades are such a great idea, why not make it an entry requirement? Why introduce the ability to pay into the equation? It smacks of making exceptions for rich kids. Levelling up? I don't think so.

My other thought concerns the wishful idea that there must be a kind of litmus test qualification that can predict success or failure further down the line. For generations of us this was the “verbal reasoning” test that was part of the 11-plus. In order to guarantee (some said fiddle) the predictability of the test, we were put into ability streams before we sat the test and then into different types of schools depending on our scores in the tests. Now here we are again with a notion that having English and maths at GCSE will guarantee that a student will get a degree. Or put it the other way, if they don’t have those [GCSEs](#) they won’t last the course.

This is a shot below the bows at many young people who have aptitudes that don’t fit the template of those two subjects. I’ve known students who are highly capable at science, computing, maths and engineering but who struggle with English. Similarly, I’ve known people (I’m one) who can cope extremely well with the arts and humanities for whom maths is a hurdle. For the record, I got a fail for my mock O-level maths and it was only the intervention of a colleague of my dad, who set me work based on the maths textbooks he wrote, that got me over the line – just.

Many people less privileged than me would have failed. Oh, hang on ... that’s what this policy is for, isn’t it?

**Yours, Michael Rosen**

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jun/04/dear-nadhim-zahawi-do-you-think-curbs-on-university-entrance-will-be-levelling-up>

**OpinionQueen's platinum jubilee**

## A Kardashian snub, Harry's return and Andrew gone awol. How's your jubilee weekend?

**Marina Hyde**



I'm enjoying the pomp of the event and the grandeur of those who hate it. There's always something interesting about these royals, if you care to look



‘The Queen came on to the Buckingham Palace balcony dressed like a particularly fragile Wedgwood vase.’ Photograph: Alastair Grant/AP

Fri 3 Jun 2022 08.03 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 13.04 EDT

Harold Nicolson [famously wrote](#) that the Queen became Queen in 1952 “while perched in a tree in Africa watching the rhinoceros come down to the pool to drink”. She was wearing jeans. For much of the succeeding 70 years, she has been the one for whom royal safarists will wait patiently for a short glimpse, [which they got on Thursday](#) when she came on to the Buckingham Palace balcony dressed like a particularly fragile Wedgwood vase.

The thing about royal pageantry is that even committed ironists wilt in the face of it. Mark Twain covered Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee, sent over to do the job for American readers by William Randolph Hearst, and only managed a single, final sentence of wryness after several thousand awestruck words. “One can enjoy a rainbow,” Twain reflected, “without necessarily forgetting the forces that made it.”

For some, of course, enjoyment is quite out of the question. But I hope that, like me, you very much enjoy the grandeur of those who feel bound to issue their own regular court-and-social bulletins concerning the jubilee. “I will not be watching this.” “I will not be attending a street party.” “I will be

clicking my knitting needles.” Marvellous. It’s very good of them to emerge on to their digital balconies to acknowledge their public at all, of course, and perhaps accept a posy or two from their devoted followers. But also, it’s funny how both the most ardent royalists and republicans in this country embody the sweetly ridiculous solipsism of that [brilliant final couplet](#) from AA Milne’s poem about changing the guard at Buckingham Palace. ““Do you think the King knows all about me?” ‘Sure to, dear, but it’s time for tea ... ’ ”

Clearly, the ability to look an extra bank holiday in the mouth is hugely admirable, and venturing repeatedly online to express disdain is a form of tireless service in itself, and a much more improovingly awful way to spend one’s time than simply going to the pub and ignoring it pleasurable there. Indeed, given the focus on constancy, we have to recall that drunkenness has long been a feature of such occasions. I read a [hilarious newspaper report](#) from the 1977 silver jubilee, which featured a Scottish guy in town for the football who’d been startled by an early-morning rehearsal of the carriage procession a few days before the main event. “I was frightened,” he said. “I haven’t been sober since Thursday and I thought it must be Tuesday or the Scotland team doing a lap of honour round London.” This report also contained the deathless line: “The foreign office last night confirmed that Mr Enoch Powell would be spending [the] jubilee in Moscow.”

Hand on heart, this is my nerdy favourite part of all these events – the ability to go back and read what all sorts of different people were really thinking about the thing, and then flash forward to see what’s changed (or hasn’t). Ben Pimlott’s brilliant biography of the Queen suggests that part of the monarch’s reticence about her coronation being televised was fear that the appearance of boredom would be inadvertently transmitted ([she had been bored](#) at her own father’s crowning).

Boredom has been the constant stalking horse of her role. I always think the British rather like to see their royals miserable and suffering out of “duty”, which is a huge part of why they cursed Diana for trying unsuccessfully to have a life away from it (then pretended they’d never done so when she died). A currently more successful escape attempt by Diana’s son has driven people far madder than the actions of someone sixth in line to the throne ever should have. People who wouldn’t dream of sacrificing so much as an

active role in the Mail Online comments section demand superhuman feats of misery absorbance in their royals.



Left, Cecil Beaton's portrait, taken after the Queen's coronation on 2 June 1953, and right, the official platinum jubilee portrait. Composite: Cecil Beaton/Camera Press/Ranald Mackechnie/Royal Household

But back to 1953, and the BBC was making supposedly terrible mistakes even then. A throwaway line in the Radio Times suggesting the Queen had approved of the coverage of her father's death was regarded as totally incendiary. She had precisely *no view*, insisted the royal household, and that was the point. (Today, in an age where permanently having an opinion is fetishised, the Queen is perhaps the last person whose opinions remain sacredly unknown.) At the coronation itself, Noel Coward [made a joke](#) about the Queen of Tonga so outrageous that he uncharacteristically disowned it, perhaps worrying that he'd be cancelled. In fact, he felt he had been cancelled in Tonga, judging that a planned visit the following year had been rendered "quite impossible".

Snubs closer to home remain a huge part of many royal occasions, as they have been since long before the 13th fairy failed to make the cut for Sleeping Beauty's christening. Kim Kardashian, presently on some kind of unilateral state visit to the UK, reportedly sought to gain an invitation to

Saturday's jubilee party, but [was rebuffed](#). Other no-shows? I couldn't believe it when Prince Andrew [announced he had Covid](#) and therefore would not be attending today's service at St Paul's. That was the exact same excuse I was going to use to get out of writing a column on a bank holiday, but then I remembered that I'd had it in January, and also haven't [just paid £12m](#) to an accuser in a sexual assault case. So here we are. And, indeed, here the Duke of York is not.

In 1953, even the celebrated photographer Cecil Beaton feared he'd be NFI, though he needn't have worried. He took the mesmerisingly bravura [official portraits](#) of the new Queen, not in the Abbey itself, but afterwards, and against a painted, impressionistic backdrop of the church. Beaton perhaps always understood that royalty needed extra artifice to work – succeeding most dramatically as a representation of a representation. His dreamlike coronation picture stands in poignant contrast to the [rather artless photo](#) of the Queen released to mark the platinum jubilee. Presumably the sitter has got somewhat bored of this process down the decades, but then a wistful nostalgia is quintessential to all royal occasions. Many cannot watch without wondering if the country just did things better in a past that is constantly retreating.

"The coronation was a phoenix-time," [Princess Margaret once said](#). "Everything was being raised from the ashes. There was this gorgeous-looking, lovely young lady, and nothing to stop anything getting better and better." This isn't quite the whole story of that post-imperial moment, but it's rather difficult to avoid the unfortunate contrasts with our present one, where it currently feels to many as though there is little to stop things getting worse and worse.

Ah, there it is again. Encouraging us to look backward and forward at the same time, at the same-yet-different of it all. This is perhaps the trick of royalty in its most successful form. You don't have to like it – that would be absurd. But to be unable to find anything to be *interested* in about it at all, well ... that seems a wasted opportunity, and none of us can drink to that.

- Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist

*Do you have an opinion on the issues raised in this article? If you would like to submit a letter of up to 300 words to be considered for publication, email it to us at [guardian.letters@theguardian.com](mailto:guardian.letters@theguardian.com)*

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/03/kardashian-prince-harry-andrew-jubilee-royals>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

---

[\*\*Opinion\*\*](#)[\*\*Rail transport\*\*](#)

# A bike, a skateboard or the Elizabeth line? It depends where you want society to go

[Andy Beckett](#)

Though people have new, often liberating ways to travel singly, it is shared, publicly funded services that weld us together



Illustration: Nathalie Lees

Fri 3 Jun 2022 08.00 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 13.18 EDT

In a lot of ways, cities are about movement. Commuting, cultural visits, consumer binges, social trips or just staring out of the bus window, feeling part of the flow: motion makes urban life fulfilling, sometimes very tiring and occasionally sublime. Over recent years, without much discussion, the way we move around cities has changed. The change started before the

pandemic, but Covid accelerated it, and it has continued as the pandemic has apparently receded.

Since 2010, the UK has acquired bike-hire schemes and Ubers, more than 1 million electric bikes and [electric scooters](#), and a fleet of other personal transport solutions, from electric skateboards to bikes with trailers. A whole new world of what transport theorists call micromobility, some of it backed by corporations, not all of it legal, has appeared on urban roads.

For some people, it has been liberating. Owning a car in a city is expensive, especially during an energy crisis, and increasingly impractical, thanks to much-needed environmental measures such as [low traffic neighbourhoods](#). Micromobility offers more personal choice – you can go almost anywhere; more anonymity – no need for number plates or a licence; and, especially if you're pedalling, feelings of empowerment. In an impatient age, it's also faster than walking. Where I live in east London, with bikes and scooters cruising past in all directions and barely a moving car in sight, the quieter residential streets feel like a vision of greener city living from the 1970s finally come to life. The future of urban travel seems to have arrived, and it's small-scale and individualised.

So in some respects it's an awkward time for London to open the [Elizabeth line](#), a £19bn upgrade of a 19th-century idea: that the best way for people to move around the perpetually congested capital is in crowds in underground train carriages, according to a timetable and along routes over which they have no control. Named after a 96-year-old monarch and connecting already powerful places, such as the bankers' towers of Canary Wharf, the elite boutiques of Bond Street and the overbearing airport at Heathrow, it's possible to see the Elizabeth line – beautiful and ingenious though it is – as a grandiose and old-fashioned enterprise. Given that public transport in many British towns and cities means a few train stations and infrequent buses, adding another London underground line seems a luxury.

It has been done, moreover, just as the capital's public transport use may be entering long-term decline. As in New York and Paris, passenger numbers were falling in London even before the pandemic, thanks to online shopping, home working, micromobility and the long stagnation of incomes since the

financial crisis, which has made many people less willing or able to pay for leisure travel. The currently influential idea of the “[15-minute city](#)” – that residents’ needs should be within a short walking or cycling distance – could reduce the need for big transport systems further. It’s possible that the Elizabeth line, despite the impressive passenger numbers of its opening days, could be the last of its kind.

Yet if public transport use has peaked in [London](#) (one of the few British cities where it has grown in recent decades), the environmental, social and political consequences will not be benign. Going on public transport, in a place where a wide range of people still use it, is one of a diminishing number of egalitarian experiences in today’s Britain. A city bus or train carriage is a shared space: people of different classes, races, nationalities, ages and abilities mix and observe each other, not always harmoniously but often usefully. Everyone enjoys or endures the same conditions. Everyone has to wait for people to get on or off. While cycling, say, is often an individual experience, using public transport is always collective. Even if you’re the only passenger, the route has been shaped by the preferences of others.

Public transport can also be a reminder that the state can still provide and even inspire. Reservations about the Elizabeth line are hard to retain once you’ve used its elegant, spacious platforms and fast, smooth trains – which last Monday morning were full not of metropolitan elites but ordinary Londoners with prams and plastic bags. The capital’s [heaviest users](#) of public transport are minority ethnic residents, people on lower incomes, the young and the old.

Tory governments have often neglected or actively undermined urban public transport, sometimes for blatantly political reasons. In 1988, Margaret Thatcher [vetoed a rail scheme](#) that would have connected the west and centre of the capital to Hackney, a borough long known for its bad transport and leftwing residents. “Do you know what sort of people live out in Hackney?” she asked the civil servant presenting the scheme. “They are not Conservative voters!” She agreed to a plan that became the Elizabeth line instead.

Boris Johnson's government has responded uncharitably to the collapse of London's public transport usage and revenues since the start of the pandemic. It has given Transport for London – for which the city's Labour mayor, Sadiq Khan, is responsible – a series of [short-term bailouts](#). These have been conditional on cuts severe enough to cause tube strikes, the latest of which is [due on Monday](#); and fare rises and service reductions, potentially including the [removal of a fifth of bus services](#) from central London. The current bailout expires in three weeks' time.

Non-Londoners weary of the capital's privilege and dramas may be tempted to shrug. Yet how people move around London is not just a local matter. Many of these people are visitors, and the capital is a model for other British cities. The mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, is campaigning for his city to have "[London-style public transport](#)".

People who prefer to cycle – Johnson is one of them – may in some ways be more modern. When you're waiting ages for a bus, or stuck in traffic in one, and bikes and scooters are shooting past, public transport can feel less like social equality on wheels and more like a Victorian ordeal.

But for many elderly, underconfident or physically vulnerable people, or those who have to travel big distances across London, micromobility is probably never going to be more than an obscure buzzword – or something that occasionally makes city life more hazardous. Memo to people who ride on the pavement: your mobility is no more important than anyone else's.

- Andy Beckett is a Guardian columnist
- 

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/03/a-bike-a-skateboard-or-the-elizabeth-line-it-depends-where-you-want-society-to-go>

## 2022.06.04 - Around the world

- US Capitol attack Secret Service was warned of Trump threat to Pence day before riot
- Peter Navarro Ex-Trump aide indicted for defying panel
- Myanmar Military accused of torching hundreds of homes in three-day blitz
- Texas school shooting Uvalde police were trained to confront an active shooter. So why did they wait?

## US Capitol attack

# Secret Service were warned of security risk to Pence day before Capitol attack

Ex-vice-president's chief of staff warned head of his Secret Service detail that Trump was about to turn on Pence



Mike Pence presides over a joint session of Congress on 6 January 2021.  
Photograph: Saul Loeb/AP

*[Martin Pengelly](#) in New York*

*[@MartinPengelly](#)*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 15.01 EDT Last modified on Fri 3 Jun 2022 15.02 EDT

A day before the deadly attack on the US Capitol, Mike Pence's chief of staff warned the head of Pence's Secret Service detail that [Donald Trump](#) was about to turn on his own vice-president, endangering his security.

The news was [reported](#) on Friday by Maggie Haberman of the New York Times, who said she uncovered it during research for a book on Trump due out in October.

On 5 January, Haberman wrote, Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, did not know how his boss's security might be threatened if Trump turned on him. But Trump and [advisers](#) had been formulating a plan under which Pence would stop certification of electoral college results in Trump's defeat by Joe Biden.

Under pressure which the Times said included withholding funding for the vice-president's transition out of power, Pence considered the plan before concluding he did not have the authority to reject electoral college results.

When the mob attacked the Capitol on 6 January, rioters were heard to chant "Hang Mike Pence" while a gallows was set up outside.

The Times recently [reported](#) that two witnesses who spoke to the January 6 committee said Trump told Mark Meadows, his own chief of staff, "something to the effect of, maybe Mr Pence should be hung".

The Times said it was not clear if Trump was serious.

Trump [told](#) another reporter and author, Jon Karl, his supporters "were very angry" with Pence and that it was just "common sense" to be so, because Pence was not helping overturn Trump's election defeat.

The Times said it was not clear what Tim Giebels, the head of Pence's Secret Service detail, did with the warning from Short.

The next day, with the Capitol under attack, Pence's protectors rushed him from the Senate chamber to an underground parking bay. Multiple accounts have said the vice-president refused to leave the building.

According to [Short](#), Pence said: "I'm not going to let the free world see us fleeing the Capitol, and I'm staying."

Authors of books on the Trump presidency have been widely criticised for withholding news until publication. Haberman was known for having strong sources in the Trump White House, and was filmed taking [calls from Trump himself](#).

She [published](#) her nugget about Trump's threat to Pence in the run-up to public hearings due to be staged by the House committee investigating the events of 6 January 2021.

Pence and the Secret Service did not comment on the new Times report.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/03/mike-pence-capitol-attack-secret-service-donald-trump-security-risk>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## US Capitol attack

# Ex-Trump adviser Peter Navarro indicted for defying Capitol attack panel

Navarro in custody after indictment on two counts of contempt of Congress after he defied subpoena issued by January 6 committee



Peter Navarro speaks to reporters as he departs US district court in Washington after he was indicted on two counts of contempt of Congress.  
Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

*[Hugo Lowell](#) in Washington*

Fri 3 Jun 2022 17.22 EDTFirst published on Fri 3 Jun 2022 12.08 EDT

Peter Navarro, a top former White House adviser to [Donald Trump](#), was taken into custody after being indicted by a federal grand jury on Friday on two counts of contempt of Congress for defying a subpoena issued by the House select committee investigating the January 6 Capitol attack.

The [indictment against Navarro](#) marks the first time that the justice department has pursued charges against a Trump White House official who worked in the administration on January 6 and participated in efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.

Navarro is facing one count of contempt of Congress for his refusal to appear at a deposition and a second count for his refusal to turn over documents as demanded by the select committee's subpoena, the justice department announced in a news release.

The former Trump White House adviser, who was involved in the former president's unlawful scheme to have the then-vice president, Mike Pence, refuse to certify Joe Biden's election win on January 6, was taken into custody at the airport – he had a pre-planned trip – Navarro told a magistrate judge.

Navarro's indictment comes just weeks after the full House of Representatives voted to hold him in criminal contempt of Congress for entirely defying [the select committee's subpoena](#), issued in February, demanding documents and testimony in the January 6 inquiry.

The indictment is the latest twist in a series of developments surrounding Navarro's position in the crosshairs of congressional and justice department investigators, who last week [served him with a grand jury subpoena](#) demanding his communications with Trump.

In an attempt to block the justice department from prosecuting the contempt of Congress referral and to somehow invalidate the grand jury subpoena, Navarro on Tuesday filed a last-ditch, [88-page lawsuit](#) seeking an injunction from a federal judge.

It was not clear whether that grand jury subpoena – which also demanded records requested in the select committee subpoena – came as part of the contempt of Congress case, or whether he was being treated as a witness [in a separate criminal investigation into the former president](#).

But a potential benefit for the justice department is that through this indictment, it may be able to obtain those communications with Trump, according to a former assistant US attorney who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The status of the lawsuit is currently unclear and it was not clear whether the filing led the justice department to request Navarro's indictment and arrest warrant will be placed under seal until the warrant was executed on Friday morning in Washington DC.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/03/peter-navarro-indicted-trump-adviser-capitol-attack-inquiry>.

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

## Myanmar

# Myanmar military accused of torching hundreds of homes in three-day blitz

Columns of smoke seen rising from villages along 8km stretch in drone footage from country's north amid opposition to regime



The burning remains of a building after the Myanmar military allegedly attacked a village in the eastern Kayin state last month. Photograph: Free Burma Rangers/AFP/Getty Images

*Agence France-Presse in Bangkok*

Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.25 EDT

Myanmar junta troops have torched hundreds of buildings during a three-day raid in the country's north, local media and residents said, as the military struggles to crush resistance to its rule.

The Sagaing region has seen fierce fighting and bloody reprisals since the coup last year, with local “People’s Defence Force” (PDF) members clashing regularly with junta troops.

Analysts say the informal militia has surprised junta forces with its effectiveness, and the military has on numerous occasions called in air strikes to support its troops on the ground.

Troops torched hundreds of buildings in the villages of Kinn, Upper Kinn and Ke Taung over three days last week, locals and media reports said.

On 26 May, villagers in Kinn fled as soldiers approached and began shooting into the air, said one resident who requested anonymity.

“The next morning we saw smoke rising from our village before they left.

“Over 200 houses were burned down ... my house was totally burned down, only the concrete foundation is left.”

Drone footage purporting to show the aftermath showed columns of smoke rising into the sky from the villages, set along a roughly 8km (five-mile) stretch of the Chindwin river.

A health clinic seen in the video matched the geolocation of one in Ke Taung village.

Digital verification reporters with Agence France-Presse confirmed the footage had not appeared online before last week but could not independently verify reports from the region.

Soldiers “raided and destroyed our houses”, said Ke Taung villager Aye Tin, who requested to use a pseudonym.

“And they also burned motor boats that we use for transport and for carrying food for our village, including my boat.

“My life is ruined, as I have lost my home ... and I [have] nothing left to do for a living.”

Satellite images from Nasa showed fires in locations that matched Ke Taung and Kinn villages last week.

The junta has previously rebuffed claims its troops have torched houses, accusing “terrorist” PDF fighters of starting the fires.

In a speech on Tuesday, the junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, said “efforts were made to minimise the casualties as much as possible in performing the counterattacks to terror acts”.

“Now, the country is in tranquillity,” he said, according to state media.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/myanmar-military-accused-of-torching-hundreds-of-homes-in-three-day-blitz>

## Texas school shooting

# **Uvalde police were trained to quickly confront an active shooter. So why did they wait?**

After Columbine, FBI training urged that fast action is critical to saving lives. Somehow that lesson hasn't been learned



Law enforcement outside Robb elementary school on 24 May, the day of the shooting. Photograph: Dario Lopez-Mills/AP



[Poppy Noor](#)

[@PoppyNoor](#)

Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.00 EDT Last modified on Sat 4 Jun 2022 02.30 EDT

It took more than an hour for police officers to enter and stop the gunman who killed 19 children and two teachers at Uvalde's Robb elementary school last Tuesday in Texas.

In that time, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos fired more than 100 shots while as many as 19 police officers stood outside waiting and desperate parents tried to break victims out of the school windows. It has been reported that one teacher and several children placed 911 calls while the gunman was inside the building.

The reasons for the delay in entering the school remain unclear, and the police department has been criticized for its failure to adequately explain the events, releasing contradictory reports in recent days.

The officers on duty had received active shooter training just two months before the massacre, prompting questions from parents, politicians and public safety officials about exactly what officers should have done and casting doubt on how effective such training is in reality.

## What happened?

It was 11.31am when law enforcement first received a call saying someone had crashed their truck across the road from Robb elementary school, and was now approaching the building with a gun.

A minute later, Ramos was in the school parking lot, shooting. He entered the school, unobstructed – despite initial claims that he was [engaged by an officer on site](#).

The first officers arrived to the school parking lot just minutes later, and three officers followed behind Ramos, getting grazed by gunfire in the process. They did not continue to pursue him. By noon, 19 officers were on site. Reasons given as to why it took another 50 minutes to kill the suspect have differed, depending on who has given the account.

In interviews after the incident, Uvalde's public safety department spokesman, Lt Chris Olivarez, suggested police officers feared for their own lives. “They are receiving gunshots … At that point, if they proceed any further not knowing where the suspect was at, they could've been shot, they could've been killed, and that gunman would have had an opportunity to kill other people inside that school,” Olivarez told CNN’s The Situation Room.

The police also originally claimed to have engaged the gunman – this has now been found to be untrue – and that a teacher had propped a door open, letting the gunman in. But it has now been clarified that the teacher closed the door behind her while calling police and it did not lock automatically as it should have.

Parents who had grown panicked and desperate during the shooting were reprimanded for trying to [break students and teachers out through windows](#). They have also offered conflicting accounts to those of police officers – claiming officers were [waiting outside for protective shields](#).

Steven McCraw, the Texas director for public safety, has since claimed that some of the confusion centered on whether there was a hostage situation in the building – officers often use a different response to hostage situations, to prevent the possibility of more bloodshed.

So what should have happened?

## What are the guidelines for an active shooter situation?

“A first responder unwilling to place the lives of the innocent above their own safety should consider another career field.” Those are the words, from an active shooter [training manual](#) used to train Uvalde’s school police on 21 March 2022, that have been repeated again and again since the shooting on Tuesday.

They refer to the lessons post-Columbine, the high school shooting in 1999 that led to the deaths of 15 people (including the suicides of both shooters). Before Columbine – which was the most deadly US mass shooting in history at the time – officers had been taught to form a perimeter around the school and wait for backup in the event of a school shooting, not unlike what allegedly happened at Uvalde on Tuesday. But after Columbine, law enforcement officials learned that not going in and directly confronting the shooter costs precious minutes and possibly lives.

The training materials encourage officers to confront the attacker in an active shooter situation, driving them away from victims, isolating and distracting them, even when it means putting themselves in harm’s way: “If they are engaged with the officer(s) they will be less capable of hurting innocents,” the manual says.

If officers are at the scene alone, they must go in alone, it says. “Time is the number one enemy during active shooter response ... The best hope that innocent victims have is that officers immediately move into action to isolate, distract or neutralize the threat, even if that means one officer acting alone.”

The manual makes clear that not doing so will cost lives. “The number of deaths in an active shooter event is primarily affected by two factors: How quickly the police or other armed response arrives and engages them; How quickly the shooter can find victims,” it states.

The confusion arises around hostage situations – where a gunman may take victims hostage and threaten to inflict more harm if approached. McCraw has said it was wrong to treat the shooting as a hostage situation, probably because gunshots could still be heard from within the building while officers waited outside, and calls from children reporting further gunshots were made to 911 during that time.

But while the training materials stress that “stopping the killing” is the officer’s first priority, it also warns that “barricaded subjects pose the greatest threat when attempts are made to enter the space and subdue them”.

## **What does this mean?**

Police officers trained to deal with active shooting situations have frequently been criticized for not going in quickly enough; for mis-assessing the situation; or failing to prevent more bloodshed.

The Uvalde training manual lists lessons learned from Parkland, Florida, where an officer on duty drew huge public criticism and was ultimately suspended for waiting outside while the attack went on.

Similarly, during the Columbine shooting, the manual states: “The event was broadcast real-time on television [which] led to public outcry about police ‘hiding outside while children died inside the school’,” in a portent of the same complaints at Uvalde.

But the line between active shooting events versus hostage situations often blurs, as the training manual notes. The attacker might take victims hostage first, then start firing, or the active shooter situation can quickly turn into a hostage situation after the rampage has calmed.

At the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, in which 49 people were killed, the gunman held several victims in a bathroom, where they texted and called 911, claiming the gunman had explosives. Eventually officers broke into the bathroom, but they were also criticized for not acting quickly enough.

In other mass shootings where response times were quicker – from Sandy Hook (nine minutes), to the Las Vegas shooting in 2017 (where officers were inside the building within 12 minutes after confusion about where gunshots were coming from), claims have been made that they should have acted quicker.

But if the same mistakes are made repeatedly, they cast doubt over the efficacy of active shooter drills and police training in the face of gunmen armed with military-style weapons.

---

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/04/valde-police-training-school-shooter-response-time>

| [Section menu](#) | [Main menu](#) |

# Table of Contents

[The Guardian 2022.06.05 \[Sun, 05 Jun 2022\]](#)

## [2022.06.05 - Opinion](#)

[I'll be happy to be running up that hill with Kate Bush for ever](#)

[The Observer view on Turkey's name change](#)

[The Observer view on inequality in the UK](#)

[Succumbing to workplace stress? We're now supposed to suffer in silence](#)

[Boris Johnson as Johnny Rotten – cartoon](#)

[What did Depp v Heard teach us? That justice and reality TV are incompatible](#)

[Uefa, the police, French ministers... all peddled gross lies.](#)

[Only fans prevented disaster](#)

[Letters: beauty and desire can lie in unexpected places](#)

[For the record](#)

[Sheryl Sandberg's influence reaches all of us. But it's a troubling legacy](#)

[Unlike the Queen, King Charles will have no sense of caution, only of entitlement](#)

## [Headlines monday 30 may 2022](#)

[Partygate Tory minister rules out new inquiry into claims of illicit gathering in Johnson's flat](#)

[Live Conservatives 'in denial' over difficulties party is facing, says former minister](#)

[Boris Johnson PM accused of abusing ministerial code so rule-breakers can avoid sack](#)

[Partygate Labour urges inquiry into alleged second event at No 10 hosted by Carrie Johnson](#)

## [2022.05.30 - Spotlight](#)

['Same nightmare week after week' UK firms fed up with post-Brexit EU trade](#)

['I've seen bedsheets with my face on them' Thomas Brodie-Sangster on obsessive fans, Love Actually and the Sex Pistols Shine on! Why we've fallen back in love with lip gloss](#)

[Sony LinkBuds review Novel earbuds that let the outside world in](#)

### [2022.05.30 - Opinion](#)

[Andy Burnham is a prime Labour leader candidate, but also a mayor. That's a problem](#)

[I am queer and proud – even though I am now married to a man](#)

[This age of inflation reveals the sickness ailing Britain's economy: rentier capitalism](#)

[A third of new mothers are traumatised by childbirth, but there's one easy way to help](#)

### [2022.05.30 - Around the world](#)

[Sidhu Moose Wala Punjabi singer and rapper shot dead](#)

[Hong Kong Churches drop Tiananmen tributes after 33 years amid arrest fears](#)

[China 'Tragically ugly' school textbook causes social media outcry](#)

[Canada Arctic tuberculosis outbreak lays bare overcrowded living conditions](#)

[New Zealand Husband of British diplomat pokes fun at country's 'crappiest fountain'](#)

### [Headlines](#)

[Live Andrea Leadsom condemns Boris Johnson's 'unacceptable failings of leadership'](#)

[Travel Firms should have been ready for post-Covid surge, UK minister says](#)

[Environment Sunak's UK oil subsidy could have insulated 2m homes, says thinktank](#)

[School meals All families on universal credit should get free school meals, says ex-children's tsar](#)

[Civil service Graduate scheme paused in drive to cut 91,000 roles](#)

### [2022.05.31 - Spotlight](#)

[Avril Lavigne 'I moved out of my parents' house and straight into a tour bus with no rules'](#)

['Our ears were bleeding!' Harry Hill on making his Tony Blair musical](#)

Covid With UK cases at their lowest for a year, what could the future look like?

The long read The man who built his own cathedral

2022.05.31 - Opinion

What does it mean to be Russian? For many of us, it's no longer a simple question

I've finally put something on eBay that people want – now I wish I hadn't

I agreed to my sperm donor's anonymity - now I see my daughter has a right to know who she is

Linking nitrous oxide to climate risk is yet another example of the disdain shown to women's pain

2022.05.31 - Around the world

Taiwan Jets scramble as China makes major incursion into air defence zone

Health Coffee drinkers 'may be at lower risk of early death'

Mongolia State under pressure to align with Russia and China

US Austin resolution aims to 'decriminalize' abortion if Roe v Wade is overturned

The Pacific project Outcry as China stops Pacific journalists questioning Wang Yi

Headlines thursday 2 june 2022

Politics Don't overshadow jubilee by plotting against PM, Patel tells MPs

Live Priti Patel tells Tory MPs calling for Boris Johnson to resign to 'forget it'

Live Russia-Ukraine war latest: Zelenskiy says 243 children killed in war; Merkel condemns 'barbaric war of aggression'

Queen's birthday honours PM's critic Jeremy Wright recognised alongside Lewis, Foster and Ferdinand

Euan Blair From PM's son to £700m business and an MBE

2022.06.02 - Spotlight

Out of office? How working from home has divided Britain

Film From The Fly to A History of Violence: our writers pick their favourite Cronenberg movies

Television Borgen review – this antidote to real-life politics is like The West Wing 2022

['What do I have to lose?' The desperate long Covid patients turning to 'miracle cures'](#)

[2022.06.02 - Opinion](#)

[For 50 years, governments have failed to act on climate change. No more excuses](#)

[The Amber Heard-Johnny Depp trial was an orgy of misogyny](#)

[The rejection of China's deal shows the Pacific will not be used as a geopolitical pawn](#)

[She takes an age to walk now, but I love my old dog, smells and all](#)

[2022.06.02 - Around the world](#)

['Not resonating' Muted reception for Queen's platinum jubilee in Jamaica](#)

[US Four killed in shooting at Tulsa medical building, police say](#)

[Pacific islands China's Wang Yi heads to Papua New Guinea amid tensions over election](#)

[China West demands publication of UN's long-awaited Xinjiang report](#)

[Headlines friday 3 june 2022](#)

[Exclusive Met police profiling children 'on a large scale', documents show](#)

[Live Russia-Ukraine war: UK warns of Russian tactical success in Donbas as war enters 100th day](#)

[Platinum jubilee Queen leads lighting of beacons but will miss St Paul's service](#)

['History maker' How the papers covered the Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations](#)

[EastEnders Prince Charles and Camilla appear in jubilee episode](#)

[Prince Andrew Queen's son to miss jubilee service with Covid](#)

[2022.06.03 - Spotlight](#)

['All is not lost!' Yeah Yeah Yeahs return with riffs, risks and radical optimism](#)

[You be the judge Should my wife clear out her old books?](#)

[Farming\\_The regenerative farm working to improve soil without fertilisers](#)

['A certain stigma' Spain's hospitality sector hit by waiter shortage](#)

### [2022.06.03 - Opinion](#)

[Ukraine is desperate for peace, but we won't sign up to a bogus Russian deal](#)

[No, Top Gun: Maverick's success isn't down to being pro-America and anti-woke](#)

[Africa will be the world's ashtray if big tobacco is able to get its way.](#)

[What did Blackout Tuesday change? Not much – TV boardrooms are still very white](#)

### [2022.06.03 - Around the world](#)

[Tiananmen Square massacre Hong Kong police warn anniversary gatherings will break the law](#)

[US Florida supreme court declines to rule gerrymandered voting map unconstitutional](#)

[Elon Musk Return-to-office threat to Tesla staff sparks Twitter spat with Australian billionaire](#)

[US Justice Department could be zeroing in on Trump lawyers, experts say](#)

[Depp-Heard trial Verdict condemned as a 'toxic catastrophe' for women](#)

### [Headlines saturday 4 june 2022](#)

[Exclusive UK officials in line for immunity in assisting crimes overseas, say critics](#)

[Live Russia-Ukraine war latest: Ukraine says Russian forces taking 'huge losses' as it fights back in Sievierodonetsk](#)

[At a glance What we know on day 101 of the invasion](#)

[Queen's platinum jubilee Celebrations enter third day with Party at the Palace](#)

[Thanksgiving service Queen's absence strikes symbolic note](#)

### [2022.06.04 - Spotlight](#)

[Escape from Auschwitz The most extraordinary Holocaust story you've never heard](#)

[Scam-busting, stunts and social media](#) [The consumer champions fighting the cost-of-living crisis](#)

['I always secretly wonder which of us is the real artist'](#) [Sally Rooney in conversation with Patricia Lockwood](#)

[Blind date 'It was going well until he choked on his dessert and started crying'](#)

#### 2022.06.04 - Opinion

[This jubilee is not like any other: we look back but can also see the future](#)

[Dear Nadhim Zahawi, do you think curbs on university entrance will be levelling up?](#)

[A Kardashian snub, Harry's return and Andrew gone awol. How's your jubilee weekend?](#)

[A bike, a skateboard or the Elizabeth line? It depends where you want society to go](#)

#### 2022.06.04 - Around the world

[US Capitol attack Secret Service was warned of Trump threat to Pence day before riot](#)

[Peter Navarro Ex-Trump aide indicted for defying panel](#)

[Myanmar Military accused of torching hundreds of homes in three-day blitz](#)

[Texas school shooting Uvalde police were trained to confront an active shooter. So why did they wait?](#)