

The Guardian

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Education

Ministers set to halt plans for daily Covid tests in English schools

Exclusive: DfE to pause £78m programme weeks after it was unveiled as ‘milestone moment’

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Students take a Covid-19 test in Coulsdon, Surrey. The government is expected to halt plans for daily rapid tests in schools. Photograph: Aaron Chown/PA

Students take a Covid-19 test in Coulsdon, Surrey. The government is expected to halt plans for daily rapid tests in schools. Photograph: Aaron Chown/PA

[*Josh Halliday*](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.30 EST

Ministers are set to halt plans for daily coronavirus tests in England's secondary schools after teachers expressed alarm that the flagship policy had not been approved by regulators.

The [Department for Education](#) will announce it is pausing the daily testing of pupils and teachers after receiving new health advice, only five weeks after the £78m programme was unveiled as a “milestone moment” in the fight against Covid-19.

The about-turn came after the [Guardian revealed last week](#) that the UK's medicines regulator had not authorised the daily use of rapid-turnaround tests as an alternative to self-isolation.

The programme, which began in secondary schools a fortnight ago, was at the centre of the government's “Operation Moonshot” mass-testing plans and its strategy for fully reopening schools after the February half-term.

It is understood that the DfE will say it has received updated advice from Public Health England on daily contact testing and that it will be “paused” across England, except for a handful of trials.

The government is expected to say that the new advice is related to the high transmissibility of the new Covid strain, which it first raised concerns about in December. The DfE has been contacted for comment.

The testing of secondary school and college staff and students is expected to revert to twice a week, and pupils will still have two tests, three to five days apart, before they return to classrooms. [Schools](#) in England are only open for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, had said the testing of “literally millions of children every single week” would keep more children in schools by sending home only those who tested positive with [a 30-minute lateral flow test](#).

However, concerns have been raised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) about using these tests to allow those

who test negative to avoid isolation if they have been in close contact with an infected person.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said late on Friday that the MHRA's approval was not required for the school tests, in which students swab themselves, because they are assisted by school staff who have been trained to oversee them.

However, that failed to allay the concerns of school leaders. Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, urged ministers to halt the programme, which he said was "very confusing and will send out a mixed message to pupils, parents, and staff about what is safe".

The DfE said on Friday that the daily testing of pupils would not be expanded to primary schools this week. Dougal Hargreaves, the DfE's deputy chief scientific adviser, told MPs on Tuesday that the programme of keeping children in schools if they tested negative carried a potential risk of increasing transmission of the virus.

But he said there was a "strong feeling" that Covid cases were resulting in too many children being off school.

The education minister Vicky Ford said on Monday that NHS test and trace and Public Health England had been asked to provide "rapid updated public health advice" on daily contact Covid testing in schools.

She added: "This is in the context of the current prevalence of the virus and the high transmission rates. The department, NHS test and trace and Public Health England encourage the weekly testing of all staff, although this remains a voluntary matter for individual staff members, and, as I said earlier, early years staff will be prioritised through the community testing."

The use of 30-minute lateral flow tests has divided experts. Some say they should be welcomed because they can quickly and cheaply identify infected people that would otherwise be missed. But others point to their low accuracy and say they risk doing more harm than good.

The Labour MP Clive Lewis said schools were being turned into “experimentation labs for big pharma” and asked the government to confirm that no tests that had not met regulatory approval were being carried out on children.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/19/ministers-set-to-halt-plans-for-daily-covid-tests-in-english-schools>

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Coronavirus

UK coronavirus death toll rises with highest daily record of 1,610

Public Health England says number of daily new infections fell to 33,355 – down from 37,535 on Monday

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Ambulance staff bring a patient into the Royal London hospital in east London. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

Ambulance staff bring a patient into the Royal London hospital in east London. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

*Sarah Marsh
@sloumarsh*

Tue 19 Jan 2021 13.04 EST

The UK has recorded its deadliest day from coronavirus so far, with 1,610 deaths recorded on Tuesday.

It comes as the number of new infections fell, showing early signs that lockdown restrictions are working, with confirmed coronavirus cases within 24 hours dropping to 33,355 – down from 38,598 cases on Sunday, and 37,535 on Monday.

Official data showed one in eight people in England – about 5.4 million – had already had Covid by December last year, with experts claiming the disease was “much more widespread than previously realised”.

A further 1,610 people died in the UK within 28 days of a positive Covid test, Public Health England (PHE) confirmed. This is the biggest UK figure reported in a single day since the pandemic began.

After the latest coronavirus death figures were released, the Labour leader Keir Starmer tweeted: “The UK has faced the deepest recession of any major economy, and now we have the highest daily death rate in the world. The British people are paying the price for the government’s serial incompetence.”

His concern was echoed by the shadow health secretary, Jonathan Ashworth, who tweeted: “Awful. Horrific. Devastating. And it didn’t have to be like this.”

On Tuesday Scotland’s first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced that lockdown in the country would be extended to mid-February despite signs that cases have flattened off. The first minister said she was being “cautious” and more evidence was needed that the outbreak was on a “downward trajectory”.

In Northern Ireland, there have been 713 further cases and 24 further deaths. The number of new cases is down sharply on the total for last Tuesday (1,205), but today’s deaths total is marginally higher than last Tuesday’s (22).

The number of registered deaths involving coronavirus in England and Wales doubled in a week, following delayed registrations over the Christmas period, figures showed.

There were 17,751 deaths from all causes registered in the week ending 8 January – a “sharp increase” from the previous seven days, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

Of these, 6,057 mentioned “novel coronavirus” on the death certificate – up 92.7% from the previous week. There was also a 71.4% rise in registered deaths involving Covid-19 in care homes – from 560 registered in the week ending 1 January to 960 in the week up to 8 January.

The ONS said the figures should be interpreted with caution as the Boxing Day and New Year’s Day bank holidays will have affected numbers previously registered.

The Nuffield Trust’s deputy director of research, Sarah Scobie, said that while part of the rise could be explained by delayed registrations over Christmas, the numbers were still heading in a “worrying direction”.

She said: “We may not see a jump like this next week, but there will be further increases in these tragic numbers as the surge in cases from December translates into some people becoming very unwell, and in some cases unfortunately dying.

“We are beginning to see a welcome fall in the number of cases now due in part to the third national lockdown – we’ll need to wait a few weeks to see this begin to pull mortality figures down.”

The figures show that more than 106,000 deaths involving Covid-19 have now occurred in the UK. A total of 99,813 deaths have so far been registered in the UK where Covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, according to the latest reports from the UK’s statistics agencies.

PHE also said 4,266,577 people in the UK had received the first dose of a vaccine, a rise of 204,076 on Monday’s figures.

[Scotland](#)

Scotland's lockdown will last until at least mid-February, says Sturgeon

First minister says coronavirus transmission rates too high to allow safe return to schools

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Nicola Sturgeon defended the speed of Scotland's vaccine rollout when challenged in parliament. Photograph: Russell Cheyne/AFP/Getty Images
Nicola Sturgeon defended the speed of Scotland's vaccine rollout when challenged in parliament. Photograph: Russell Cheyne/AFP/Getty Images

[Libby Brooks](#) and [Steven Morris](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.03 EST

Scotland's lockdown will continue until "at least the middle of February", [Nicola Sturgeon](#) has told the Scottish parliament, with no definite date for a full return to schools and nurseries.

The current level 4 restrictions, which have been in place since Boxing Day and include a “stay at home” message in law, were extended following a meeting of the Scottish cabinet on Tuesday morning.

Scotland’s first minister acknowledged how “difficult, distressing and damaging” the ongoing disruption to early years care and schooling has been, but added that her cabinet’s “reluctant judgment” was that community transmission of the virus is too high to allow a safe return to education settings until mid-February “at the earliest”. She told parents that this date remained under review.

Sturgeon said that there was some evidence that restrictions are beginning to have an impact on transmission rates, even of the faster-spreading variant, but that these emerging trends needed to continue before any relaxation of lockdown could be considered.

Sturgeon was also challenged by opposition leaders about the slower pace of Scotland’s vaccine distribution. The country is understood to have received more than 700,000 doses to date, and – according to comparable figures up to Monday – vaccinated 264,991 people with first doses, around 6% of the adult population, while England has reached 8%, Wales 6% and Northern Ireland 8.7%.

Earlier on Tuesday, the chair of BMA Scotland’s GP committee, Andrew Buist, said that patients were becoming increasingly anxious and practices frustrated at the patchy nature of the rollout. He told BBC Radio Scotland: “The workforce is there and that’s why it is so incredibly frustrating when the patients want the vaccine, we are very keen to give it to our patients, but we just don’t have the vaccine in our fridge.”

Sturgeon told MSPs that the reason why Scotland’s figures were overall lower than England’s is because her government had decided to focus first on the more time consuming and labour intensive vaccination of elderly care home residents, more than 90% of whom have now been inoculated – a much higher proportion than in England.

The Scottish Conservative’s Holyrood leader, Ruth Davidson, asked Sturgeon to explain why it seemed that 400,000 doses of the vaccine had yet

to reach GP practices.

Sturgeon countered that the Westminster government was “briefing and spinning misleading figures on supply” and that her own government was prevented from being transparent about such figures by UK ministers last week.

She said: “We are now picking up pace with the over-80s. We are not behind our targets.”

This includes offering the first dose to all care home residents and over-80s by the start of February, extending to all over-70s, and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, by the middle of that month.

The Welsh first minister was also challenged on the pace of distribution on Tuesday. Mark Drakeford was forced to repeatedly deny that his government was operating what opposition politicians have claimed is a “go slow” rollout.

Drakeford promised seven out of 10 care home residents and people aged over 80 would have received their first doses by the end of the week. He said that Wales remained on course to meet its target of vaccinating all members of the top four priority groups by mid-February.

Wales continues to face criticism for lagging behind England and Northern Ireland in the pace of its vaccination programme, but Drakeford said: “The race we are in is the race with the virus, between infection and injection, not a race with other countries.”

However, Drakeford warned that there was a “fragility” in the supply chain for both the Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines. He flagged up production issues at a Pfizer plant in Belgium and the loss of a batch of 26,000 Oxford doses earmarked for Wales that did not arrive this week because of a problem with the batch.

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Coronavirus

Researchers warn of another Covid spike if people mix after vaccine

Behavioural psychologist says many people mistakenly think they are safe as soon as they receive jab

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Rajeev Syal](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.24 EST First published on Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.12 EST



Doctors are still unsure whether the vaccine will stop the recipient from passing on the virus. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/REX/Shutterstock

Vaccinated people mistakenly believe they are “good to go” and socialise with other people despite a continuing threat of the coronavirus, the head of the government’s behavioural unit has said.

Prof David Halpern, the chair of the Behavioural Insights Team, said on Tuesday that surveys showed that those who had received a jab were preparing to meet family and friends, which could result in another spike of the virus.

“We definitely do worry that people feel that, the second they have got that vaccination, they are good to go,” he told MPs on the public administration and constitutional affairs committee.

The vaccine offers the best protection 12 to 14 days after the second jab, and doctors are still unsure whether it will stop the recipient from passing on the virus.

Halpern said research had shown that people were eager to meet friends and family and some were preparing to do so soon after receiving their vaccine.

“People feel, as soon as they have got that vaccination: ‘Fantastic, I’m going to be able to go out’. You hear people on vox pops doing this.”

Sage is urging ministers to begin a public awareness campaign to stress the need to follow restrictions after receiving the jab.

Ministers have been warned by scientific advisers that the benefits of the vaccine programme could be “offset” by people becoming lax about Covid restrictions once they have had the vaccine, particularly in the early months of rollout.

In Sage minutes released on Friday, the advisers called for fresh efforts to ensure compliance with the rules by monitoring people’s behaviour and setting up a system of “rapid alerts” that would give public health authorities time to intervene if adherence to Covid guidelines slumps.

A second paper, from the Sage behavioural science group, reveals that a YouGov survey in December of adults in the UK found that while half would follow whatever rules were in place after they received a vaccine, 29% said they would follow the rules less strictly, with 11% saying they would “probably no longer follow the rules” after receiving the vaccine.

Prof Stephen Reicher, who also sits on the Scientific Pandemic Insights Group, which feeds into Sage, said the government could do more to offer information about the risks of socialising after receiving a vaccination.

“Some people think the effect of the vaccine is absolutely immediate. Some people believe that you can’t transmit the disease – and there is a lack of clarity on that from the medical community.”

Reicher said the public had been blamed too often for breaking rules when in fact behavioural scientists had been surprised at how well the public had adhered to advice during the pandemic.

“There has been a tendency to blame the public … for the difficulties we’re having and for the rise in infections,” he told the committee.

“It’s led us to delayed action such that, by the time we have to take action, the situation is even worse and we have to do more, and we have to do it for longer.

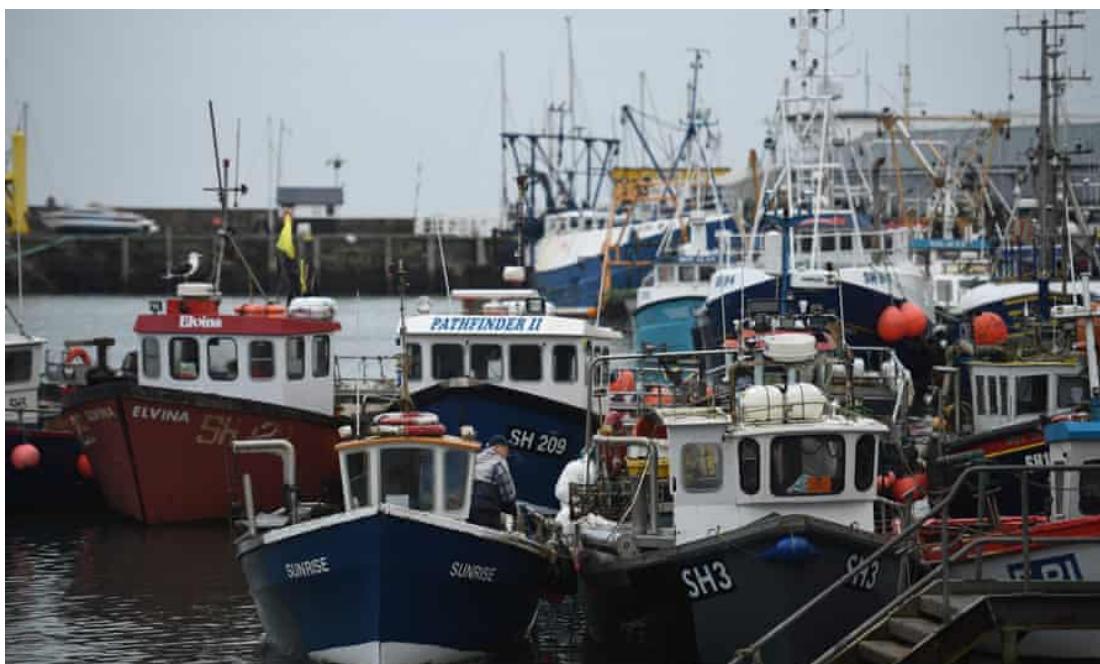
“On the whole, the public is not a weak link in this pandemic, it actually has been a strong link – and I think a bit more confidence in the public is extremely important and might lead to some better decisions.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/researchers-warn-of-another-covid-spike-if-people-mix-after-vaccine>

Fishing industry

Defra sets up £23m fund for UK seafood exporters hit by Brexit

Each firm can claim up to £100,000 from food and environment ministry for losses due to trade deal



The harbour at Scarborough. The British fishing industry has lost millions of pounds since 1 January because of new checks and paperwork required for exports to the EU. Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images

The harbour at Scarborough. The British fishing industry has lost millions of pounds since 1 January because of new checks and paperwork required for exports to the EU. Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images

PA Media

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.30 EST

Seafood exporters hit by [Brexit](#) red tape and delays will be able to claim up to £100,000 in compensation, the government has said.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed that it was putting in place a £23m compensation package for

firms exporting fish and shellfish to the EU that can show they have suffered “genuine loss”.

Boris Johnson originally disclosed the government’s intentions after [seafood hauliers descended on Westminster](#) on Monday to protest at the terms of the Brexit trade deal, which has left them struggling to access EU markets.

The introduction of new [checks and paperwork](#) since the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December has caused huge disruption to exports of fresh fish and seafood to the EU, with producers becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of government action.

Defra said the scheme would be targeted at small and medium-sized operators, with payments made retrospectively to cover losses incurred since 1 January.

The government will consult with the industry across the UK on the eligibility criteria – as well as working with the devolved administrations – with details to be announced in the “coming days”.

Barrie Deas, the head of the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations, welcomed “a financial safety net for businesses at risk of failure” but called for “emergency support for fishing vessels impacted as well”.

[Brexiters are waking up to the damage they've done | Polly Toynbee](#)
[Read more](#)

Donna Fordyce, the chief executive of Seafood Scotland, also welcomed the announcement of “short-term assistance” but said the government needed to do more to support the sector.

“Money will offer a much-needed sticking plaster covering the losses over the last few weeks, but to completely staunch the wound, the sector still needs a period of grace during which the systems must be overhauled so they are fit for purpose,” she said.

Fishing companies have said they have already lost millions of pounds as fish perishes or orders are cancelled because they have been unable to

provide the paperwork required by EU importers.

The environment secretary, George Eustice, said: “This £23m scheme will provide crucial support for fishermen and seafood exporters, who have experienced delays and a lack of demand for fish from the restaurant industry in the UK and [Europe](#).

“We are continuing to work closely with the fishing and aquaculture sectors to make sure that they are supported, and can continue to fish whilst contributing to the economies of our coastal communities.”

Scotland’s fisheries secretary, Fergus Ewing, said the UK government must ensure that its compensation package is open to all whose business has been interrupted or harmed by any aspect of the new export requirements.

He said: “It is very clear that the UK government should have extended the transition period, as we called for, due to the pandemic and lack of progress in the negotiations.”

Tavish Scott, chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation, welcomed the details of the compensation scheme but stressed that the priority was getting salmon to customers in the EU quickly and efficiently.

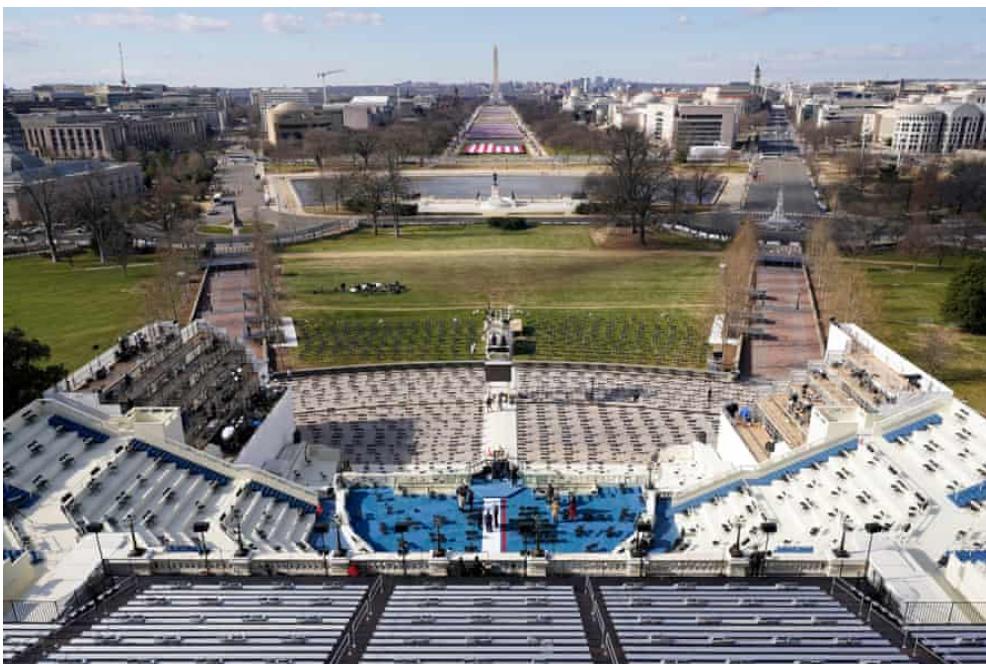
He said: “Compensation may help a limited number of seafood businesses and that would be welcome. The salmon farming sector is worth £300m every year in exports to Europe. Our sector simply wants the ability to successfully sell fish into this European marketplace. That objective has been riven by difficulties since 1 January. Sorting out these endless problems for exporting salmon companies should be the top priority of government.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/19/defra-sets-up-23m-fund-for-uk-seafood-exporters-hit-by-brexit>

Biden inauguration

Joe Biden heads to inauguration in city scarred by last days of Trump

- Heavy security for scaled-down event after Capitol attack
- Biden: ‘I know these are dark times but there’s always light’
- [US politics – live coverage](#)
- [Confirmation hearings begin one day before inauguration](#)



A view of the stage on Capitol Hill ahead of the inaugural ceremony for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.
Photograph: Getty Images

A view of the stage on Capitol Hill ahead of the inaugural ceremony for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

Photograph: Getty Images

David Smith in Washington

[@smithinamerica](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.28 EST

America is preparing to herald Joe Biden as its 46th president on Wednesday, turning the page on [Donald Trump](#) in a city that vividly bears the scars of his tumultuous presidency.

[Joe Biden will launch presidency with appeal for unity – but whose unity?](#)
[Read more](#)

Instead of the joyous parades and cheering crowds that typically celebrate an inauguration, Washington is eerily quiet, a militarised zone on high alert. The ceremony will take place behind a ring of steel and barbed wire, watched over by [thousands of national guard troops](#).

Biden will take the oath of office at the US Capitol, two weeks after it was stormed by a violent pro-Trump mob, leaving five dead, and one week after Trump was impeached there for a second time.

On Tuesday afternoon, Trump issued a “farewell address” video in which he called on the public to pray for the success of the incoming administration but hinted at a desire to return to power by saying “the movement we started is only just beginning”.

Meanwhile a tearful Biden gave his own farewell speech to supporters in his home city of Wilmington, Delaware, on Tuesday, before the former vice-president to Barack Obama flew to Washington to take up residence in the capital again.

“I know these are dark times but there’s always light,” he said. “I’m truly honoured to be your next president and commander-in-chief and I’ll always be a proud son of the state of Delaware.”

He paraphrased James Joyce and nearly broke down with emotion as he said: “When I die, Delaware will be written on my heart.”

His one regret, he said, was the absence of his son Beau Biden, who died from brain cancer in 2015. “We should be introducing him as president,” he said.

When I die, Delaware will be written on my heart

Joe Biden

At 78 Biden will be the oldest president ever sworn in, and his inaugural address is expected to echo his campaign message, calling for healing, unity and redeeming the soul of America.

The Democratic former senator and vice-president is also sure to address what his incoming administration has described as “four crises” facing the US: the economic downturn, racial injustice, the climate and the coronavirus pandemic, which has now infected more than 24 million Americans and killed about 400,000.

Historians have suggested that no president has faced such an uphill start since Franklin Roosevelt assured a nation embroiled in the Great Depression that “we have nothing to fear but fear itself”.

Biden has pledged a \$1.9tn stimulus proposal to rescue the economy and a goal of delivering 100m doses of Covid-19 vaccines in his first 100 days.

He is also lining up a slew of executive orders to begin undoing his predecessor’s legacy, including a dramatic overhaul of immigration laws, easing the pathway to citizenship for migrants without legal status and expanding refugee admissions.



Joe Biden cries as he speaks during an event at Major Joseph R ‘Beau’ Biden III National Guard/Reserve Center in New Castle, Delaware. Photograph: Tom Brenner/Reuters

Trump’s presidency looked set to end with a whimper. He has been banned from Twitter, depriving him of a megaphone that could move markets, rattle the political class and dominate news cycles. He also broke from tradition by failing to hold a farewell press conference.

Instead he was running down the clock in a near-deserted White House, where the official daily guidance for his last full day in office said only: “President Trump will work from early in the morning until late in the evening. He will make many calls and have many meetings.”

[Trump's presidency: a lesson in the true meaning of 'American carnage'](#)
[Read more](#)

Media reports suggested Trump was working on a plan to issue more than 100 pardons, some highly controversial. It was not known if he would try to pre-emptively pardon himself.

In a video address released on Wednesday he said: “This week, we inaugurate a new administration and pray for its success in keeping America safe and prosperous.”

He added of the deadly insurrection at the US Capitol on 6 January,: “All Americans were horrified by the assault on our Capitol. Political violence is an attack on everything we cherish as Americans. It can never be tolerated.”

And he hinted at his political future, although it remains very uncertain.

“Now, as I prepare to hand power over to a new administration at noon on Wednesday, I want you to know that the movement we started is only just beginning,” he said.

Trump ended his address by saying, “I go from this majestic place with a loyal and joyful heart, an optimistic spirit, and a supreme confidence that for our country and for our children, the best is yet to come. Thank you, and farewell. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.”

The 45th president was set to leave the White House early on Wednesday, hold a formal sendoff at the Joint Base Andrews airfield and then take up residence at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Impeached by the House of Representatives for inciting violence against the US government on 6 January, he must endure a trial in the Senate, which could vote to bar him from holding public office again, destroying his hopes of running for president in 2024.

The mob was fed lies. They were provoked by the president and other powerful people

Mitch McConnell

Ominously for Trump on Tuesday, Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader in the Senate who could determine his fate, directly accused the president of sparking the 6 January attack, the worst on the US Capitol in more than two centuries.

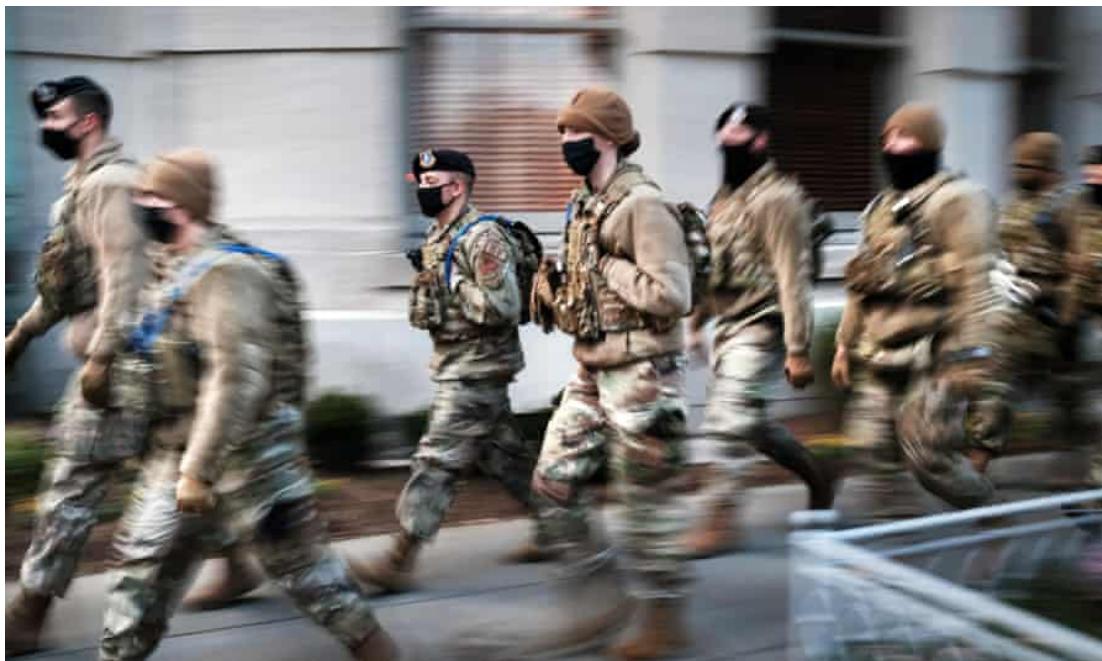
“The last time the Senate convened, we had just reclaimed the Capitol from violent criminals who tried to stop Congress from doing our duty,” McConnell said. “The mob was fed lies. They were provoked by the president and other powerful people.”

Trump will be the first president to skip his successor’s inauguration in more than 150 years but his administration will be represented by outgoing vice-president Mike Pence.

Pence successor Kamala Harris will be sworn in by Sonia Sotomayor, meaning the first woman and first woman of colour to become vice-president will take her oath from the first woman of colour to sit on the supreme court. Biden’s administration is among the most diverse in US history, interpreted by many as a forceful rebuke to the white male dominance of the Trump era.

Trump’s election represented a leap into the political unknown but Wednesday is likely to symbolise a restoration of the old order. Guests will include former presidents Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama –

all of whom are younger than Biden – and former first ladies Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama.



Members of the national guard patrol the streets of Washington. Photograph: Spencer Platt/Getty Images

Jimmy Carter, at 96 the oldest living former president, and former first lady Rosalynn Carter will not be present but have sent their “best wishes”.

The ceremony has been scaled down because of the pandemic and threats from white supremacists and domestic terrorists. Lady Gaga will sing the national anthem. Jennifer Lopez, Bruce Springsteen and Garth Brooks will also perform.

The proceedings will begin with an invocation by the Rev Leo O’Donovan, a Jesuit priest and close friend of the Biden family. Andrea Hall, the first African American woman to become captain of the fire rescue department in South Fulton, Georgia, will recite the pledge of allegiance.

About 200 dignitaries will sit – masked and physically distanced – on a main stage typically packed for inaugurations. Around 2,000 are expected to attend overall. Trump memorably and falsely claimed his inauguration crowd was bigger than Obama’s, which exceeded a million people.

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[US news](#)

'To heal, we must remember': Biden holds memorial for 400,000 US Covid victims – live

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Biden administration

Biden cabinet picks: confirmation hearings begin one day before inauguration

- Hearings kick off as Trump's second impeachment looms
- Janet Yellen for treasury secretary; Antony Blinken for state secretary
- [US politics – live coverage](#)



Alejandro Mayorkas, nominee to be secretary of homeland security, testifies during confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill on Tuesday. Photograph: Joshua Roberts/EPA

Alejandro Mayorkas, nominee to be secretary of homeland security, testifies during confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill on Tuesday. Photograph: Joshua Roberts/EPA

Daniel Strauss in Washington

[@danielstrauss4](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.08 EST

Confirmation hearings for Joe Biden's cabinet nominees kicked off on Tuesday, one day ahead of the inauguration and as the next step in Donald Trump's second impeachment loomed.

[Biden to block Trump's proposal to lift US travel restrictions on Europe](#)
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Senators on the relevant committees began hearings to confirm [Janet Yellen](#) (treasury secretary), Avril Haines (director of national intelligence), Alejandro Mayorkas (homeland security secretary) and Antony Blinken (secretary of state). The hearings were merely a first wave of confirmations Congress must process as the new president takes office.

Biden will take the oath of office on Wednesday, cementing a massive shift in the American political universe. Once Kamala Harris is sworn in as vice-president – the first Black woman in the role using a Bible [once owned by Thurgood Marshall](#), the first Black supreme court justice, as well as one from a close family friend – Democrats will narrowly control both chambers of Congress.

As well as holding confirmation hearings, the Senate must hold a second trial for Trump, even after he has left office. Democrats hope Republican sentiment has shifted away from the outgoing president in response to the riot he encouraged at the Capitol. There are signs that might be the case.

On Tuesday, the Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, said: “The mob was fed lies. They were provoked by the president and other powerful people, and they tried to use fear and violence to stop a specific proceeding of the first branch of the federal government which they did not like.”

John Thune of South Dakota, a member of Republican leadership, told [ABC News](#): “It sounds like we are going to have a trial to examine that and like all senators I'll fulfill my constitutional duty and listen intently to the evidence, and we will come to the conclusion.”

Looking to make good on his promise to lower the political temperature of the country, Biden invited Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress to a prayer session before he takes office, the mere fact of the invitation a

tonal shift from how Trump interacted with congressional leaders through his four years in office. Earlier in the day, Biden participated in a sendoff from his home state, Delaware, ahead of his move to Washington. A Covid memorial service was due to take place in the capital in the evening.

Biden will need to retain good relations with both parties if he wants any of his policy agenda to become law and cabinet confirmations to go smoothly. The Senate will be split 50-50. In any tie, Harris, as vice-president, will hold the deciding vote. In the House, the Democratic majority shrank in the last election but Nancy Pelosi still wields control as speaker.

When Biden is sworn in, he will be lagging behind his most recent predecessors on confirmation hearings held, according to data compiled by [Axios](#). Only five Biden nominees will have had hearings by the end of Tuesday, seven fewer than Trump had by inauguration day, six fewer than Barack Obama (whom Biden served as vice-president), seven fewer than George W Bush and nine fewer than Bill Clinton.

On the Senate floor on Tuesday, Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, noted that Democrats must deal with an unusually heavy load.

“All of us want to put this awful chapter in our nation’s history behind us, but healing and unity will only come if there is truth and accountability, not sweeping such a severe charge, such awful actions under the rug,” Schumer said.

“So let me be clear. There will be an impeachment trial in the United States Senate. There will be a vote on convicting the president for high crimes and misdemeanors. If the president is convicted, there will be a vote barring him [from running for office] again.”

[Joe Biden will launch presidency with appeal for unity – but whose unity?](#)
[Read more](#)

Privately, there is a worry among Democrats that impeachment hearings held simultaneously with confirmations will delay cabinet confirmations and progress on legislation. Away from Congress, Biden has said he will reverse

key Trump policies by executive order, achieving among other objectives re-entry to the Paris climate accord and Iran nuclear deal.

Democrats also worry that impeachment could further fuel the sense of heated national division the new president wants to end.

“In 2017, the Senate confirmed President Trump’s secretary of defense and his secretary of homeland security on inauguration day,” Schumer said, adding: “Biden should have the same officials in place on his inauguration day at the very least.

“That is the expectation and tradition for any administration, especially in the midst of a homeland security crisis … the way the Senate works, it will take cooperation from our Republican colleagues to swiftly confirm these highly qualified national security officials. But make no mistake, the Senate will move quickly to confirm Biden’s cabinet.”

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US military

One dozen national guard troops pulled from inauguration duties after vetting

- Checks involved looking at ties to extremist groups
- Two members earlier reportedly removed due to militia links
- [US politics – live coverage](#)



National guard troops gather in front of the US Capitol on Tuesday, a day before Joe Biden's inauguration. Photograph: Mike Segar/Reuters
National guard troops gather in front of the US Capitol on Tuesday, a day before Joe Biden's inauguration. Photograph: Mike Segar/Reuters

[Lauren Aratani](#) in New York and agency

Tue 19 Jan 2021 16.07 EST

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One dozen members of the US national guard have been removed from their duties helping to secure Joe Biden's inauguration after vetting – which included screening for potential ties to rightwing extremism, Pentagon officials said on Tuesday.

A Pentagon spokesman said the vetting went beyond ties to extremist groups. One guard member was removed from duty after troubling text messages and another had been reported to a tip line, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen Daniel Hokanson, told reporters.

Earlier it was reported that two army national guard members were being removed from the mission. That figure grew on Tuesday afternoon and could expand further as vetting continues by the defense department and FBI.

About 25,000 guard members have been [deployed in Washington](#) in the aftermath of the Capitol attack on 6 January, in which a mob incited by Donald Trump in his attempt to overturn his election defeat rampaged through Congress, seeking lawmakers to kidnap and kill. Five people died, including a police officer who confronted the mob.

[Tucker Carlson baselessly claims Democrats using troops as 'political weapon'](#)

[Read more](#)

Senior defense officials subsequently [indicated concern](#) that attacks on the inauguration might be launched from within the ranks of the guard.

A US army official and a senior US intelligence official, speaking anonymously, had initially told the Associated Press the first two guard members removed had been found to have ties to fringe rightwing militias. No plot against Biden was found, the officials said.

The federal government has taken the possibility of [insider threats](#) seriously after multiple rioters who breached the US Capitol were revealed to have ties to law enforcement and the military.

The mood in the capital remained tense as the Washington Post [reported](#) that the FBI had privately warned law enforcement agencies that far-right extremists had “discussed posing as national guard members in Washington and others had reviewed maps of vulnerable spots in the city”.

The army official and the intelligence official spoke on the condition of anonymity due to defense department regulations. They did not say what fringe group the guard members belonged to or what unit they served in.

In the Senate, the Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, said the pro-Trump mob that stormed the Capitol had been “fed lies” by the president and others.

McConnell’s remarks were his most severe and public rebuke of Trump. The Republican leader vowed a “safe and successful” inauguration of Biden at the Capitol, which is under extremely tight security.

“The mob was fed lies,” McConnell said. “They were provoked by the president and other powerful people, and they tried to use fear and violence to stop a specific proceeding of branch of the federal government.”

After Biden’s inauguration on the Capitol’s West Front, which McConnell noted the former president George HW Bush called “democracy’s front porch”, “we’ll move forward”, the majority leader said.

Republican senators face a daunting choice over whether to convict Trump of inciting the insurrection, in the first impeachment trial of a president no longer in office.

In opening remarks at his confirmation hearing on Tuesday, Biden’s nominee for secretary of homeland security, Alejandro Mayorkas, vowed to get to the bottom of the “horrifying” attack on the Capitol.

Mayorkas told the Senate homeland security committee that if confirmed he would do everything possible to ensure “the desecration of the building that stands as one of the three pillars of our democracy, and the terror felt by you, your colleagues, staff, and everyone present, will not happen again”.

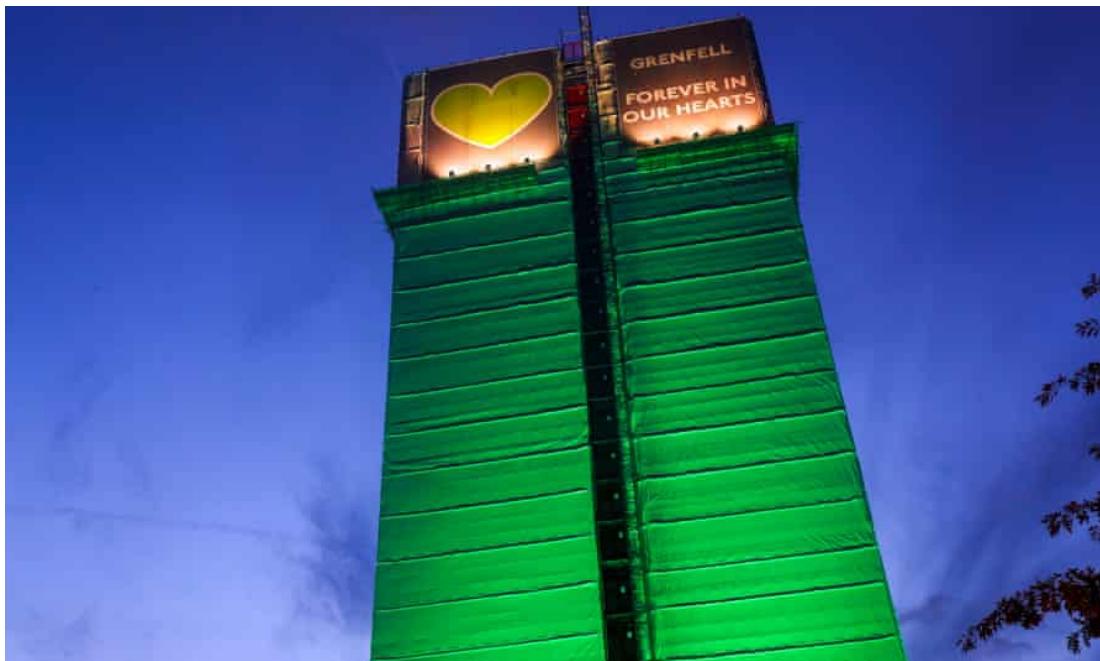
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Grenfell Tower fire

New watchdog will be able to ban dangerous materials used at Grenfell Tower

Announcement by housing secretary, Robert Jenrick, dismissed as ‘too late’ by UK Cladding Action Group

- [What has the Grenfell inquiry revealed about building materials?](#)



The new regulator for construction products was prompted by evidence of attempts to ‘rig safety tests’ heard at the public inquiry into the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire. Photograph: Steve Parsons/PA

The new regulator for construction products was prompted by evidence of attempts to ‘rig safety tests’ heard at the public inquiry into the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire. Photograph: Steve Parsons/PA

[Robert Booth Social affairs correspondent](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.24 EST

Companies that make dangerous building materials such as those used at Grenfell Tower could be prosecuted and their products banned by a new watchdog announced by the government.

The housing secretary, [Robert Jenrick](#), said the new regulator for construction products was prompted by evidence at the public inquiry into the west London fire of “dishonest practice by some manufacturers ... including deliberate attempts to game the system and rig the results of safety tests”.

The Ministry of [Housing](#), Communities and Local Government said the regulator would have “strong enforcement powers including the ability to conduct its own product-testing when investigating concerns”.

Offences could be punished with fines or imprisonment, currently for up to three months. It would be funded with up to £10m and be part of the Office for Product Safety and Standards “to encourage and enforce compliance”.

But the announcement was dismissed as “too late” by campaigners representing hundreds of thousands of [leaseholders trapped in unsellable](#) high-rise homes that used dangerous materials similar to those used at Grenfell, where the 14 June 2017 fire cost 72 lives.

“It’s good news for buildings to be built in the future but this regulator does literally nothing for the buildings that already have these materials on them,” said Rituparna Saha, the co-founder of UK Cladding Action Group, which represents some of the estimated 175,000 homeowners whose buildings have applied for £1bn in government grants to meet repair bills.

Grenfell United, which represents bereaved and survivors from the fire, added: “A new regulator doesn’t fix what is out there already. It’s been three and a half years and the government still hasn’t come up with a plan to get dangerous materials off homes.

[Fire hazards found at block housing Grenfell Tower survivors](#)
[Read more](#)

“Kingspan, Celotex and Arconic [which made combustible cladding materials used on Grenfell] have faced no consequences – they are still making profits ... Consequences for companies involved in Grenfell would be the best way for the government to send a message it was serious about cracking down. This is not an industry that deserves a clean slate.”

Whitehall sources have said the government is exploring the best way to exclude companies that “have played the system” from future contracts funded with taxpayer money.

The public inquiry into the disaster [heard last year](#) how in 2013 executives for Celotex had known that “in the event of a fire [its insulation] would burn” and that in 2009 a manager at Arconic, which made the plastic cladding panels, had shared images of a burning tower fitted with similar panels “to show you how dangerous PE [polyethylene] can be when it comes to architecture”.

Celotex has said it was not a manufacturer’s responsibility to meet building regulations, but admitted “unacceptable conduct on the part of a number of former employees”. Arconic told the inquiry it was entitled to expect the UK regulatory regime to maintain safety and that its product had been “misused”.

One executive at Kingspan, which also made insulation, said in an email that customers worried about the safety of its product could “go fuck themselves”. The firm has apologised for “process shortcomings and unacceptable conduct”.

“The Grenfell inquiry has heard deeply disturbing allegations of malpractice by some construction product manufacturers and their employees, and of the weaknesses of the present product testing regime,” said Jenrick. “We are establishing a national regulator to address these concerns and a review into testing to ensure our national approach is fit for purpose. We will continue to listen to the evidence emerging in the inquiry, and await the judge’s ultimate recommendation – but it is already clear that action is required now and that is what we are doing.”

[The culture of incompetence that led to Grenfell still imperils us | Rowan Moore](#) [Read more](#)

Building inspectors approved the materials for use on Grenfell and the new regulator is an attempt to tackle the sale of dangerous products higher up the supply chain rather than leaving it solely to local council officials to check what is being used on each site.

In common with most products, building components already have a CE safety mark. Arnold Tarling, a surveyor and building safety expert, said checks should in theory have been carried out by trading standards inspectors but they rarely visited building sites. He also questioned whether £10m would be enough to fund checks of “millions” of building products, with fire tests for example costing as much as £60,000 each.

The government said the new regulator would “in due course” start work “in shadow form” and then operate with new powers after the building safety bill was passed.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/19/new-watchdog-will-be-able-to-ban-dangerous-materials-used-at-grenfell-tower>

Grenfell Tower inquiry

What has the Grenfell inquiry revealed about building materials?

Some firms had rigged fire safety tests for potentially dangerous products from as early as 2007

- [New watchdog will be able to ban dangerous materials used at Grenfell Tower](#)



After the Grenfell Tower fire, it emerged that hundreds of tower blocks were wrapped in similar combustible materials. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

After the Grenfell Tower fire, it emerged that hundreds of tower blocks were wrapped in similar combustible materials. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

[Robert Booth](#) Social affairs correspondent

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.25 EST

A new regulator that could prosecute companies making dangerous building materials has been announced by the government, prompted by evidence given at the [Grenfell Tower inquiry](#). Here we look at some of the key issues that were raised by the hearing ...

What is the problem with building products?

After the [Grenfell Tower fire](#), it emerged that hundreds of tower blocks were wrapped in similar combustible materials that builders and building inspectors believed were being used in line with regulations. They have now been deemed dangerous and must be stripped off, leaving leaseholders and the government with multibillion-pound bills.

What has the public inquiry into the 2017 fire revealed about how this happened?

From as early as 2007, some construction material companies set up fire safety tests to artificially improve results and deliver certificates that would reassure builders they performed safely in a fire. Test rigs were set up according to the manufacturer's instructions rather than fully independently. Materials companies also lobbied certifiers and building inspection bodies to get the widest possible access for their products.

Some were aware that their materials were more dangerous than the test results or marketing brochures let on. This cemented conclusions drawn by Dame Judith Hackitt, whom the government asked to review building safety in 2018.

What did Hackitt say?

She said the whole system needed major reform and that residents' safety needed to be a greater priority through the entire life cycle of a building – from design and construction, through to when people were living in their homes. She found that methods for testing, certification and marketing of construction products and systems were not clear, and called for “a more effective enforcement, complaint investigation and market surveillance regime at a national level for construction products”.

How long has the government known about this problem?

In 2014, Brian Martin, a senior building safety official at the Department for Communities and Local Government, said in an email that he was aware of “reliable” claims that several buildings had been erected with combustible polyisocyanurate insulation in high-rise cladding.

“Apparently people are under the impression that PIR is a material of limited combustibility (which it isn’t),” he wrote to a building safety certifier. “The purpose of my email is a friendly warning. You might want to double check with your inspectors and plan checkers that they are on top of this.”

How does this change regulation of building materials?

It doesn’t change the building regulations, which still allow combustible materials to be used on buildings up to 11 metres. But it looks likely to intensify scrutiny of the testing of products and the claims that manufacturers make for them. The Construction Products Association said: “We are awaiting further details from government and look forward to supporting its development and implementation.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/19/what-has-the-grenfell-inquiry-revealed-about-building-materials>

[Ghislaine Maxwell](#)

Ghislaine Maxwell court hearing disrupted by apparent QAnon followers

An unlawful live stream was viewed by numerous followers of the conspiracy theory before being shut down



The proceeding, which was held by telephone, was to discuss whether more documents in the Maxwell lawsuit would be unsealed. Photograph: Lucas Jackson/Reuters

The proceeding, which was held by telephone, was to discuss whether more documents in the Maxwell lawsuit would be unsealed. Photograph: Lucas Jackson/Reuters

[Victoria Bekiempis](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.57 EST

A court proceeding on documents in [civil litigation against](#) the jailed British socialite and accused sex trafficker [Ghislaine Maxwell](#) was interrupted on Tuesday when the judge became aware of an unlawful live stream being viewed by numerous apparent followers of the QAnon conspiracy theory.

“Judge, I need to interrupt. I was just informed that apparently somebody is broadcasting this on to YouTube, so I don’t know if you want to give a reminder that that is illegal to do,” the deputy clerk told the Manhattan federal court judge Loretta Preska.

[FBI tracked down Ghislaine Maxwell using cellphone data](#)
[Read more](#)

“Whoever is doing it, you are operating against the law,” Preska said of this stream, which attracted 14,000 listeners. “I suspect there is a way to find out. So I will ask you, most respectfully, to stop doing it.”

“We have had enough of lack of the rule of law around here. Let’s try to observe it.”

The stream shut down shortly thereafter.

The existence of a strong contingent of QAnon supporters listening in was based upon comments in a live chat that ran alongside the stream. The baseless, far-right conspiracy theory maintains that a [cabal](#) of Satan-worshipping Democrats and elites control the world while sex-trafficking children.

One commenter remarked, for example, “FREEE OUR CHILDREN NOW.” Another said: “PROTECT THE KIDS FROM THESE WEIRDOS”. There were also references to “National Popcorn Day”, which is a phrase widely [used](#) in QAnon circles.

The proceeding, which was held by telephone, was to discuss whether more documents in the Maxwell lawsuit would be unsealed. The public conference call line was full with hundreds of listeners, preventing many reporters from attending.

While Preska is releasing more documents in this litigation, some records involving Maxwell’s “intimate matters” will remain sealed, according to a transcript of the proceeding.

“Although the prurient interest of some may be left unsatiated as a result, Ms Maxwell’s interest in keeping private the details of her sexual relationships

with consenting adults warrants the sealing of those portions of her testimony ..." Preska said.

The records in question are from [Jeffrey Epstein](#) accuser Virginia Giuffre's 2015 civil lawsuit against Maxwell. Giuffre has alleged that Maxwell recruited her to be Epstein's masseuse at 15 years old, when she was a locker-room attendant at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in south Florida.

In this lawsuit, Giuffre claimed that Maxwell had defamed her by publicly remarking that she was a liar in alleging that Epstein and Maxwell engaged in sexual misconduct. While the suit was settled in 2017, Maxwell was arrested in July on criminal charges related to her alleged involvement with Epstein's sex trafficking of minors.

Epstein, Maxwell's close friend and a convicted sex offender, was [arrested](#) in July 2019 with prosecutors stating that he "sexually exploited and abused dozens of underage girls" as young as 14. The financier [killed himself](#) in jail about one month later.

Records previously unsealed in this case contained bombshell claims about Maxwell, Epstein and Prince Andrew. The Duke of York – whom Giuffre accused of sexual misconduct – was among the many rich and powerful men who had associated with Epstein.

In her unsealed deposition, Giuffre said that Maxwell: "Trained me as a sex slave."

Prince Andrew has vehemently denied all allegations of misconduct.

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Meat industry

UK ministers gain power to allow lower-standard food imports

Trade bill vote rejects Lords amendment giving MPs greater scrutiny of trade deals



A chicken processing plant in the US. Photograph: Glowimages/Getty

A chicken processing plant in the US. Photograph: Glowimages/Getty

Fiona Harvey Environment correspondent

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.06 EST

Ministers will be able to approve the import of animal and agricultural products of a [lower standard](#) than currently permitted in the UK, after attempts to amend the trade bill failed.

The government has [repeatedly vowed](#) not to allow the import of chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef, but has refused to sign those pledges into law.

The House of Lords [put forward amendments](#) to the trade bill that would have required future trade agreements to be scrutinised by parliament, with a view to ensuring standards are retained, but the key amendment fell on Tuesday night by 353 votes to 277.

Campaigners said the new post-Brexit arrangements for food imports and food production standards in the UK would allow ministers to [make sweeping changes](#) to existing food safety regulations without consultation.

Many products could be affected. For instance, while the government has said it will not allow chlorinated chicken, meat can be washed in a variety of other substances that have similar effects: peracetic acid, cetylpyridinium chloride, acidified sodium chlorite, or organic acid rinses.

Chicken treated with bleach and similar substances can [retain some pathogens](#), according to research, and campaigners also fear that such treatment is used to disguise infections caused by animals being kept in poor conditions that would be illegal in this country.

In the debate, the government sought to reassure MPs that there were sufficient safeguards to ensure the UK's standards were kept high.

However, there was disagreement. Jonathan Djanogly, one of a small number of Conservative MPs who voted against the government, said: "Ministers suggest that a pre-signature vote [on a trade deal] would make them look less decisive and weaken their hand, but I would suggest that the opposite is actually the case. In the US, negotiations are often strengthened by the executive suggesting that Congress won't accept such-and-such a proposal."

He added: "The power of approval that was given to MEPs now needs to come back here to parliament, not to be forgotten by ministers. Having proper scrutiny votes will go towards establishing the UK as a modern, democratic, confident, international trading nation, and we should be embracing that."

Campaigners pointed to loopholes in the government's regulations that mean food standards can be altered without consultation or fanfare. They said the

rules would make it difficult to even find out whether standards had been lowered.

For instance, the list of approved antibiotics for livestock – a vital issue, because the overuse of antibiotics on livestock is a key driver of the growth of antibiotic resistance that threatens human medicine – can be changed without notice, and only close retrospective scrutiny would reveal the changes.

Kierra Box, a campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: “MPs have voted to lock themselves out of decisions on future trade deals. These deals will have a far bigger impact than changing the contents of our supermarket shelves. They could make it harder to pass new legislation to protect our environment, increase the UK’s contribution to climate change, or prop up supply chains linked to human rights abuses. It’s not just disappointing that our elected representatives are willing to let themselves and their constituents be satisfied – it’s mystifying.”

Debbie Tripley, the director of environmental policy and advocacy at WWF-UK, said: “The government’s approach to trade risks undermining their ambition to be a global green leader. Ministers should not have powers to remove important protections via loophole, nor push future trade deals through parliament without meaningful scrutiny.”

Recent research suggests the government may run into trouble with its “red wall” voters if food standards are lowered in trade deals. Qualitative research among focus groups of 52 first-time Conservative voters in red wall constituencies, carried out by Unchecked UK in partnership with KSBR Brand Futures, found strong support for stringent food standards.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/19/uk-ministers-gain-power-to-allow-lower-standard-food-imports>

Refugees

Kent refugee site locked down after scores test positive for Covid

Police officers enforce move at Napier barracks after warnings from humanitarian organisations

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Residents sleep outdoors in protest at conditions inside Napier barracks, where they have been living for months. Photograph: Care4Calais/PA

Residents sleep outdoors in protest at conditions inside Napier barracks, where they have been living for months. Photograph: Care4Calais/PA

[Jamie Grierson](#) Home affairs correspondent

[@JamieGrierson](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.03 EST

A former Kent army barracks being used to house asylum seekers has been locked down – preventing its 400 residents from leaving – after scores of

people tested positive for coronavirus.

The private contractors who manage the site at Napier barracks near Folkestone on behalf of the Home Office have advised its residents the entire camp has been placed into isolation, with police officers enforcing the move.

Asylum seekers on the site said they had been keeping a tally of the number of positive cases of coronavirus and claimed about 100 had been returned. The Home Office would not comment on the numbers.

The outbreak follows repeated warnings from humanitarian organisations and healthcare professionals over the [significant risks posed by Covid-19](#) at the site, which has been dogged by [allegations of overcrowding and poor conditions](#).

Kent has been one of the worst-hit areas of the country and is where the new, more transmissible variant of Covid-19 was first detected. Folkestone and Hythe, where the site is located, has a rate of about 572 cases per 100,000, above the average for England.

Clare Moseley, founder of the charity [Care4Calais](#), whose volunteers have been helping men inside Napier barracks, said: “Under full lockdown our volunteers can no longer go in to support and care for the residents and we are deeply concerned for their wellbeing.

“Many questions have been raised over the suitability of this type of accommodation, particularly under Covid, and the severity of this outbreak appears to validate those concerns.

“The Home Office has a responsibility to house people fleeing wars, torture and persecution in a safe environment. After all they have been through, the one thing they desperately need is to feel safe.”

The barracks is not a detention centre but “initial accommodation”, purportedly intended to hold men for a short period of time as they await a decision on their claims for asylum before they are moved on. Before the

recent lockdown, the men were free to come and go from the site to access services in the community.

A letter sent to residents from Clearsprings, the private firm that manages the site, states any person who tests positive will be isolated from those who test negative but concerns have been raised this is not happening.

The residents sleep in blocks that hold as many as 28 men and individual blocks have previously been isolated to prevent outbreaks. But sources have told the Guardian some of the infected men were seen dining in the communal canteen on the night they received the positive test and have said the men are receiving mixed messages from the managers of the site.

In a recording, an official can be heard telling residents nothing can be done to force the men to self-isolate and prevent them from roaming the camp.

They are heard saying: “This is one big house ... so they can roam around their house ... we can’t stop them.

“We advised them they have to stay in their rooms for isolation, for their own health and everyone else’s health. If they still choose to come out that’s up to them.”

[World leaders urged to make Covid vaccine available to millions of refugees](#)
[Read more](#)

The letter to residents states mass testing is soon to be introduced on site, but does not specify when.

The minister for immigration compliance, Chris Philp, said: “Despite our best efforts a number of those accommodated at the site have tested positive for coronavirus and are self-isolating.

“It is incredibly disappointing that prior to this a number of individuals refused tests and have been either refusing to self-isolate or follow social distancing rules, despite repeated requests to do so and these being national guidelines to protect the NHS and save lives.

“These individuals could face enforcement action and are not only risking their own health but the health of staff looking after them and the communities who are accommodating them.”

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Uighurs

UK free to make trade deals with genocidal regimes after Commons vote

Defeated measure aimed to give high court more power to protect minorities such as China's Uighurs



A protest in support of Uighur people in Xinjiang, China in London last October. The US state department has declared their treatment a crime against humanity. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

A protest in support of Uighur people in Xinjiang, China in London last October. The US state department has declared their treatment a crime against humanity. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

[Patrick Wintour](#) Diplomatic editor

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.53 EST

The government has narrowly defeated a move requiring the government to reconsider any trade deal with a country found by the high court to be committing genocide.

The measure, backed by religious groups and a powerful cross-party alliance of MPs, was defeated by 319 to 308.

The move giving the domestic courts a new [role in determining genocide](#) had been heavily endorsed by the Lords, and now peers will be asked by campaigners to reinsert the measure in a revised form back into the trade bill so forcing MPs to consider the proposal again.

A US state department's declaration that the treatment of the Uighur Muslims [represents genocide and crimes against humanity](#), issued on Tuesday in the midst of the Commons debate, may embolden peers.

The outgoing US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, called for all appropriate multilateral and relevant judicial bodies to join the US in seeking to hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities.

"I believe this genocide is ongoing, and that we are witnessing the systematic attempt to destroy [Uighurs](#) by the Chinese party-state," Pompeo said in a statement.

Greg Hands, the trade minister, opposed the amendment as a fundamental denial of parliamentary supremacy. He said he was open to holding further discussions with his rebel MPs, but offered no specific concession.

A second measure, also endorsed by the Lords, requiring ministers to make a formal assessment of a country's human rights record before striking a trade deal was heavily defeated by 364 to 267.

The [genocide amendment](#) was devised by the independent peer Lord Alton as an attempt to break the current impasse whereby the international courts often cannot make rulings on genocide since nation states such as China do not recognise the relevant courts, or veto any reference to such issues. Alton had proposed the UK high court be able to make a preliminary determination that the government would then have to consider.

The measure is primarily directed at protecting the Uighur Muslims in [Xinjiang](#) province, but a similar reference to the high court could be sought

by any group claiming they are victims of genocide such as the Rohingya Muslims.

The amendment had the backing of the Conservative Muslim Forum, the British Board of Jewish Deputies, the International Bar Association and a large array of Christian groups.

Hands told MPs: “To accept this specific amendment would allow the high court to frustrate, even revoke trade agreements entered into by the government and approved after parliamentary scrutiny. This is a completely unprecedented and unacceptable erosion of the royal prerogative and not something the government could support.”

He added the government had no plan to sign a free trade deal with [China](#).

In his only hint at a concession, he said the government was committed to make sure the expertise in the Commons on human rights is used and to explore how this could happen.

He was backed by the former attorney general Sir Jeremy Wright who said it was not clear who the respondent would be in the event of a genocide case being brought in the high court. But he added the government did need to give MPs a greater say over future trade deals.

Nus Ghani, a leading member of the inter-parliamentary alliance on China, said: “When the British Board of Deputies of Jewish colleagues state they are reminded of the Holocaust when they consider the state of the Uighur people it cannot get any worse than that.”

Tom Tugendhat, the chair of the foreign affairs select committee, said the “vote was not about whether the courts or parliament decide on genocide. It’s already the courts who decide. The question is whose courts. The international courts are blocked, so this a way for the British people to take back control of our laws and our conscience.”

Tobias Ellwood, the chair of the defence select committee, said: “The UK was suffering from an absence of clarity about what we believe in,” adding China was on a geopolitical collision course with the west. “The world

watched and hesitated when genocide took place in Rwanda and indeed in Syria. Let's not hesitate again.”

Responding to the defeat Alton, the co-sponsor of the amendment in the Lords, said: “The fight does not end here. We will continue to do all we can to ensure that Uighurs and other victims of alleged genocide have a route to justice through UK courts.”

He said the revised amendment would seek to “meet the perfectly reasonable argument that, once the court has reached a determination of genocide, parliament should then be able to vote on the revocation of a trade deal with the country concerned”. Helena Kennedy, the Labour peer and human rights lawyer, said: “I know that colleagues across all parties will not accept the loopholes in our existing systems which allow perpetrators of genocide to escape with impunity. The work to bring an improved amendment to the House of Lords begins immediately.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/uk-free-to-make-trade-deals-with-genocidal-regimes-after-commons-vote>

Flooding

Greater Manchester declares major incident in preparation for Storm Christoph

Met Office issues amber weather warning as South Yorkshire also declares major incident



Traffic in heavy rain on the A1(M) near Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.
Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

Traffic in heavy rain on the A1(M) near Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.
Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

[Maya Wolfe-Robinson](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 13.58 EST

Greater Manchester has become the latest area to declare a major incident as swathes of central and northern England brace for the arrival of Storm Christoph.

South Yorkshire has also declared a major incident in preparation for potential flooding. The Met Office issued an amber weather warning for rain between Tuesday and Thursday for an area covering Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield and stretching down to Peterborough.

Nick Bailey, the Greater Manchester police assistant chief constable, said heavy rainfall was expected on Tuesday evening, which could cause flooding in several areas across Greater Manchester.

He said: “Whilst we appreciate that everyone has been told to stay home due to the coronavirus pandemic, we want to make it clear that should members of the public need to evacuate to protect themselves due to flooding, then that is the priority and you should follow your local authority’s advice regarding evacuation.”

Ros Jones, the mayor of Doncaster, said emergency protocols were instigated in South Yorkshire with sandbags handed out in flood-risk areas. She said plans would run alongside the region’s Covid-19 response, adding: “I do not want people to panic, but flooding is possible so please be prepared.”

People living in areas previously devastated by the floods are preparing for the worst to happen again as Storm Christoph moves in. Residents in villages in the Calder Valley, West Yorkshire, who have been flooded several times in recent years, are bracing themselves as many mount flood defences in preparation for overnight flooding.

Villagers in Fishlake, South Yorkshire, which was cut off by floodwaters just over a year ago, hope they are better prepared this time. A flood warden, Peter Trimingham said the sandbags delivered outside homes in Fishlake were a boost to worried residents. “It’s a very, very welcome sight for villagers, it gives us confidence,” he said.

The National Flood Response Centre is coordinating the response as Storm Christoph moves in, Downing Street said, but no meeting of the Cobra emergency committee has yet been announced.

The prime minister's official spokesman told reporters: "If there are any plans for a Cobra we will obviously set them out in the usual way. But the National Flood Response Centre has been stood up and is coordinating the cross-agency and government operations on this.

"The important message whilst the alerts are in place is that we urge everybody to follow the Environment Agency's advice and check their flood risk and sign up to alerts."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/19/greater-manchester-major-incident-storm-christoph>

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Apprenticeships

Tony Blair son plans big expansion for training firm valued at \$200m

Venture capitalists provide \$44m for Euan Blair start-up that helps people find apprenticeships



Euan Blair in 2015. His company supports his belief that a university education is not the only route to success. Photograph: Ben Cawthra/Rex/Shutterstock

Euan Blair in 2015. His company supports his belief that a university education is not the only route to success. Photograph: Ben Cawthra/Rex/Shutterstock

[Rob Davies](#)

[@ByRobDavies](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.00 EST

An education business started by Euan Blair has secured new funding from venture capitalists thought to value the business as high as \$200m (£147m)

and crystallising a fortune for the son of the former prime minister [Tony Blair](#).

Multiverse is a start-up founded in 2016 that helps young people who don't want to go to university find apprenticeships with companies and access training.

The valuation placed on the business by new investors indicated that Blair's stake could be worth more than \$60m, making the 37-year-old a paper multimillionaire. A spokesperson for the company declined to comment.

The new funding round was led by US venture capital firm General Catalyst and also includes Google start-up backer Google Ventures. Existing investors include Sky's executive chairman, Jeremy Darroch, while Lightspeed Ventures and Index Ventures, which contributed to a \$16m fundraising last year, also put in new money.

Multiverse, previously known as White Hat, said it would use the money to expand across the UK, with plans to create 200 jobs in 2021. The company will also launch in New York this month.

In Europe, the firm has more than 300 clients including Facebook, Morgan Stanley, KPMG, Fujitsu, Capita and Microsoft. In the last year, the company has tripled the number of apprentices it trains to more than 2,000.

[Cuts to university targets in England are insulting to working-class people like me | Laura McInerney](#)

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Blair, whose father used a 1999 speech to set a target of 50% of young people going into higher education, said it was time to move away from the belief that a university education was the only route to success.

"This model is fundamentally broken – too often failing to give people the skills they need and not spreading opportunity fairly across society. We're building an outstanding alternative to both the university system, and to a corporate training model that rarely delivers long-term impact and genuine results.

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“There are many different ways for people to be successful and we’re empowering people from diverse communities to access the very best opportunities through apprenticeships as they embark on a successful and fulfilling career.”

Multiverse said its model of matching talented people with apprenticeships made for more equal access to good jobs.

It said 55% of apprentices placed by Multiverse are people of colour, 22% are black and 53% are women, while 33% have received free school meals.

Blair held 6m shares – an estimated 40% stake – in the business as of November 2020, according to filings at Companies House. The former Labour leader’s eldest child is understood to have retained his holding, although his stake is likely to have been reduced by the \$44m in new funding announced on Tuesday.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/19/tony-blair-son-plans-big-expansion-for-training-firm-valued-at-200m>

Italy

Police find stolen Leonardo copy museum did not know was missing

Museum shut due to coronavirus was unaware that 500-year-old Salvator Mundi had been missing



Police officers stand next to the recovered Salvator Mundi painting. A 36-year-old flat owner has been arrested on suspicion of receiving stolen goods.
Photograph: Ciro Fusco/EPA

Police officers stand next to the recovered Salvator Mundi painting. A 36-year-old flat owner has been arrested on suspicion of receiving stolen goods.
Photograph: Ciro Fusco/EPA

Agence France-Presse in Rome

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.01 EST

Italian police has found a 500-year-old copy of [Leonardo da Vinci](#)'s Salvator Mundi in a Naples flat and returned it to a museum that had no idea it had been stolen.

Officers said late Monday they had arrested the 36-year-old owner of the flat on suspicion of receiving stolen goods, after the painting was discovered in his bedroom cupboard.

Depicting Jesus Christ with his hand raised in a blessing and holding a crystal orb, the painting is part of the Doma Museum collection at the San Domenico Maggiore church in Naples.



Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi was sold for a record \$450m at auction in 2017. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP via Getty Images

It is a copy of Leonardo's work that in 2017 became [the most expensive painting ever sold](#), fetching \$450m (£330m) at a Christie's auction.

But the museum has been shut for months due to coronavirus restrictions and nobody had reported it missing.

"The painting was found on Saturday thanks to a brilliant and diligent police operation," said Naples prosecutor Giovanni Melillo.

"There was no complaint on the matter and in fact we contacted the (church) prior, who was not aware of its disappearance, as the room where the painting is kept has not been open for three months."

The oil painting is believed to be by the artist Giacomo Alibrandi and dates to the early 1500s.

Police are now investigating how it was stolen as there was no sign of a break-in, Melillo said.

“Whoever took the painting wanted it, and it plausible that it was a commissioned theft by an organisation working in the international art trade,” he added.

Leonardo’s Salvator Mundi has not been seen in public since its record-breaking sale and some experts doubt its authenticity.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/police-find-stolen-copy-leonardo-da-vinci-salvator-mundi-naples-flat>

2021.01.20 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: Germany extends partial lockdown as UK suffers record daily Covid deaths](#)
- [US Death toll passes 400,000 amid grim forecast over winter](#)
- [Israel Single Covid vaccine dose 'less effective than we thought'](#)
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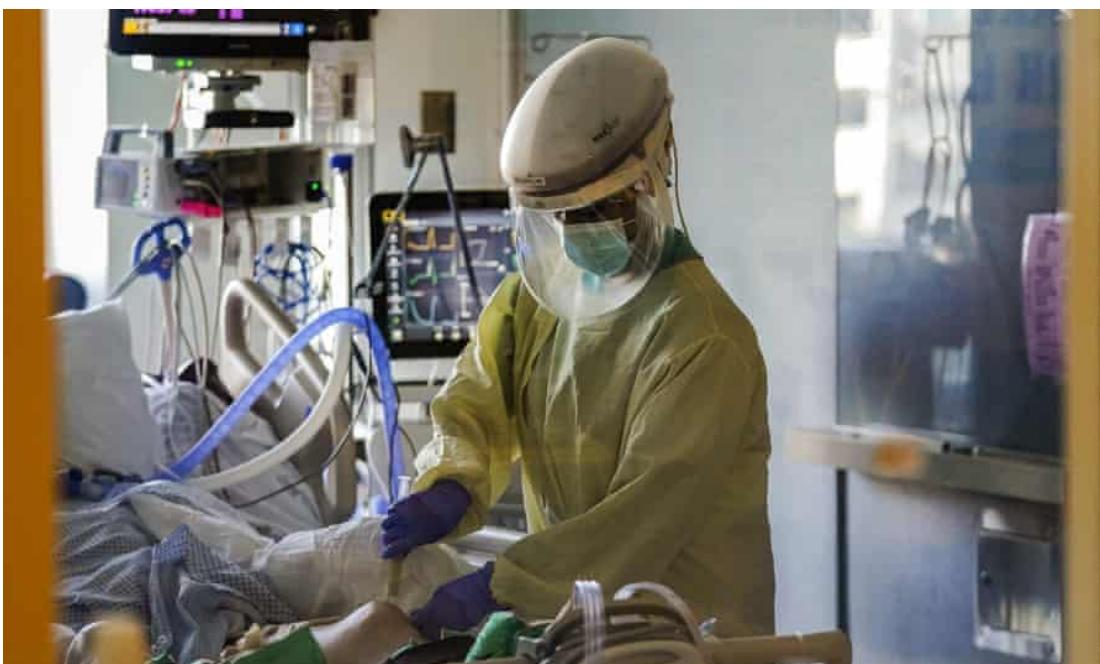
Coronavirus live news: Germany extends partial lockdown as UK suffers record daily Covid deaths

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[US news](#)

US coronavirus death toll passes 400,000 amid grim forecast over winter

Thousands more deaths expected this season as more transmissible strain spreads and vaccinations move slowly



A healthcare worker tends to a Covid-19 patient in the intensive care unit at Santa Clara Valley medical center in San Jose, California. Photograph: Jeff Chiu/AP

A healthcare worker tends to a Covid-19 patient in the intensive care unit at Santa Clara Valley medical center in San Jose, California. Photograph: Jeff Chiu/AP

[Jessica Glenza](#)

[@JessicaGlenza](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.42 EST

More than 400,000 Americans have now been killed by the coronavirus, a horrific marker of the misery the virus has spread across the country, as the rate of deaths from Covid-19 increases.

The latest death toll comes as thousands more deaths are expected in a bleak American winter with widespread Covid transmission, as a more transmissible strain spreads across the country and a mass vaccination campaign gets off to a slow start.

The Johns Hopkins University [Coronavirus](#) Resource Center reported 400,022 people had died. The burden is disproportionately borne by people of color.

Months of death are still ahead for the US, as people recently infected by the virus become ill and perish. A [forecast assembled](#) by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts that the death toll could be 477,000 by 6 February.

That prediction also represents the clear acceleration of deaths in the US. It took more than 16 weeks for the US to reach 100,000 deaths, but less than five for the toll to leap from [300,000 to 400,000](#). Many experts expect the US will reach 500,000 deaths in February.

['An unmitigated disaster': America's year of Covid](#)
[Read more](#)

“1920 was the last time an infectious disease was a leading cause of death in the US,” said Dr Stephen Woolf, an expert in population health and a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. “For generations, people who study public health have been taught that era is behind us.

“Once again, an infectious disease has become a leading cause of death,” said Woolf. “Americans are more likely to die from Covid-19 than from heart disease or cancer, and that is something I never thought I would ever say in my career.”

What’s more, the scale of death is expected to decrease American life expectancy by more than one year, the largest single-year decline in 40 years, according to a recently published study in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#).

That burden also falls disproportionately on Black and Latino people, who have experienced a higher death rate and will lose more than two years of life expectancy. The life expectancy gap between white and black Americans is expected to widen to more than five years, a 40% increase.

Woolf and other public health experts believe the scale of death in the US is a reflection of the failure to control the virus ahead of an expected winter surge, travel over the holidays, and failure to implement widespread public health measures such as masking until very late.

The administration of Donald Trump has faced major criticism for its handling of the virus after it repeatedly failed to organize an effective national response and its top officials – including the US president himself – regularly trafficked in conspiracy theories and denialism.

Now, an acceleration in mortality is also partly expected because a new, more transmissible variant of Covid-19 is believed to be spreading in most states. The strain, called B117, transmits more easily from person to person. The CDC expects it to overtake dominant US strains [by March](#).

The variant is not believed to be deadlier. But the strain will probably lead to more cases and more deaths as further burdens are placed on already overwhelmed hospitals.

Vaccines hold the potential to bring the pandemic to an early end through mass vaccination. However, the hope heralded by the emergency authorization of vaccine candidates has so far been met by a bumpy deployment. More than 31m doses of two available vaccines have been distributed, but only 12 million people have been vaccinated.

President-elect Joe Biden has promised to vaccinate 100 million people in his first 100 days in office, a goal Dr Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said was achievable.

“One thing that’s clear is that the issue of getting 100m doses in the first 100 days is absolutely a doable thing,” said Fauci on Sunday on NBC’s [Meet the Press](#).

Even as Americans mourn the extraordinary loss of 400,000 people, this figure too probably underrepresents the extraordinary toll of the virus. Analyses of “excess mortality”, which compare the expected number of deaths to actual deaths, show official death counts represent only [60-70%](#) of the true death toll.

That is because official tallies do not count Covid-19 deaths not listed on death certificates, while fatal conditions have gone untreated because of disruptions caused by the pandemic.

[Recent research](#) also put the monetary cost of the pandemic at nearly 90% of the US gross domestic product, or roughly \$16tn through the fall of 2021. That enormous figure was reached by analyzing the economic burdens of death, mental health impairment, and the long-term disabilities of “[long-haulers](#)” associated with Covid-19.

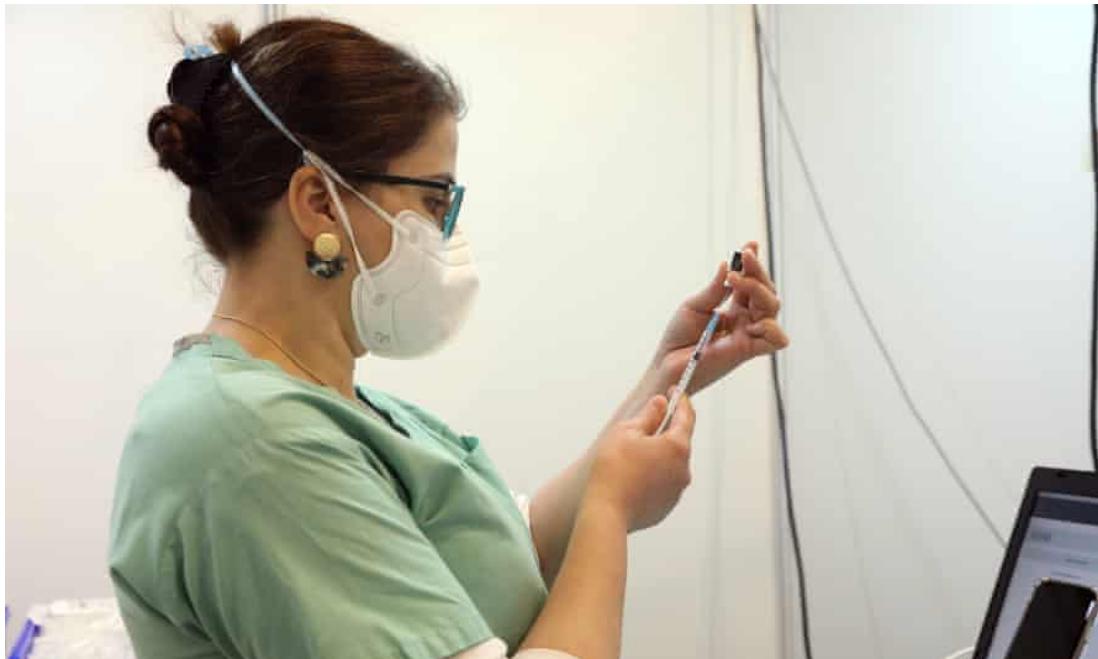
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[Israel](#)

Single Covid vaccine dose in Israel 'less effective than we thought'

Surge in infections dampens optimism over country's advanced immunisation programme

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An Israeli medical worker prepares a dose of Covid-19 vaccine in Tel Aviv on 17 January. Photograph: Xinhua/Rex

An Israeli medical worker prepares a dose of Covid-19 vaccine in Tel Aviv on 17 January. Photograph: Xinhua/Rex

[Peter Beaumont](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.53 EST

Israel's coronavirus tsar has warned that a single dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine may be providing less protection than originally

hoped, as the country reported a record 10,000 new Covid infections on Monday.

In remarks reported by Army Radio, Nachman Ash said a single dose appeared “less effective than we had thought”, and also lower than Pfizer had suggested.

By contrast, those who had received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine had a six- to 12-fold increase in [antibodies](#), according to data released by Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer on Monday.

The issue of some vaccines being less effective after a single dose rather than two is well known, as well as the fact that protection is not immediate. While the first dose can take several weeks to promote an effective antibody response, the second dose can trigger different responses, supercharging the protection. Pfizer itself says a single dose of its vaccine is about 52% effective. Some countries such as the UK have [delayed administering their second doses](#) to try to maximise the number of people given a first dose.

Questions over the effectiveness of the vaccine were raised amid reports that thousands of Israelis were still becoming sick after receiving the vaccine, although the public health services head, Sharon Alroy-Preis, said that in most cases this was because the individuals had not built up sufficient antibodies after being inoculated before being exposed to the virus.

The latest figures for Israel, which has implemented one of the [fastest national vaccine efforts](#), underscore the huge challenges still being faced around the globe even in countries with aggressive coronavirus vaccine programmes.

Already more than 2 million Israelis have had their first Pfizer shot, while 400,000 have had a second.

Amid warnings that 30% to 40% of the new infections were being driven by a Covid-19 variant first identified in the UK, the Israeli cabinet was meeting on Tuesday to consider tightening existing restrictions. Some analysts, however, have put the prevalence of the new variant at lower levels.

The cabinet had been warned by Ash that the new variant was set to become the main source of infections in Israel within weeks.

The new concern follows the release of data on Monday by Israel's health ministry recording 10,021 infections the previous day, with a positivity rate above the 10% mark for the first time in more than three months, suggesting widespread community transmission.

The rates of infection have undercut the sense of optimism that the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has tried to project around Israel's vaccination campaign, for which he has taken credit.

Opening the cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Netanyahu said: "We are in a tight race between the vaccination campaign and the high infection rates in the world due to the mutation." He called for a "last ditch effort" against the virus.

Israel is in the midst of a third lockdown, due to end on Thursday. Other measures under consideration include closing the country's main aviation hub, Ben Gurion international airport, to all except essential flights.

The rise in new cases has provoked a round of finger pointing, not least at lax policing of the ultra-Orthodox community, where some schools have remained open and there have been large gatherings, including a wedding in Bnei Brak on Monday, described as "scandalous", which drew 300 guests before being raided by police.

Describing the impact of the new coronavirus variant, Alroy-Preis told Kan radio that the new variant appeared to be having a significant impact on infections in the ultra-Orthodox community.

"We're seeing very significant and rapid infections and it's really a race between this and the vaccine," said Alroy-Preis, adding that one person who recently returned from the UK had infected 20 to 30 people.

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Coronavirus

Germany extends Covid lockdown amid concern over variants in Europe

Denmark and Netherlands set to follow suit, while France says virus still at ‘worrying’ level

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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[Jon Henley](#) in Paris, [Philip Oltermann](#) in Berlin and [Sam Jones](#) in Madrid

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.30 EST First published on Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.42 EST



An almost deserted farmers' market in the centre of Bremen, Germany.
Photograph: Focke Strangmann/EPA

Germany has extended and tightened its national lockdown despite slowly declining case numbers and the **Netherlands** and **Denmark** are expected to

follow suit as concern mounts about new, more contagious variants of Covid-19.

The chancellor, Angela Merkel, and leaders of **Germany's** 16 states agreed to extend the country's lockdown on Tuesday until 14 February, with new rules also making it mandatory to wear medical masks in shops and on public transport.

Variants first seen in the UK and South Africa risked reversing a recent downward trend in infection numbers, said Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert.

In a digital summit, the German leaders agreed to carry over current restrictions [introduced in November](#), when restaurants and leisure and sporting facilities were closed, with schools and non-essential shops [following](#) in mid-December.

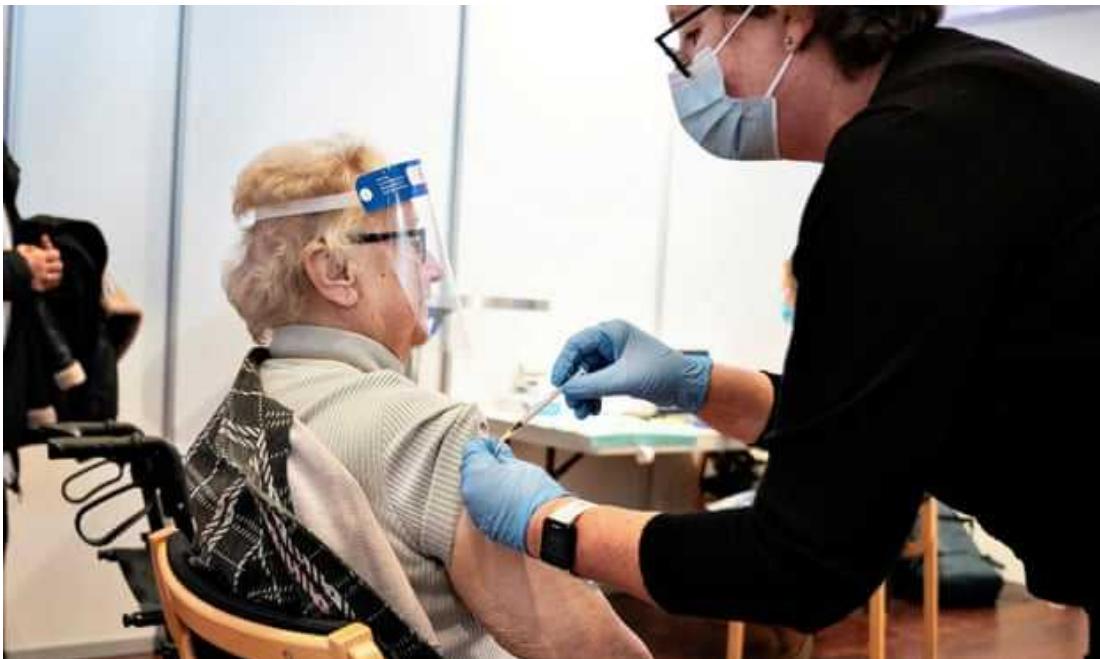
A new rule will ban people from wearing homemade cloth masks or scarves as face coverings in shops and on trains and buses, instead mandating the use of “clinical masks” including single-use surgical masks as well as [filtering facepiece respirators](#), known as FFP2 masks in Europe.

[Covid deaths in Germany graph](#)

Denmark may also have to extend its lockdown measures beyond early February – despite a fall in infections – because of the British variant, the prime minister said on Tuesday.

The government already extended the lockdown for three more weeks last week, saying it expected the variant to be the dominant strain by mid-February. “If we don’t contain the pressure, we may risk an exponential increase in infections,” Mette Frederiksen said.

Under Denmark’s current measures, restaurants, bars and non-essential shops are closed and public gatherings limited to five people.



A woman receives the coronavirus vaccine in Aalborg, Denmark, on Monday. Photograph: Ritzau Scanpix/Reuters

The **Dutch** government, [which resigned last week](#) but is staying on in a caretaker capacity until elections planned for mid-March, said it would announce new measures on Wednesday amid media speculation that it planned to announce a curfew and further localised restrictions.

The **French** health minister, Olivier Véran, said the virus was still circulating at a “worrying” level but stopped short of recommending a third national lockdown, saying France’s nationwide 6pm curfew was sufficient for now.

In **Spain**, Valencia – which like the rest of the country has been under a state of emergency [since the end of October](#) and subject to an overnight curfew – became the latest region to announce tougher action amid a surge in Covid cases. Spain reported a record rise in infections over the weekend.

Last week, Galicia banned all non-essential travel in the seven largest cities, ordered bars and restaurants to close at 4pm, and brought forward a curfew to 10pm. La Rioja closed non-essential businesses at 5pm and limited group meetings to four people, while shops in Cantabria were banned from opening at weekends.

As EU nations struggle to roll out their vaccination programmes, Letizia Moratti, the health chief of the wealthy northern region of Lombardy, sparked outrage by suggesting vaccines should be allocated to regions based partly on productivity in an effort to aid national economic recovery.

The health minister, Roberto Speranza, quickly dismissed the idea, saying everybody had a right to be vaccinated “regardless of the wealth of the place where they live” and health was a constitutionally guaranteed public good, not a privilege.

As **Russia** said its second vaccine, a candidate shot known as EpiVacCorona, was “100% effective” in early stage trials, the **European commission** announced a proposed timetable for vaccinations across the bloc’s 27 member states.

At least 80% of those aged over 80 will be given a jab by March 2021, as will 80% of health and social care professionals, it said, with 70% of the entire adult population vaccinated by the end of the summer.

In a thinly-veiled reference to the UK’s vaccination programme, the commission’s vice-president, Margaritis Schinas, said the pace of rolling out jabs should increase but that it was “not a race between countries but a race against time”.

Schinas also said the EU’s member states would agree by the end of the month on the form of a common vaccination certificate, but there were no plans to give travel rights to holders of such documents.

The paperwork will instead be used to ensure pan-European recognition of citizens’ vaccination records, although other possible uses will be debated by the bloc’s leaders at a virtual summit on Thursday.

Schinas said the use of the certificates as a passport – eagerly awaited by countries such as Greece and Spain – was “imaginable”, but only once enough people had been covered and agreement was found between all the capitals on the conditions of use.

An independent panel reviewing the **World Health Organization** (WHO) and the global response to the pandemic concluded the WHO was underpowered and underfunded and must be reformed to give it the resources to be more effective.

“We are not here to assign blame, but to make concrete recommendations to help the world respond faster and better in future,” the panel’s co-chair, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, said on Tuesday, a day after its interim report was issued.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/germany-extends-covid-lockdown-amid-concern-variants-europe>

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Coronavirus

'Verify before you amplify': the BAME activists fighting Covid myths

Campaigners push back at influencers stoking fears over safety and lawfulness of vaccine



Imam Qari Asim, chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, has started a campaign to encourage BAME communities to get vaccinated. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

Imam Qari Asim, chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, has started a campaign to encourage BAME communities to get vaccinated. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

[Nazia Parveen](#) and [Lucy Campbell](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.37 EST

Sitting in his usual spot, in front of a rainbow-coloured brick wall, Shukeel Chohan gets comfortable. He welcomes his audience for his Late Night Live discussion: what is a vaccine?

The discussion points for tonight's debate will include: is a supermarket chain cashing in on the coronavirus experimental miracle treatment in Birmingham? When will the lockdown end? Will you take the experimental miracle treatment?

Then there is a bit of housekeeping. "All comments and opinions welcome. Please remain polite and respectful. I might even invite you on screen," writes Chohan.

The discussion, which took place on Wednesday, lasted for almost three hours, with Chohan – who describes himself as a motivational speaker, business strategy coach and former British army officer – discussing a number of anti-vaccination theories and questioning whether coronavirus exists. Referring to the vaccine as an "experimental miracle treatment", he tells his followers that he does not wear a mask due to being exempt and needing oxygen.

"I refuse to be part of the experiment. I can't understand why anyone would want to do that ... I don't trust anything right now, nothing makes any sense to me," he says.

Chohan's following on Facebook, the social media platform which he uses the most, is not substantial at just over 1,700, but BAME leaders say he is part of a group of influencers who have been causing concern with [their cumulative effect on close-knit communities](#).

Another is Shah Nur, a social activist and commentator from London. Against a backdrop reading "The real agenda: gambling on the vaccine?" Ustadh Mohammad Quraishi, a presenter on a community TV network, introduces Nur, who allegedly recently exposed the vaccine.

"The question is now: as Muslims, do we trust Pfizer?" Quraishi asks, as the two discuss how "giants in their field" who were sceptical of lockdowns have been ignored by governments who have "spun" the information. In an example that probably hasn't aged well (this video was posted on 31 December), Nur points to Sweden, [which was slow to introduce lockdown](#), and US government predictions on deaths which "frightened the hell out of people".

To illustrate “both sides of the argument”, Quraishi then holds up a book entitled “Corona, False Alarm? Facts and Figures” written by two German scientists who claim coronavirus is no different to a seasonal flu. “It’s quite an eye-opener,” Quraishi says. He rejects the label of “Covid-denier” but maintains “there is something out there”.

The Guardian has been sent a number of other videos posted by different individuals, some standing outside vaccination centres, as they discuss unsubstantiated claims that the vaccine might contain pork, is not halal or that it could result in modification of DNA, playing on religious concerns.

As this misinformation began to gain momentum, Imam Qari Asim, chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, alongside a number of other Muslim leaders, said they were forced to start a campaign to encourage BAME communities to get vaccinated. Last week hundreds of mosques used Friday prayers to raise coronavirus awareness and dispel myths around vaccinations.

“Individually, they (anti-vaxxers) are not a big concern. But when you have quite a few of them all making the same unsubstantiated claims and they have a couple of thousand followers each – that’s when they can create an impact and sow the seeds of doubt. We have been urging people to ‘verify before you amplify’ and not believe everything they hear about the vaccines from unqualified sources,” said Asim.

He added: “I think it’s extremely concerning that even during this pandemic, there are people that are exploiting opportunities and also spreading misinformation online and potentially scapegoating communities.

“Thankfully, now the tide is starting to turn. Some imams have even been filmed while being vaccinated to reassure their communities about the permissibility of the vaccines from Islamic perspective, and inspire confidence. Another aspect of our campaign has been to address some of the rumours and conspiracy theories, because misinformation can cost lives.”

The vaccine minister, Nadhim Zahawi, recently warned of the impact of conspiracy theories being shared online, as a study from the Royal Society

for Public Health found 57% of BAME people said they would take the vaccine. This compared with 79% of white people

Meanwhile, Dr Arif Dasu in Preston, said other anti-vaxxers were not brave enough to reveal their identities, with their faces often remaining concealed when espousing their theories. Dasu said he became aware of the scale of the issue when he set up a voluntary taskforce for the community to combat the negativity around Covid on social media.

“People were watching videos claiming Covid is a conspiracy, it’s a money-making scheme, how was the vaccine produced so quickly, it was a way for the government to monitor the population and change our DNA. Then there were videos saying the vaccine was not permissible and not halal.”

Dasu and his colleagues on the taskforce hosted a webinar on YouTube to bust myths around Covid and the vaccine. He says the fact they were from the community, rather than an official body, was crucial in bringing the discussion out into the open. “People know us in Preston; being a GP and other health professionals from the community really drove the message home that the vaccine is permissible, halal and safe.

“Opinions are changing in our locality with the majority of Asian and BAME community in our locality now wanting the vaccine and having it now,” he said.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/verify-before-you-amplify-the-bame-activists-fighting-covid-myths>

[Tokyo Olympic Games 2020](#)

Tokyo Olympic Games unlikely to go ahead, says London 2012's Sir Keith Mills

- ‘I would be making plans for a cancellation’
- Sebastian Coe remains confident Games will take place



The illuminated Olympic Rings installation at Odaiba Marine Park in Tokyo.

Photograph: Stanislav Kogiku/Sopa Images/Shutterstock

The illuminated Olympic Rings installation at Odaiba Marine Park in Tokyo.

Photograph: Stanislav Kogiku/Sopa Images/Shutterstock

PA Media

Tue 19 Jan 2021 13.48 EST

Sir Keith Mills, the deputy chairman of the London Organising Committee for the 2012 [Olympic Games](#), is unconvinced that the delayed Tokyo Olympics will take place.

Tokyo organisers and the International Olympic Committee are adamant the Games will start in July despite a fresh wave of infections sweeping the globe.

[Tokyo's Covid outbreak adds to doubts over hosting Olympic Games](#)
[Read more](#)

Mills told BBC Radio 5 live: “Looking at the pandemic around the world, in South America, in North America, in Africa and across Europe, it looks unlikely.

“If I was sitting in the shoes of the organising committee in Tokyo, I would be making plans for a cancellation and I’m sure they have plans for a cancellation. I think they will leave it until absolutely the last minute in case the situation improves dramatically, in case the vaccinations roll out faster than we all hope.”

A state of emergency has been extended in Japan to combat rising coronavirus rates, but the World Athletics president Sebastian Coe is confident the event will go ahead this year. “I don’t think it will be cancelled,” he told Sky News. “It is going to be a challenge, we know that, it is pretty self-evident and there will be adaptions. But of all the countries on the planet that has the fortitude and the resilience to see this through, it is Japan. I wake up as a federation president grateful that Japan is dealing with this and not some other places I could think of.

[Olympics official says he is not certain Tokyo Games will go ahead](#)
[Read more](#)

“I am sure there will be big issues with crowds and just think about the Olympic Village, too. You have got 10,500 athletes and another 7,000 support staff in there. They are all wanting to eat at the same time and that is just a sliver of the challenge. For the athletes it will be a different experience. I think the Games will take place but they will look different.”

Despite Lord Coe’s optimism, the current situation makes it hugely difficult for athletes to prepare for the Games.

The Tokyo 2020 organising committee spokesman Masa Takaya said last week there had never been a discussion about a further delay to this summer's Games or a cancellation.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/tokyo-olympics-games-unlikely-to-go-ahead-says-london-2012s-sir-keith-mills>

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[**Donald Trump**](#)

Biden to block Trump's proposal to lift US travel restrictions on Europe

- Trump order announced plans to lift measures next week
- Biden spokeswoman: 'Not the time to be lifting restrictions'



Passengers at JFK airport in New York in December. Biden spokeswoman Jen Psaki said: 'We plan to strengthen public health measures around international travel to further mitigate the spread of Covid-19.' Photograph: Reuters

Passengers at JFK airport in New York in December. Biden spokeswoman Jen Psaki said: 'We plan to strengthen public health measures around international travel to further mitigate the spread of Covid-19.' Photograph: Reuters

Jessica Glenza in New York

@JessicaGlenza

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.37 EST

Joe Biden's administration plans to retain coronavirus travel restrictions on much of Europe, the United Kingdom and Brazil, aides to the president-elect said, shortly after the White House announced plans to lift the measures on 26 January.

Donald Trump signed an executive order late on Monday, ending the travel restrictions that he imposed in March 2020, and instead requiring that travelers present proof of a negative Covid-19 test to enter the US.

But soon afterwards, Biden's spokeswoman, Jen Psaki, said the measures would remain in place. "With the pandemic worsening, and more contagious variants emerging around the world, this is not the time to be lifting restrictions on international travel," Psaki said on [Twitter](#). Biden is scheduled to be inaugurated on Wednesday.

"On the advice of our medical team, the administration does not intend to lift these restrictions," Psaki said. "In fact, we plan to strengthen public health measures around international travel in order to further mitigate the spread of Covid-19."

Trump's executive order would have ended travel restrictions from the UK, Ireland, Brazil and the Schengen area of 26 European countries.

That would have allowed people from those countries who are not citizens or legal permanent residents to visit the United States, as long as they had a negative Covid-19 test within three days of traveling.

American citizens and legal permanent residents will continue to be able to travel from these countries.

It is unclear whether citizens and legal permanent residents will still need to test negative for Covid-19, as ordered by the Trump administration on 12 January. Trump's executive order left in place restrictions on Iran and China, citing the countries' "lack of transparency" on the pandemic.

The US is currently experiencing an acceleration of Covid-19 deaths. Senior members of the incoming Biden administration have repeatedly said they expect the pandemic will "[get worse before it gets better](#)". Nearly 400,000

Americans have died of the disease, making it one of the worst-hit nations in the world.

['An unmitigated disaster': America's year of Covid](#)
[Read more](#)

Models published by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forecast up to 477,000 Americans will die from the disease by the end of January. As well, the CDC believes the more contagious Covid-19 variant B117 is circulating in “[most](#)” US states and that it will overtake dominant strains by [March](#). Mass vaccination campaigns have also gotten off to a rocky start, with just over 12 million people vaccinated, fewer than initially expected.

A recent study published in the [Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences](#) found the US has been so hard-hit that American life expectancy will probably drop by one year, the largest single-year decline in four decades. Minority populations are set to suffer worse declines in life expectancy.

The airline industry, which has seen a 95% decline in travel from European countries, had hoped to see the end of the restrictions, even as one high-profile panel tasked with examining systemic failures that allowed the spread of the virus found the measures have probably been helpful.

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, a World Health Organization group, [recently found](#) travel and trade restrictions have “most likely been helpful in curbing transmission”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/us-travel-restrictions-coronavirus-biden-block-trump-order>

2021.01.20 - Coronavirus uk

- [Care homes Covid-related deaths in England jump by 46%](#)
- [Lincolnshire Two-thirds of residents die in outbreak at care home](#)
- [England Schools may reopen regionally, medical chief says](#)
- [Business Black, Asian and minority-ethnic UK workers hit worst by Covid job cuts](#)
- [Pets Bereavement helplines report big rise in calls during Covid](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

Covid-related deaths in care homes in England jump by 46%

Number of deaths at highest level since mid-May and UK toll at more than 25,000, figures show

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Robert Booth](#) and [Niamh McIntyre](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.59 EST First published on Tue 19 Jan 2021 07.53 EST



Care home resident Vera Levick, 106, is comforted by staff before receiving an injection of the coronavirus vaccine at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

Deaths in care homes in England have hit the highest level since mid-May, according to the latest official figures, which revealed a 46% jump in

coronavirus-related deaths in the last week as the more transmissible variant of Covid-19 breaches care homes' defences.

In the week to last Friday, 1,260 deaths in care homes involving Covid-19 were reported to the Care Quality Commission, a sharp jump from 824 and 661 in the previous two weeks. The weekly death toll in care homes had fallen to well below 100 in early October.

The rising numbers came after the vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, described the inoculation programme as "a race against deaths" and GPs scrambled to deliver vaccines to the half of care home residents yet to receive jabs. NHS England has set a goal of vaccinating all care residents by Sunday as care homes report "extreme staffing pressures" amid outbreaks that have almost trebled since late December.

Separate figures from the Office for National Statistics for the week to 8 January showed more than 25,000 people had died from Covid in care homes across the UK since the start of the pandemic.

However, the number of care home residents who have succumbed to Covid is more than 6,000 higher once deaths after residents were admitted to hospital are taken into account.

Cases

They take the number of care resident deaths from Covid in the UK to more than 32,000 – about a third of all fatalities from the pandemic.

Over Christmas 13 of 27 residents [at Edendale Lodge care home in Crowhurst](#), East Sussex, died from Covid, but several of them died in hospital, meaning that until now they would not have been counted as care home deaths.

The worst-affected areas last week were in line with the community spread of infections. In the south-east, 378 care home residents died from Covid, followed by 178 in the east of England and 137 in the West Midlands.

Craven in North Yorkshire had the worst care home death rate of any local authority in England, with 23 deaths in the month to 8 January – amounting

to 3.5% of its total care home beds, according to Public Health England data from 2020.

The next worst death rate was in Boston in Lincolnshire, while Eden in Cumbria, and Hastings and Canterbury in Kent also reported death rates of about 3%. The East Riding of Yorkshire had the highest total number of deaths, with 60 reported during this period.

Vic Rayner, the executive director of the National Care Forum, said research among its membership had shown “phenomenal pressure on staffing across all care settings” and warned: “The acute challenges we are seeing in hospitals across the country are also happening in social care – right here, right now.”

At Tile House, a care home on the Isle of Wight infected in recent weeks, only five of its 37 staff did not test positive and 15 of the 17 residents were infected. It meant the managing director of the chain that runs it, Island Healthcare, had to take over along with other head office staff. Maggie Bennett told the Guardian she worked from 6.30am till 10pm for 10 days to manage the shortage of staff. At another of its homes on the island, Northbrook House, 37 out of 81 staff tested positive.

“The guidelines were followed to the letter, PPE, restrictions on visiting and we were testing vigorously, taking temperatures, and before I knew it the whole house had it,” said Kat Cotton, the manager of Northbrook House, who has been working 18-hour days. “It sends you into turmoil, in your brain, in your stomach.”

Bennett said: “The whole system is stretched beyond anything we could imagine.”

Covid interactive

Mike Padgham, the chairman of the Independent Care Group, which represents some providers, said: “Today’s awful figures show us that Covid-19 is still taking a terrible toll in our care and nursing homes. Each statistic is the death of a loved one – a parent, a wife, a husband, an aunt, uncle or

friend and our thoughts go out to everyone who has lost someone to Covid-19.

“We have to keep up the pressure – keep the momentum on the vaccination programme and, as a society, keep observing the rules.”

Meanwhile, the government has acted to help care homes accept Covid-positive patients from crowded hospitals by underwriting the risk posed by them spreading the virus.

Insurers were refusing to cover care homes offering to become “designated settings” for discharged Covid patients – also known as “hot homes” – which have been set up in some areas to try to keep infection out of other care settings.

Until the end of March those homes will now be covered by the UK government for clinical negligence and employers’ and public liability where they cannot obtain commercial cover.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/covid-related-deaths-in-care-homes-in-england-jump>

Coronavirus

Two-thirds of residents die in Covid outbreak at Lincolnshire care home

Exclusive: eighteen out of 27 people living at The Old Hall near Spilsby died and two staff were treated in hospital

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Diane Vale, manager at The Old Hall care home, said: ‘You expect to lose residents periodically but not that quickly and in that number. The effects on staff emotionally and mentally are horrendous.’ Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

Diane Vale, manager at The Old Hall care home, said: ‘You expect to lose residents periodically but not that quickly and in that number. The effects on staff emotionally and mentally are horrendous.’ Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

[Sarah Marsh](#) and [Robert Booth](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 06.02 EST

A care home in Lincolnshire has been left devastated after Covid killed two-thirds of its residents with two staff treated in hospital in an outbreak the manager described as “horrendous”.

Eighteen of 27 residents at The Old Hall at Halton Holegate, near Spilsby, died in the run-up to Christmas, the care home’s manager, Diane Vale, told the Guardian. Most of those who died were in their 90s – the youngest was 79 and the oldest 99.

Some of the deaths were so sudden staff did not have the chance to administer end-of-life treatment or arrange for loved ones to say goodbye.

It is the most devastating outbreak in a care home in England to have emerged in the second wave of the pandemic, as the new, more transmissible, variant of the virus spreads and GPs race to vaccinate all residents by the end of this week.

Covid outbreaks in England’s care homes almost tripled in the three weeks to 10 January, according to data from Public Health England. This month, [the Guardian revealed](#) that 13 of 27 residents had died from Covid at Edendale Lodge care home in Crowhurst, East Sussex, since 13 December.

“The outbreak started on 16 November and lasted around six weeks,” Vale said. “All 27 residents tested positive at the same time, as well as 20 out of 28 staff. It was awful, we lost 18 residents altogether. I have been a manager for 40 years and have never had to deal with anything like it – it was horrendous.”

Two members of staff were so ill they were taken to hospital with one still off sick. The home’s infection control procedures were validated as safe [by regulators at the end of November](#). Core staff had moved in to reduce the risk of infection spreading.

The home is in East Lindsey, the district of Lincolnshire that recorded one of the highest weekly number of Covid care homes deaths in England last month. Fifty-two people died from Covid in the district’s care homes in the five weeks to 3 January, second only to the number of care home deaths, 71, in East Riding.

Across the UK, 23,916 people had died from confirmed or suspected Covid in care homes by 1 January 2021 – 31% of all deaths from the virus.

The first death from Covid at The Old Hall was on 18 November, two days after the residents were all tested for Covid.

“Originally there were no symptoms and the symptoms they tell you to look for, such as a continuous cough or high temperature, there was no indication of that,” Vale said.

The manager said panic went through her mind as she had been able to keep coronavirus out of her care home during the first wave of the virus.

“You get used to losing residents. That is the nature of a care home and the life expectancy when you are in a care home is two years. You expect to lose residents periodically but not that quickly and in that number. The effects on staff emotionally and mentally are horrendous,” she said.

Vale said staff spent a lot of time crying and they moved into a caravan nearby to be around to help.

“For a lot of residents, we did not have time to bring them to the hospital because they were not poorly for long enough,” she said. “We were talking to doctors on a daily basis but with a lot of them there were no signs they were going to die. We had one lady who had a full bowl of porridge in the morning, and ate her lunch and she died the next day. Some of the deaths were even quicker than that.”

Vale said a lot of residents did not get to say goodbye to loved ones or receive the normal end-of-life care. “Some did pass on their own because there was no suggestion anything was going to happen. We went in to do checks and they had gone,” she added.

Vale is proud of her staff, who found the experience very hard. “It was the staff that got me through it and my deputy, Andrea, I would not have been able to do it without her ... The staff were amazing.”

She added: “People who think Covid is a hoax want to come to a care home or hospital. They are on their knees.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/two-thirds-of-residents-die-in-covid-outbreak-at-lincolnshire-care-home>

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Coronavirus

Schools could reopen sooner in some parts of England, medical chief says

Concerns raised about fairness of assessment if areas such as London go back quicker

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Sally Weale](#) and [Helen Pidd](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.27 EST First published on Tue 19 Jan 2021 07.33 EST



Boris Johnson ordered schools in England to close as part of a national lockdown just a day into the new term. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

There could be a phased reopening of schools in England based on regional infection rates after a lifting of the national lockdown, MPs have been told.

The deputy chief medical officer, Dr Jenny Harries, said that as England came out of lockdown, it was highly likely there would be inconsistent patterns of infection across communities in different parts of the country.

As a result, schools could reopen at different times, with areas such as London – which was one of the first to be severely affected by the new variant, resulting in soaring rates of hospital admissions – among the first to get children back in classrooms.

Harries, who was giving evidence to MPs on the Commons education committee, would not commit to schools definitely reopening after the February half-term, saying there was still uncertainty about the implications of the new variant of the virus.

Asked by the committee chair, Robert Halfon, whether there was likely to be a regional or phased system of opening, Harries said: “On the broad epidemiology, it’s highly likely that when we come out of this national lockdown, we will not have consistent patterns of infection in our communities across the country.

“And therefore, as we had prior to national lockdown, it may well be possible we need to have some differential application.”

She said schools would be at the top of the priority list, to ensure children’s education and wellbeing were at the forefront of consideration.

“[The] short answer is, I think it’s likely we will have some sort of regional separation of interventions.” She added that there were “glimmers of hope” in London with regards to infection rates.

Halfon said it seemed very unlikely that schools would be able to reopen classrooms next month. Some reports have suggested they may remain shut until Easter, though with a staggered return based on regional infection rates. Some children could get into school sooner than others, raising concerns about growing inequalities in access to education.

Boris Johnson ordered schools in England to close as part of a national lockdown just a day into the new term, after millions of primary children

had returned to class. Under the restrictions children of key workers and vulnerable pupils are still allowed to attend school, while all other pupils are now learning remotely.

Asked whether Johnson agreed with a phased reopening of schools, the PM's spokesman said his priority was to get schools open as soon as possible. But whether or not that was possible after the February half-term would depend on a number of factors, the spokesman said.

Official figures published by the Department for Education on Tuesday showed that more than a fifth of primary school pupils in England (21%) were in class last week, compared with 5% of secondary school students.

A staggered school return will add to fears about the fairness of summer assessments. Glyn Potts, the headteacher of Newman Roman Catholic college in Oldham, said the government must address urgent questions about fairness and exams to ensure children in areas hardest hit by Covid were not disadvantaged.

About [200 year 11 pupils](#) at his secondary school missed five weeks of teaching in the first term in autumn because of successive outbreaks.

Lucy Powell, the Labour MP for Manchester Central, said a regional reopening approach to schools would be “very difficult” and “not supported by evidence”.

The mayor of Greater Manchester said he would be concerned about a regional approach to schools reopening. “If you are going to allow schools to go back at different times I don’t see how you can have any form of standardised assessment, which is what the government are still talking about,” Andy Burnham said.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: “We expect that it will depend on coronavirus infection rates and the pressure on the NHS, and that the government will make a call on this issue nearer the time. What is important is that when schools fully reopen, everything possible is done to keep them open and to keep disruption to a minimum.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/english-schools-may-reopen-regionally-medical-chief-suggests-covid>

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Job losses

Black, Asian and minority-ethnic UK workers hit worst by Covid job cuts

Drop in employment in year to September 2020 was 26 times higher than for white workers



Debenhams in Oxford Street, which is closing down. O'Grady said that in sectors such as hospitality, retail and the arts, BAME employment had 'plummeted'. Photograph: Mark Thomas/REX/Shutterstock

Debenhams in Oxford Street, which is closing down. O'Grady said that in sectors such as hospitality, retail and the arts, BAME employment had 'plummeted'. Photograph: Mark Thomas/REX/Shutterstock

[Phillip Inman](#)

[@phillipinman](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 13.52 EST

Black, Asian and minority-ethnic (BAME) workers have suffered the brunt of job cuts during the pandemic, according to analysis that shows the

number in employment has dropped by 26 times more than the drop in white workers over the same period.

The employment rate for people from BAME backgrounds slumped 5.3% in the year to September 2020, compared with a 0.2% decrease in the number of employed white workers.

The TUC called on the government to act quickly to protect vulnerable BAME workers, many of whom faced redundancies in the accommodation and food sectors, where about a quarter of BME workers have lost their jobs.

The TUC general secretary, Frances O'Grady, said she blamed systemic racism that pushed a disproportionate number of such workers into low-income and part-time jobs.

BAME workers have borne the brunt of the economic impact of this pandemic, she said. “In every industry where jobs have gone, BME people have been more likely to be made unemployed.”

“The time for excuses and delays is over. Ministers must challenge the systemic racism and inequality that holds back BME people at work,” she added.

Last month, the Office for National Statistics said its research into the wellbeing of different ethnic groups showed that 27% of people from black backgrounds reported finding it difficult to make financial ends meet, compared with fewer than 10% among most white groups.

More people from BAME worked in precarious and poorly paid jobs, leading them to be among the most worried about their household finances going into the pandemic in March.

A rise in unemployment among BAME workers was likely to have played a part, the report found.

More than 800,000 workers have been made redundant during the pandemic and the unemployment rate is expected to peak at about 7.5% sometime between April and June, according to data from the Office for Budget Responsibility.

But the unemployment rate for BAME people has already reached 8.5%, much higher than the overall average of 4.9% and the 4.5% average for white workers, the TUC report said.

Job losses have been concentrated in a handful of industries, with three industries accounting for 70% of job losses: 297,000 in accommodation and food, 160,000 in wholesale and retail and 115,000 in manufacturing.

O'Grady said that in sectors such as hospitality, retail and the arts, BAME employment had "literally plummeted".

The number of black, Asian and minority-ethnic workers in the accommodation and food sector fell by 23%, compared with 13% among white workers, while the number of black women working in arts and entertainment dropped by two-fifths.

Guardian business email sign-up

The TUC called on the government to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting, ban zero-hours contracts which disproportionately affect BAME workers, and publish all equality impact assessments on government responses to Covid-19.

Patrick Roach, who chairs the TUC's anti-racism taskforce, said: "During previous economic downturns, [BAME] workers have been 'first out and last in'.

"The government needs to address the causes and effects of structural racism and set out a national recovery plan that works for everyone."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/19/black-and-minority-ethnic-uk-workers-hit-worst-by-covid-job-cuts>

Pets

UK pet bereavement helplines report big rise in calls during Covid

As actor Miranda Hart takes time off to grieve, charities speak of heartache many face after loss of beloved animal

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Miranda Hart has said she will be taking time off after the death of her dog Peggy, pictured here in 2016 with the actor. Photograph: Ken McKay/ITV/Rex/Shutterstock

Animal bereavement helplines have reported a big increase in calls during the coronavirus pandemic, charities have said, as it emerged that the comedian and actor [Miranda Hart](#) was taking time off work to grieve the loss of her beloved dog Peggy.

The Blue Cross animal charity and [Cats](#) Protection, a UK charity dedicated to rescuing and rehoming stray cats, said they had received a growing number of calls from people unable to be with their dying pets because of social-distancing rules that mean vets have to euthanise a cat or dog alone.

The reports come as Hart shone a light on the heartache many people experience when a pet dies. The actor wrote about Peggy's death on her Instagram page, saying: "Fellow dog owners will know the excruciating sadness of losing your loyal, loving best friend."

Animal charities and pet bereavement counsellors said most companies did not offer time off work to an employee when their pets died and there was no legal requirement for them to do so. However, they said there was a growing awareness around being sympathetic in such situations.

Diane James, who manages the Blue Cross pet bereavement support service, said the number of people contacting them had increased from a few thousand five years ago to 14,200 last year. She noted that there had been a 38% rise in calls during December compared with the previous year.

"I think that is a time when people feel lonely and realise loss [over Christmas]. They need support more around those times," she said.

"It has been a tough old year because when a lot of animals are euthanised their owners have not been there because of the pandemic ... We get people ringing saying their only companion is now gone. Also, it is different now pet crematoriums are not running as normal," she said.

James said a handful of employers offered compassionate leave, usually unpaid, if someone informed them a pet had died.

"Compassionate unpaid leave is the best option but more important is understanding how the loss of a pet affects an employee and directing people to services that offer support."

Dawn Murray, a pet bereavement support counsellor, said that in her two decades of working in the industry she has seen a rise in its growth as companies realised the impact losing a dog or cat could have on an

employee. “We are making progress in that direction but I don’t know if it will ever be a law to allow someone time off,” she added.

She said she received a 20% rise in calls last year. “With pet bereavement, a lot of people don’t require to be counselled but want extra support and reassurance that they are not going mad. I can address a lot of people’s concerns.”

Catherine Joyce, the leader of the “Paws to Listen” team at Cats Protection, said that at the beginning of the lockdown there had been a rise in reports of cats getting involved in road traffic accidents. She attributed the increase to people driving more recklessly and the fact there were fewer cars on the roads, which led to cats roaming into unfamiliar territories.

“But the main thing we are hearing is that people cannot be with cats when they die, which is really sad … It is horrific for people who have to leave a cat carrier at the door and then pick it up later.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/19/uk-pet-bereavement-helplines-report-big-rise-in-calls-during-covid-miranda-hart>

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[Art](#)

Raw, brave, wild and honest: why Germany is Europe's greatest artistic nation

Germany became a unified state 150 years ago this week – and no other country has produced such original, provocative and powerful art since, from Richter to Klee, from Dix to Höch



Decadent days ... a detail from Otto Dix's 1926 portrait of the journalist and poet Sylvia von Harden. Photograph: agefotostock/Alamy
Decadent days ... a detail from Otto Dix's 1926 portrait of the journalist and poet Sylvia von Harden. Photograph: agefotostock/Alamy



[Jonathan Jones](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.38 EST

Situated on the edge of the Alps, Neuschwanstein Castle may not look like the birthplace of modern art. Best seen from a perilously crowded footbridge across a vertiginous gorge, it floats in misty rains, a cloudy dream of white spires and battlements. Yet this 19th-century colossus is an architectural homage to one man: a composer who inspired the avant garde to make the leap to modernism.

[Richard Wagner](#)'s music so enflamed King Ludwig II of Bavaria, he built this magnificent medieval vision in honour of the composer. But, in artists across Europe, Wagner's musical might released much more futuristic impulses. The abstract leitmotifs and unearthly symbolism of his operas fascinated artists from Aubrey Beardsley to Paul Cézanne. The impressionists, too, were entranced: Renoir travelled to Palermo, Sicily, to portray Wagner when he was composing Parsifal.

For all these artists, Wagner, in spite of his disfiguring antisemitism, was a new kind of creator from a new kind of country, and not just one that built castles for its cultural heroes. Germany became a unified nation 150 years ago this week, on 18 January 1871. It's an anniversary that will doubtless be seen by some as one of shame and blood: the Prussian chancellor and

architect of German nationhood Bismarck secured unification through a series of wars in the 1860s, including attacks on Denmark and Austria, and it was sealed at the Palace of Versailles after the military humiliation of France. In the next seven decades, [Germany](#) would be at the centre of two world wars and perpetrate the Holocaust, only to re-emerge today as a successful democracy after the defeat of Nazism in 1945 and the fall of communist East [Germany](#) in 1989.



Unforgettable visions ... Three Horses, 1912, by Franz Marc. Photograph: Universal Images Group/Getty Images

But Britons who close their minds to Germany are missing so much. For one thing, this is the greatest modern artistic nation in [Europe](#). Art history tends to get it all wrong, exaggerating the glamour of French art, just as it does with American art. And in Britain, laughably, we even try to kid ourselves that Henry Moore and John Piper are modernist greats. The reality is that nowhere else has produced as much original, provocative and powerful art as Germany over the last 150 years. This has been the German era.

And all modern art begins with Wagner. His mystic tones can be discerned in the smoky light of [Monet](#)'s Impression: Sunrise, and they shaped the late-19th-century symbolist movement, which turned away from exterior reality into poetic distillations of feeling. The arch-symbolist [Edvard Munch](#) spent

key years of his career in bohemian 1890s Berlin and originally gave his most famous painting a German title, *Der Schrei der Natur* (The Scream of Nature). With its blood-red sky, it is a very Wagnerian shriek.



Stormtroopers and a potty helmet ... The Pillars of Society, 1926, by George Grosz. Photograph: www.bridgemanart.com

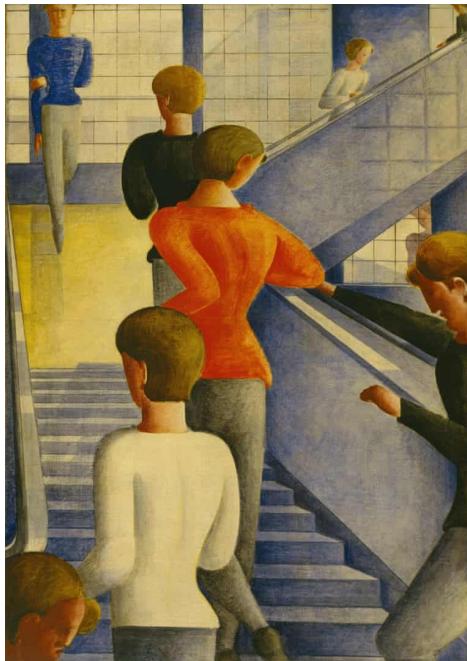
By the 1900s, the international appeal of Berlin as an artistic centre was matched by Munich. It was here that [Marcel Duchamp](#) journeyed from Paris in 1912 to study perspective and plan his *meisterwerk*, *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*. He was part of a cosmopolitan golden age. Munich's Blue Rider group took the symbolist intensity of Munch into a fierce realm of raw colour. They were anything but narrowly nationalist, led as they were by Russian émigré Wassily Kandinsky who preached the spiritual depth of the colour blue. The wildest genius was Bavaria's own Franz Marc, who painted unforgettably charged visions of red and blue horses in exploding landscapes before being killed, aged 36, at the Battle of Verdun in 1916.

Here the angel of history appears. There is no denying the nightmare of Germany between 1914 and 1945. The greatness of German modern art lies in the ways it has recorded, opposed and remembered that age of destruction. In [Georg Grosz](#)'s 1926 painting *The Pillars of Society*, the rise

of the far right is laid bare. While a building blazes in the background, an unholy alliance of stormtroopers and capitalists rant and rave. One has shit for brains, literally, another wears a potty as a helmet, and another wears a swastika tiepin, a prophetic image – as few thought, in 1926, there would be a Chancellor Hitler.

Against these *scheisskopfs*, Grosz and his radical contemporaries revealed the joyous energy of Weimar democracy. New freedoms create a cut-up chaos of the new in Hannah Höch's punk photomontages, while Otto Dix's portrait of the journalist Sylvia von Harden holding forth in a Berlin cafe with short haircut, monocle and a cigarette between her long bony fingers is a homage to Weimar "decadence".

In 1937, the Nazis displayed the modern German art they confiscated, along with works by the likes of Picasso and Matisse, in the notorious [Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich](#). This Nazi rhetoric – that modern art was morally depraved – was a vicious response to something quite specific and homegrown: the celebration of free and fluid sexualities that takes often shocking forms in Weimar artworks, above all Dix's pictures of sex and death. His 1932 painting Youth and Age shows a stereotypical Aryan beauty in a pornographic pose being approached by a skeleton. Maybe it's Germany's immediate future.



Like living sculptures ... Bauhaus Stairway by Oskar Schlemmer.
Photograph: Alamy

Other radical Germans turned on the Wagnerian heritage of aesthetic reverie itself. For, as every Germanophobe knows, Hitler was a Wagner fan. The German Marxist Walter Benjamin argued in the 30s that fascism is an aesthete's ideology, its motto, "Let art flourish and the world perish." To see what he meant, watch the disturbingly seductive Nazi films of [Leni Riefenstahl](#). For Benjamin, the art of democracy is the photograph, endlessly reproducible and replacing romantic sublimity with human information.

Benjamin was at one with a strand of Weimar art. The great photographer August Sander's steady-eyed portrait series of the German people, formally posed and presented as anthropological specimens, is one of modern art's most haunting social documents. And at the Bauhaus school, young Germans learned to make artworks, buildings and objects that were useful, rational, optimistically beautiful. Oskar Schlemmer's 1932 painting The Bauhaus Stairway shows young men and women like living sculptures in its clean architecture: a portrait of a Germany that was about to be effaced.

It would come back. For many artists after 1945, the objectivist, photographic rationalism advocated by Benjamin is the only truly moral art after Nazism. [Gerhard Richter](#) is a painter who refuses any idea that painting is special, who not only copies photographs but avoids all hints of the expressionist. Paradoxically, he's created some of the most sublime images in contemporary art. His Cage paintings, abstractions made by chance according to the rules of American neo-dada composer John Cage, are as mysterious and entrancing as a Wagner prelude, or at least Kraftwerk's Autobahn. The same goes for [Andreas Gursky](#)'s panoramic photographs that show social reality matter of factly, yet on an epic scale that makes you woozy.

The boldest, strangest, most profound art of today's Germany fully embraces its dark and bloody roots. How it happened that in the 1960s and 70s, with a heritage that appeared too toxic to touch, German art regained the courage to dive into a Wagnerian ocean of myth and memory is the most astonishing redemption in modern culture. [Josef Beuys](#), who wore his famous hat to hide the burns he sustained as a wartime pilot, started out making primeval

Gothic religious sculptures and went on to reinvent art itself. Beuys translated Germanic folklore and ancient history into readymades of fat, felt, rusty metal and mud. The more time passes, the more clearly these ageing collections of 20th-century German relics reveal themselves as one vast Holocaust memorial.



‘The angel of history’ ... Paul Klee’s Angelus Novus. Photograph: Heritage Images/Getty Images

Beuys created his greatest installation, Tramstop, for the German Pavilion at the 1976 Venice Biennale. This Nazi era building still has on its facade the word “GERMANIA”, the title of the first book ever written on Germany, by the ancient Roman historian Tacitus. Beyond that brooding word in 1976 you could see found steel tramlines, cannonballs, a metal column (actually a cannon) topped with a howling head from some ancient place of grief.

In 1980, that same Germania pavilion housed a rough-hewn wood figure by [Georg Baselitz](#) that seemed to give a Nazi salute, and similarly history-drenched paintings by [Anselm Kiefer](#). At the time some saw this as irresponsible, or worse, but nothing could be clearer today than the serious way these two great artists contemplate the sorrows of the past. Kiefer’s vast European landscapes point the same way as Beuys’ tramlines.

Happy birthday, Germany? We won't hear much of that in Brexit Britain. But, then again, no historical celebration is simple. Walter Benjamin saw the tragic nature of all history, and all serious art, as he gazed at a 1920 masterpiece by [Paul Klee](#) that he owned, a monoprint called Angelus Novus. "This is how one pictures the angel of history," he wrote, looking at this cartoon vision of an angel with big eyes. "His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe ... The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed."

The angel of history is the spirit of Germany's greatest modern art: an art that stares at the past and cannot forget its tragedy. There is something very moving in its attempts to make whole everything that has been smashed. Klee's Angelus Novus, the symbol of this desire, now hangs fittingly in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

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[TV review](#)[Television](#)

Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain review – have attitudes changed?

Cerrie Burnell explored Britain's treatment of disabled people over history, from the Victorian workhouses for the 'feeble-minded' to the activists and trailblazers of the modern day



Cerrie Burnell with activists Jane Campbell and Alia Hassan in *Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain*. Photograph: Tom Hayward/BBC/Blast! Films

Cerrie Burnell with activists Jane Campbell and Alia Hassan in *Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain*. Photograph: Tom Hayward/BBC/Blast! Films



[Ellen E Jones](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.00 EST

Children's TV presenters are often at the forefront of social change. Perhaps this is because – as one of the people interviewed in *Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain* (BBC Two) remarked – “children are much better at inclusion” than their angry-letter-writing, Ofcom-complaint-making parents.

Ben Cajee, of the current CBeebies cohort, won praise for [his age-appropriate discussion of racism in October](#), but in 2009 it was his predecessor Cerrie Burnell who inadvertently became an activist. Burnell was born with a right arm that ends just below the elbow. She hadn't set out to champion the rights of disabled people – all she wanted was to introduce another episode of *Balamory* – but when parents complained that her appearance was “scaring children”, she did just that.

Where do such prejudices against disabled people come from? This documentary saw Burnell explore that question, finding the beginnings of an answer in the archives of a workhouse in Southwell, Nottinghamshire. There, page after page of an 1861 parliamentary report reduced human beings to labels such as “feeble-minded”, an umbrella term covering all manner of physical and mental conditions. In Victorian Britain, disabled and

impoverished people were routinely shut away from the rest of society in workhouses. When Burnell tentatively suggested that “a shadow of that has carried on, in a way”, the continuity was striking. It was in this 19th-century hell that the 21st century’s punitive attitudes towards benefits recipients took root.

Not everyone was content to leave disabled people to fend for themselves, however. Burnell’s history is littered with misguided do-gooders, such as the Manchester-area benefactor Mary Dendy, whose attempts to save Britain from “this evil” caused generations of misery. A committed eugenicist, she dedicated her life to founding Sandlebridge Colony, “a home for the permanent care of the feeble-minded”, and campaigning for the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which gave authorities sweeping powers to institutionalise people against their will.

At this point, Silenced shifted in tone from Who Do You Think You Are? social history to an unusually bleak episode of ITV’s reunion show [Long Lost Family](#). Brothers David and Alan Gambell only discovered the existence of an older sister, Jean, in 2007 after [opening a letter addressed to their long-dead mother](#). Jean had been shut away in a Macclesfield care home for more than 70 years, but, when the brothers were at last able to visit, she immediately recognised them and greeted them by name. “Within weeks, she died,” said David. “She was just hanging on to see her family at long last.”

[Cerrie Burnell: 'Disabled people have been shut away during the pandemic'](#)
[Read more](#)

It was all getting almost unbearably sad by the time the first heroes of Burnell’s history emerged to point the way forward. There was Dr Ludwig Guttmann, a Jewish spinal injuries specialist who fled Nazi Germany, then used competitive sports to restore the confidence of his paraplegic patients in England, ultimately founding the Paralympic Games. Later, in 1972, the trailblazer Paul Hunt wrote a letter to the Guardian calling for [the formation of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation](#) (UPIAS), resulting in the development of the social model of disability. This was the revolutionary idea that people were not disabled by their impairment or

difference, but by a society that, for example, had no wheelchair ramps at train stations.

Particularly badass, though, were the disability rights activists Jane Campbell and Alia Hassan, who recalled for Burnell the thrill of “bringing London to a standstill” with their direct action campaign in the 80s. The look of baffled insult on Chris Tarrant’s face when he emerged from the Telethon ’92 charity fundraiser at LWT studios to a crowd of protesters holding “Piss on Pity” placards was a picture. It does seem, though, that the producers missed a trick in not approaching Tarrant for an updated comment. What better case study on how popular attitudes to disabled people have – or haven’t – changed over the past 30 years?

The history of disabled Britain features plenty of heroes to inspire, but what Silenced so movingly illustrated is that this is not really the story of individuals who overcame the odds. In fact, it is the story of how entire communities can – and must – open up to include humans in all our variety. So, it felt appropriate to give the last word to Micheline Mason, a campaigner for integrated schools from a time before CBeebies: “When people saw the non-disabled kids saying we want our friends in school with us, we had a lot of fun together, y’know, that’s what changes people. You almost can’t argue about it any more.”

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[The Society interview](#)[Disability](#)

Interview

Cerrie Burnell: 'Disabled people have been shut away during the pandemic'

[Clare Horton](#)

The former CBeebies presenter and actor asks why disabled people are still treated as if they are inferior, especially during Covid-19



Cerrie Burnell presents *Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain* on the 25th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act. It's 'a wake-up call but not in a shouty way'. Photograph: Blast! Films/BBC

Cerrie Burnell presents *Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain* on the 25th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act. It's 'a wake-up call but not in a shouty way'. Photograph: Blast! Films/BBC

[@clare_horton](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.00 EST

"As a disabled person you have to be so political every day," says Cerrie Burnell, "just in how you go about your life; being joyful has to be a choice

because you are told at the beginning that you're not really welcome here or there is something wrong with you.”

Burnell, a former presenter on the children's channel CBeebies was born without the lower part of her right arm. The subject of [prejudice](#) by some parents when she got the CBeebies job, Burnell – also an actor and writer – explores the origins of negative attitudes towards disability in a BBC Two documentary on Tuesday, [Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain](#).

Part of a BBC season [marking the 25th anniversary](#) of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the programme asks why disabled people have been ostracised from society, charts the battle for rights and concludes that, despite the freedoms won, much progress still needs to be made.

[The Guardian view on disability rights: a deficit of attention | Editorial](#)
[Read more](#)

Burnell describes the show as “a wake-up call but not in a shouty way”, and says making it opened her eyes to the systemic ableism that has led to those with disabilities being treated as inferior.

In Great Britain, just over half of disabled people (52.5%) [are in employment](#), compared with 76.3% for the population as a whole, while [statistics for England](#) show that for those with a learning disability, the figure is only 5.6%.

Burnell cites the DDA as the most significant advance made for UK disability rights, although she is shocked at how relatively recently it was introduced.

“People had been campaigning since the 60s to have the right to choose where to live or how to dress or to have a relationship or to have children or to get to keep those children. All of those things had been taken away from us.”

The documentary [follows Burnell](#) as she questions why the prejudice towards disabled people dating back centuries persists today. Contemporary attitudes, she learns, were shaped by the segregation of disabled people, first

in workhouses and then in 20th-century institutions that admitted children with physical and learning disabilities and where they remained shut away for decades.

She also meets some of the trailblazers and crusaders who campaigned for [disability rights](#) and [inclusive education](#) and pioneered [independent living](#).

But she warns that rights fought for over decades can swiftly be lost. Disabled people had already been [badly affected by austerity policies](#) – which have led to cuts to welfare payments and social care funding, and made it harder for disabled people to live independently – and she feels that disabled people have “yet again been segregated and shut away” during the coronavirus crisis.

The first thing the public heard during the pandemic was that people didn’t have to worry about the virus as long as they didn’t have an underlying health condition, says Burnell. “Well, what if you do?” she asks. “It doesn’t mean that your life is any less valuable and again it is the disabled community who suffered the most throughout the pandemic and the death toll has been high.”

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in England and Wales, disabled people account for [almost six in 10 \(59%\) of all deaths involving Covid-19](#).



Presenter Cerrie Burnell speaks to disability campaigners Baroness Jane Campbell and Alia Hassan for the documentary. Photograph: Tom Hayward/BBC/Blast! Films

The fallout from the pandemic will be “brutal”, says Burnell, and “isn’t just going to suddenly end when everyone has been vaccinated because we’ll have lost so many people and services will be readjusting to the aftermath of the crisis”. She feels the emotional impact of the past year will take many people time to recover from, whether they were feeling anxious about going back into the world after isolating or they are working in overstretched public services.

Post-pandemic recovery plans must focus on improving access to spaces – from workplaces to cafes and other venues and better awareness of disability issues, Burnell believes. She especially wants disability to no longer be viewed as a barrier to employment, learning and living a full life.

“I think there is going to be a huge amount of anxiety going back out into the world,” she says. “The world wasn’t particularly kind to disabled people before the pandemic, so a lot of those small victories are going to have to be refought for.”

[People with learning disabilities should be prioritised for a Covid vaccine |](#)

[Steve Scown](#)

[Read more](#)

Burnell hopes her work – whether on this documentary, presenting on CBeebies or as an author – will help to play a part in “normalising” disability. She looks back fondly on her time on the children’s channel.

“I got to do a job that I loved and it was fabulous that it started conversations about disability,” she says, “but it is still very telling that it was needed. Now when you see someone on screen with one hand, without a prosthetic, hopefully it is less jarring than it was pre my time on CBeebies.”

In a 2011 Guardian interview, she called for [more positive disabled icons](#) – so have things improved over the past decade? She says advances have been made in getting more disabled actors on screen, citing Silent Witness’s [Liz Carr](#), rock musician, actor and writer [Mat Fraser](#), Years and Years star [Ruth Madeley](#) and [Melissa Johns](#), who has appeared in Coronation Street and BBC drama Life.

“Of course there is further to go, there always is,” she adds. “While there may be many working disabled actors, we are not yet at the point where we have got superstars, but that day is coming. I have much hope and I hope to be part of that change.”

She hopes eventually to see the media present more nuanced narratives of disabled people’s lives, beyond the current binary of misery or triumph over adversity: “We never explore things in a non-obvious way, we never explore the subtleties, the love or the joy.”

Curriculum vitae

Age: 41.

Family: Solo parent to a daughter.

Education: Cavendish secondary school, Eastbourne; Manchester Metropolitan University (acting).

Career: 2018-present: actor, author and TV presenter; 2018: actor, Doctors; 2018: presenter, Matron, Medicine and me; 2009-17, presenter on CBeebies, along with other shows such as The One Show and The Wright Stuff; 2002-08, actor, various roles, including The Bill, Holby City, EastEnders and Grange Hill; 2002-08: playwright.

Public life: Writer in residence, Booktrust.

Interests: Beach volleyball, ice skating, yoga and meditation.

- Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain is on [BBC](#) Two at 9pm on 19 January and available on iPlayer after that

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/19/cerrie-burnell-disabled-people-have-been-shut-away-during-the-pandemic>

From Maralinga bombs to bailer shells: the artistic alchemy of Judy Watson and Yhonnies Scarce

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[The politics sketch](#)[Politics](#)

UK proves world-beating at Covid deaths and prioritising profit

[John Crace](#)



Debates about post-Brexit fate of musicians and ethics in trade deals underline government's concerns



Junior minister Caroline Dinenage is better suited to reading audiobooks for insomniacs than her chosen career in parliament. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Junior minister Caroline Dinenage is better suited to reading audiobooks for insomniacs than her chosen career in parliament. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.06 EST

On the day that the UK took poll position in the number of deaths per capita in the coronavirus pandemic – I’m not sure that’s what the prime minister had in mind when he described the country as world-beating – one of the biggest political stories was whether Boris Johnson treated himself to power naps during the course of his working day.

Allegra Stratton, the prime minister’s press spokesperson, insisted that the rumours were untrue but stopped short of saying they were “completely” untrue. So maybe Boris just likes to spend a lot of time wide awake with his eyes closed.

But if Johnson had been planning on a quick snooze, he couldn’t have chosen a better moment than the SNP’s Peter Wishart’s urgent question on visa restrictions for musicians wanting to tour the EU post Brexit. Not because there was anything inconsequential about the matter, but because in

Caroline Dinenage, a junior minister at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Tories have a natural barbiturate. Someone far better suited to reading audiobooks for insomniacs than her chosen career in parliament.

It's not just the monotone with which she delivers her sentences, it's the absence of content. Rather she just bores everyone into submission by repeating the same things over and over again – something which in Westminster is regarded as a highly prized asset – so no one comes away any the wiser from an hour spent in her company. Her main thrust was that the [UK had offered the EU a great deal](#) for touring musicians but that the EU had turned it down and offered an unacceptable deal instead.

Wishart and many others shook their heads in disbelief. Their understanding – along with the Musicians' Union – was it had been the EU which had offered the good deal of a 90-day free travel period and that the UK had turned it down.

“Absolutely not,” Dinenage said, while refusing to give any details and insisting that the EU had been telling lies about what it had proposed. Eventually Labour’s Kevin Brennan and others begged her to publish the full correspondence between the UK and the EU so parliament could make up its own mind about who was telling the truth.

Now Dinenage became uncharacteristically coy, saying she would have to ask her superiors at several other departments for permission. Something she made sound as difficult as a breach of the Official Secrets Act. You have to remember, she mumbled, that the country had just voted for parliament to take back control over its laws and borders so now was not the time to do anything that might benefit the EU. Or the UK for that matter.

Next up came the consideration of the Lords’ amendments to the trade bill. Or rather, the outright rejection of all the amendments by the government’s mouthpiece, junior trade secretary, Greg Hands, whose main objection to everything was that the executive hadn’t gone out of its way to take back control only to allow MPs to have their say. It had been bad enough in the old days when MEPs had been allowed to have a voice on EU trade policy.

So why throw away all the advantages gained by giving UK democratically elected representatives the chance to mess things up?

What was needed was a bit more trust. The UK had promised not to get involved in any deals that might trade away the NHS or risk online harms to children, so it would be helpful if MPs just took the government at its word rather than seek to cause trouble through greater scrutiny. But the key amendment was the one on genocide, with many Tories concerned that the government might turn a blind eye to the [treatment of the Uighurs](#) in its keenness to come to a deal with China.

“We don’t have a free trade deal with China,” Hands declared triumphantly. So there was nothing genocidal to be considered.

And even if there was, we shouldn’t trust the British high courts to decide what regimes had or hadn’t committed human rights abuses, not least because they may take a harsher view than the compromised international criminal court.

It should be the government that decided the ethics of trade deals, not some unelected UK judges. It wasn’t that far away from declaring the British judiciary to be enemies of the people yet again.

Tory MP Nusrat Ghani interrupted to say that was why she had tabled another amendment giving parliament the right to vote on any deal in the event the courts had found our trading partners guilty of genocide. Hands looked genuinely surprised.

This was the first he had heard of it. Well that’s odd, said Iain Duncan Smith, unusually finding himself on the side of the angels, because he had given the department a copy of the amendment a week ago and it had mysteriously found its way on to the day’s order paper.

It was a staggering admission of ignorance and complacency but Hands did his best to cover his embarrassment by saying that nobody cared more about human rights than he did, but the damage was done. Several other Tories, as well as all opposition MPs, spoke out in favour of the amendment but Hands wasn’t in the mood for listening. His hands were over his ears. Given a

choice of conscience or profit, the latter won out every time. That's what will make the UK world-beating again. That and the death stats.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/19/uk-proves-world-beating-at-covid-deaths-and-prioritising-profit>

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Joe Biden

Joe Biden will launch presidency with appeal for unity – but whose unity?



American flags are placed on the National Mall, with the US Capitol behind, ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Photograph: Alex Brandon/AP

American flags are placed on the National Mall, with the US Capitol behind, ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Photograph: Alex Brandon/AP

Analysis: The convergent crises call for a united response, the president-elect argues, but Republicans say that means forgetting Trump's alleged role in insurrection

[Lauren Gambino](#)

[@laurenegambino](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.19 EST

When Joe Biden takes the oath of office on Wednesday, the new president [will appeal for national unity](#) from the steps of the US Capitol, where two

weeks ago a mob, incited by Donald Trump, stormed the building in a violent attempt to prevent this very moment.

Though their efforts failed, the bloody insurrection exposed the fragility of America's commitment to a peaceful transfer of power, underscored by Trump's absence at his successor's inauguration ceremony.

[Biden to target Covid and the economy amid stack of orders in first 100 days](#)
[Read more](#)

As he takes his oath, Biden will not look upon an expanse of cheering crowds and American flags: a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic which has claimed about 400,000 American lives. Instead, in the aftermath of the assault on Congress, he will see the nation's capital fortified on a scale [not seen since the civil war.](#)

So begins the Biden era.

“Not since FDR, in 1933, has a president come in facing so many urgent challenges,” said Bob Shrum, the veteran Democratic strategist.

Upon his inauguration, the culmination of a career-long pursuit, Biden must immediately confront an ever-worsening pandemic that killed more Americans each day last week than died on September 11 or Pearl Harbor and an ailing economy that is exacerbating inequality along lines of race and gender, while the persistence of racial injustice and the global threat of climate change demand action.

All of this while the Senate begins an unprecedented second impeachment trial of his predecessor over his role in provoking the 6 January unrest that left five dead, endangered the lives of lawmakers, congressional staff and the vice-president, and delayed the certification of the electoral count.

Biden ran as a rebuke to the divisiveness and cynicism of Trumpism, promising to “restore the soul of the nation” and serve as a president for “all Americans”. Though the events of recent weeks have made that task demonstrably more difficult, Biden and his team say they are prepared to

plow ahead with their agenda, all under the inaugural theme of “America United”.

Hours after his inauguration, according to a memo by his incoming chief of staff, Ron Klain, Biden is planning to rejoin the Paris climate accords, repeal the ban on citizens from majority-Muslim countries, extend the temporary pause on student loan payments, evictions and foreclosures as well as implement a mask mandate on federal property and inter-state travel. He will also send an expansive immigration bill to Congress that seeks to provide a pathway to citizenship for 11 million people living in the US with irregular immigration status – a promise that has eluded past presidents.

Last week, he called on Congress to pass a \$1.9tn economic stimulus package that includes \$1,400 checks to Americans and funding to mobilize an unprecedented vaccination campaign against the coronavirus. Biden has pledged to inoculate 100 million Americans in his first 100 days, an ambitious goal that could be an early test of his presidency.



Biden leaves after meeting with transition advisers at the Queen theater in Wilmington, Delaware on Monday. Photograph: Angela Weiss/AFP/Getty Images

But the conditions under which Biden will assume the presidency are – remarkably –more auspicious than it first appeared in the wake of his November win.

Democrats unexpectedly won a pair of runoff races in Georgia, handing the party control of the Senate. Now the Senate will be divided evenly between the two parties, with Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris serving as a tie-breaking vote. A unified government gives Biden significantly more latitude to pursue an expansive legislative agenda and more freedom to fill his cabinet and judicial vacancies.

Even so, Biden faces an uphill struggle enacting his legislative agenda. Congress has been mired in gridlock over immigration, healthcare and government spending for years. Already, [Republicans](#), suddenly concerned once again about the national deficit, have signaled an unease with the size of his relief package.

Biden has spent much of his 50-year career in the political mainstream, evolving as the center of gravity moved, with his party marching leftward on issues of crime, abortion and immigration. Some have argued his reputation as a consensus-minded institutionalist may help push through more liberal policies. Biden himself has envisioned an FDR-sized presidency, outlining a massive economic agenda that he presented as a pragmatic response, given the scale of crises.

“The magic of [Joe Biden](#),” Andrew Yang, a former Democratic presidential rival, once observed, “is that everything he does becomes the new reasonable.”

Biden has signaled he plans to work extensively with Congress, aiming to build on his knowledge of the institution and his personal rapport with senators to attract bipartisan support.

Yet even if his drama-free approach to governance does help calm the body politic, substantive ideological and policy differences remain – both between and within the political parties.

For now, Biden has sought to overcome these differences by seeking counsel from across the political spectrum, including Republicans and progressives. More than ideology, Biden has focused on experience as he assembled his cabinet and White House Staff. His cabinet also reflects unprecedented racial and gender diversity.

Part of Biden's legacy, after serving eight years as the vice-president to the first Black president, will be elevating Harris to the vice-presidency. When she is sworn in on Wednesday, Harris will become the nation's first female, first Black and first south Asian American vice-president.

Biden's legislative agenda will require at least some Republican support at a moment when Democrats consider a number of their colleagues accomplices to the assault that put their lives at risk on 6 January. Deepening their fury, several Democrats have tested positive for the coronavirus after being locked down together with Republican lawmakers who refused to wear masks.

Multiple Senate Democrats have demanded the resignations of Senators Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, who led challenges to electoral votes in the chamber. Instead of calling for them to be removed, Biden said the Republican senators should "just be flat beat the next time they run". Neither are up for re-election until 2024, a presidential election year in which they are both viewed as potential contenders.



Stand-ins for President-elect Joe Biden and Jill Biden participate in a dress rehearsal for the inaugural ceremony. Photograph: Rod Lamkey/AP

But Democrats and progressive groups are pushing for more accountability. The Democratic congresswoman Cori Bush of Missouri introduced a resolution calling for the possible sanction or expulsion on House members who voted to throw out the electoral votes of some states. Their actions, she contends, amounted to a violation of the 14th amendment, which bans those who “engaged in insurrection” against the US government from ever holding federal office.

“In our country’s struggle for multiracial democracy, there have often been calls for unity that avoid holding white supremacists accountable before the American public,” said Waleed Shahid, a spokesman for Justice Democrats, a group that works to elect progressives. “It happened after the civil war and it happened after Jim Crow. I fear it could happen now.”

Barring Trump from holding future office and expelling Republicans are only part of the solution, Shahid said. Biden and the Democratic party, he continued, must “act on their mandate to deliver change for the American people rather than compromising on an agenda by co-governing, with a party that just paved the way for one of the most terrible episodes in American history.”

Some Republicans have claimed that pursuing accountability, particularly in the form of a Senate impeachment trial against a former president, threatens national unity.

The Republican senator Lindsey Graham, who amplified Trump's baseless claims of voter fraud before denouncing the president's actions after the riot, called Democrats' push to convict Trump after he leaves office "an unconstitutional act of political vengeance" that stands in the way of the "national healing that the country so desperately yearns for".

Biden has said his first priority remains combatting the coronavirus and stabilizing the economy, but added that there must be accountability for "those folks who engaged in sedition".

He urged the Senate to split its work days between Trump's trial, confirming his cabinet nominees and passing a new round of coronavirus relief.

Though a growing number of Republicans have split from the president in the wake of the attack, including 10 who voted to impeach him last week, recent polling underscores the depth of Biden's challenges rallying the nation behind his agenda.

An Axios-Ipsos [poll](#) found that a majority of Republicans still believe Trump was right to challenge the results of an election he lost decisively in November and do not hold him responsible for the riot on Capitol Hill.

A new [survey by the Pew Research Center](#) found that 62% of Democrats want Biden to work with Republicans "even if it means disappointing some of his voters". Nearly as many Republicans – 59% – say their party leaders should "stand up" to Biden, "even if it means it's harder to address critical problems facing the country".

Critics have cast his appeals for bipartisanship as willfully naive, especially after senior Republicans waited weeks to acknowledge him as the president-elect and two-thirds of the House Republican caucus voted to overturn the result of the presidential election in the hours after the riot.

Publicly Biden has sought to downplay the depth of opposition to his presidency. Speaking to reporters last week, Biden suggested that the violence would only loosen Trump's grip on the Republican party, making his goal of bipartisanship more achievable.

Whether Biden can – even to some degree – unite a profoundly polarized nation will depend in part on how successfully he meets the myriad challenges that await him upon his swearing-in.

On Wednesday, Biden will draw on the same themes of unity he outlined when he launched his campaign for president in April 2019, motivated by the white supremacist violence of Charlottesville. Far from being naive, Biden insists the message is even more urgent now.

“Unity is not some pie-in-the-sky dream,” Biden said last week, unveiling his vaccination plan. “The only way we come through this is together.

“And starting at noon on Wednesday, that is exactly how we are going to govern.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/joe-biden-unity-analysis-republicans-democrats>

[Television](#)

How France's Lupin became the surprise Netflix hit of the season

The charming series combines Ocean's Eleven's slickness with the implausibility of National Treasure to become the first French series to crack the US top 10



Omar Sy in Lupin. Photograph: Emmanuel Guimier

Omar Sy in Lupin. Photograph: Emmanuel Guimier

[Adrian Horton](#)

[@adrian_horton](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.21 EST

The greatest trick by Lupin, a new French series on [Netflix](#), is disguising substantiveness in plain sight. The show, created by the British showrunner George Kay and inspired by the beloved French character Arsène Lupin, packages over 115 years of inspiration (dating back to the character's invention by writer Maurice Leblanc in 1905) in a slick, swift escape easily binged in a day. Its star, the French actor Omar Sy, towers over his scene

partners, perpetually unreadable yet brimming with charisma; his character, Assane Diop, is a con man with a heart of gold able to turn his outsized presence into an uncatchable master of deception.

[Call My Agent: get au fait with the smash hit French comedy-drama](#)
[Read more](#)

The show is slight – five episodes of about 43 minutes (with more to come this year) – and without much press in the US, yet a week after its release is the second most watched program on Netflix, and the streamer's first French program to crack the top 10 in the American market. It's currently the streamer's most-watched global program and the company has now stated that it's set to reach 70m households within the first month, which will make it bigger than both Bridgerton and The Queen's Gambit.

It's not hard to see why; Lupin combines the verve of Ocean's Eleven with the thrilling implausibility and cultural lore of the first National Treasure. Where Nicolas Cage stole the Declaration of Independence, Assane begins the series with a similarly outlandish plan: steal Marie Antoinette's necklace, lost for 25 years and slated for auction, from the Louvre. But Assane, it's quickly revealed, is more cunning than anyone around him assumes; he's a devout fan of Arsène Lupin, the quintessential French gentleman thief replete with a monocle and a top hat, who has fingered through a copy of his debonair escapades so many times the pages are worn. (Sy is a fan as well, and the series arose in part from the freedom afforded by his César award for The Intouchables and Hollywood career to select his dream role – “If I were British, I would have said James Bond, but since I’m French, I said Lupin,” he told the New York Times).

Between montages of his shockingly low-budget heist plan (which, ultimately, is a bit of a red herring; you're not watching to see if he gets the necklace) the show peels back the layers of Assane's motivation: 25 years earlier, his father Babakar (Fargass Assandé), an immigrant from Senegal hired as a chauffeur for a wealthy white Parisian family, was framed for stealing the necklace. He died by suicide in prison, leaving an orphaned Assane with a copy of the Lupin stories and a drive for vengeance.

The series was always likely to be a hit in France, where the character of Lupin is a Sherlock Holmes-type cultural touchstone – a popular TV series that bore his name ran from 1971 to 1974 and a 2004 film starred Romain Duris. Lupin has also served as inspiration for a lineage of Japanese creators: the manga artist Kazuhiko Kato, known by the pen name Monkey Punch, created an ongoing anime series based Lupin's grandson, Lupin III, which has itself inspired several anime adaptations, including the legendary director Hayao Miyazaki's debut feature [Lupin III: The Castle of Cagliostro](#).

Though a largely unfamiliar character to the US, and despite Americans' general reluctance to watch with subtitles, Lupin's success isn't entirely unprecedented. Netflix automatically plays the dubbed English version, and Lupin follows in the footsteps of breakout global hits, such as [Money Heist](#), far and away Netflix's most popular global show viewed by [65m households](#) when its fourth season dropped in April 2020 (though it's worth noting that as of last year, Netflix counted a "view" as any account watching over two minutes of a program).

But the biggest draw, of course, is the gentleman con. Lupin won't win any awards for its production or writing, but any viewer knows that's not the point; the hook is in the Hollywood slickness of Assane's scheming, and the illusion of dauntless competency under pressure. It's a tried and true TV genre – think the icy schemer Tommy Shelby at his prime in the British gangster series Peaky Blinders, another bombastic global Netflix hit, or Idris Elba in Luther, perhaps Assane's clearest TV antecedent.



Photograph: Emmanuel Guimier

Still, Assane is no tech-laden Bruce Wayne; Assane is decidedly minimalist in his schemes, as he harnesses the potential of the street – masquerading as a food delivery biker, for example, or infiltrating small-scale drug rings – and eludes authorities through a series of distractions and faultless charm. He handles the fault lines of race in French society with the same dexterity, able to wield his presence as a 6ft 2in black man as alternately magnet or cloak. Posing as a member of the Louvre’s custodial staff, he’s invisible, able to scope out his target with minimal attention; as an ultra-rich tech entrepreneur at the necklace’s auction, his singularity as the only black face in the room becomes an insurance policy – noticed by everyone, he’s not suspected for the theft.

It’s a refreshing twist on an old-fashioned character within a longstanding genre, one that takes little to surrender to. Each episode concludes with a kick, in which Assane reveals his hand to reframe the episode’s prior events as a cascade of aspirational calm, expert planning and total control. Lupin’s “greatest talent, without a doubt, was to always be one step ahead”, Assane narrates over the first reveal, quoting the century-old source material over a montage of his deception – the allure of an all-knowing, sublime, mutable thief transcending both time and language.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/jan/19/lupin-netflix-surprise-hit-france-omar-sy>.

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Comedy

Radio 4 standups zoom through angst from all angles

The BBC's new comedy series brings together half-hour sets from Kiri Pritchard-McLean, Imran Yusuf and Joz Norris



Journalistic zeal and earthy humour ... Kiri Pritchard-McLean's Egg-sistential Crisis. Photograph: BBC

Journalistic zeal and earthy humour ... Kiri Pritchard-McLean's Egg-sistential Crisis. Photograph: BBC



[Brian Logan](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.00 EST

Netflix, Amazon Prime ... [Radio 4](#)? It's not just global content platforms carving up the standup market. [Radio 4](#) has broadcast sets in recent years from Geoff Norcott, Lucy Porter and Tom Allen – and is kicking off 2021 with a clutch of new recordings. Of the three so far released, none will blaze for the station a new rep for pulse-quickenning comedy. But they all reward a listen – and, at 28 minutes a pop, can be digested in the time it takes to (not) travel to work or knock up a socially isolated dinner.

None are live standup sets in the classic, room-full-of-laughing-people sense. Kiri Pritchard-McLean's Egg-sistential Crisis and Imran Yusuf's Relabelled are both performed to a live Zoom audience, the former with an added laughter track. It wouldn't struggle for laughs in the real world: it's a pert half hour, jaunty with an edge, exploring her generation's – and her own – resistance to having children.



Men behaving badly ... Imran Yusuf

Like the Edinburgh shows that made Pritchard-McLean's name (one of which, [Appropriate Adult](#), is part-recycled here), Egg-sistential Crisis comes at that issue with journalistic zeal and earthy humour. She itemises the reasons millennials shrink from parenting (overpopulation, money, concerns about fertility), each one teeing up a story from her life, such as the time she tried to sell her eggs to fund university and the occasion her friend introduced her, for the first time, to the man in the moon.

That cues a routine about the pockets of embarrassing ignorance we carry into midlife – which in turn proves to Pritchard-McLean that she's no less qualified to be a parent than anyone else. It brings the show to its resolution a bit too cutely, but when tackling huge generational and personal dilemmas in under 30 minutes, a certain superficiality is hard to avoid.



Head trip ... Joz Norris

It's a feature, too, of Relabelled – ostensibly an exploration of masculinity, but really a tour of [Yusuf's life](#), looked at through that lens. The commentary on gender roles amounts to little. Boys want to be strong, apparently, which is sometimes a good thing and sometimes bad. To illustrate the argument, Yusuf deploys material old and new, weak and less so. We find him hero-worshipping Jackie Chan and joining a karate class – before the “scrawny kid” grows up, works in video games, and finds a belated sense of male self-worth.

Just as Pritchard-McLean resorts to cheap jokes about crap men, Yusuf's stock in trade here is the “just kidding” sexist remark. “Of course,” he says, “some species have matriarchal societies. But the movie was still called Lion King though, innit? Hakuna matata, bitches. Get your own film!” There's a lot of that. But there's also a droll gag about the Schrödinger's cat nature of male behaviour right now, when an action can be both chivalrous and chauvinistic – until the woman on the receiving end makes her feelings known.

Joz Norris's A Small Talk on Small Talk is, as you'd expect from this graduate of [the Weirdos comedy collective](#), the least conventional of the trio. It's not a live performance; it's a trip inside Norris's head as he dramatises

his phobia of superficial social interactions. Some material overlaps with his 2020 film [You Build the Thing You Think You Are](#), and a very funny set piece about the mnemonic Thirty Days Hath September (released as a video last year) is revived, as Norris – a sort of absurdist Simon Amstell – worries at the question, “How can it be so hard to say something interesting about ourselves?” Seldom can half an hour have been so densely packed with meta comedy and existential angst.

- [BBC Radio 4's Stand-Up Specials](#) are available online.
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[Alexei Navalny](#)

Even in a Moscow jail, Alexei Navalny is dangerous to Putin

Analysis: release of investigation into Putin's wealth shows opposition leader is still determined to expose Russian president



Alexei Navalny being escorted out of a police station in Khimki, outside Moscow, after the court ruling that ordered him jailed for 30 days.
Photograph: Alexander Nemenov/AFP/Getty Images

Alexei Navalny being escorted out of a police station in Khimki, outside Moscow, after the court ruling that ordered him jailed for 30 days.
Photograph: Alexander Nemenov/AFP/Getty Images

[Andrew Roth](#) in Russia

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.36 EST

For more than a decade, [Vladimir Putin](#) has refused to say Alexei Navalny's name in public, referring to him as "that gentleman", or more recently, the "patient", a reference to his suspected poisoning by FSB agents.

In the logic of politics, Putin is simply trying not to give the Russian opposition leader free advertising. But his linguistic game also points to a rivalry that has become deeply personal, stoked by a decade of attacks against friends and family, and made urgent by the understanding that Navalny will not back down despite the threat of death by poisoning or prison.

On Tuesday, Navalny's team released a [mammoth investigation into Putin's wealth](#), including a £1bn palace on the Black Sea allegedly built for the Russian president that Navalny called "the biggest bribe in history".

[Vladimir Putin is not scared of Alexei Navalny, says Kremlin](#)
[Read more](#)

Even inside Moscow's notorious Matrosskaya Tishina jail, Navalny has remained personally dangerous to the Russian leader, determined to expose his two decades in power as nothing more than a swindle.

Having released details of the seaside idyll, underwritten by his friends and state companies, Navalny's team then twisted the knife, claiming that the safety-obsessed Putin would have to abandon the palace because they had released its architectural plans to the public.

Navalny has never shied away from direct attacks against Putin, labelling him as early as the 2011/12 mass protests a "thief" and his United Russia as the "party of crooks and thieves". He bet that anger over corruption would outweigh support built on patriotism and better living standards after the 1990s. His criticisms challenged the Kremlin narrative that Putin had returned Russia to a great power status.

Critics of Putin maintain that Navalny is the greatest threat to his government. "Putin is no longer afraid of western sanctions, critical statements and the demands of European and American politicians for further isolation," Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of the murdered opposition politician Boris Nemtsov, [wrote in an article](#) for Bild on Tuesday. "For him the stakes are too high – he knows that Navalny is capable of overthrowing his regime."

Whether or not that is true, Navalny has proven himself to have political talents that Putin does not: he is a charismatic speechmaker who actually appears to enjoy being on stage, an effective protest leader and a witty digital campaigner who can reach young, tech-savvy Russians, a demographic that the Kremlin is worried it is losing. By returning to the country on Sunday, he also exhibited a personal courage that many believe has been lost in Russia's cynical politics. Supporters at Vnukovo airport in Moscow compared him, somewhat prematurely, to Nelson Mandela.

On the day of the epiphany, when Russians bathe in ice-cold lakes and rivers to wash away their sins, Putin stepped into a cross-shaped pool near his Moscow residence and plunged his head below the surface three times, coming up each time to cross himself.

Next in “meanwhile Vladimir Putin” — an epiphany dip in front of an ice carved Jesus pic.twitter.com/3TPyvCqNlT

— Mary Ilyushina (@maryilyushina) [January 19, 2021](#)

Navalny, meanwhile, spent his first full day in Matrosskaya Tishina jail, isolated in a three-person cell as a measure against the coronavirus epidemic. He told an independent prison monitor that he had not been abused and that he was glad to be back in Russia.

It is not hard to guess why Navalny may be a target for retribution. His and Bellingcat's recent investigation into his poisoning was deeply embarrassing for the FSB, an organisation that Putin once ran. And his exposés of government corruption have naturally led him in one direction: Putin's friends and family. Navalny played an important role in identifying Katerina Tikhonova, a Moscow State University official, as Putin's daughter.

“It is more than just a dynastic succession,” he told Reuters in 2015, calling the system “neo-feudal”. “Children don't just inherit their parents' posts, but also the right to choose any other post they fancy. The danger is that very soon, all key resources will end up in the hands of five to seven families.”

After his arrest, his ally Vladimir Ashurkov said Navalny had given him a list of people he believed should be sanctioned to punish the Russian

government. Among them were two wealthy Russian businessmen, Roman Abramovich and Alisher Usmanov, and the sons of two senior security officials, Nikolai Patrushev and Alexander Bortnikov.

“The west must sanction the decision-makers and the people who hold their money,” he quoted Navalny as saying. “Nothing less will make an impact on the behaviour of the Russian authorities.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/even-in-a-moscow-jail-alexei-navalny-is-dangerous-to-putin>

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[Opinion](#)[Coronavirus](#)

The Guardian view on the vaccine rollout: a shot in the arm

[Editorial](#)

The strong start of the UK's inoculation programme doesn't cancel out past failures. But it is a huge relief



Blackburn Cathedral, one of the 10 new mass vaccination centres in England. Photograph: Reuters

Blackburn Cathedral, one of the 10 new mass vaccination centres in England. Photograph: Reuters

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.54 EST

We can do this. Not a mantra, or a hope, but a reality and a huge relief. With 6% of the population inoculated so far, and an ambitious target of 13 million people by mid-February, Britain's vaccination programme is working. In hospitals, pharmacies, [GP practices](#) and vaccination centres, using a nationwide queueing system that puts the eldest and most vulnerable at the front, people are being protected against the virus.

[More than half of the over-80s](#) have had at least one dose of either the Pfizer/BioNTech or Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, as have healthcare workers and care home staff and residents. People deemed clinically extremely vulnerable and the over-70s are next. The UK has vaccinated almost 4.1 million people, with around 62 million to go, and is ahead of every country except Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

This is not a call for complacency. The UK's death rate from coronavirus is a disaster. The situation in hospitals and [care homes](#) remains dire. With more than 90,000 deaths and almost [38,000 Covid patients in hospital](#), hundreds of thousands of people are either mourning family members or desperately worried about them. Nor is the vaccine rollout problem-free, with questions being asked about the slower start in Wales and Scotland. In England, too, the situation is subject to local variations, with concerns about the over-80s in some areas who have not yet had appointments. And there are worries about vaccine scepticism, with experts calling for a [focus on minority ethnic groups](#), who, research suggests, may need additional reassurance.

We do not yet know whether vaccinated people can transmit the virus. A reckoning is due with "lockdown sceptics" in politics and the media, who [fomented public distrust](#) of official advice and encouraged dangerous risk-taking. Looking beyond the UK, the lack of vaccines for low-income countries is a serious problem with long-term consequences. On Monday, the [World Health Organization warned](#) of a "catastrophic moral failure" if rich countries continue to hoard supplies and undermine Covax, the international vaccine-sharing fund, by prioritising their own deals with manufacturers.

These are more than caveats. The widening by the pandemic of inequalities both within and between countries is a cruel and ugly business. In the UK this week, there were worrying reports about the extent of [unhappiness among young people](#), the [harmful impact of nursery closures](#) and the grim threat hanging over families who are reliant on the £20 added to universal credit last year, which the government is now threatening to take away.

But in the midst of so much gloom and anger, it should still be possible to praise the achievement of all those who have worked on the vaccine rollout. Somehow, with intensive care wards full to bursting and [staff illness rates](#)

higher than usual, the NHS and its voluntary sector partners managed to find the resources needed to give more than 1.3 million people an injection last week. Ten new centres, including at Taunton racecourse and Blackburn Cathedral, are open. There is an end to this disease-ridden tunnel, and the more we support each other as we go through it, both in our private networks and publicly, as a society, the easier it will be to find the light on the other side.

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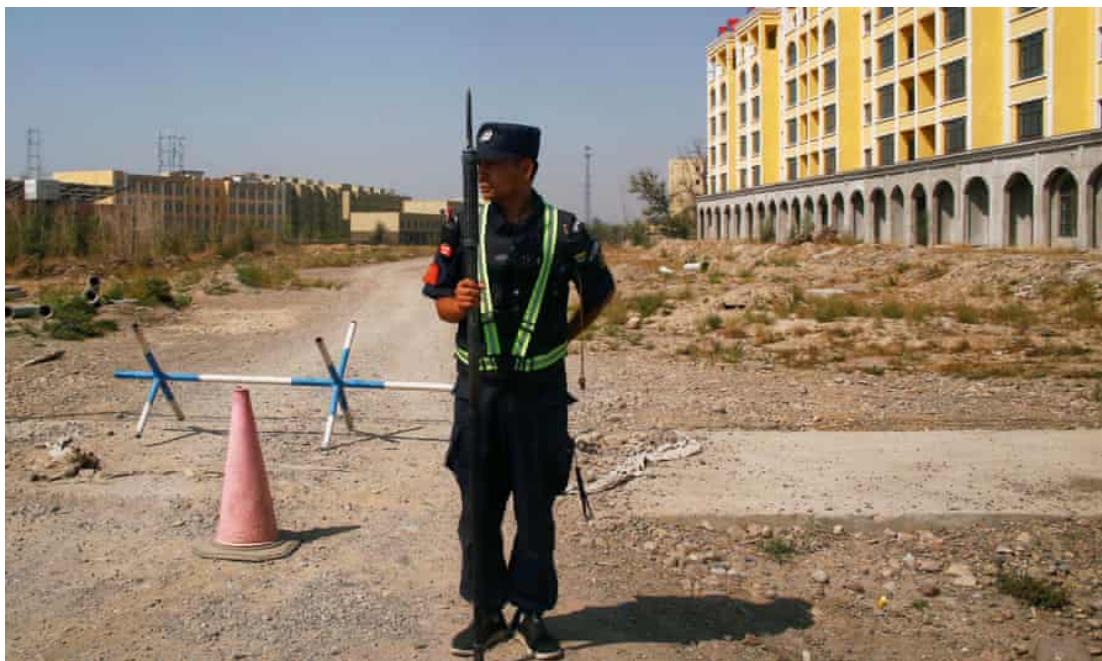
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[OpinionChina](#)

The Guardian view on Xinjiang and crimes against humanity: speaking and acting

[Editorial](#)

The US has accused China of genocide against the Uighurs, while British MPs are pressing the government to take a tougher stand



A policeman guards a ‘vocational education centre’ in Xinjian, China. ‘The willingness to say that human rights matter, and not only when it is convenient for the UK to do so, is important.’ Photograph: Thomas Peter/Reuters

A policeman guards a ‘vocational education centre’ in Xinjian, China. ‘The willingness to say that human rights matter, and not only when it is convenient for the UK to do so, is important.’ Photograph: Thomas Peter/Reuters

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.55 EST

It took a long time for leaders to notice, longer to condemn, and longer still to act. It took time for researchers to amass evidence of China's treatment of Uighurs in [Xinjiang](#) – from mass detention to forced sterilisation – given the intense security and secrecy in the north-west region. Beijing initially denied the existence of the camps, believed to have held about a million Turkic Muslims, before describing them as educational centres to tackle extremism. But the hesitation by other governments also reflected the anxiety to maintain relations with the world's second-largest economy.

The US, on Donald Trump's final day in office, became the first country to declare that [China is committing genocide](#). The administration has already [targeted officials](#) and [issued a ban](#) on any cotton or tomato products from the region. On Tuesday, the secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, described a "systematic attempt to destroy Uighurs by the Chinese party-state ... forced assimilation and eventual erasure". A more cautious report from a bipartisan US Congressional commission [said](#) that China had committed crimes against humanity and "possibly" genocide.

Mr Pompeo's statement is a parting shot, made with some cynicism. (Not all criticism of human rights abuses, however merited, is motivated solely by human rights concerns; Mr Trump reportedly told Xi Jinping that the camps were "exactly the right thing to do".) But the announcement is unlikely to be the end of the matter. Joe Biden's campaign called it genocide [months ago](#). While Mr Trump broke with the previous approach to China, the US has undergone a bipartisan shift, forged primarily by Beijing's actions – not only in Xinjiang but also in Hong Kong, its handling of the pandemic and in international relations more broadly.

The same change is evident in the UK, as evidenced by the sizeable Conservative rebellion in parliament on Tuesday, in which an amendment to the trade bill was narrowly defeated by 319 to 308. The genocide amendment originated in the Lords and was backed by all opposition parties, as well as a broad coalition outside parliament, including the Muslim Council of Britain and the [Board of Deputies of British Jews](#). It [proposes](#) that the UK high courts could determine whether genocide is taking place, potentially leading to the revocation of trade deals. The Foreign Office argues that genocide determinations are complex matters better made by international institutions – knowing full well that in reality they will not

consider them in this case, and that this is not a requirement of the Genocide Convention. The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, struck a far stronger tone than before when he spoke recently of “torture and inhumane and degrading treatment … on an industrial scale” in Xinjiang. But the remedies he put forward – requiring firms to do better on due diligence – were feeble.

A genocide finding is an extremely high bar: it is unclear whether a court would agree that Chinese actions passed it. It could not address Britain’s continuing sale of arms to Saudi Arabia despite its grotesque record, nor the recent agreement with Egypt, said by campaigners to be seeing its worst human rights crisis for decades.

China – whose spokespeople have described “the so-called ‘genocide’” as “a rumour deliberately started by some anti-China forces and a farce to discredit China” – has shown itself increasingly impervious to international opinion.

But at the very least, it must be ensured that western businesses do not profit from abuses such as forced labour. The willingness to say that human rights matter, and not only when it is convenient for the UK to do so, is important. MEPs too have promised to focus on them in their scrutiny of the new EU-China investment treaty, although Anglophone countries are taking a stronger stance towards Beijing in general. The political ground internationally is shifting. But measures can only hope to have an impact if like-minded nations act together and support each other.

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[Guardian Opinion cartoon](#)

[Donald Trump](#)

Steve Bell on Donald Trump leaving office – cartoon

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Opinion[**Marcus Rashford**](#)

Why is Marcus Rashford the only millionaire the Tories hate listening to?

[**Marina Hyde**](#)



In public their MPs say he's doing an 'incredible' job. But, after all the U-turns, in private the false bonhomie is failing



Marcus Rashford at FareShare Greater Manchester, October 2020.

Photograph: Fareshare/Mark Waugh/PA

Marcus Rashford at FareShare Greater Manchester, October 2020.

Photograph: Fareshare/Mark Waugh/PA

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.10 EST

There is no one vignette about the government's handling of the pandemic that "says it all", but there will always be a broken place in my heart for the fact that at the end of the first lockdown, the government opened the pubs before the schools. Hey, give the Johnson administration a break. They'd only had three and a half months to think about it, which the likes of Gavin Williamson had instead spent not thinking about how to handle the looming exam results fiasco.

Whether ministers will make more humane and intelligent choices this time round for the millions of children in various stages of crisis is as yet tantalisingly unclear. The precedent set by their dealings with [Marcus Rashford](#) suggests that the government needs to make the same mistake many more times than an average primary school pupil before it learns.

And so to Rashford, whose success in forcing government U-turns is increasingly infuriating backbench Tory MPs – particularly those who represent the so-called red wall. From school meals to food "hampers" to,

perhaps, the permanent universal credit top-up the footballer has endorsed, their frustration is broadly summarised by the question: why does the government keep losing against Marcus Rashford? Once the impossible has been eliminated, they might have to face the improbable truth that Rashford is simply better at it than them.

The government has found it so difficult to know how to play Rashford (for reasons that can only be guessed at) that they had largely settled into a rather excruciating form of sycophancy. On each of their unsuccessful outings against the Manchester United forward so far, ministers have fallen over themselves to “salute” him, to be “inspired” by him, and to judge he is doing “an incredible job”, at the same time as voting against said incredible job.

Last week the prime minister further formalised this admiration, declaring that in comparison with the Labour leader, Rashford was doing [“quite an effective job ... in holding the government to account”](#). Johnson using his own Dickensian incompetence as the setup to some Westminster joke is certainly ... innovative.

In private, however, there are [reports that the false bonhomie is failing](#). The Tory MPs’ education WhatsApp group has lit up with discontent on both this issue and the continuing performance-art piece entitled “Gavin Williamson”. Several MPs are said to have accused the government of dancing to Rashford’s tune, or giving in to him, with the fact he is a millionaire footballer either mentioned disparagingly or in ways that suggest his success disqualifies him from speaking on the subject.

Well, now. It’s somewhat confusing to find [Conservatives](#) practising both the politics of envy and the politics that decries aspiration. Why do they hate football so much, given that the top flight of the game is an engine of social mobility that “levels up” a lot of talented and dedicated working-class men into millionaires? Perhaps the answer is in the question. It certainly can’t be that millionaires are, per se, the sort of people whom Conservative politicians believe shouldn’t be listened to. After all, huge swaths of Conservative policy have been formulated as a direct result of listening very hard to them; and over the past 10 months of the pandemic, huge numbers of incredibly lucrative private contracts have been outsourced to them.

In general, the Conservatives have always liked millionaires – and as long as they pay their taxes, why not? So what is it about Marcus Rashford that makes him the wrong kind of millionaire to be listened to? None of the possible answers to that question would seem to flatter his detractors.

It's still notable that the only people any cabinet minister has chidingly suggested take a pay cut during this entire pandemic are Premier League footballers. [Matt Hancock called for this](#) back in April, of all bizarrely skewed priorities at the time. Oddly, he has since remained silent on the question of pay cuts for anyone from test-and-trace consultancies to health or education secretaries, all of whom have deserved a 100% pay cut at various times during the pandemic.

Maybe footballers have for so long been a lazy target for lazy politicians that the latter just can't adapt their game. Consider the red wall MP who in October [expressed frustration](#) that Rashford was repeatedly out-strategising the government. As they put it: "Rashford is clearly a smart guy, but he's not exactly fucking Clausewitz, is he?"

Interesting that this government should regard the Prussian general as a worthy foe, and not some 23-year-old part-timer whose day job is being extremely good at something else entirely. As the next U-turn percolates and an entire generation of children continues to be an afterthought, do enjoy the implication that Boris Johnson's strategists might JUST lose honourably to Clausewitz. If they drew him away in the Cup, for instance – otherwise, his is very much the league in which they're playing.

- Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist

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[Opinion](#)[Conservatives](#)

Brexit was a typically English revolution – one that left the elites unharmed

[Rafael Behr](#)



Our ruling class is expert in maintaining a myth of continuity, and absorbing supporters from the ranks of the aggrieved



Jacob Rees-Mogg at the state opening of parliament, London, December 2019. Photograph: Toby Melville/PA

Jacob Rees-Mogg at the state opening of parliament, London, December 2019. Photograph: Toby Melville/PA

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.27 EST

Jacob Rees-Mogg's star has waned since his glory days leading backbench rebellions against Theresa May. He is on TV less, playing to smaller crowds. I caught him the other week on the BBC Parliament channel telling the Commons that fish unable to reach EU markets were "[better and happier](#)" because Brexit makes them more British.

Watching his performance, I recalled the perennially startling fact about Rees-Mogg: he is younger than Kylie Minogue (also Noel Gallagher and Damon Albarn, but Minogue is the more arresting comparator for some reason).

No one expects politicians and pop stars from the same generation to sound and dress alike, but how many people realise that the artist known to fans as Moggy is of Kylie's generation? His style implies something ancient, but that is the point. It is a look, tailored for an audience – just like any theatrical costume. Except his stage is parliament.

That is not to accuse Rees-Mogg of fakery. He hams up the fogeyism, but he plays it with conviction. He is an authentic adherent to a fashion subculture. Tory anachronism was his lifestyle choice, its uniform worn as sincerely as those of the punks, new romantics and goths who were around in his formative years. All are valid modes of Britishness, but not all include the hint at having sprung from some antique source of nationhood.

Costumes, like pageantry, have an important function in public life. The Queen's speech, the ermine-clad Lords and bewigged clerks are all parts of the mechanism that excludes the masses while drawing them into complicity with their exclusion. They fence off politics as a spectacle for consumption, not an activity for participation. They promote a sentimental, passive detachment from power. The veneration of British democracy's lineage is meant to demonstrate how archaism provides security through stability.

There is truth in that idea, and much fiction. Every modern country tells stories about its origins that impose a narrative of continuity over messy reality. For England (different in this respect to other nations of the UK) the tendency is taken to extreme lengths. The greatest myth – a backdrop stretched so wide we hardly notice it's there – is the succession of monarchs that links Elizabeth II to William the Conqueror.

Generations have grown up thinking of 1066 as the origin of a line that, after some zig and zag, joins up with now. That long, casual stroke of the pen glides over savage occupation, butchery, usurpation, religious massacre, civil war, regicide, chaos, theocracy, military coup, foreign intervention, mass migrations, colonial genocides, and a constant cycle of rebellions and repressions. The treacherous, blood-drenched landscape has been covered with the polished parquet of National Trust houses, skated over effortlessly in period drama balls.

The English cast themselves as a peaceful people, occasionally provoked to war by foreigners (Germans, mostly). We are no more or less bellicose than human nature dictates. There is a credible claim to have been world leaders in adherence to law. Magna Carta was truly a landmark on the road to civilisation. But it is also a monument built to disproportionate height, admired at an angle that lets us avoid seeing uglier sights closer at hand.

But nothing matches victory over the Third Reich as a resource for making us feel better about ourselves. It was indeed a magnificent thing that Britain did (in alliance with others), but not the only significant thing that happened in modern times, as its compulsive dramatisation sometimes implies. The attachment to the collective endeavour of “blitz spirit” speaks to insecurity about national cohesion. We idealise the time we stuck together, from fear that the glue is thinly applied.

Solidarity is a defence against trauma, which is why [war metaphors abound](#) in the struggle against Covid. But there is dishonesty in the claim that unity and patience are solutions to problems of government. The pandemic affects everyone, but not equally. There are limited resources and places to assign in the queue for help. Appeals to stoical togetherness camouflage the exercise of political priorities.

A functional democracy recognises that societies contain competing interests. Parties represent those forces and mediate between them. Conflicts are managed without recourse to actual fighting. But British democracy has a subtly different mechanism. The ruling class defuses social grievance by selectively recruiting from the ranks of the aggrieved.

The Conservative party is a brilliant machine for adapting to social pressure from below, remaking itself to absorb new supporters without the established elite having to surrender power. It happened in the early 1980s, with the sale of council houses. It happened with Brexit and the co-opting of working-class “red wall” voters. It is a pattern predating the modern party, going back to the [19th-century reform acts](#) and selective extension of voting rights.

Society’s upper echelons have been historically permeable, by European standards, admitting individuals from lowly backgrounds if they have the right education, wear the right clothes, speak with the right accent. That flexibility is one of the ways England avoided violent revolution on the French model.

The price is dilution of the reforming spirit, coupled with a weird aristocentric populism that conflates meritocracy and social climbing. Our version of the American dream is a perverse heritage myth that the lives of a tiny,

rich minority can tell a shared national story. It is the fantasy that we all dressed in finery once upon a time. The servants and peasants who were chopped to bits to settle obscure vendettas between noble families must have been someone else's great-great-great-grandparents.

The genius of this system is its ability to contain violent upheavals behind the veneer of continuity. Brexit is just the latest iteration: upsetting the established order while somehow leaving the established order untroubled, a rebellion that succeeds by inflicting the highest economic cost on the places that rebelled.

It is typically English: a revolution without emancipation. It ends with Jacob Rees-Mogg, in fancy dress, strutting the parliamentary stage as if he has been there for centuries, although he was born a year after Kylie Minogue. Take back control? We should be so lucky.

- Rafael Behr is a Guardian columnist

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OpinionProperty

Some people fill the holes in their lives by building homes. I do it by watching them

[Luke Turner](#)

They're privileged and can be lacking in self-awareness, yet the home-builders on Grand Designs are always compelling



Kevin McCloud at a Grand Designs house in Midlothian in 2008.
Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

Kevin McCloud at a Grand Designs house in Midlothian in 2008.
Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

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If the foolish man builds his house upon the sand, as I was taught to sing at Sunday school, only the exhibitionist asks [Kevin McCloud](#) to come and film it happening. The usual plot of a Grand Designs episode sees a bright-eyed middle-class couple set out to turn the 3D rendering of their fantasy home into bricks and mortar, or more commonly steel and glass. McCloud bounds

in to keep an eye on progress (or lack thereof) as plans run over budget and tempers fray. The programme ought to have become formulaic, yet after 21 series and more than 200 episodes it remains a ratings hit.

On a superficial level, the appeal is a voyeuristic peek into the lives of people whose access to immense amounts of money cannot buy self-awareness. There are exceptions, but a familiar *Grand Designs* victim has the air of someone who now spends on rolled steel joists and glass the disposable income once used for 2am deliveries of little wraps containing stimulating powders. Their vainglorious ambition fills with poured concrete a gap in their lives or relationships that others might deal with by getting a puppy. Into this maelstrom steps McCloud, architecture critic and, frequently, amateur therapist.

This is where it gets interesting. His presence is a haunting, a phantom reappearing every few years to hear of dreams and love fading in a blizzard of plywood dust. In the time between these visitations, banks crash and stop lending, people visibly age, relationships sour. The children of the central couple grow up from being little brats excited to be surrounded by diggers to slightly older brats desperate for the house to be finished so they can get their mates round to do laughing gas balloons. The viewer starts to look for hints of bitter secrets and clues of betrayal in newly dyed hair and changes to the wet room tiling. It's Roxy Music's [In Every Dream Home A Heartache](#) turned into primetime telly.

When the great projects are done, we never see them truly, properly lived in. McCloud himself often seems torn between seeing these houses as places of architectural merit and comfortable homes. What is it like to live in the memory of passive-aggressive rows, and months spent in the obligatory caravan floating on a muddy building site? They're never cosy, and with white walls and everything placed *just so*, many of the buildings look like art galleries. You can't help but think their owners might have saved themselves a few million quid by taking a sleeping bag to one of those "night at the museum" events at the Tate Modern extension.

It isn't always an easy watch. My own enthusiasm for *Grand Designs* has largely depended on my living situation: 13 different rented flats in 15 years; being 36 and skint in a single bedroom with the plaster coming off the walls

made it hard to enjoy the sight of someone cooing over their plans for a dressing room, whatever one of those is.

Despite all this, the clever part of Grand Designs' appeal is how we viewers masochistically end up rooting for even the most privileged participant, such as the bloke who made a fortune flogging Ibiza compilations and decided to spend it on building a pretend lighthouse perched on a North Devon cliff. A decade on, he's millions in debt, his marriage has ended, and the bones of the building howl with the full force of the salty wind sweeping in from the sea. It looks like an abandoned bunker from Hitler's Atlantic Wall, yet you still will him on. The same goes for the descendant of the Stuart dynasty sinking millions into a subterranean house on the edge of a south London cemetery, despite his infuriating access to yet more and more easy money.

[Are soaring markets and house prices an 'epic bubble' about to pop? | Larry Elliott](#)
[Read more](#)

What stops Grand Designs being property porn unfit for this time of housing crisis is our own complicity, plus a canny combination of schadenfreude at the jeopardy of the super-rich and more humane moments. In the latest episode, a pub landlord converts a nondescript barn into a safe home for his immuno-compromised wife, whom he met as they both recovered from brain tumours. As Covid hits, it becomes an emotional rollercoaster.

Other episodes have visited a cooperative of families joining forces to build each other's homes, featured structures designed to help people living with a disability, and, in my favourite, followed the progress of woodsman Ben Law's cheaply built eco-lodge.

Grand Designs undoubtedly has something to say in the current moment, when Britain's new housing stock is all too often an unimaginative sprawl of identikit brick boxes crammed onto out-of-town sites. It surely wouldn't be that hard to use some of the vision and innovation displayed by the programme's wannabe Corbusiers for the greater good? Although, this potential may be overshadowed by the fact that, as reported in August 2020, McCloud's own housing venture was at risk of insolvency. Some investors ended up nursing big losses.

The new series of Grand Designs airs as 1990s archaeological TV show Time Team crowdfunds to [make a comeback](#). We can't seem to get enough of trying to understand how people build their homes, whether ancient or modern. Perhaps McCloud's programme is really a form of living archaeology, where the secrets of how people live and what it reveals about their thoughts and behaviour are all on the surface, no digging required – for the viewers, at least.

- Luke Turner is an author. His latest book is Out of the Woods

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Opinion[Alexei Navalny](#)

Alexei Navalny is appealing to the people, over the heads of Russia's crooked system

[Yana Gorokhovskaya](#)

The government continues to rely on repression, but Navalny's rallying cry has galvanised the opposition



Alexei Navalny is detained on arrival at Sheremetyevo international airport in Moscow on 17 January. Photograph: Sergei Bobylev/TASS

Alexei Navalny is detained on arrival at Sheremetyevo international airport in Moscow on 17 January. Photograph: Sergei Bobylev/TASS

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.28 EST

Less than 24 hours after returning to Russia, Alexei Navalny – the most internationally recognisable political opponent of [Vladimir Putin](#) – was jailed for 30 days following a brief court hearing held inside a police station in a suburb of Moscow. Navalny, having survived a nearly lethal poisoning

by the Soviet-era nerve agent novichok in August, now faces a possible three-and-a-half year prison sentence.

The official explanation of his arrest and detention? Navalny allegedly violated the terms of his suspended criminal sentence by remaining in Germany for further treatment after he was released from hospital. The suspended sentence, which expired on 30 December 2020, is from a 2014 trial that was deemed to be “arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable” by the European Court of Human Rights and for which Russia was ordered to pay Navalny and his brother nearly €76,000 in compensation.

If that all sounds confusing, that’s because it is. But the legal details don’t really matter. In dealing with Navalny, the Kremlin is continuing its standard policy of changing the rules of the game when and as needed to achieve the desired outcome. For his part, Navalny is bypassing Russia’s unstable system of legal rules altogether in order to appeal directly to the people.

In Russia, rules exist – there is an abundance of laws and regulations – but they are quite malleable according to the Kremlin’s needs. In 2020, we saw a great number of rules change, mostly to make it easier for those who are in power to stay in power.

The year began with an [announcement](#) of constitutional reform. Although Putin was coy at first about the ultimate goal of the amendments, in time it became obvious that Russia’s 1993 constitution would be altered to allow the president to run for office again after his term was up in 2024. The method of amending the constitution was also imagined from thin air – a legally unprecedented “nationwide vote” was used to seek the voters’ approval, which allowed the government to forbid advertising a no campaign and forgo any minimal turnout requirement.

In the summer, [three-day voting](#) was made a permanent part of Russia’s electoral law. Originally instituted as a Covid-19-related precaution, three-day voting is now possible whenever the electoral commission decides. Given Russia’s [track record](#) with electoral misconduct, instead of making life easier for voters, extended voting time will increase the opportunity for ballot-stuffing and make it even more difficult for independent election observers to monitor voting.

At the end of the year, Russia's infamous "foreign agent" law was expanded to include more groups and individuals, such as foreign journalists and informal civil society organisations. A [draft law](#) was proposed in November that would force people running in elections who are associated with "foreign agent" organisations to use the label on all their campaign material and even have it appear next to their names on ballots. This is a transparent ploy targeting Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation and its associates, who have already indicated a desire to participate in the parliamentary elections in September.

After months of anti-government protests in the eastern region of Khabarovsk in south-eastern Russia, the Kremlin introduced changes to laws on protest that will make it harder for protest organisers to receive official permission for events. Though only a technical requirement, official permission is often the only insurance for protest participants against significant fines, arrest and [assault](#). Changes to the law also prohibit single-person pickets, which were one of the sole remaining methods for Russians to spontaneously come together to publicly voice their dissent without obtaining prior official permission.

After Navalny and the [investigative journalists](#) at [Bellingcat](#) used passport, flight and mobile phone data to show which members of the Federal Security Services were likely to be involved in his poisoning, in a bombshell report released in November, the Kremlin introduced [draft legislation](#) prohibiting the distribution or use of private data of security and intelligence officers.

Russia's system of laws and regulations has been repeatedly bent to the Kremlin's will. We can expect the same of Navalny's legal predicament, which will play out the way the Kremlin wants it to no matter how absurd the result.

Yet in returning to Russia, Navalny is betting not on the system but on the people. His message is simple: don't be afraid, speak out. That is what he said on Sunday after riot police dispersed his supporters from one airport and his plane was redirected to a different airport. It was the message repeated by his wife, [Yulia Navalnaya](#), after Navalny was detained at passport control: "Alexei is not afraid. I am not afraid either and I call on

you all not to be afraid.” And it is the [message](#) Navalny delivered from inside the makeshift court on Monday afternoon telling supporters: “They fear us. They fear you.”

There may be something to the message. As much as the Kremlin relies on repression made possible by ever-shifting laws, it also needs the continued support of citizens who see no alternative to Putin and his United Russia party. As the political scientists Samuel Greene and Graeme Robertson argued in their book, [Putin V the People](#), it’s not Putin’s Russia: it’s Russia’s Putin. And Russia’s Putin needs Russians’ support. Navalny’s return has probably accelerated a collision between the opposition and the Kremlin in which both sides will be forced to appeal to the people rather than the rules.

- Yana Gorokhovskaia is a political scientist researching civil society in Russia

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2021.01.20 - Sport

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Premier League

Leicester go top of Premier League after Ndidi and Maddison cut down Chelsea



James Maddison fires past Édouard Mendy to set the victory over Chelsea that leaves Leicester top of the Premier League. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/NMC Pool/The Guardian

James Maddison fires past Édouard Mendy to set the victory over Chelsea that leaves Leicester top of the Premier League. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/NMC Pool/The Guardian

[Paul Doyle](#) at the King Power Stadium

[@Paul Doyle](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.17 EST

Leicester are top of the league and worthy title contenders. Who knows what [Chelsea](#) are? Not what many think they should be, that is for sure, which is why Frank Lampard's management is under fresh scrutiny. This was Chelsea's fifth defeat in their last eight league matches and there could be no quibbling about the outcome at the King Power, where Brendan Rodgers's team were superior in all departments.

Leicester outwitted and outfought the visitors and sealed victory thanks to first-half goals by Wilfred Ndidi and James Maddison. They could have scored more against a Chelsea team that mixed tantalisingly slick interplay with alarming sluggishness and ramshackle defending. At times they looked like an attractive work in progress; mostly they resembled a disenchanted side going through motions. Lampard has criticised the players' attitude several times this season. Some do not seem to be responding.

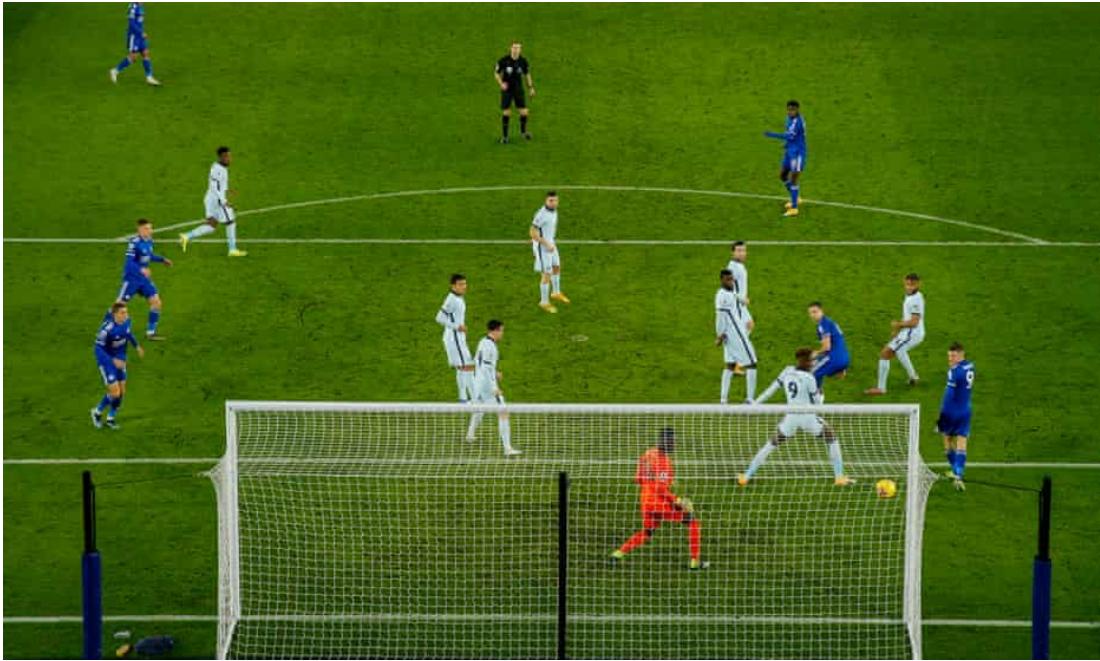
[Michail Antonio deepens West Brom woes with winner for West Ham](#)

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While Leicester had the summit in their sights, Lampard went into this game having to explain why Chelsea were squatting so far below them. Roman Abramovich [did not spend over £200m](#) to build a team of also-rans. Nor is he noted for his tolerance of patter about adaptation periods and teething problems. Given that the club have jilted managers of much better pedigree than Lampard, he needed to demonstrate that in spite of his lack of experience, he can guide this team upwards, and fast. The best way to indicate progress would be to beat high-ranked opponents, a feat Chelsea had yet to achieve in the league this season.

Lampard made four changes to the lineup that [started Saturday's victory at Fulham](#), which ended a three-match losing streak on their travels. Tammy Abraham started up front, while Kai Havertz was given another opportunity to come to terms with the Premier League. Reece James returned at right-back, with Callum Hudson-Odoi on the wing ahead of him.

Leicester opted for consistency, Rodgers fielding [the same side that proved to be too good for Southampton](#) on Saturday. They picked up where they left off, opening the scoring against a sluggish Chelsea after six minutes. The goal encapsulated Leicester's superior sharpness and rhythm. Marc Albrighton played a short corner to Maddison and then accepted the return pass before pulling the ball back to Harvey Barnes near the penalty spot. Barnes, whose gorgeous cross had led to the corner, swished at the air, a mis-hit that turned into the perfect tee-up for Ndidi, who struck a superb left-footed shot in off the post from 20 yards. The Nigerian's first goal of the season was a work of beauty. Things had just turned uglier for Lampard.



Wilfred Ndidi fires in Leicester's opening goal in the first half. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/NMC Pool/The Guardian

Worse almost followed in the 15th minute, when Maddison thrashed a shot past Édouard Mendy from even farther out. This time the ball struck the bar and continued on over. The chance had been created by Timothy Castagne after the Belgian cantered down the right wing, leaving Ben Chilwell and others in his wake. As a vignette of the better return that Leicester are getting from their recruits, that told a tale, even if Chilwell has generally delivered more than Chelsea's other recent signings.

Chilwell began to make dangerous runs of his own as the first half progressed. But as a unit Chelsea's attack sputtered, too many players flimsy or out of sync. Abraham struggled to hold on to the ball up top, while Havertz seemed out of his depth.

Leicester threatened from long range again when Albrighton let fly from 25 yards. Mendy pushed the swerving shot over the bar.

Yet Chelsea created a fine chance in the 32nd minute, when Christian Pulisic combined with Havertz before presenting Hudson-Odoi with a prime invitation to score. But the winger fired a shot into the side-netting. Then came an even more agonising series of events for Chelsea: first, they had a

penalty in their favour overturned when, after reviewing the evidence, the referee Craig Pawson decided that Jonny Evans fouled Pulisic just outside the box. Mason Mount botched the free-kick. Moments later Leicester made it 2-0 in damning fashion.

[Pep Guardiola says Aymeric Laporte can decide own future at Manchester City](#)

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Albrighton clipped the ball from midfield over Chelsea's ramshackle defence, Antonio Rüdiger bumped into Jamie Vardy and Maddison was left free to finish smartly from eight yards.

Surprisingly, Lampard did not call on any of his high-end substitutes at half-time. Leicester, content to counterattack, tore a gaping hole in their defence again in the 50th minute, but James Justin headed wide from Albrighton's cross. Five minutes later Maddison prised them apart again with an exquisite pass, but Leicester sabotaged their own brilliant move by straying offside. But soon the hosts picked their way forward again, Maddison conspiring artfully with Vardy before forcing a good save from Mendy.

With his team drifting to defeat, Lampard finally reached for a different plan in the 67th minute. On came Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech for Hudson-Odoi and Havertz. The new duo made little difference until five minutes from time, when Werner stabbed the ball into the net from a free-kick by Ziyech. To no avail, as the German was judged to have been fractionally offside.

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Premier League

Michail Antonio deepens West Brom woes with winner for West Ham



West Ham's Michail Antonio scores the winning goal against West Brom at the London Stadium. Photograph: Matthew Childs/AP

West Ham's Michail Antonio scores the winning goal against West Brom at the London Stadium. Photograph: Matthew Childs/AP

[Jacob Steinberg at the London Stadium](#)

[@JacobSteinberg](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.35 EST

The Sam Allardyce survival guide stated a draw was the minimum requirement for West Brom here after [the joy of beating Wolves](#). Yet the reality of his side's dismal defending scotched that ambition. The leakiest back four in the Premier League could not handle West Ham's crossing game and there was something slightly doomed about the anguished cry from Allardyce when Darnell Furlong spurned a late chance to equalise: a growing realisation, perhaps, that his record of never being relegated from the top flight is under serious threat.

The numbers suggest this might prove one rescue mission beyond even Allardyce's ability to save a struggling side. West Brom, who lie five points below Burnley in 17th place, [have conceded 17 goals](#) in six league games since replacing [Slaven Bilic with the 66-year-old](#). The goals against column now reads 43 overall and there was no sign of their defensive flaws fading against West Ham, who profited because they were sharp and smart in the opposition box.

[Leicester City v Chelsea: Premier League – live!](#)

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Both of West Ham's goals came when they won the first and second ball from crosses. The frustration for Allardyce was immense, especially as West Brom were primed to claim a precious draw after Matheus Pereira cancelled out Jarred Bowen's chested effort. Parity lasted until Michail Antonio settled the contest with his second winner in as many games.

Allardyce was a disappointed man and was soon being asked about Robert Snodgrass's strange omission from the squad. The Scottish midfielder's absence was attributed by his manager to a gentleman's agreement with West Ham following his move to the Hawthorns earlier this month. The [Premier League](#) is investigating whether the deal is in breach of regulation 17, stating: "No club shall enter into a contract which enables another party to that contract to acquire the ability materially to influence its policies or the performance of its teams in league matches." Allardyce laughed. "Before I can answer anything that might put me, West Ham or anybody else in a bit of trouble I'll see what the [Premier League](#) say," he said.



Matheus Pereira scores West Brom's equaliser at the London Stadium.
Photograph: Kevin Quigley/NMC Pool

David Moyes was not in a mood to discuss the issue. West Ham's manager preferred to focus on his side West Ham extending their unbeaten run [to six games in all competitions](#) and rising two points below fourth-placed Liverpool, who host Burnley on Thursday. "If we can keep this standard up we'll be pleased," Moyes said. "I want to be ambitious and get us as far up the league as we possibly can. I want us to try and compete at the top."

West Ham are on the up [thanks to Moyes](#), who said that he is still in the market for a new striker. They defended well, dealing with Allardyce's rudimentary tactics in the first half, batting away West Brom's tedious tactics of launching the ball into the air whenever they happened to win a free-kick in the general vicinity of the halfway line.

West Brom missed Snodgrass, who impressed against Wolves, and their cautious gameplan unravelled at the end of the opening period. It was asking a lot from a mediocre defence to stay focused throughout and the visitors eventually cracked when Saïd Benrahma twisted and turned on the left before launching a cross to the far post. Vladimir Coufal arrived unnoticed to tee up Bowen, who chested past Sam Johnstone.

[West Ham v West Brom: Premier League – live!](#)

[Read more](#)

Allardyce bemoaned an inability to muster “five seconds of defending properly”, although he was pleased with his side’s response after the break. A more refined approach brought a reward when Craig Dawson backed away from Pereira, inviting the Brazilian to fire past Lukasz Fabianski from 20 yards. The goal survived a VAR review for offside against Conor Gallagher, who was judged not to have run across Fabianski’s line of vision.

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Yet West Ham raised their level. Dara O’Shea cleared off the line from Manuel Lanzini, and Declan Rice shot wide. The pressure grew and West Ham broke through again when Aaron Cresswell’s cross was nodded down by Andriy Yarmolenko for Antonio to volley home on the turn.

Although West Brom fought until the end, their misery was complete when Gallagher was booked for diving in stoppage-time. Allardyce knows that time is running out.

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FA Cup

Southampton set up Arsenal FA Cup tie but doubts grow over Danny Ings' future



Southampton's Dan N'Lundulu scores his side's first goal of the game against Shrewsbury. Photograph: Adam Davy/PA

Southampton's Dan N'Lundulu scores his side's first goal of the game against Shrewsbury. Photograph: Adam Davy/PA

[Ben Fisher at St Mary's Stadium](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 18.21 EST

The beauty of chaos is that it usually brings opportunity. On a night which finished with Ralph Hasenhüttl fielding questions about Danny Ings, who has hit an impasse in contract negotiations over extending his [Southampton](#) stay, the next generation helped tee up an FA Cup fourth-round tie with Arsenal on Saturday. Daniel N'Lundulu struck his first [Southampton](#) goal before James Ward-Prowse's peach of free-kick deflated a spirited Shrewsbury Town.

Ings, who is recovering from Covid-19, was among nine first-team players missing for Southampton and, while his absence was expected, the striker holding off signing a lucrative new contract that would make him the club's highest earner has clouded his long-term future.

Hasenhüttl insisted "life will go on" with or without Ings, who has 18 months remaining on his current contract and is thought to be keen on returning to a Champions League club. Asked if he was confident Ings would stay, the Southampton manager replied: "Yes," before adding: "If he wants Champions League football, he must score 10-15 more goals for us and we can go there. It's not impossible, I don't think."

[Michail Antonio deepens West Brom woes with winner for West Ham](#)
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For League One's [Shrewsbury](#), the magnitude of this game was put into perspective by absent manager Steve Cotterill spending last weekend in intensive care after testing positive for the coronavirus. Cotterill watched this game from his hospital bed.

"The last thing I said to the boys before the game was the manager is in hospital and for five to 10 minutes I want him sat up excited about how you've started the game," said assistant manager Aaron Wilbraham, who was tasked with taking charge on the touchline. "He had his laptop and other things dropped off at the hospital yesterday so he could watch the game. I think the boys would have made him proud."

"It has been a horrible couple of weeks," Wilbraham said. "To know he is recovering now and getting stronger every day is great news. We just want to do him proud and do everything he would expect of us. I'm really proud of the boys, the effort they put in. Every adversity that we went through, with the manager not being here and we could have used 15 excuses but not one of the players did. We were right in the game until the final minute."

It was always going to be a big ask for Shrewsbury, 52 places below the Saints in the pyramid, to eke out a result given the start to the year they have had. They had not played for three weeks owing to a severe Covid-19 outbreak – as many as 20 players and staff tested positive – that put paid to

three games and meant they only had three days of squad training since returning from isolation before this game. In the absence of Cotterill it was down to Wilbraham – who scored in this competition the age of 40 to help Rochdale to a third-round replay against Newcastle last season –to lead the team alongside academy manager David Longwell.

Shrewsbury started sprightly but struggled to stem Southampton's flow once N'Lundulu drilled in to earn the lead. The Southampton captain Ward-Prowse, one of just four players to keep their spot in the hosts' starting lineup, floated a pass upfield and the 19-year-old Caleb Watts, making his debut wearing No 65, did his best to bring the ball under his spell, attempting to chest the ball down. It rolled free and N'Lundulu picked up the pieces before, encouraged by Hasenhüttl to finish, hammered in from an angle.

The Fiver: sign up and get our daily football email

Josh Vela powered over and the Shrewsbury forward Shaun Whalley tormented full-back Yan Valery, one of the more experienced academy graduates in a youthful Saints side. Whalley twice sent curling efforts close but Southampton kept the visitors at arm's length. The first had Fraser Forster, who Hasenhüttl recently termed his 'number one B' goalkeeper, fretting before it dipped over the crossbar on the half-hour and four minutes later he got a hand to another fine effort before the attacker was flagged offside.

Before their period of inactivity, Shrewsbury were unbeaten in the league since Cotterill replaced Sam Ricketts in November, winning four of their past five matches. Harry Chapman went on a meandering run before shooting wide and, at the other end, the defender Aaron Pierre cleared off the line after Matija Sarkic, the Shrewsbury goalkeeper on loan from Wolves, saved from Watts. Moments earlier, Jack Stephens almost fed off the scraps of a Ward-Prowse corner. Then, a minute from time, the Saints captain sealed victory with a delicious free-kick.

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Championship

Championship: Rooney praises Derby's desire in win while Watford go third

- Rooney's side out of bottom three despite Wilshere debut
- Deeney penalty sinks Barnsley but Xisco wants more



Krystian Bielik celebrates scoring Derby's winner against Bournemouth, not long after sustaining a nasty head injury. Photograph: Matt Bunn/BPI/Shutterstock

Krystian Bielik celebrates scoring Derby's winner against Bournemouth, not long after sustaining a nasty head injury. Photograph: Matt Bunn/BPI/Shutterstock

PA Media

Tue 19 Jan 2021 18.15 EST

Wayne Rooney was keen to shift the praise towards his players after landing his first win as permanent **Derby** manager.

Krystian Bielik's tidy finish in the first half was enough to see off promotion-chasing **Bournemouth** 1-0 at Pride Park. The Rams were good value for the win and it was a victory which lifted them out of the bottom three.

[European roundup: Diaby terrorises Dortmund to end Leverkusen slump](#)
[Read more](#)

A delighted Rooney reflected on the maiden success, saying: “To get any win is great. Obviously I’ve not been looking at it like that [first win] as I’ve been doing it a while but yeah I’m delighted. But most of all I’m really pleased for the players. It shows what a difference it makes playing with more desire, and that desire to stop crosses.

“I demanded a reaction tonight and in fairness it has been a difficult couple of weeks. I felt this game had a lot of pressure on us tonight. There’s only one game lately where I’ve been disappointed in us and that was the loss to Rotherham last week. But I was delighted with their reaction tonight.”

Even the late introduction of Jack Wilshere, who agreed terms with Bournemouth until the end of the season on Monday, failed to inspire Jason Tindall’s side as they fell to a second successive defeat.

Xisco Munoz urged his **Watford** side to improve their away record after Troy Deeney’s penalty saw off **Barnsley** 1-0 and earned the Hornets a 10th league success at Vicarage Road this season. The captain blasted home from 12 yards after Callum Brittain had blocked his 26th-minute cross with his right arm to improve a home record that was already the best in England. Watford moved up to third place in the [Championship](#) as a result of a third successive home win under Xisco, who succeeded Vladimir Ivic as manager in December. However, the Hornets trail leaders Norwich by seven points after winning just twice away from home.

“This is a good moment for us because every time we play at home we take the points,” Xisco said. “I am very happy with the players but now we must start to win away. “We are going to work a lot on this and try our best to improve our results away from home. It is something everybody wants in this team.”

The **Rotherham** manager Paul Warne said his side were amazing as they drew a thrilling contest 3-3 with **Stoke** to mark his 200th game in charge. Rotherham twice let their lead slip in the second half as Stoke battled back to earn a point on a wet night in South Yorkshire. “I really enjoyed it and it’s sad the fans weren’t in,” Warne said. “Both sets of fans would have really enjoyed it. Both teams weren’t settling for a draw. I always ask the lads to leave everything out on the pitch and they did. I’ve no complaints.”

Play-off contenders **Reading** strengthened their top-six position with a comfortable 3-0 victory over 10-man **Coventry**. The home side went ahead in the 16th minute when top scorer Lucas João slotted home his 17th goal of the season from close range. Andy Rinomhota made it 2-0 straight after half-time and John Swift added a third with a superb 72nd-minute free-kick. The Coventry centre-back Kyle McFadzean was sent off for his second yellow card for the foul that led to Swift’s goal.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/jan/19/bielik-derby-bournemouth-reading-coventry-watford>

Golf

Annika Sörenstam defends accepting award from Donald Trump

- Swede received medal of freedom the day after [US Capitol riot](#)
- ‘It’s really about people that make this world a better place’



Annika Sörenstam offered no apology for her trip to the White House on 7 January. Photograph: Phelan M Ebenhack/AP

Annika Sörenstam offered no apology for her trip to the White House on 7 January. Photograph: Phelan M Ebenhack/AP

[Ewan Murray](#)

[@mrewanmurray](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.48 EST

An unrepentant Annika Sörenstam has defended her right to receive the presidential medal of freedom from Donald Trump in a ceremony held [a day after the riotous mobs invaded the US Capitol](#).

Sörenstam and Gary Player were afforded recognition with the former's appearance especially controversial given her recent appointment as the president of the International [Golf](#) Federation. That body, responsible for golf at the Olympics and Paralympics, has a stated aim of securing the "enjoyment of the rights and freedoms among its competitions and members without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." Sörenstam claims to have had "overwhelming support" from the IGF.

[Golf's pitch to distance itself from Donald Trump came five years too late](#)
[Read more](#)

Speaking from Florida, where Sörenstam will compete on the LPGA Tour this weekend, the 50-year-old offered no apology for her 7 January White House visit. "I have always viewed it [the medal] in the context of the people through history who have received it," she told Golf Channel. "It started in 1963 and it's quite the impressive list of people; whether that's through science, art, entertainment or sport. It's really about people that make this world a better place.

"I'm not one to second-guess. It [the ceremony] was supposed to be in March 2020. Looking back at it, it's really about the people who have received it through history. I don't want to spend energy looking back. I want to spend energy looking forward, continuing to open doors and create opportunities for young girls around the world."

Within days of the Capitol incidents, which resulted in the deaths of five people, the PGA of America [removed their 2022 major championship from Trump-owned Bedminster](#). Sörenstam added: "I share the sadness and the fear with everyone. What happened at the Capitol was a dark day in America's history."

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Pressed on whether she would have handled anything differently, Sörenstam said: "Again, looking back, I don't second-guess. I like to look forward and not spend energy on what could have been. It's all about opening doors. I've

heard from a lot of people. As you can imagine, a lot of opinions, a lot of comments and I hear clearly what those people say. I know they see it differently. I listen and embrace them all. It's really important to listen."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/annika-sorenstam-defends-accepting-award-from-donald-trump>

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Swimming

Klete Keller: why did an Olympic champion invade the US Capitol?

The swimmer won gold medals for his country in Athens and Beijing. Then his patriotism took an ugly turn



Klete Keller celebrates a relay victory at the 2008 Olympics. Photograph: Greg Wood/AFP/Getty Images

Klete Keller celebrates a relay victory at the 2008 Olympics. Photograph: Greg Wood/AFP/Getty Images

[Tom Dart](#)

[@Tom_Dart](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.30 EST

Klete Keller was somebody, a two-time Olympic gold medallist who swam in three Games. Then he was nobody, aimless, penniless and reduced to sleeping in his car. Now he is “Person 1” in court documents, identified by the FBI as a participant in the storming of the US Capitol and charged with federal crimes.

Amid the militia gear and Maga paraphernalia on display during the 6 January riot at the heart of American government, [footage](#) shows a bearded man in the Rotunda who stands out for his height and his clothes. He wears an officially-branded jacket with a United States Olympic Team patch and USA on the left sleeve and the back.

The choice of apparel, with the Olympic rings logo and Stars and Stripes flag, seemed to symbolise the perversion of patriotism among insurrectionists loyal to Donald Trump who hold the warped belief that it is their duty to agitate for the overturning of a legitimate democratic election. Aspirational emblems appropriated and debased as the president, his enablers and his acolytes crumpled a set of ideals to fit a dishonest and deranged narrative.

Then the tall man was identified by the website [SwimSwam](#) as Keller, a 38-year-old who grew up in Arizona and won gold in the 4x200m freestyle relays in Athens and Beijing. A sense of bafflement has not receded since.

Olympic Champion Klete Keller Appears to Have Been in US Capitol During Insurrection - <https://t.co/JiDwxgSPog>
pic.twitter.com/9b0zwbLXCH

— Swimming World (@SwimmingWorld) [January 12, 2021](#)

Keller, who lives 1,700 miles away from Washington in Colorado Springs, was arrested last week on [charges](#) of disorderly conduct, obstructing law enforcement and illegally entering a restricted area. He was released after an initial appearance in federal court in Denver.

He has not commented in public, so the reason for his actions during the deadly demonstration-turned insurrection on the day Congress met to certify Joe Biden's election victory are unclear. What is certain is that, like many athletes before him, he found it hard to adjust to ordinary life after an extraordinary sporting career.

His marriage collapsed, he was unable to hold down a series of sales jobs and he struggled to afford a place to live while paying child support for his three kids. He felt bitter and angry, losing motivation and gaining weight as

he ate and drank to excess. He said his money problems prompted him to [live in his Ford Fusion](#) after his divorce in 2014. He would squeeze his 6ft 6in frame into the car and try to grab some sleep in Walmart parking lots.

[Loneliness, isolation and pressure: the inner demons of elite swimming](#)
[Read more](#)

“I found the real-world pressure much more intimidating and much more difficult to deal with because I went from swimming to having three kids and a wife within a year and so the consequences of not succeeding were very, very real and if I didn’t make a sale or if my manager was ticked off with me, or If I got fired - oh shoot, you have no health insurance. It’s very concrete,” he told an [Olympic Channel podcast](#).

“I felt when I failed a much more acute sense of pain and frustration and failure than I did with swimming. With swimming it was just me. All those years of success I had with swimming really gave me an inaccurate expectation of the world and so it was much harder to cope with the mini-failures I’d experience on any given day.”

He added: “I think I became a real lazy, spoiled, entitled person, just because I didn’t have the coping skills. You would think all the lessons I’d learnt in swimming would immediately transfer but it really takes a lot of work to figure out exactly how to transfer athletic lessons into real life lessons - how to put a bad day behind you in the working world.”

There were not too many rough times in the pool for Keller, whose finest moment came when he swam the anchor leg of the relay in 2004, holding off the great Australian Olympian, Ian Thorpe.

He finished fourth behind Thorpe, Pieter van den Hoogenband and Michael Phelps but ahead of Grant Hackett in the 200m freestyle in Athens, an event dubbed the “race of the century”. He also won bronze medals in the individual 400m freestyle in the 2000 and 2004 Games and a silver in the 4x200m freestyle relay in Sydney.

“To find something else that is that important, to move on to the next rung of life that you find as compelling and worth working as hard for, it’s just not

an easy transition for anybody,” said Nancy Hogshead-Makar, a three-time Olympic swimming gold medallist, lawyer and founder of [Champion Women](#), an equality and accountability advocacy group.

She believes that Keller’s fall underscores the need for greater assistance for athletes from all backgrounds. Especially in a sport such as [swimming](#) they might become famous for a couple of weeks every four years and be lionised as national heroes, but risk slipping back into the shadows and suffering in obscurity with scant financial security or emotional support.

“What would cause them to have mental health issues and what can we do? How can we change governance and structure so that this person can get the help that we need?” The attention on Keller, she said, could help act as a catalyst for change, “a big ‘aha!’ opportunity moment”.

Eli Bremer, who competed for the US in the modern pentathlon in Beijing, knows Keller but has not spoken with his fellow Colorado Springs resident since the incident. “I don’t want to say that the history that Klete’s been quite open about and the struggles he’s had led into what happened in Washington DC because I don’t know,” he said.

“However, I think that his overall story does shine a light on saying: these athletes are American heroes and then a lot of them do struggle afterwards with learning how to find jobs, learning how to cope with the emotional side of retiring from sports and oftentimes being a decade behind your peers. That can cause issues with your personal life, with your family, it can cause professional issues, it can cause a lot of psychological issues.”

Keller had fond memories of training in Colorado Springs, which styles itself “Olympic City USA”, and moved there after his marriage ended, attracted by the idea of riding dirt bikes in the mountains.

He grew more interested in right-wing politics in recent years but was not known as especially radical. His reputation among friends was as more of a mild-mannered goofball than a committed extremist, though one [told the Washington Post](#) Keller was “infatuated” with guns and he was increasingly supportive of Trump on social media.

He was in Washington for a pro-Trump rally last November after Biden's election and wrote on his now-deleted Facebook page that the result was a "brazen assault on our republic and our way of life," according to the [New York Times](#).

No evidence has emerged to suggest he was involved in fighting or looting at the Capitol. "I don't think he went there with any malicious intent. I hope there's a more sophisticated story there," Bremer said.

"When an Olympian has bad judgment of course there will be consequences but I also hope people understand, sometimes these athletes have sacrificed their body and their future for our pride as a nation when they compete in the Olympics. In my experience Klete's a kind person, well-intentioned, laid-back, patriotic, and I think that while he made a mistake I doubt he had any intentions of doing anything harmful to our nation."

Keller appeared on local television news in 2018 (his Olympic status unmentioned) after he became the unwitting victim [of a bizarre episode](#) with shirtless men and a dog-sitter. Still, he appeared to have turned his life around: getting engaged, finding work with a commercial real estate firm and launching a personal website, [The Olympic Agent](#). It pledges "Gold Medal Service" to help clients "navigate the waters of real estate".

Now he has lost his job and potentially faces a long prison sentence. "There's really no limit to how bad things can get, I learnt that. It can always get worse," he reflected on the podcast. "You have to maintain discipline throughout life in order to stay afloat."

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England in Sri Lanka 2020-21

'We can beat them': Silverwood talks up England's Ashes bid after Australia wilt

- Head coach fired up after Australia's series defeat by India
- Silverwood hails Root's captaincy after win over Sri Lanka



Joe Root and Chris Silverwood have set their sights on a fifth successive away Test win. Photograph: ECB

Joe Root and Chris Silverwood have set their sights on a fifth successive away Test win. Photograph: ECB

[Simon Burnton](#)

[@Simon_Burnton](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.40 EST

Chris Silverwood has hailed Joe Root's ever-improving captaincy as England take aim at a fifth successive away Test victory, and admits he is already relishing the Ashes following Australia's series defeat against India.

India pulled off a spectacular victory at the Gabba on Tuesday to clinch the series and Silverwood, when asked about Australia, said it is “always nice to see the opposition under pressure”.

[Victory in first Test a personal and team triumph for Root's depleted England](#)
[Read more](#)

England will be focused on regaining the Ashes this year and Silverwood is excited by the prospect. “It shows that if we do the basics well and get stuck in, we can beat them,” the head coach said.

Before that they will aim to win their fifth successive away Test, a feat they have not achieved in more than a century, in the second meeting with Sri Lanka in Galle on Friday. It will be another instalment in what Silverwood expects to be a thrilling year of long-form cricket.

England’s last such sequence of success was achieved in Australia and South Africa between the start of 1912 and the end of 1913 and their current run of four successive wins, which started in South Africa last January, is better than anything they have managed since 1957. In their past three away Tests England’s first-innings totals have been 499 for 9 dec, 400 and 421.

The Spin: sign up and get our weekly cricket email.

“It’s not rocket science,” Silverwood said of these achievements. “It’s exactly what I stated when I first came into the job: big first-innings runs, put the opposition under pressure with skilful bowling. With the ball, we’ve been relentless. We’ve got variation in the attack. It’s just becoming really, really good at doing the basics well and implementing the plans that we put in place.”

[Rishabh Pant leads record-breaking chase as India beat Australia to fourth Test and series](#)

[Read more](#)

Root has won 24 of his 45 matches as Test captain. Only Michael Vaughan has won more games (26 out of 51) and only two people who have captained England more than seven times can better Root’s win percentage (Mike

Brearley won 18 of 31 matches between 1977 and 1981, and the other is WG Grace). “He’s not far off becoming the most successful captain that England’s had,” Silverwood said.

“The way he manages the bowlers on the park now, the way he speaks in the huddle, the way he addresses the players, he’s grown in every area. Tactically, he is learning how to use his bowlers every day, he talks a lot about it, he talks to the bowlers. They have plans and he works with them.”

Many squad members watched [the thrilling end to India’s series in Australia](#) and with England facing India first away – India have announced their squad for the first two Tests next month, recalling Virat Kohli, Ishant Sharma and Hardik Pandya – and then at home before they head to Australia for the Ashes, 2021 could be a standout year for Test cricket.

01:21

‘Unreal’: India’s record-breaking victory over Australia seals series – video report

“Look at what we’ve got in front of us – what is it, nine Tests against India? What a fantastic way to prepare to go to the Ashes,” said Silverwood. “There’ll be some great cricket, it’s a great position for our players to go out and show off their skills, and it’s really exciting.”

Silverwood said England are likely to rotate their squad for the Test starting on Friday, with Jimmy Anderson set to come in, Chris Woakes available and Olly Stone in with a chance of selection, but Moeen Ali is unlikely to be ready [after his positive Covid test](#).

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/chris-silverwood-hails-joe-root-captaincy-england-relentlessness-sri-lanka-cricket>

[Cricket](#)

'Plunder down under': India revels in cricket team's shock victory at Gabba

Narendra Modi congratulates team's 'remarkable grit' after India beats Australia in fourth Test to win series

01:21

[Amrit Dhillon](#) in Delhi

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.31 EST

As Indians exploded with joy over their [cricket team's history-making win at the Gabba stadium](#) in Brisbane, cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar summed up the mood.

"Every session we discovered a new hero," he said of how an untested and inexperienced team, which had so little going for it, managed one of the greatest victories in Test cricket. "Every time we got hit, we stayed put and stood taller. We pushed the boundaries of belief to play fearless but not careless cricket."

['This will go down in history': India coach Shastri hails 'unimaginable' win](#)
[Read more](#)

The Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, congratulated the team for its "stellar intent, remarkable grit and determination" in retaining the Border-Gavaskar trophy and defeating Australia at the Gabba fortress for the first time 33 years.

The celebrations in India were all the sweeter because the victory was so unexpected. Many Indians expected little after Australia won the first Test match, in which India were bowled out for a humiliating 36 runs, their lowest ever Test total.

Any comeback from that rout would have to be on an epic scale, but the Australian team were at full strength. In contrast, the debilitated Indian side

had numerous top bowlers missing. Many players were playing a Test match for the first time. The team was beset by injuries.

For sports journalist Jaydeep Basu, the very fact that India triumphed despite having nothing going for it proved a “coming of age”, not only for several players such as Mohammed Siraj and Cheteshwar Pujara, but for Indian cricket itself.

“The result showed the depth of Indian cricketing talent. All the vast sums of money that have been spent on recruiting players from small towns and training them is now paying off. We’ve shown that young untested players can do spectacularly well,” said Basu

In line with Basu’s comment, many writers spoke of how “the boy has become a man” with reference to Siraj and Washington Sundar and how the former had overcome the odds (his father was an auto-rickshaw driver) to play for India.

Former cricketer Sunil Gavaskar praised the team for giving India “a magical moment”, saying: “They were not prepared to just save the game. They were wanting to go out and finish the tour in a blaze of glory. Young India has done it. Young India has shown the way. Young India is showing that they are not afraid.”

[India's bloody-mindedness fired them to historic win in Australia | Geoff Lemon](#)
[Read more](#)

Referring to the injuries – several head blows and a bent finger – suffered by Pujara, he said: “He put his body on the line for Indian cricket”.

The headlines – “India pulls off one of the greatest heists in Australia”, “Plunder Down Under” – were euphoric.

While many Indians saw their team’s victory as the simple result of a stunning display of character and skill, others called it poetic justice for Australian complacency. “India has many players injured but what has been

injured more has been the Australian arrogance and pride,” tweeted former cricketer Virendra Sehwag.

The jibe “See you at the Gabba”, which Australian skipper Tim Paine hurled at Ravichandran Ashwin on the final day of the third Test at Sydney, was mocked mercilessly on Twitter. “Yes we did Mr Paine, yes we did!” read one tweet. Ashwin’s wife, Prithi, who had to see her husband play despite bad back pain, settled for: “WooohoooooHAHAHAHAAHAAHAHAHASHHAAAHHA.”

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[India cricket team](#)

India's bloody-mindedness fired them to historic win in Australia

From one-down, without their captain and a host of first-choice players, India completed one of the great comebacks in one of the great Test series

01:21

[Geoff Lemon at the Gabba](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.30 EST

There is nothing like the feeling after a classic Test series. There may be greater peaks of human joy or pleasure, but this is a high that fades into a particular satisfaction, elation dimming warmly within us like the spot of light that remains when turning off an old television.

It's because of the amount of time and effort and energy invested, even from those of us who watch rather than play. We have lived that experience until the final payoff and in the great contests the payoff is immense.

Australia and India have made a habit of such contests. The modern context starts in 2001, when Steve Waugh's champions reached a record 16 wins in a row by annihilating India in Mumbai, then had them four wickets down while following on at Kolkata. Turning that around should have been impossible, but VVS Laxman did and India won in the dying overs of day five before taking the third and deciding Test in just as much of a thriller.

[Rishabh Pant leads record-breaking chase as India beat Australia to fourth Test and series](#)

[Read more](#)

The two boards expanded their contests to four Tests. In Australia in 2003-04, in India in 2004, Australia in 2007-08, India in 2017, and Australia in 2018-19, the series tilted one way and then the other and were defined by matches with grandstand finishes.

The conclusion in Brisbane on Tuesday fits this tradition, featuring a couple of teams willing to scrap all the way to the end. It fits the tradition of storylines that are hard to believe, performances that come out of nowhere. At the same time, it also has its own story, one that isn't a repeat.

When India won in Australia two years ago, it was a first. None of the former greats had pulled that off. They had drawn and had come close but that win eluded them. The conditions were too foreign, the competition too fierce. The result was based on the most professional and well-drilled team India had sent to Australia. Virat Kohli's intensity as captain shaped the same qualities in his players. He had a five-man pace battery and a main trio that played every match.

This time around was the opposite. Injury after injury meant players vanished like chips at the pub. There was no continuity. Only the batsmen Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane played all four Tests. The decider relied on net bowlers who had been kept on the tour after some white-ball matches in November. All of this came after having been humiliated in the first Test at Adelaide [by being bowled out for 36](#) to lose from a strong position.



Rishabh Pant smashes a six off Nathan Lyon during his superb unbeaten 89.
Photograph: Darren England/AAP

It's worth considering the quality of those missing. Ishant Sharma, tall and fast and able to dart the ball in both directions, India's attack leader from the previous tour. Bhuvneshwar Kumar, a brilliant exponent of swing bowling who can also bat as a proper No 8. Neither made it on to the plane.

Mohammed Shami, the team's most relentlessly accurate operator, had his arm broken as the closing insult of the Adelaide collapse. Umesh Yadav, fast and with four Australian tours of experience, pinged his calf in Melbourne. Jasprit Bumrah, India's most exciting bowler, strained his side in Sydney. Ravindra Jadeja was a huge influence [in the Melbourne win](#) and the Sydney draw before hurting his thumb while batting. Ravichandran Ashwin was India's leading wicket-taker through three Tests before hurting his back.

That adds up to India's five best fast bowlers and two best spinners – the latter pair with five Test centuries between them. Throw in the best all-format batsman in the world, after Kohli went home to see his daughter born, and the damaging opener KL Rahul, who went home with an arm injury, while Hanuma Vihari tore a hamstring while batting to save the match in Sydney.

['This will go down in history': India coach Shastri hails 'unimaginable' win](#)
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Finish up with the fast-bowling all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who was sent home unable to bowl after dominating the preceding one-day series with the bat, and you have an entire India XI of fine players missing by the time Brisbane rolled around. The five-bowler attack for that match had four Tests and 11 wickets between them. Australia's four bowlers had taken more than 1,000.

This was the context in which India went to a venue where the home team had not lost in 33 years. It was the context in which India bowled out Australia in both innings at the Gabba, something that had happened in two other matches in those decades. And it was the context in which the batting side of India's operation decided [to charge down 328](#) in the fourth innings to win the match and the series.

There had been 18 bigger run chases in 2,403 Tests, but no matter. Under Kohli's urging, India had set off after 364 at Adelaide in 2014 and fallen narrowly short. Under his deputy, Rahane, [India had set off after 407](#) a week ago in Sydney, and may well have won instead of drawing had Vihari and Ashwin not been too injured to move between the wickets for the final couple of hours.

01:21

'Unreal': India's record-breaking victory over Australia seals series – video report

The Brisbane win came via another young operator. Rishabh Pant, the 23-year-old wicketkeeper who did not start this series in the side due to his glovework, chose his moments of aggression and ran the chase with 89 not out. In Sydney, he had made thoughts of a win possible by smashing 97. Both times he had knocked Australia off kilter.

Of Indian batsmen doing what Pant had done – making 89 or more in the fourth innings while winning or saving a Test – the only ones with multiple instances were Sunil Gavaskar four times, Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly twice. Pant has done it twice in a week.

But his audacity was built on his team's bloody-mindedness. The way he batted after being smashed on the elbow in Sydney, hampering his grip. The way Pujara took blow after blow in Brisbane to make sure Pant had solidity at the other end. The way Rahane took charge of a team at its lowest and lifted it up. The way Vihari and Ashwin battled while hurt in Sydney to keep the series alive. The months in hotel isolation, Mohammed Siraj missing his father's funeral, T Natarajan missing his daughter's birth, in the hope of making an Indian debut.

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Duly they did. As did Navdeep Saini and Washington Sundar and Shubman Gill, and effectively Shardul Thakur after his debut three years ago lasted minutes. New players came into this situation and did not flinch. They made vital contributions beyond what was fair to expect.

For the third time in these recent Australia contests, after 2001 and 2017, India lost the first match but fought back to win the series. This alone is a rare thing in Test cricket. But to have done it in these circumstances, under these constraints, is what sets this result apart. It exists in a tradition, but the effort of these players also sits squarely on its own.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/india-bloody-mindedness-historic-cricket-win-in-australia>

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[India cricket team](#)

'Amazing' Rishabh Pant reminded me of Stokes at Headingley, admits Langer

- India stun Australia to take series with win at the Gabba
- 'This is one of the biggest moments of my life,' says Pant

01:21

Reuters, PA Media and Australian Associated Press

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.19 EST

Justin Langer compared Rishabh Pant's innings at the Gabba to Ben Stokes' for England at Headingley in 2019 after an injury-ravaged India triumphed 2-1 in the four-Test series.

Pant hit an unbeaten 89 on day five in Brisbane to complete a remarkable recovery for the tourists after they had begun the series by being bundled out for [a record low of 36 in Adelaide](#) and with their regular captain, Virat Kohli, leaving a demoralised team behind him as he returned home to attend the birth of his daughter.

Set a record target of 328 to win at the Gabba, the tourists reached it with three wickets in hand and only 18 balls left to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a dramatic finale.

"It was an amazing effort, Pant's innings reminded me of Ben Stokes' at Headingley. He came in, was almost fearless and he'll be lauded because of it. It was an unbelievable innings," Australia's head coach, Langer told 7Cricket. "It was an incredible Test series. There is a winner and a loser and we didn't come out today, but Test cricket is the winner. It has been magnificent.

"It will hurt us big time and India deserve full credit because they have been outstanding. My God they are tough dusters and they deserve full credit but

we will learn a lot of lessons.”

[Rishabh Pant leads record-breaking chase as India beat Australia to fourth Test and series](#)

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After Adelaide, India levelled the series in Melbourne under stand-in captain, Ajinkya Rahane, and drew in Sydney but had lost their entire frontline bowling attack to injuries by the time they arrived in Brisbane.

Washington Sundar and T Natarajan, retained as net bowlers, made their Test debuts, helping [India to pull off a series victory for the ages](#).

It left their coach, Ravi Shastri, declaring that it will go down as one of the greatest series played.

“I’m not someone who really has tears in my eyes but I had real tears because this is unreal,” Shastri said. “The penny has still not dropped, and it will take a long time to drop. Unreal.

“What these guys have pulled off will go down in history as one of the greatest series ever played. When you take the Covid situation and the spate of injuries into account, showing stomach for a fight after being bowled out for 36 is unimaginable.”

The challenges of living in a biosecure bubble and the spate of injuries made it the toughest tour he could remember, said the former Test player. “This is the toughest tour ever. We’re playing in Covid times, quarantine times and with the multiple injuries – nothing comes close. It surpasses all.”



The celebrations begin at the Gabba. Photograph: Bradley Kanaris/Getty Images

Rahane inspired India's comeback with a [captain's century in Melbourne](#) and the 32-year-old was at his modest best after the win. "I was emotional too. I still don't know what happened and don't know how to describe this," said Rahane, who gifted a signed India shirt to Australia's Nathan Lyon to mark the spinner's 100th test after the match.

Pant labelled his series-winning innings "one of the biggest moments" of his life after India inflicted a first defeat on Australia at the Gabba since 1988. "This is one of the biggest moments of my life now," Pant told espncricinfo.com. "It's been a dream series. The team management always back me and tells me: 'You are a match-winner' and I keep thinking every day that I want to win matches for India and I did it today."

The absent captain, Kohli, tweeted: "WHAT A WIN!!! Yessssss. To everyone who doubted us after Adelaide, stand up and take notice. Exemplary performance but the grit and determination was the standout for us the whole way. Well done to all the boys and the management. Enjoy this historic feat lads. Cheers."

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Defeat for Australia and their captain, Tim Paine, added to the disappointment of the third Test, where they failed to bowl out India for victory on day five. After another final day to forget, the wicketkeeper conceded they need to review how they handle pressure.

Paine said: “Absolutely disappointed. We came here to win the Test and win the series. It’s been a bit of a trend that we were found wanting in the key moments and completely outplayed by a tough Indian side that fully deserves the win. I think there’s lots of things we’ll look back at, but what’s done is done. We need to look forward now. There’s a big series in South Africa coming up. We’ve been outplayed by the better side in this series.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/this-will-go-down-in-history-india-coach-shastri-hails-unimaginable-win-australia-cricket>

[England women's football team](#)

FA puts Hege Riise in interim charge of Lionesses but faces Olympics headache

- Former Norway international assisted by Rhian Wilkinson
- No Team GB coach decision before spring after Neville exit



Hege Riise, leads a LSK Kvinner training session in March 2019.

Photograph: Alejandro García/EPA-EFE

Hege Riise, leads a LSK Kvinner training session in March 2019.

Photograph: Alejandro García/EPA-EFE

[Paul MacInnes](#)

[@PaulMac](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.32 EST

The Football Association faces an ever-more complicated situation as it tries to fill the hole left by the [departure of Phil Neville](#), with a decision over who will lead Team GB at the Olympics postponed to the spring and the prospect of a run-up devoid of competitive football.

Following Neville's decision this week to end his tenure with England Women early, the FA has announced the former Norway midfielder Hege Riise will take charge of a training camp in February, supported by the former Canada international Rhian Wilkinson.

[Phil Neville's tenure as England Women coach: tepid and too much arrogance | Suzanne Wrack](#)

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Riise, a former world player of the year and head coach of LSK Vinner, where she was nominated for the Fifa Best women's coach of the year award in 2020, had been lined up as assistant to Neville before his departure for the MLS side Inter Miami on Monday. She will step up a role, with Wilkinson filling in beneath.

That relationship will be re-evaluated after the camp, with Sarina Wiegman set to come into the head coach role after the Olympics. But the question of who will lead Team GB in Tokyo, a role Neville had been expected to fill, is equally high-profile and increasingly trickier.

It is understood that the FA, under its head of women's football, Baroness Sue Campbell, has a process for identifying a new Team GB manager. That will not begin until after the February camp.

The search will be complicated by the difficulty of appointing a head coach from the WSL, where the successful candidate would be expected to solicit training data on potential squad players from managerial rivals. With the FA anticipating a decision by the middle of April on whether the Tokyo Games will go ahead, there is the possibility it may not appoint a head coach at all.

There are also questions over the ability to prepare the squad for the Games, with Covid-19 causing continuing to disrupt international fixtures. The Lionesses have not played a competitive match since the She Believes Cup last March and, on Tuesday, the Danish FA announced it would no longer be participating in a training tournament with England during the upcoming camp.

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Announcing the appointment of England's new coaches, Campbell said: "I am delighted to welcome Hege Riise and Rhian Wilkinson to the England coaching team, having had positive discussions with them in recent weeks.

"They bring significant international experience and will help guide our players before the arrival of Sarina Wiegman as our new head coach to lead us into the home Euro in 2022. Once February is complete, we will sit down and assess the Lionesses situation and consider next steps for Team GB in consultation with the home nations and the British Olympic Association."

Campbell is not in the running to be new FA chair after deciding against applying before the 9 January deadline.

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Premiership

Bath's Premiership game at Bristol in doubt after positive Covid tests

- Bath scheduled to play at Ashton Gate on 29 January
- Club's training ground closed after outbreak at club



Bath's players and staff were sent home after the positive tests were confirmed. Photograph: Patrick Khachfe/JMP/Shutterstock

Bath's players and staff were sent home after the positive tests were confirmed. Photograph: Patrick Khachfe/JMP/Shutterstock

[Paul Rees](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.44 EST

Bath's derby against [Bristol](#) at Ashton Gate on 29 January is in doubt after their players and staff were sent home on Tuesday to isolate after a number of positive Covid-19 tests at the club.

Bath's training ground, Farleigh House, is closed for a deep clean and another round of testing will be conducted on Thursday before the scheduled

round next Monday. Bristol's tests this week were all negative. Those who tested positive at [Bath](#) will have to isolate for at least 10 days, ruling them out of the Bristol match, along with their close contacts. [Bath](#) have already had two fixtures cancelled this season, against La Rochelle and London Irish, and their only victory came against Worcester.

[Covid and dementia leave rugby union fretting over an uncertain future |](#)

[Paul Rees](#)

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“This is an anxious time for us all and the mental as well as physical health of our people and their families is our priority,” the Bath director of rugby, Stuart Hooper, said. “Our planned training sessions have been cancelled and those able to train from home will now do so. My team and I are focused on doing all we can to be ready to play our forthcoming fixtures, but I must reinforce that I will not allow the health of our people to be compromised.”

A decision on whether the match at Bristol will go ahead will be taken after Monday’s round of testing. Five Premiership matches have been [called off this season](#), affecting seven clubs, but Bristol are among the five sides to have played all their fixtures.

The Breakdown: sign up and get our weekly rugby union email.

With no room in the schedule for rearranged matches, the games have been cancelled and four points awarded to the side that did not cause the fixture to be called off, with the other side getting two. It has led to a number of clubs calling for relegation to be suspended and the [Premiership expanded to 13 clubs next season](#) to accommodate [Saracens, who are expected](#) to win the Championship.

Bath’s last match [was against Wasps](#), when they scored 44 points at home and lost. Dai Young, who has taken over at Cardiff Blues for the rest of the season, parted company with Wasps a year ago after an indifferent start to the season and watched them reach the Premiership final under head coach Lee Blackett.

[What England squad should Jones pick to mark 150th anniversary? | Robert Kitson](#) [Read more](#)

“I needed a break having felt a bit of burnout,” said Young. “When relegation was no longer an issue, the club and I agreed that it was time to part company.

“I would love to have been a part of getting to the final having employed the coaches and signed the players, but I felt a little more vindicated. I bear no grudges and am still a Wasps fan.”

Elsewhere, the Rugby Football Union released a one-off commemorative kit that England will wear for [this year's Calcutta Cup match](#) to mark the 150th anniversary of English rugby.

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Law

UK government accused of discriminating against maternity leave-takers

Charity brings judicial review and says payment calculations breach Human Rights Act



About 75,000 women who took maternity leave between 2016 and 2019 lost out on earnings. Photograph: Alamy

About 75,000 women who took maternity leave between 2016 and 2019 lost out on earnings. Photograph: Alamy

[Alexandra Topping](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.27 EST

The government could be forced to award rebates to tens of thousands of self-employed women if a case accusing it of discriminating against those who have taken maternity leave is successful.

About 75,000 women who took maternity leave between 2016 and 2019 lost out on earnings because payments from the self-employed income support scheme (SEISS) – introduced alongside the furlough scheme last year – are worked out based on average profits.

The payments – which are calculated by taking into account 80% of self-employed profits, averaged out between 2016 to 2019 – do not exempt periods when self-employed women were not earning because they were on maternity leave, or take into account statutory maternity payments.

[UK government urged to protect pregnant women in second Covid wave](#)
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The charity [Pregnant Then Screwed](#) (PTS) is bringing a judicial review for indirect sexual discrimination on Thursday, supported by Doughty Street Chambers and law firm Leigh Day.

When asked about the issue in parliament, [Rishi Sunak](#) said self-employed people had “ups and downs” in their earnings “for all sorts of reasons … whether through maternity, ill health or others”.

PTS founder and CEO Joeli Brearley said: “Giving birth and caring for the next generation, particularly in a baby’s first year of life, is work. It is mentally and physically exhausting work.

“For maternity leave to be dismissed as the same as being sick or taking a sabbatical is not only insulting, but it sends out a very dangerous message about how this government views mothers and the integral role we play in a well-functioning society.”

Brearley said SEISS calculations breached the anti-discrimination provisions of the Human Rights Act and the requirement in the Equality Act to consider the position of women who did not work for reasons relating to pregnancy or maternity.

“This court case is about defending women’s rights and showing the government that they cannot ride roughshod over the Equality act,” she said.

Cheryl Liversuch, a self-employed fitness instructor, had her third child in 2018 and went back to full-time work just before the coronavirus pandemic started – her grant was about a third what she would normally earn. She said her partner, who is also self-employed, had received a full grant calculated on his full earnings.

“His payments weren’t reduced at all, but obviously he also became a parent – it takes two to tango, but it is only the woman that is penalised for having a family,” she said.

Laura, a single parent who did not want to give her surname, said her work as a cake maker had dried up, but because she had a child in May 2017 her SEISS payments were minimal and did not include the maternity allowance she was paid by the government. “So they are paying me maternity pay to cover my income, but not counting it as my income. It doesn’t make any sense,” she said.

A Treasury spokesperson said SEISS was “one of the most generous” schemes of its type in the world, claiming that calculating the grant based on average profits over three years better reflected people’s incomes.

The spokesperson said: “We understand the challenges for new parents who are self-employed – and even if a new parent did not submit their tax return for 2018-19, they may still be eligible and able to claim for a grant using their self-assessment returns from previous years.”

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Royal Dutch Shell

Shell pulls out of joint venture to build UK sustainable jet fuels plant

Withdrawal a blow to Boris Johnson's desire for UK to achieve first zero-emission long-haul flight



Shell said it would leave venture with British Airways and Velocys days after joining a new project in Canada. Photograph: Carl Court/AFP/Getty Images

Shell said it would leave venture with British Airways and Velocys days after joining a new project in Canada. Photograph: Carl Court/AFP/Getty Images

[Gwyn Topham](#) and [Jillian Ambrose](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.54 EST

Shell has pulled out of a joint venture with British Airways and Velocys to build a flagship sustainable jet fuels plant in the UK – in a blow to Boris Johnson's claims that Britain could deliver the world's first zero-emission long-haul flight.

The oil firm was named last year as one of the top companies set to “turbocharge government plans” for sustainable aviation fuels, the centrepiece of the so-called “jet zero” plan to decarbonise flights.

Shell said it would leave the Altalto project, to be built in Immingham, Humberside, days after the company agreed to join a project in Canada which plans to produce more than double the green fuel from less than half the waste.

Shell’s departure was by mutual consent, and the project would continue “according to its existing development plan”, the three parties behind the project said. Immingham could begin supplying its first aviation fuel from non-recyclable household waste within five years.

But Shell’s decision to exit the UK’s burgeoning green fuels industry is likely to compound scepticism over Johnson’s promise that Britain would be in the “vanguard of green innovation” by pioneering zero-emission transatlantic flight.

The departure comes after a number of false starts for BA’s plans for UK production of sustainable fuels. The airline shelved a proposed waste-to-fuel factory in Thurrock, Essex, which was due to open in 2017, blaming a lack of government support.

Shell’s head of new fuels, Matthew Tipper, said the oil company was “pursuing multiple opportunities across our global portfolio”.

“On this occasion, we have decided to focus our resources on other lower-carbon fuels opportunities which leverage our own technology. We will continue to work with the aviation industry and the UK government, as part of the jet zero council, to help decarbonise UK aviation,” he said.

Shell announced plans earlier this month to take a 40% interest in the Varennes Carbon Recycling project, the first waste-to-low-carbon-fuels plant in Quebec, which will use Montreal-based cleantech company Enerkem’s proprietary technology.

The pair plan to treat more than 200,000 tonnes of non-recyclable and wood waste annually to produce nearly 125m litres of low carbon fuels to help cut emissions from Canada's transport industries. The UK's Immingham Altalto project will use 500,000 tonnes of waste to make less than half the fuel, or 60m litres a year.

Velocys and BA said they had been in talks for several months with other potential sources of finance for the project, which was well placed to achieve significant government funding.

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BA's parent company, IAG, was the first airline group to pledge that its operations would become net zero by 2050, albeit largely through offsetting. BA's chief executive, Sean Doyle, said: "Sustainable aviation fuel is vital to the decarbonisation of aviation and to helping us achieve our net zero target. We are excited to continue to work with Velocys, with the support of government and other private-sector partners."

Velocys said it was looking forward to moving to the next stage of development this year. The chief executive, Henrik Wareborn, said: "Altalto Immingham is ready to take advantage of the strong push from both government and industry for the decarbonisation of aviation, especially using waste feedstocks."

While manufacturers have said that hybrid-electric, or even hydrogen, short-haul commercial passenger jets could be feasible by 2035, long-haul net zero flights, if possible, are assumed to depend on sustainable jet fuels.

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Electric, hybrid and low-emission cars

Global sales of electric cars accelerate fast in 2020 despite pandemic

Sales of electric cars rose by 43% while overall car sales slumped by a fifth last year



Chinese-built Tesla Model 3s outside Tesla's gigafactory in Shanghai. Tesla sold more electric cars in 2020 than any other brand, and China bought more electric cars than any other nation. Photograph: Aly Song/Reuters

Global sales of electric cars accelerated fast in 2020, rising by 43% to more than 3m, despite overall car sales slumping by a fifth during the coronavirus pandemic.

Tesla was the brand selling the most electric cars, delivering almost 500,000, followed by Volkswagen. Sales of electric cars more than doubled in Europe, pushing the region past China as the world's biggest market for them, according to data published on Tuesday by [EV-volumes.com](#), a Sweden-based consultancy.

Sales of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) made up 4.2% of the global car market, up from 2.5% in 2019. The rising sales are being driven by government policies to reduce carbon emissions, but a key factor is that electric cars are simply a better technology, said Viktor Irle, sales and marketing analyst at EV-volumes.com.

Sales of electric cars did fall below 2019's levels from March to June, at the height of the Covid-19 lockdowns, but recovered strongly after that and by December were at double the level in December 2019.

Global sales of electric cars accelerated in 2020

A series of governments have set [dates for the end of sales of fossil fuel-powered cars](#) in the next decade or so. "The political push is still there – [governments] everywhere speak about the green recovery," said Irle.

"But the main reason for growth is simple – electric cars are a better technology. There is no noise, no pollution, better acceleration, and [cheaper running costs](#). If people test-drive an electric car, they're not going to go back to gasoline vehicles. The problem at the moment is that the price is a little bit higher, but the cost is really coming down as well."

Irle said the surge in sales in Europe may in part be because carmakers had to meet EU emissions targets averaged across their fleets in 2020, and may have pushed sales of low-emission vehicles more than in 2019.

The relatively high purchase prices of today's electric cars may have helped manufacturers weather the Covid-19 storm, Irle added: "The cheap car segments are always the worst hit [in recessions], because it's not normally high-income people that buy those cars."

Tesla's approach of selling cars directly to customers, rather than via franchised dealers, may also have helped while others' showrooms were closed, and carmakers including Volkswagen also [took up this sales approach in 2020](#).

There are about 150 new BEV and PHEV models expected on the market in 2021. This indicates that 2021 will see continued growth, said Irle, who estimates sales of about 4.6m electric cars by the end of the year.

The EV-volumes.com data showed the five highest national sales were in China (1.3m), Germany (0.4m), the US (0.3m), France and the UK (both 0.2m). However, growth in the US was only 4% in 2020, due to few new models being available.

In the UK, 2020 was a record year for electric vehicle sales, according to data from the trade body SMMT, which said the sector was looking to a green recovery from poor overall sales.

Sales of BEVs almost tripled in the UK, while those of PHEVs almost doubled, giving the vehicles a combined market share of 10.7%. Other non-plug-in hybrids took 18% of the market, but overall car sales were down 29%. In December 2020 BEVs and PHEVs outsold diesel cars by two to one in the UK, while the Tesla Model 3 was the UK's top selling car that month.

“The accelerated take-up [of electric vehicles] in 2020 is encouraging but a true mass market depends on a wide range of models at competitive prices,” said Steve Gooding, director of pro-motoring organisation the RAC Foundation. “The industry is delivering on the first point – there are reports that more plug-ins will be launched in the UK in 2021 than those running on petrol and diesel – but there remains an affordability gap.

“Much attention also focuses on battery-powered cars as being ideal for the city, but they could be just at home in rural and remote areas where there is plenty of space for public and private recharging facilities, and a relative scarcity of forecourts selling fossil fuels, and where there is availability it comes at an inflated price.”

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Domestic violence

Landmark hearing to examine handling of domestic abuse cases by UK courts

Family lawyers hope test appeals involving allegations of partner rape and coercive control will help update approach of family courts



Two of the four appeals being heard concern decisions made by Judge Robin Tolson. Photograph: Gary Lee/Photoshot

Two of the four appeals being heard concern decisions made by Judge Robin Tolson. Photograph: Gary Lee/Photoshot

Hannah Summers

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.37 EST

A landmark hearing in the court of appeal is under way to examine how cases of domestic abuse are handled by judges in the family courts.

It concerns four conjoined appeals which feature allegations including marital or partner rape and coercive control, which emerged during private proceedings to address disputes centred on access to children.

The appeals have been brought by mothers who have made serious claims against the fathers of their children, and challenge the decisions made by circuit judges at the family courts during the last 18 months.

Two of the cases relate to decisions by Judge Robin Tolson, who was criticised last year by a more senior judge based in the Family Division of the high court over his handling of rape allegations. Ms Justice Russell upheld a woman's appeal after she complained Tolson had deduced she could not have been raped because she took "no physical steps" to stop her assailant.

Barrister Christopher Hames QC, representing one of the four women, says his client is challenging Tolson's decision to make "absolutely no findings" in respect of her "myriad of allegations", including complaints of non-consensual sex, coercive control and that her partner "slapped her hard" when she was heavily pregnant.

The court of appeal heard how the mother had had an on-off relationship with her ex-partner, who had wrongfully retained their child at his home overseas after the mother had left them there for a visit.

Hames said Judge Tolson ignored an important admission by the father that on a few occasions he used physical violence.

He told the court of appeal on Tuesday that Tolson had found the father's account to be consistent, despite police evidence to the contrary. Hames asserted that Tolson's reference to the mother's mental health issues as her "demons" flavoured his entire approach to her and her evidence.

He said: "It was clear the judge was not keeping an open mind about the allegations the mother made. He didn't analyse the evidence appropriately at all. He failed to take a holistic evaluation of all the evidence before him."

Hames said Tolson had wrongfully placed emphasis on the fact the alleged non-consensual sex preceded "many other occasions of consensual sex" and the decision by the mother to leave the child abroad with the father.

“It should not be taken that just because a woman has consented to sex in the past that she should be taken as consenting every time ... I would have hoped that this is an assumption long assigned to the judicial dustbin.”

The appeal raised issues of how claims of coercive and controlling behaviour are handled in the family courts.

[Coercive control is a form of intimate terrorism and must be criminalised | Paul McGorrery, Jess Hill and others](#)

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“In this appeal, as in other cases, the real question is not limited to what happened, but whether those events were abuse themselves and/or whether there is sufficient evidence of patterns of behaviour which is demonstrative of an abusive relationship,” Hames told appeal judges Sir Andrew McFarlane, Lady King and Lord Holroyde in a written case outline.

Hames said Tolson had commented that incidents of note were “insignificant in themselves” and ignored that victims of abuse do not always recognise themselves as victims and as a result may not report abuse to the authorities.

On behalf of the respondent, barrister Janet Bazley QC highlighted “extravagant claims” made by the mother including that the father had a personality disorder and that one of his older children was a risk to their child.

Bazley said Tolson had concluded it was impossible to reconcile sending a very young child to live with their father for an extended period with her claims and concerns about the father’s ability to provide adequate care.

The court also heard that the mother had told psychiatrists the father was a “good man and not abusive”.

Barrister Amanda Weston QC, who is representing a second woman challenging a ruling by Tolson, said he had been wrong to find her client’s allegation of rape “deeply unconvincing” because she had had consensual intercourse with the father on other occasions.

“The judge failed to consider the rape allegations in the context of a pattern of coercive control,” she said in a written outline of the case.

“The judge was wrong to find the mother’s case ‘weakened’ because she did not conform to his stereotype of the ideal victim, as she delayed in reporting the allegations.”

Charlotte Proudman, one of the mother’s lawyers, told the Guardian: “These appeals show the need to update how family courts approach cases involving rape, domestic abuse and coercive control. All too often we see outdated attitudes towards wider domestic abuse, which could leave parents and children at risk of harm.

“It’s been two decades since the family courts have looked at these issues and these landmark appeals couldn’t be more timely.”

A [report](#) by the Ministry of Justice published last year warned that “rape myths” can be applied in the family jurisdiction to undermine a woman’s credibility.

Two further women have challenged rulings by other judges – Judge Jane Evans-Gordon and Judge Richard Scarratt.

No findings of abuse had been made against any of the men involved and each of them opposes the appeals.

It is anticipated appeal judges will not only decide whether or not to uphold or reject the appeals – but may also issue new guidance to family court judges based on the findings.

The hearing continues.

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Transgender

High court grants leave to appeal to UK gender identity service

NHS trust wins right of appeal over referrals for puberty-blocking drugs for under-16s who want gender reassignment



Keira Bell, a 23-year-old woman, who was prescribed puberty blockers at 16, brought the case against the Tavistock and Portman NHS trust in December 2020. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

Keira Bell, a 23-year-old woman, who was prescribed puberty blockers at 16, brought the case against the Tavistock and Portman NHS trust in December 2020. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

[Alexandra Topping](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.47 EST

An NHS trust has been allowed to appeal against a high court decision that barred it from referring under-16s for puberty-blocking treatment.

The court ruled that children considering gender reassignment were unlikely to be able to give informed consent. Now the Tavistock and Portman NHS

trust, which runs the UK's main gender identity development service for children, has been granted permission to appeal, alongside University College Hospitals NHS foundation trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS trust.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Tavistock, which leads the national Gender Identity and Development Service (Gids), said it welcomed the court's decision. "Our priority is to work together with our partners to support our patients and their families while legal proceedings are ongoing," the spokesperson said.

At the start of December last year the London clinic lost a case brought by Keira Bell, a 23-year-old woman who began taking puberty blockers when she was 16 before detransitioning, and the unnamed mother of a 15-year-old autistic girl who is on the waiting list for treatment.

In their decision, Dame Victoria Sharp, president of the Queen's bench division, Lord Justice Lewis and Mrs Justice Lieven, ruled that it unlikely that children under the age of 16 who were considering gender reassignment were mature enough to give informed consent to be prescribed puberty-blocking drugs.

In addition the judges ruled that even in cases involving teenagers under 18 doctors may need to consult the courts for authorisation for medical intervention. They added: "It is doubtful that a child aged 14 or 15 could understand and weigh the long-term risks and consequences of the administration of puberty blockers."

At the time of the ruling an NHS spokesperson said the Tavistock had immediately suspended new referrals for puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for the under-16s, which would henceforth only be permitted where specifically authorised by a court.

Susie Green, CEO of Mermaids, a charity providing support to transgender or non-gender-conforming children, said the initial ruling forced transgender young people to go to court to get basic healthcare.

“Whatever our beliefs, most of us can agree that it is the young people themselves, together with their parents and their doctor, who best understand their needs,” she said.

“We are pleased to see that this ruling will now be challenged – for the sake of every child who deserves the chance to live a happy life and be true to themselves.”

In September last year the [NHS](#) launched [an independent review into the future of gender identity services for children and young people](#) to examine the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormone drugs as well as looking at how care could be improved.

The NHS service at Tavistock, to which those under the age of 18 with concerns about their gender are referred for treatment, has had a surge in demand from 77 in 2009 to 2,590 in 2018-19.

An inspection of the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation trust gender identity services for children and young people by The Care Quality Commission due to report on Wednesday is expected to include feedback from people using the service, parents, relatives, carers and staff.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/high-court-grants-leave-to-appeal-to-uk-gender-identity-service>

JD Wetherspoon

Wetherspoon moves to buy up smaller pubs on the cheap amid Covid crisis

Chain targets London pubs as ex-Greene King boss leads separate buying spree

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Wetherspoon has raised £93m to buy up Covid-hit smaller wet pubs, largely in central London. Photograph: REX/Shutterstock

Pubs driven to financial ruin by the impact of the pandemic could be bought up on the cheap under plans being drawn up by [JD Wetherspoon](#) as well as by a new venture fronted by the former boss of Greene King.

In a statement to investors, Wetherspoon said it was raising up to £93.7m by placing new shares.

It said the money would be used to strengthen a balance sheet damaged by the pandemic and offset the impact of an expected slow start once pubs reopen.

But the 871-strong pub chain said the money would also “facilitate the acquisition of new properties, which are likely to be available at favourable prices, as a result of the pandemic”.

It is targeting pubs in central London, which have been particularly hard-hit due to the loss of tourist traffic and office workers. Many have also been closed for longer than large, rural pubs because they cannot meet social distancing standards.

“It may be possible to achieve a higher-than-average return on capital on properties acquired in the next few years, based on the company’s past experience,” Wetherspoon said.

The chain announced its intentions on the same day that it emerged the former [Greene King](#) boss Rooney Anand is leading a new venture ready to spend £200m in a major gamble on recovery for the pubs sector.

Redcat Pub Company has financial backing from an unnamed US-based private equity firm to acquire smaller pubs and bars, City sources told Sky News, which first reported the story.

The opportunity for those with capital to buy venues at knockdown prices comes in the wake of a prolonged period in which the licensed trade has been among the hardest hit by the impact of the coronavirus.

The industry trade body said on Tuesday that parts of the sector were “hanging by a thread” and bemoaned the length of time it was taking for government grants to arrive.

Nearly three-quarters of the pubs promised a £1,000 grant by the prime minister to help them survive the [loss of Christmas](#) sales in England are still waiting for the money, the British Beer & Pubs Association (BBPA) said.

The grants, which local councils have been asked to distribute, were intended to help “wet-led” pubs, which do not serve food and instead rely on

alcohol sales, leaving them particularly exposed to Covid-19 restrictions. Venues that did not serve food were unable to open over the traditionally lucrative Christmas period.

It was “scandalous” that many of its members were still waiting for cash promised in December 2020, the association said, warning that much of the industry was on the verge of financial ruin.

More than half of the grants introduced to support pubs through the tier restrictions and November lockdown were also yet to be paid.

“Months have passed by yet still thousands of pubs are waiting on the grants they have been promised,” said the BBPA chief executive, Emma McClarkin. “These grants are a vital lifeline, but only when delivered.

“It is unbelievable that so many pubs are still waiting on their Christmas grants and grants for the second lockdown. Considering we are now in a third lockdown it is scandalous.

“Publicans across the country are desperately checking their bank accounts every minute of every day to see if they have got their payment. Our sector is hanging by a thread, so for many pubs getting these grants is the difference between surviving or closing for good.

“The prime minister personally promised some of these grants for wet-led pubs. We implore him to now intervene and ensure his promise is delivered.”

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The grants are funded by government and are meant to be distributed by 314 local authorities, each of which have different systems in place for doing so.

The Local Government Association, which represents councils, said some may be prioritising January grants, which are larger and in many cases may be going to the same businesses.

“Councils are working fast to ensure businesses eligible for this funding are able to receive it quickly as possible,” a spokesperson for the association said, adding that its members had distributed £12bn to 880,000 small businesses in grants last year.

McClarkin said central government needed to work with local authorities to ensure the money reached struggling businesses faster.

A government spokesperson said: “We understand these are extremely challenging circumstances for businesses. We are working closely with local authorities, who are responsible for administering these grants, to ensure that funds are paid out as quickly as possible to those that need it.”

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Police

'Eye watering': top police officer laments rate of stop and search on young black men

Exclusive: Mike Cunningham, who has just retired as head of College of Policing, calls for 'humility' from former colleagues



Activists and community groups protest against misuse of stop and search powers outside Tottenham police station in December 2020. Photograph: Guy Smallman/Getty Images

Activists and community groups protest against misuse of stop and search powers outside Tottenham police station in December 2020. Photograph: Guy Smallman/Getty Images



Vikram Dodd Police and crime correspondent

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.04 EST

There is “widespread dissatisfaction” with the police among black communities with it being clear young black men are being disproportionately stopped and searched at an “eye-watering” rate, a former senior police chief has said.

Mike Cunningham, who retired last month as chief executive of the College of Policing which sets standards for law enforcement, said stop and search was the “totemic” issue and called for “humility” from police leaders faced with sustained criticism after a tumultuous year. He said law enforcement had achieved a lot but had much more to do on the issue.

In an interview to mark his retirement from policing after 32 years, including stints as chief constable of Staffordshire and HM Inspector of Constabulary, Cunningham told the Guardian: “It is absolutely starkly clear that there is a widespread dissatisfaction with policing from black people. And, I don’t think anybody should try to dress that up and say, ‘it isn’t real, it’s a mistake, it’s a perception’. Something more needs to be done.”

Race exploded as an issue last year after police in the United States brutally killed [George Floyd](#). It triggered demonstrations worldwide, with the scale

of protest in the UK shocking British police leaders.

Over 250,000 people demonstrated during lockdown, a figure that otherwise could have been higher.

It tapped into simmering discontent at stop and search by police, especially in London, with a string of incidents caught on video where innocent black people were stopped, and sometimes handcuffed, sparking claims of racial profiling.

Cunningham said the rate at which young black men were stopped remained “eye watering”. He said: “What I mean is, the numbers of particularly young black men who are stopped and searched, compared to white men, is still huge in some parts of the country.”

The latest official figures show black people are nine times more likely than white to be stopped by police in England and Wales. In London, black young men are 19 times more likely to be stopped than the general population, according to analysis of official data by University College London. The Met says young black men are disproportionately perpetrators of knife crime.

Cunningham said: “You only have to listen to what black communities are saying. This is still a big problem in terms of community trust and community confidence.”

The Metropolitan police are to run a six-month pilot recording the ethnicity of people stopped in their cars in a move aimed at halting the alleged targeting of people for “driving while black”. It follows a spate of cases last year when people were stopped and found to be innocent.

Cunningham said claims of racial profiling could not be dismissed and more work was needed to understand the reasons for disproportionate stop and search figures affecting black people across England and Wales.

He said of police officers: “If you work in an area where there has been a lot of knife crime, and it has been the case that the perpetrators and victims are both young black boys and men, then that could well lead officers from their

operational experience to think, ‘well, actually this is how I need to address this problem’.”

Asked if that meant being more likely to stop people of a certain colour, Cunningham said: “Yeah … who is most likely to be carrying knives in this place? Well the most knife crime that I have seen is perpetrated by young black men and that takes them in that direction.”

He said stop and search was a vital crime-fighting tool, but it would not solve violent crime: “There is evidence to show that it has a short-term effect and can be of use. But there is no evidence to say it’s a long-term solution to serious violent crime.

“To look for a long-term solution through stopping and searching people is not the way to address it.”

He said policing had improved its stance on race since he joined in 1987. He said it was not just stop and search causing problems for the legitimacy of policing: “There are serious issues also about how we recruit black people into policing, how people from minority ethnic backgrounds thrive in policing, feel included in policing.

“There are still lots of very, very clear voices that are telling us that we haven’t done enough, and I think we have to accept that. There’s no point people at the top of policing like me just saying ‘that’s not true’.

“These are evidence backed, committed people who want to say there is something not yet right around race and policing. And I think it is absolutely incumbent upon the leadership of the service to respond to that in an open way with some humility to try and understand what more needs to be done, because unquestionably more does need to be done.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/19/eye-watering-top-police-officer-laments-rate-of-stop-and-search-on-young-black-men>

[Welsh politics](#)

Senior Welsh Tory and Labour figures apologise for drinks event

Conservative leader in Wales, Paul Davies, among those at event days after Covid pub ban came into force



Paul Davies, the Welsh Conservative party leader, in November 2019.
Photograph: Richard Stonehouse/Getty Images

Paul Davies, the Welsh Conservative party leader, in November 2019.
Photograph: Richard Stonehouse/Getty Images

[Steven Morris](#)

[@stevenmorris20](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.13 EST

Three senior politicians including the Conservative leader in [Wales](#), Paul Davies, have apologised over a drinks event in a Welsh parliament building at a time when pubs were banned from serving alcohol on their premises under Covid laws.

Davies, along with the Tory chief whip in the Senedd, Darren Millar, and the party's chief of staff in Wales, Paul Smith, said they had broken the spirit of the rules and were "profoundly sorry".

Alun Davies, a former Labour Welsh government minister, also said he was "very sorry" and has been suspended from the Senedd Labour group.

A ban on the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol in licensed premises came into force in Wales on 4 December. Four days later, on 8 December, a group of Senedd members and staff allegedly drank alcohol in the Ty Hywel building in Cardiff Bay.

A spokesman for the Senedd commission said: "We are aware of an incident on the Senedd estate last month which may have been contrary to public health regulations in force at the time.

"The Senedd commission takes the public health regulations in Wales very seriously and is currently investigating the matter in order to establish an accurate account of what took place and to determine whether action may be required."

A joint statement from Paul Davies, Millar and Smith said: "We are profoundly sorry for our actions. While we did not break the rules, we recognise that what was part of a day's work would not be seen to be following the spirit of them, especially given the tough time the country has been going through."

A spokesperson for the Senedd Labour group said: "A member has been suspended from the privileges of Senedd Labour group membership while an investigation takes place into this alleged incident."

Alun Davies said: "I am very sorry if my actions have given the impression that I am in any way not committed to upholding the regulations, which I have consistently supported throughout the last year.

"For context, the purpose of this meeting from my perspective was to seek to persuade the Welsh Conservatives to support my proposal for a Welsh

Hearts Bill” [to improve the outcomes for people who suffer cardiac arrests]. This is part of my work across political parties on this issue.

“The Senedd commission has already confirmed to me that I did not breach the coronavirus regulations on the consumption of either food or alcohol that were in force at that time. I have also confirmed to the commission that the regulations on the number of people present and on social distancing were not breached either. I look forward to the commission’s final conclusions on this matter.”

It is understood the alcohol was not bought on the premises and was not served by catering staff.

A spokesman for the catering company CH&CO Group, which offers catering and hospitality services at the Senedd, said: “We are aware of an alleged breach of public health regulations at the Senedd estate.

“As caterers, we take our responsibilities and obligations to restrictions and public health regulations across the UK very seriously. We are currently undertaking a full investigation into this matter.”

The Welsh government’s minister for mental health, Eluned Morgan, has written to the Welsh Conservatives asking them to suspend its members involved while the incident is investigated.

A spokesperson for South Wales police said: “South Wales police is aware of an internal investigation being conducted by the Senedd Commission into an incident on the Senedd estate last month.

“If the matter is referred to police, an investigation will be undertaken if suspected breaches of the public health regulations are identified.”

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Undercover police and policing

Scottish parliament rejects Westminster's 'spy cops' bill

Holyrood move means covert police bill will not cover Scotland when it comes into law



Scotland's justice secretary, Humza Yousaf, in the Scottish parliament in September 2020. Photograph: Fraser Bremner/PA Media

Scotland's justice secretary, Humza Yousaf, in the Scottish parliament in September 2020. Photograph: Fraser Bremner/PA Media

[Severin Carrell](#) Scotland editor

[@severincarrell](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.34 EST

The Scottish parliament has rejected a controversial bill from Westminster that potentially allows undercover agents to commit crimes, after [Labour](#) MSPs again ignored Keir Starmer's policies.

Scottish Labour's MSPs voted alongside the Scottish National party, Scottish Greens and the Lib Dems to refuse legislative consent by Holyrood

for the so-called “spy cops” bill after a short debate on Tuesday afternoon.

Holyrood’s rejection of the bill means it will not cover [Scotland](#) once it comes into law, potentially leaving Scottish police and intelligence agents unable to mount covert operations that could involve them committing criminal offences to protect their cover.

[Lords inflict two defeats on government over 'spy cops' bill](#)

[Read more](#)

The [covert human intelligence sources \(Chis\) bill](#) has been introduced at Westminster because criminal activity by police or spies in the UK is currently unregulated. A forthcoming case at the court of appeal in London will rule later this year on whether the current rules regarding undercover agents are lawful.

Humza Yousaf, the Scottish justice secretary, told MSPs that if the appeal court ruled they were unlawful, that could force Holyrood to introduce emergency legislation to authorise criminal activity by police or spies in Scotland.

Hinting this raised fresh questions about the remit of UK ministers to influence Scotland’s independent criminal justice system, Yousaf said the UK government had rejected his attempts to reach a consensus.

Starmer has told Labour MPs and peers to abstain on the bill, despite widespread anxieties that it gives undercover police, intelligence agents and soldiers immunity from prosecution for any criminal offence, without prior approval from a judge.

[Labour has already split over the bill](#) at Westminster: two frontbenchers resigned in October after 34 Labour MPs rebelled, and Shami Chakrabarti, the shadow attorney general under Jeremy Corbyn, [tabled amendments](#) that were rejected by Labour peers on Starmer’s orders.

[Secrets and lies: untangling the UK 'spy cops' scandal](#)

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Starmer argues that Labour would need to introduce similar legislation if it was in power. Neil Findlay, a Corbyn-supporting Labour MSP who campaigned for a Scottish public inquiry into the undercover police officers who infiltrated protest groups, said the UK government's proposals were "a human rights scandal waiting to happen".

Speaking in favour of a Scottish government motion to reject the bill, Findlay indicated Labour at Holyrood were opposed to the legislation on principle. "[We] should be rejecting this because it is an affront to our democracy and an affront to our legal system," he said.

Yousaf said the SNP was opposed to the bill chiefly because it failed to include pre-authorisation for any criminal acts from a judge, despite repeated Scottish government appeals for it do so.

In a vote, only the Scottish Conservatives voted to support the UK bill, arguing that rejecting it could leave police and the intelligence services unable to use any covert informants or undercover agents.

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Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex

Meghan's letter 'signalled end of our relationship', Thomas Markle tells court

Duchess of Sussex's father says letter part-published in Mail on Sunday showed 'no concern' for his health



The Duchess of Sussex with her husband, Prince Harry, in London last year.
Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

The Duchess of Sussex with her husband, Prince Harry, in London last year.
Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

Caroline Davies

Tue 19 Jan 2021 12.24 EST

A private letter written by the Duchess of Sussex to her father “actually signalled the end of our relationship, not a reconciliation”, Thomas Markle has told the high court as he accused his daughter of showing “no concern” for his health as she allegedly “shut [him] out”.

The letter, extracts of which were published by the [Mail on Sunday](#), is at the centre of the court case pitting Meghan against her estranged father.

In a witness statement submitted on behalf of the publisher [Associated Newspapers](#) (ANL), Markle, 76, said he felt compelled to release extracts of the 2018 letter to correct “lies” written about him when Meghan’s friends spoke anonymously to the US magazine People.

He said: “I believe (and still believe) that Meghan wanted her account of the letter to be published.”

He chose the extracts he released to the Mail on Sunday, and did not want the whole letter published “because I thought the letter as a whole made Meg look terrible”, his statement said.

He had been “shocked” when he read the People article, saying it had “vilified me by making out that I was dishonest, exploitative, publicity-seeking, uncaring and cold-hearted, leaving a loyal and dutiful daughter devastated”. “I had to defend myself against that attack,” the statement added.

In his statement, Markle said the suggestion in the People article that Meghan had reached out to him “saying that she loved me and that she wanted to repair our relationship” had been “false”.

“The letter was not an attempt at a reconciliation. It was a criticism of me. The letter didn’t say she loved me. It did not even ask how I was. It showed no concern about the fact I had suffered a heart attack and asked no questions about my health. It actually signalled the end of our relationship, not a reconciliation,” his statement said.

“It was wrong for People magazine to say I had lied about Meg shutting me out – she had shut me out, as the letter from her showed.”

Markle’s witness statement was released as the duchess sought to have the judge [rule in her favour in a summary judgment](#) without the need for a trial in her privacy action against ANL, the publisher of the Mail on Sunday and Mail Online, which reproduced parts of the letter over five articles in February 2019.

Justin Rushbrooke QC, for the duchess, told Mr Justice Warby that ANL's case had no prospect of success and that publication of the extracts had been a "triple-barrelled invasion of her privacy rights". The letter was "a heartfelt plea from an anguished daughter to her father", he added. Rushbrooke said ANL's defence was "smoke and mirrors" and did not "stand up to scrutiny".

"It is as good an example as one could find of a letter that any person of ordinary sensibilities would not want to be disclosed to third parties, let alone in a mass media publication, in a sensational context and to serve the commercial purposes of the newspaper," he added.

He said the defence's case that Thomas Markle had been left "with no choice but to go public" about the letter after its existence was revealed to US People was "cynical and unattractive".

In his statement, Markle said he neither asked for nor received payment for the Mail on Sunday article. He felt that if the public did not see the letter "and read what it said in its own words, I did not think anyone would believe me".

The duchess is seeking damages for alleged misuse of private information, copyright infringement and breach of the Data Protection Act over the articles. Any trial has been postponed until the autumn after an application by Meghan, which was granted for reasons that have not been made public.

Rushbrooke said the case raised an "important point of principle", and the "disturbing question: Who has the right of control over the contents of a private letter? Is it the writer of the letter, or the editor of the Mail on Sunday," he said.

"There can only be one answer to that question, and it's the same whether the writer is a duchess or any other citizen. And the answer is it is not the editor of the Mail on Sunday," he said.

Antony White QC, representing ANL, said in written submissions that the case was "wholly unsuitable for summary judgment".

He told the judge Meghan wrote the letter in order “to defend her against charges of being an uncaring or unloving daughter” and she must have appreciated “that her father might choose to disclose it”.

The defence has argued that the duchess made personal information public by co-operating with authors of the biography [Finding Freedom, a claim she denies](#). It also argued that her denial she knew her friends had been talking anonymously to People magazine “does not seem plausible”.

The duchess’s case had “constantly shifted” and she had given a “confusing and tortuous account of the genesis of the letter”, White said in written submissions. Much of the confusion which “bedevils” her case arose because she was “compelled to put forward explanations in response to facts provided by ANL”, he said.

The hearing is due to last two days.

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2021.01.20 - Around the world

- Jamal Khashoggi Biden administration 'to declassify report' into murder
- US Biden to hold memorial for 400,000 Americans who have died of Covid-19
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- Rachel Levine Biden health pick set to become first trans Senate conferee
- Oklahoma New owners of Tiger King zoo ordered to turn over lion and tiger cubs
- Russia Vladimir Putin is not scared of Alexei Navalny, says Kremlin
- Sean Spicer Trump's ex-media chief applies to join White House press corps

Jamal Khashoggi

Biden administration 'to declassify report' into Khashoggi murder

Decision would mean US could assign blame for death on to Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman



The Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, left, with journalist Jamal Khashoggi in a scene from the recent documentary *The Dissident*.
Photograph: AP

The Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, left, with journalist Jamal Khashoggi in a scene from the recent documentary *The Dissident*.
Photograph: AP

*[Stephanie Kirchgaessner](#) in Washington
@skirchy*

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.05 EST

The Biden administration will declassify an intelligence report into the murder by the Saudi government of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, according

to Avril Haines, who [has been nominated to serve as director of national intelligence](#).

The decision means that the US is [likely to officially assign blame for Khashoggi's brutal murder to the kingdom's de facto ruler](#), Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post journalist and US resident who wrote critical columns about the Saudi crown prince, was murdered by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate in Turkey in October 2018.

While media reports have said that the US intelligence community determined with a medium to high degree of confidence that Prince Mohammed ordered the killing, that assessment has never officially been stated. The crown prince has denied he ordered the murder.

[Jamal Khashoggi's fiancee urges Joe Biden to release CIA report](#)
[Read more](#)

Since then, Khashoggi's fiancee [Hatice Cengiz](#) and other human rights activists have [called on Biden to release the classified report into the murder](#), saying that doing so was the first step towards seeking accountability.

During Haines's confirmation hearing on Tuesday, the Oregon senator Ron Wyden said that, if confirmed as the new DNI, she would have the opportunity to "immediately" turn the page on the "excessive secrecy" and "lawlessness" of the Trump administration, and submit an unclassified report on "who was responsible" for Khashoggi's murder, as required under a February 2020 law that the Trump administration in effect blocked.

Asked whether she would release the report, Haines replied: "Yes, senator, absolutely. We will follow the law."

In a statement, Wyden praised the move, saying it was "refreshing to hear a straightforward commitment to follow the law" from Haines.

Biden's Director of National Intelligence nominee Avril Haines says, if confirmed, she will provide Congress with an unclassified report on the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. [pic.twitter.com/ocPUsJUeti](#)

— NBC News (@NBCNews) [January 19, 2021](#)

Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst and director at the Brookings Institution, said: “It is a useful way to put the question of accountability for Khashoggi’s murder in the public domain early in the new administration.”

One of the most outspoken advocates for justice for the murder, Agnès Callamard, also praised the move, saying the information would provide the “one essential missing piece of the puzzle of the execution of Jamal Khashoggi”.

Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, said she hoped other information would also come to light, such as any new details about the whereabouts of Khashoggi’s remains, and whether a risk assessment had ever been done by the US about whether Khashoggi was in danger before his trip to Turkey.

Callamard, who will be named the new head of Amnesty International later this year, also pointed to other threats that have reportedly been lodged against human rights defenders and former Saudi officials in Canada and Norway by Prince Mohammed’s agents, who have been called a “death squad” in media reports.

“At some point, if the US intelligence has information about those operatives, then I think they should really make that information publicly available,” Callamard said.

The release of the Khashoggi report will also raise a host of new questions for both the US and [Saudi Arabia](#).

“If the document fingers MBS as responsible for the murder it will raise the question what is Biden going to do to hold him accountable?” said Riedel.

During the 2020 election campaign, Biden issued scathing attacks against the crown prince, saying Saudi Arabia needed to be treated as “a pariah”. It is expected that the Biden administration would seek to curb weapon sales to Saudi Arabia, but it could also take more targeted actions against Prince Mohammed, including financial sanctions.

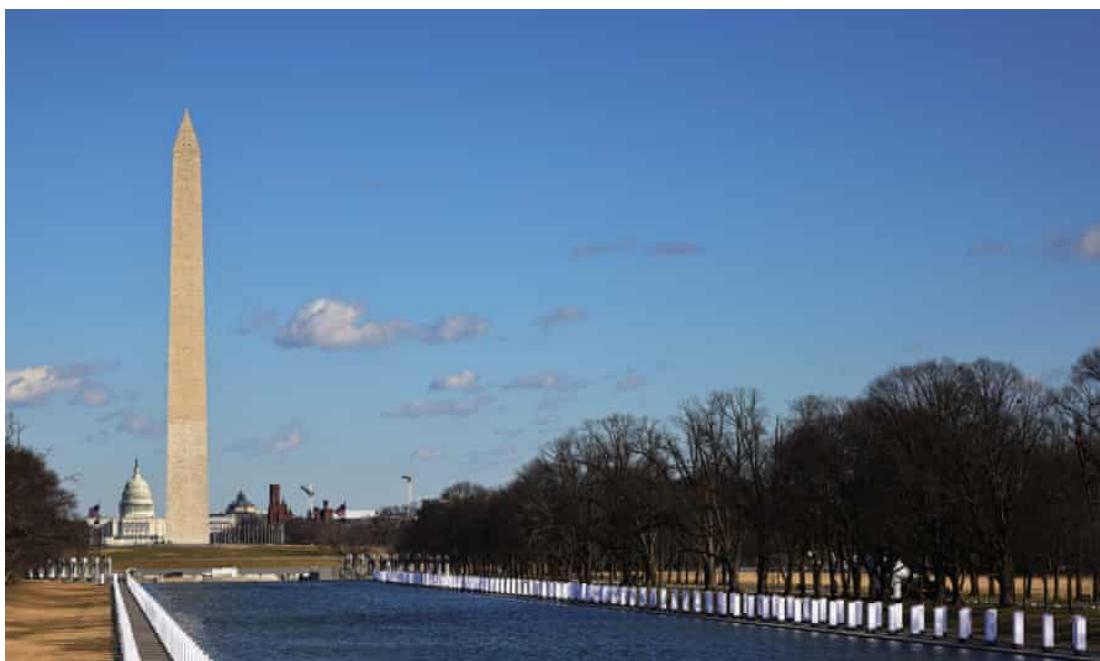
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Coronavirus

Joe Biden to hold memorial for 400,000 Americans who have died of Covid-19

Memorial marks the first large-scale acknowledgment of pandemic's massive toll in the US



Columns representing victims of the coronavirus pandemic adorn the sides of the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool ahead of a national memorial.
Photograph: Michael M Santiago/Getty Images

Columns representing victims of the coronavirus pandemic adorn the sides of the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool ahead of a national memorial.
Photograph: Michael M Santiago/Getty Images

[Victoria Bekiempis](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.24 EST

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[Joe Biden](#)'s inaugural committee is hosting a memorial late Tuesday afternoon in remembrance of the more than 400,000 Americans who have now died from [Covid-19](#).

The grim milestone was passed earlier on Tuesday as the latest figures from Johns Hopkins university show that about 401,128 people have now been killed by the virus in the US amid more than 24m cases – both numbers being by far the highest in the world.

“Tonight’s [#COVIDMemorial](#) is a chance to reflect and honor those no longer with us,” the committee [said](#) in a tweet about the event. “Join us in a national moment of unity at 5.30pm ET by lighting a candle in your window.”

[US coronavirus death toll passes 400,000 amid grim forecast over winter](#)
[Read more](#)

The memorial marks the first large-scale acknowledgment of Covid-19’s massive toll on individuals, families and communities across the US. The president-elect’s recognition of the tragedy stands in stark contrast to [Donald Trump](#), who repeatedly downplayed the dangers of coronavirus amid a botched response by his administration that frequently included peddling conspiracy theories and denialism.

Organizers of the memorial event are calling upon attendees to [participate](#) from their own homes and have asked that participants light candles in their windows and ring bells for a “national moment of remembrance”.

The ceremony will feature the “first” lighting of the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool in honor of those who died from coronavirus, organizers said.

Officials across the US have announced their cities’ participation.

“Tonight we’ll join President-elect [@JoeBiden](#), Vice President-elect [@KamalaHarris](#) and our fellow Americans to remember those we lost to [#COVID19](#). We honor the 25,000 New Yorkers taken by this virus. We will never forget what our city and country have endured. [#COVIDMemorial](#),” the New York City mayor, Bill de Blasio, [said](#).

Prior to the memorial, New York’s Empire State Building [announced](#) on Twitter: “Tonight, the [@EmpireStateBldg](#) will join President-elect [@JoeBiden](#)’s [#COVIDMemorial](#) with its red heartbeat lighting.”

Biden has [promised](#) a sweeping plan to combat the coronavirus pandemic, including vaccinating 100 million US residents in his first 100 days in office. While the top US infectious disease expert, Dr Anthony Fauci, said this plan is “absolutely a doable thing”, Biden will inherit a coronavirus response that has repeatedly been described as a “[mess](#)”.

The federal government distributed vaccines to US states, and then left allocation protocols up to them. This scattershot approach, coupled with longstanding deficiencies in the US public health system, has stymied efforts to vaccinate Americans on a large scale.

Some local officials have warned that they will soon run out of the vaccine if they don’t receive additional federal shipments.

This botched vaccine rollout is all the more dangerous because a new Covid-19 variant, which is more transmissible, is poised to become far more prevalent, burdening the healthcare system even more.

It’s unclear whether Biden’s \$1.9tn coronavirus plan will get necessary bipartisan support. Congress members in both parties have voiced concern about the cost.

Members of Biden’s administration have nonetheless voiced optimism.

“There’s been bipartisan support for all of these pieces,” Kate Bedingfield, the incoming White House communications director, said during a recent TV appearance. “This plan reflects the urgent needs, the things that people need right now.” “We’ve got millions of Americans unemployed. We’ve got thousands of Americans dying from the virus every day. There’s no question we are in a state of emergency here, and this plan is designed to get the relief that people need to them right away.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/biden-coronavirus-memorial-us-deaths-ceremony>.

Kamala Harris

Vogue to release new Kamala Harris cover after original sparks backlash

Magazine plans limited edition with new photo after original was widely seen as disrespectful



The original image of Kamala Harris, at right, sparked anger and will be replaced with the left image, previously used online. Photograph: Tyler Mitchell/Vogue/AFP/Getty Images

The original image of Kamala Harris, at right, sparked anger and will be replaced with the left image, previously used online. Photograph: Tyler Mitchell/Vogue/AFP/Getty Images

[Priya Elan](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 15.51 EST

Vogue will publish a limited print edition of its February issue, featuring Kamala Harris, with a new photo following widespread backlash against an original [cover image](#) widely held to lack respect for the vice-president-elect.

The limited edition, with a cover image previously used online, will be published after inauguration ceremonies on Wednesday, when Harris will become the first person of Black and south Asian descent sworn in as vice-president.

The original cover image, showing Harris wearing Converse sneakers and casual clothes, sparked ire on social media, users questioning why [Vogue](#) would choose the image over the more formal online cover featuring Harris in a powder blue Michael Kors suit in front of a gold background.

The Washington Post fashion critic Robin Givhan [wrote](#): “Vogue robbed Harris of her roses. A bit of awe would have served the magazine well in its cover decisions. Nothing about the cover said, ‘Wow.’ And sometimes, that’s all Black women want, an admiring and celebratory ‘wow’ over what they have accomplished.”

There were also questions over lighting, considering Harris’s skin tone. Vogue was previously criticised for its lighting of the gymnast [Simone Biles](#), its August cover star.

A Vogue spokesperson said: “In recognition of the enormous interest in the digital cover and in celebration of this historic moment, we will be publishing a limited number of special edition inauguration issues.”

The news was also shared on [Instagram](#).

Last week, the editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour, explained that the original photo – by Tyler Mitchell, in 2018 the first African American photographer to shoot a US Vogue cover – was chosen for its accessibility and approachability.

Wintour also discussed negative reaction to the photo.

“Obviously we have heard and understood the reaction to the print cover,” Wintour told the [New York Times](#), “and I just want to reiterate that it was absolutely not our intention to, in any way, diminish the importance of the vice-president-elect’s incredible victory.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/kamala-harris-vogue-cover-controversy-limited-edition>

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[Egypt](#)

Egyptian chef arrested after making cupcakes with penis decorations

Female pastry chef interrogated after supplying cakes to private birthday party at Cairo sports club



Some generic raspberry cupcakes. Egypt's largest state-owned newspaper, Al Ahram, described the offending Cairo confection as 'indecent and immoral shapes'. Photograph: Ruth Black/Alamy

Some generic raspberry cupcakes. Egypt's largest state-owned newspaper, Al Ahram, described the offending Cairo confection as 'indecent and immoral shapes'. Photograph: Ruth Black/Alamy

[Ruth Michaelson](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.07 EST

Egyptian security forces have arrested a pastry chef who supplied cupcakes with penis decorations for a private birthday party at a sporting club in a wealthy Cairo neighbourhood.

In the latest example of the Egyptian state's attempts to control public morality, which tend to target women, the female chef was arrested at her home after party attenders shared photos of the cupcakes with members of the Gezira club and on social media.

State media reported that security forces identified the baker after taking statements from eyewitnesses.

The case attracted the attention of the minister for youth and sports, Dr Ashraf Sobhy, who oversees clubs such as Gezira. Sobhy said his department would form a committee to investigate the incident and punish alleged perpetrators.



Screengrab of the cupcakes that were served at the party in Cairo.
Photograph: social media

The baker has been interrogated by the same misdemeanour court that recently tried the Egyptian actor Rania Youssef on charges of “contempt of Islam and infringing Egyptian family values”, after she commented on her own physique during a television programme.

Earlier this month two female TikTok influencers who served jail terms last year for “violating family values” and harming public morals were acquitted.

In June 2020 the renowned bellydancer Sama El Masry was [jailed for three years and fined](#) 300,000 Egyptian pounds (equivalent to £14,025) for violating family values and “immorality”.

Egypt’s tabloids delighted in [publishing pictures](#) of the cupcakes, with the offending decorations blurred out. Egypt’s largest state-owned newspaper, Al Ahram, [described](#) the confections as “indecent and immoral shapes”.

Timothy E Kaldas from the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy said: “On one level it’s hard not to be initially struck by the absurdity of penis cupcakes garnering the attention of state prosecutors, police investigators, members of parliament and the regime-controlled press. At the core of the matter is not the banning of sexuality in the public sphere, it is restricting sexuality that is outside the control of men.”

Al Masry Al Youm newspaper reported that the pastry chef was in tears when she arrived at a prosecution office in Cairo. According to the paper, she told interrogators that patrons of the club “came to my shop and handed me pictures of genitals, and asked me for cakes in these forms”.

After questioning by prosecutors, the baker was released on a bail of 5,000 EGP (£233).

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/egyptian-chef-arrested-after-making-cupcakes-with-penis-decorations>

[Italy](#)

Giuseppe Conte wins confidence vote in Italy's senate by slim margin

Prime minister faces leading an even more unstable coalition after exit of Matteo Renzi's party



The Italian prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, during a debate in the Senate in Rome on Tuesday. Photograph: Roberto Monaldo/EPA

The Italian prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, during a debate in the Senate in Rome on Tuesday. Photograph: Roberto Monaldo/EPA

[Angela Giuffrida](#) Rome correspondent

Tue 19 Jan 2021 17.40 EST

Italy's prime minister, [Giuseppe Conte](#), has managed to cling to power, but he will plough ahead with an even more fragile government as the country battles to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic and recession.

Conte, who has led two different administrations since 2018, was supported by 156 lawmakers in the senate on Tuesday, with 140 voting against and 16

abstaining. Conte also won a vote of confidence in the lower house on Monday.

The victory ends the turmoil triggered by former prime minister Matteo Renzi, who last week [yanked his small Italia Viva party from the ruling coalition](#), which includes the Five Star Movement (M5S) and Democratic party (PD), over disagreements about the handling of the pandemic and a post-Covid-19 economic recovery plan.

In his speech to senators, Conte accused Italia Viva of having created chaos by persistently making demands that were “clearly divisive”.

“I assure you it’s very hard to govern in these conditions, with people who continuously place mines in our path and try to undermine the political balance patiently reached by the coalition,” Conte said.

He appealed to so-called “constructors” to [stave off the government’s collapse](#) in the middle of the pandemic, which has cost over 83,000 lives in Italy, while pledging to shake up his cabinet, modernise the country and swiftly enact the [economic recovery plan](#).

But leading a minority administration paves the way for a precarious period as any divisive issue could jeopardise its survival.

“While minority governments are nothing new in [Italy](#), what will be unprecedented is a minority government (backed by an unwieldy coalition) attempting to lead the country out of the deepest economic crisis since the second world war in the middle of a pandemic while also trying to create a multi-year plan to manage €209bn (£185bn) of recovery funding from the EU,” Wolfango Piccoli, the co-president of the London-based research company Teneo Holdings, wrote in a note.

Conte enjoyed popularity for his handling of the pandemic during the first wave, when the country endured a tough two-month lockdown, but has lost credibility over the government’s haphazard approach to subsequent restrictions and weak financial response to businesses affected.

“I think by now everyone has realised that Conte is very, very good at clinging to power but very, very bad when it comes to managing things and passing reforms,” said Francesco Galiotti, the founder of Policy Sonar, a Rome-based political consultancy. “He has passed no reforms and you can tell from the recovery plan that other EU member states are very nervous as over €200bn will go down the drain.”

Renzi had criticised the post-pandemic spending plan as weak, arguing that the money risked being squandered. His other main grievance was over Italy not tapping the EU’s bailout fund – the European stability mechanism – to shore up the health service. M5S has always resisted this, fearing it would leave [Italy](#) beholden to strict EU austerity rules.

“Renzi is spot on on these issues,” Galiotti said. “And from his perspective this was a bus driving straight into an abyss, and so he wanted to get out of the cockpit.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/giuseppe-conte-wins-confidence-vote-in-senate-by-slim-margin>

[California](#)

California's higher temperatures and dry conditions create a year-round 'fire season'

Warm winter weather and powerful winds have led to an early start for 2021's fires, following a record-breaking year of blazes in 2020



Firefighters shield themselves as strong winds whip embers through the air from the Bond fire on 3 December. Photograph: Kent Nishimura/Los Angeles Times/REX/Shutterstock

Firefighters shield themselves as strong winds whip embers through the air from the Bond fire on 3 December. Photograph: Kent Nishimura/Los Angeles Times/REX/Shutterstock

[Julia Carrie Wong](#)

[@juliacarriew](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 16.46 EST

Unusually warm and dry conditions coupled with powerful wind gusts have ignited a spate of winter wildfires that call into question the idea that

[California](#) has a “fire season” at all anymore.

Residents of several communities in the Santa Cruz mountains were [ordered to evacuate](#) by the local sheriff’s office Tuesday morning as California’s fire agency (Cal Fire) responded to more than a dozen new vegetation fires across the area. Some of the fires were ignited when power lines were toppled by high winds; others were wind-driven reignitions of areas that burned in 2020, Cal Fire [said](#). By midday Tuesday, six fires in the area were still burning.

The evacuations came as Californians grappled with the latest example of the reality of climate crisis: [red flag warnings](#) – the National Weather Service’s highest level of caution for wildfire activity – across much of the state in January. The early start to 2021’s fires follows 2020’s record-breaking year, which saw wildfires that burned approximately 4.26m acres and killed 33 people.

[California's wildfire hell: how 2020 became the state's worst ever fire season](#)
[Read more](#)

“We’re not seeing ‘fire season’ anymore,” said Issac Sanchez, battalion chief of communications for Cal Fire Sacramento. “It’s just one big fire year, where we can be prepared for and expect a large destructive fire at any point.”

While it’s not unusual for fires to start at any point in the year, what is concerning now is the warmer, drier weather and receptive vegetation that could allow those fire starts to spread, Sanchez said. Add in the powerful and dry winds – which [reached 100 mph](#) near Sacramento overnight – and you have all the ingredients for fire.

“The fact that the winds are blowing is not unusual, but what is unusual is the higher temperatures and dry conditions,” Sanchez said. “We’re just not seeing enough rain to turn the corner.”

A vegetation fire in Kern county, about 100 miles north of Los Angeles, grew to 200 acres Tuesday afternoon, with “rapid spread” caused by winds nearing 50 mph, the [local fire department said](#).

The warm winter weather has seen decades-old single-day temperature records fall in [Los Angeles](#) and [San Francisco](#), according to the National Weather Service. This follows a 2020 that was the [hottest year ever on record](#), according to Nasa.

Local utilities have [turned off the electricity](#) for tens of thousands of residents, most of them in southern California, due to the risk of high Santa Ana winds downing power lines and igniting fires. The so-called “public safety power shutoffs”, are an increasingly common fire prevention tactic for the state’s utilities in the wake of the deadly Camp fire in Paradise, California, which was [started by Pacific Gas & Electric’s faulty equipment](#) and killed 85 people.

An additional 260,000 customers are at risk of losing their power in southern California, according to Southern California Edison.

Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at UCLA’s Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, [called](#) the overnight fire starts in northern California “nothing short of incredible” for this time of year.

“As California’s wildfire crisis escalated in recent years, I have speculated with climate & fire colleagues that we might start to see wind-driven *winter* wildfire outbreaks in NorCal,” he [said on Twitter](#). “2021 is empirically demonstrating that answer to that question is: yes. Wow.”

Sanchez called on the public to adjust to the new reality of year-round fire.

“We don’t have a time of year when we’re not prepared to aggressively respond, and we need the public to be prepared right there with us,” he said, urging homeowners to perform necessary maintenance of defensible spaces and all residents to be prepared for possible evacuations.

“They need to recognize that the fact that it’s January doesn’t make a difference anymore.”

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Biden administration

Biden health pick Rachel Levine set to become first trans Senate confirmee

- Biden nominates Levine for assistant health secretary role
- President-elect hails ‘historic and deeply qualified choice’



Dr Rachel Levine in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in May. Levine has been leading Pennsylvania's Covid response. Photograph: Joe Hermitt/AP

Dr Rachel Levine in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in May. Levine has been leading Pennsylvania's Covid response. Photograph: Joe Hermitt/AP

[Ankita Rao](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.15 EST

Joe Biden has chosen Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania's health secretary, as his assistant secretary of health. Levine would be the first ever openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the US Senate.

[Biden inauguration: Donald Trump's last full day as US president - live updates](#)

Read more

Levine, a pediatrician by training, has spent the last year as the public face of Pennsylvania's Covid-19 response. Previously, she spearheaded an adolescent health clinic at Penn State before she was appointed as physician general by the state's governor, Tom Wolf, and then unanimously confirmed as secretary of health in 2017.

"Dr Rachel Levine will bring the steady leadership and essential expertise we need to get people through this pandemic – no matter their zip code, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability – and meet the public health needs of our country in this critical moment and beyond," Biden said in a statement. "She is a historic and deeply qualified choice to help lead our administration's health efforts."

A graduate of Harvard and of Tulane Medical School, Levine is president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. She has written in the past on the opioid crisis, medical marijuana, adolescent medicine, eating disorders and LGBTQ medicine.

Levine is already one of the few transgender elected officials in the country. When she was tapped by Wolf for health secretary, she said she sat down to have one-on-one conversations with officials to talk about medicine and public health, according to the Washington Post.

"With very few exceptions, my being transgender is not an issue," she told the Post.

But that doesn't mean she hasn't faced harmful rhetoric and discrimination. Amid discussion over North Carolina's transgender bathroom bill, the chairman of the Texas Republican party once tweeted: "You're in a public restroom and this person walks in. What do you do?" Attached to the post was a photo of Levine.

In her new post, Levine would serve with Biden's pick for health secretary, Xavier Becerra, and coronavirus response coordinator, Jeff Zients.

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[Oklahoma](#)

New owners of Tiger King zoo ordered to turn over lion and tiger cubs

Judge orders Oklahoma zoo featured in hit Netflix series to surrender cats and their mothers for violating animal welfare laws



Joseph Maldonado-Passage at the Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, whose new owners have been told to surrender their big cat cubs. Maldonado-Passage is serving a 22-year prison sentence. Photograph: Sue Ogrocki/AP

Joseph Maldonado-Passage at the Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, whose new owners have been told to surrender their big cat cubs. Maldonado-Passage is serving a 22-year prison sentence. Photograph: Sue Ogrocki/AP

Associated Press in Muskogee, Oklahoma

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.05 EST

A federal judge in Oklahoma has ordered the new owners of an Oklahoma zoo featured in Netflix's [Tiger King](#) documentary to turn over all the lion

and tiger cubs in their possession, along with the animals' mothers, to the federal government.

['It's pretty messed up': Americans' deadly love for tigers](#)
[Read more](#)

US district judge John F Heil III issued the order last week in the case against Jeffrey and Lauren Lowe and the Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, based on claimed violations of the Endangered Species Act and the Animal Welfare Act.

“The Lowes have showed a shocking disregard for both the health and welfare of their animals, as well as the law,” said the acting assistant attorney general Jonathan D Brightbill of the justice department’s environment and natural resources division.

Jeffrey Lowe’s attorney, Daniel Card of Oklahoma City, did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The zoo was previously run by Joseph Maldonado-Passage – also known as Joe Exotic – and featured in Netflix’s Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness.

Maldonado-Passage is serving a 22-year sentence in federal prison in Fort Worth, Texas, for his conviction on charges that he participated in a murder-for-hire plot and violated federal wildlife laws.

Maldonado-Passage has formally requested a pardon from Donald Trump.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/tiger-king-zoo-cubs-oklahoma>

[Alexei Navalny](#)

Vladimir Putin is not scared of Alexei Navalny, says Kremlin

Moscow authorities likely to block protests planned for Saturday in support of jailed opposition leader



Alexei Navalny and his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, arrive at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow on Sunday. Photograph: Reuters

Alexei Navalny and his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, arrive at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow on Sunday. Photograph: Reuters

[Andrew Roth](#) in Moscow

Tue 19 Jan 2021 07.21 EST

Vladimir Putin is not scared of Alexei Navalny, a Kremlin spokesman has said, but Moscow authorities still appear likely to block Saturday's planned protests in support of the jailed opposition leader.

Navalny "has no relation to the Russian president and can in no way be associated with the president", said Dmitri Peskov, when asked whether Putin viewed Navalny as a rival.

“Various suggestions that someone is scared of someone else are absolute rubbish.”

Navalny was [detained on Sunday](#) at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport on his return from treatment abroad after a suspected poisoning attempt on his life by Russia’s FSB spy agency.

Profile

Who is Alexei Navalny?

Show



Born in 1976 just outside Moscow, [Alexei Navalny](#) is a lawyer-turned-campaigner whose [Anti-Corruption Foundation](#) investigates the wealth of Vladimir Putin’s inner circle.

He started out as a Russian nationalist, but emerged as the main leader of Russia's democratic opposition during the wave of protests that led up to the 2012 presidential election, and has since been a thorn in the Kremlin's side.

Navalny is barred from appearing on state television, but has used social media to his advantage. A 2017 documentary accusing the prime minister,

Dmitry Medvedev, of corruption received more than 30m views on YouTube within two months.

He has been repeatedly arrested and jailed. The European court of human rights ruled that Russia violated Navalny's rights by holding him under house arrest in 2014. Election officials barred him from running for president in 2018 due to an embezzlement conviction that he claims was politically motivated. Navalny told the commission its decision would be a vote 'not against me, but against 16,000 people who have nominated me; against [200,000 volunteers who have been canvassing for me](#)'.

There has also been a physical price to pay. In April 2017, he was attacked with green dye that nearly blinded him in one eye, and in July 2019 he was taken from jail to hospital with [symptoms that one of his doctors said could indicate poisoning](#). In 2020, he was [again hospitalised after a suspected poisoning](#), and taken to Germany for treatment. The German government later said [toxicology results showed Navalny was poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent](#).

Photograph: Pavel Golovkin/AP

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

A judge [ordered him kept in custody for 30 days](#) until a parole review that could imprison him for years, prompting the Kremlin critic to call for a mass protest this Saturday.

“There’s nothing these thieves in their bunkers fear more than people on the streets,” Navalny said. He could be sent to a penal colony by the end of the month if a parole board revokes his probation.

The Russian president has still not publicly commented on Navalny’s arrest. Putin appeared in state news footage on Tuesday taking a dip in an icy pool at his suburban residence for the Orthodox holiday of Epiphany. Following the tradition, he submerged himself three times, crossing himself after each plunge, before quickly climbing out of the frigid waters.

Путин. Подмосковье. -20 pic.twitter.com/aVZxokcQ05

— Кремлевский пул РИА (@Kremlinpool_RIA) [January 19, 2021](#)

Peskov said Russia would under no circumstances bow to [international pressure to release Navalny](#), which has included condemnation of the arrest from Joe Biden's incoming national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, and from the whistleblower Edward Snowden.

“This is about the violation of Russian law by a Russian citizen, this is a completely internal affair, and we will not allow anyone to interfere,” Peskov said. “We have no intention to listen to such statements.”

Moscow authorities have indicated they plan to outlaw the Saturday protest, setting up a showdown between police and demonstrators. Analysts believe that the number of protesters on the street could influence whether Navalny is given a stiff prison sentence or set free.

Timeline

Russia’s rogue state behaviour under Vladimir Putin

Show

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Citing a source, the Russian newswire Interfax reported the protest could be declared illegal on the grounds of the ban on public events until the end of the coronavirus epidemic. Peskov said Navalny’s call for demonstrations were “disturbing”.

Navalny’s lawyers said he had been summoned to a court on Wednesday in connection with a separate case for defaming a second world war veteran who had been featured in videos supporting constitutional amendments that would allow Putin to run for office until 2036. Navalny called participants in the videos “traitors”. Libel charges can carry a prison sentence of up to five years.

A police officer who leaked data used by Bellingcat investigators to track down an FSB hit squad accused of poisoning Navalny is facing 10 years in prison, the RBC business newspaper reported on Tuesday. Russia has

refused to open a criminal case into Navalny's poisoning but has cracked down on those who exposed the attempt on his life using a novichok poison similar to that used in the 2018 Salisbury attacks.

Vladimir Ashurkov, a Navalny supporter based in London, released a list of wealthy Russians whom he said the opposition leader believed should be sanctioned in connection with his poisoning and arrest. They include several Russian oligarchs, government officials, and the children of the heads of Russia's FSB and security council director.

"The west must sanction the decision-makers and the people who hold their money," Ashurkov said. "Nothing less will make an impact on the behaviour of the Russian authorities."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/vladimir-putin-is-not-scared-of-alexei-navalny-says-kremlin>

[Sean Spicer](#)

Sean Spicer, Trump's ex-media chief, applies to join White House press corps

Former press secretary, who now works for Newsmax, applies for membership of White House Correspondents' Association

[Six bizarre moments we won't let Sean Spicer forget – video report](#)
Guardian

[Martin Pengelly](#) in New York
[@MartinPengelly](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.02 EST

Four years after he kicked off the Trump presidency by lying angrily about the size of the inauguration crowd, the former press secretary [Sean Spicer](#) has applied to join the White House press corps.

['The Capitol riot was our Chernobyl': James Comey on Trump, the 'pee tape' and Clinton's emails](#)

[Read more](#)

The former Republican party official now hosts a show, [Spicer & Co](#), on the [hard-right and conspiracy](#) theory-tinged Newsmax network. He has applied for membership of the White House Correspondents' Association.

“I thought, why not?” Spicer [told Politico](#). “I cover the White House every day on the show, and I have obviously had a lot to say about the coverage of the White House and the correspondents’ association over the last few years. You’re never gonna effect change if you stay on the sidelines.”

Spicer was [front and centre on 21 January 2017](#), when he appeared in an ill-fitting suit to harangue the press, insisting Donald Trump attracted “the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration – period – both in person and around the globe”.

In fact it was not even close to the crowd for Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009, though one official, acting on Trump's behalf, was later revealed to have [cropped photographs](#) in an attempt to prove otherwise.

Trump also claimed it had not rained. [It had.](#)

Spicer's constant battles with the press corps made him a celebrity, [lampooned](#) on Saturday Night Live, before he resigned over the [short and farcical](#) appointment of Anthony "the Mooch" Scaramucci, a brash New York hedge fund manager, as communications director.

['I don't talk so good': Melissa McCarthy impersonates Sean Spicer on SNL](#)
Guardian

Spicer has since become a pro-Trump [author](#), been [named a fellow](#) at [Harvard](#) and even [danced to the Spice Girls on Dancing with the Stars](#), surviving eight weeks before being voted off.

[The Briefing review: Sean Spicer rides Trump unicorn to the rainbow's end](#)
[Read more](#)

He told Politico he already had a White House hard pass, guaranteeing access to interview officials, and credentials to cover Congress.

The incoming White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, a former state department spokeswoman, is due to give her first briefing on Wednesday, inauguration day.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden will appear before a limited crowd for the ceremony, the National Mall largely filled with flags.

Politico said the WHCA would decide on Spicer's application "in the coming weeks".

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2021.01.20 - Climate crisis

- [US Biden to 'hit ground running' as he rejoins Paris climate accords](#)
- [Plotting the future The ‘seed guardians’ bringing variety to UK gardens](#)
- [Environment NGOs demand action not promises as EU accused of ‘failing to protect seas’](#)

Biden administration

Biden to 'hit ground running' as he rejoins Paris climate accords

President-elect to block Keystone XL pipeline among other swift environmental moves – but challenges lie ahead



A climate protest in New York in 2019. Joe Biden is poised to take immediate action on the crisis following his inauguration. Photograph: Bebeto Matthews/AP

A climate protest in New York in 2019. Joe Biden is poised to take immediate action on the crisis following his inauguration. Photograph: Bebeto Matthews/AP



[Oliver Milman](#)

[@olliemilman](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 05.00 EST

Joe Biden is set for a flurry of action to combat the climate crisis on his first day as US president by immediately rejoining the [Paris climate agreement](#) and blocking the Keystone XL pipeline, although experts have warned lengthier, and harder, environmental battles lie ahead in his presidency.

In a series of plans drawn up by Biden's incoming administration for his first day in office, the new president will take the resonant step of bringing the US back into the Paris climate accords, an international agreement to curb dangerous global heating that Donald Trump exited.

The Democrat, who will be sworn in on Wednesday, is also set to revoke a permit for the [Keystone XL pipeline](#), a controversial cross-border project that would bring 830,000 barrels of crude oil each day from Alberta, Canada, to a pipeline that runs to oil refineries on the US's Gulf of Mexico coast. The president-elect is also expected to reverse Trump's undoing of rules that limited the emission of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from oil and gas drilling operations.

[Vast coalition calls on Biden to impose national moratorium on water shutoffs](#)

[Read more](#)

“Day one, Biden will rejoin Paris, regulate methane emissions and continue taking many other aggressive executive climate actions in the opening days and weeks of his presidency,” said Paul Bledsoe, who was a climate adviser to Bill Clinton’s White House, now with the Progressive Policy Institute.

Bledsoe said Biden’s nominees to tackle the climate crisis, spearheaded by the former secretary of state John Kerry, who will act as a climate “envoy” to the world, is “by far the most experienced, high-level climate team US history. They intend to hit the ground running.”

The aggressive opening salvo to help address the climate crisis, which Biden has called “the existential threat of our time”, is set to include various executive orders to resurrect a host of pollution rules either knocked down or weakened by the Trump administration.

The US will convene an international climate summit in Biden’s first few months in the White House and is set to join a global effort to phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, which are used in refrigeration and air conditioning and contribute to the heating of the planet.

Biden has also vowed to support federal government scientists beleaguered by years of climate change denial and sidelining of politically inconvenient science by the Trump administration.



John Kerry will be Biden's climate 'envoy'. Photograph: Carolyn Kaster/AP

"It will be a starkly different approach to the Trump administration on almost every front," said Helen Mountford, vice-president for climate at the World Resources Institute. "Science will once again guide America's policymaking and inauguration day will mark a new era for climate ambition in the US. He will have a lot on his plate but there's no doubt that Biden intends to make a full court press on climate change."

However, climate experts point out that simply re-establishing Barack Obama's climate policies will not be enough to help the world avoid the worst ravages of heatwaves, flooding and mass displacement of people.

"It's not sufficient for where the science says we need to be and it's not sufficient because we've lost critical time over the last couple of years," said Brian Deese, Biden's nominee for director of the National Economic Council.

Planet-heating emissions dipped in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic but are already surging back to previous levels despite the UN warning countries must at least triple their emissions cuts promised under the Paris deal.

Biden has pledged to cut US emissions to net zero by 2050 and has a \$2tn plan he claims will create millions of new jobs in energy efficient retrofits for buildings and clean energies such as solar and wind. These ambitions have been bolstered by Democrats' slender control of the US Senate, although several of the party's senators, such as West Virginia's Joe Manchin, who once shot a piece of climate legislation with a gun in a TV campaign advertisement, are wary of big-spending climate bills. US lawmakers have been divided and inert on climate legislation for a decade, despite polls showing [record bipartisan support for climate action among the American public](#).

The outcome of the political wrangling will be most keenly felt by poorer people and people of color who disproportionately live near sources of air and water pollution such as coal-fired power plants and highways. Biden has promised to help these communities but will need to "put his money where his mouth is", said Mustafa Santiago Ali, a former senior official at the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Folks will be more focused on the greenhouse gas side of the paradigm, which is maybe a quarter of the work," Ali said. "There needs to be a comprehensive federal strategy for environmental justice. We have to rebuild trust with communities that we took decades to build up and then was broken. The bogeyman, which is Trump, may be gone but we still need to focus on dismantling that structural environmental racism. Trump just threw more gasoline on what was already there."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/biden-environment-paris-climate-agreement-keystone-xl-pipeline>

The age of extinction

Plotting the future: the ‘seed guardians’ bringing variety to UK gardens

One of the few upsides to the lockdowns over the past year has been a boost in the demand for seed. Photograph: Alex Turner

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Seascape: the state of our oceansEnvironment

NGOs demand action not promises as EU accused of ‘failing to protect seas’

Environmental groups propose urgent plan to stop overfishing and safeguard marine life, as existing laws go unenforced



A net is hauled to the surface after being dragged along the seabed. The large amount of bycatch involved in ‘bottom trawling’ harms biodiversity.
Photograph: Colin Munro/Alamy

A net is hauled to the surface after being dragged along the seabed. The large amount of bycatch involved in ‘bottom trawling’ harms biodiversity.
Photograph: Colin Munro/Alamy

Seascape: the state of our oceans is supported by



[About this content](#)

[Karen McVeigh](#)

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Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.30 EST

A coalition of NGOs is calling for an urgent ban on destructive bottom trawling in EU marine protected areas, after the failure of member states to defend seas.

The ban is part of a 10-point action plan to “raise the bar” to achieve biodiversity targets, which they say will not be met by current promises, such as last year’s high-profile pledge by world leaders at the UN [summit on biodiversity](#) in New York to reverse nature loss by 2030.

A raft of EU laws to safeguard marine life – including a duty on EU member states to achieve “good environmental status” in seas by 2020, to achieve healthy ecosystems and to introduce sustainable fisheries management – have not been enforced, says the group, which includes Oceana in [Europe](#), Greenpeace and ClientEarth.

They warn that this failure, combined with existing pressures on Europe’s seas, including climate change, risks triggering irreversible changes to the ecological conditions under which humanity has evolved and thrived.

[Auditors decry 'marine protected areas' that fail to protect ocean](#) [Read more](#)

The 10-point [call to action](#), which the group will present to EU leaders, MEPs and member states, follows the [commitment](#) of Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European commission, and many EU heads of state or government, to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

The call was published in response to a European parliament [draft report](#) on the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030. That draft report, which will be presented to the environment committee on Thursday, expresses strong regret that the EU has “neither fully met the 2020 biodiversity strategy objectives nor the global [Aichi biodiversity targets](#)”.

While the NGOs welcomed the draft report, they said it does not go far enough to ensure enforcement of current EU laws or to set action plans to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Rebecca Hubbard, programme director of Our Fish, which aims to end overfishing, said: “The EU has failed to achieve good environmental status for EU seas and the EU biodiversity strategy must be implemented if we are to have a chance of saving it – this implementation needs to include the 10 action points we have in our report.”

She said the EU has also failed to end overfishing, and to protect marine habitats from bottom trawling. “What we really need to do is go from strategies and goals to action and outcomes. National pledges, goals and agreements are important for setting a direction but if we are going to save the planet we need action.”

The 10-point action plan calls for a network of fully and highly protected ocean sanctuaries covering at least 30% of the oceans by 2030 and a drastic improvement in fisheries protections. It urges the EU to commit resources to dramatically ramp up, implement and enforce existing legislation to safeguard marine life.

The groups also call on the EU to carry out environmental impact assessments of fishing activities, to set fishing limits with “precautionary

buffers” for climate change and mandatory remote monitoring systems for all fishing fleets. It calls for measures to mitigate bycatch and for protections of the deep sea, such as closing sensitive areas to hydrocarbon exploration. And it calls for an end to harmful fishing subsidies and controls on underwater noise.

Nicolas Fournier, the campaign director for marine protection at Oceana Europe, said: “The EU 2030 biodiversity strategy is strong on marine protection targets, but we want the European parliament to raise further the EU’s ambition on biodiversity, both internationally to champion the 30% of ocean protection and support the UN treaty for the high-seas, but also in Europe to call for a ban of all destructive fishing gear inside marine protected areas, starting with bottom-trawling.”

Fewer than 1% of European marine protected areas are fully off-limits to fishing. Last month, the European court of auditors warned the EU had failed to halt marine biodiversity loss in Europe’s waters and to restore fishing to sustainable levels. In 2019, the European Environment Agency found “signs of stress at all scales” and warned the current and historical use of Europe’s seas was “taking its toll” on marine ecosystems

The call for action comes just days after warnings from international scientists that the planet is facing a “ghastly future of mass extinctions, declining health and climate-disruption upheavals” that threaten human survival.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/18/ngos-demand-action-not-promises-as-eu-accused-of-failing-to-protect-seas>

2021.01.20 - Culture

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[Publishing](#)

Open letter calls for publishing boycott of Trump administration memoirs

More than 500 book industry professionals have added their names to a call for publishers not to sign up veterans of the departing president's government



‘Publishing has chased the money and notoriety of some pretty sketchy people’ ... Donald Trump. Photograph: Tom Brenner/Reuters

‘Publishing has chased the money and notoriety of some pretty sketchy people’ ... Donald Trump. Photograph: Tom Brenner/Reuters

[Alison Flood](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.25 EST

Five-hundred American authors and literary professionals have signed a letter calling on US publishers not to sign book deals with members of the [Trump administration](#), saying “those who enabled, promulgated, and covered up crimes against the American people should not be enriched through the coffers of publishing”.

Put together by the author Barry Lyga, [the letter](#), which is continuing to add names, has been signed by bestselling writers including Celeste Ng, author of Little Fires Everywhere, Holly Black and Star Wars author Chuck Wendig. Titled “no book deals for traitors”, it opens by stating that the US “is where it is in part because publishing has chased the money and notoriety of some pretty sketchy people, and has granted those same people both the imprimatur of respectability and a lot of money through sweetheart book deals”.

Lyga [told Publishers Weekly](#): “Traditionally, members of an outgoing administration can – and do – rely on the cushion of a fat book contract with a healthy advance. In the case of the Trump administration and its history of outrages, lies, and incitement to insurrection, we cannot allow this to stand. No one should be enriched for their contribution to evil.”

Endorsed by a range of editors, authors, booksellers and publishing staff, the letter goes on to state that “no participant in an administration that caged children, performed involuntary surgeries on captive women, and scoffed at science as millions were infected with a deadly virus should be enriched by the almost rote largesse of a big book deal”, and that “no one who incited, suborned, instigated or otherwise supported the 6 January 2021 coup attempt should have their philosophies remunerated and disseminated through our beloved publishing houses”.

In November, [the Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid the New York Post](#) claimed that Trump was “being bombarded with book and TV deals that could be worth a staggering \$100m”, although his son, Donald Trump Jr, chose to self-publish his most recent tome.

Lyga’s letter comes in the same week that rightwing Missouri senator Josh Hawley was [forced to find a new publisher](#) for his book The Tyranny of Big Tech, after it was dropped by Simon & Schuster over his backing of baseless claims that the election was stolen. America’s National Coalition Against Censorship has spoken out against the cancellation of Hawley’s deal, saying that while it shares “the outrage of our fellow citizens” over the attack on the US Capitol, it was deeply concerned about Simon & Schuster’s decision to drop the book.

“Cancelling the book weakens free expression … It is crucial that publishers stand by their decision to publish, even when they strongly disagree with something the author has said,” said the free speech organisation. “Cancelling a book encourages those who seek to silence their critics, producing more pressure on publishers, which will lead to more cancellations. The best defence for democracy is a strong commitment to free expression.”

The debate comes in the midst of a reckoning for big publishers about the titles they release. In November, [staff at Penguin Random House Canada protested](#) over the press’s decision to publish a new book from Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson, the self-styled “professor against political correctness”. [Hachette dropped Woody Allen’s memoir last year](#) after a staff walkout, and Hachette imprint Little, Brown in the UK cancelled a contract with Julie Burchill to publish Welcome to the Woke Trials after it said she “crossed a line” with her comments about Islam on Twitter to the journalist Ash Sarkar.

Tony Schwartz, who ghostwrote Donald Trump’s 1987 memoir The Art of the Deal, was given the nickname Dr Frankenstein by his former editor for the gloss his book brought to the man who would become president. [Schwartz spoke out](#) about how “staggeringly dangerous” he felt a Trump presidency would be in 2016, saying: “Oh my god, I’ve contributed to creating the public image of the man who is sociopathic and people don’t realise it.”

Lyga’s letter points to Son of Sam laws, which prevent criminals from benefiting financially by writing about their crimes. “In that spirit, those who enabled, promulgated, and covered up crimes against the American people should not be enriched through the coffers of publishing,” say the publishing professionals, adding: “We believe in the power of words and we are tired of the industry we love enriching the monsters among us, and we will do whatever is in our power to stop it.”

[Lyga told the LA Times](#) that each signatory to his letter “will act to the dictates of their conscience and to the extent they are able to effect change”, pointing to the Hachette walkout which led to the cancellation of the Allen

memoir. “We are committing to doing what we individually can when and if the time comes,” he added.

“To those who believe this is censorship, I can say only this,” [he wrote on Twitter](#). “If the first amendment guarantees book deals, then there are some publishers who turned down books of mine in the past who now owe me money.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jan/19/open-letter-calls-for-publishing-boycott-of-trump-administration-memoirs>

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Watched with mother
Television & radio

Jill Halfpenny: 'I used to wish there was a Geordie Grange Hill'

In the first of a new series about what TV stars watched as children, Jill Halfpenny remembers being cast in Byker Grove



Jill Halfpenny ... 'I was obsessed with Parkinson.' Photograph: Rachell Smith

Jill Halfpenny ... 'I was obsessed with Parkinson.' Photograph: Rachell Smith

Jill Halfpenny

Tue 19 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

Growing up, I loved to watch telly and dreamed of being on it myself one day. I never much liked cartoons, though. I found them a bit dull, but I loved an American sitcom. Diff'rent Strokes was a favourite, as were Roseanne, Fresh Prince and, most of all, an odd little show called Small Wonder.

The premise was that an otherwise normal family had a little secret ... a girl called Vicki. She was a bit eccentric: cute, but weird. And the secret was that

she was a robot. They kept her downstairs in a cupboard at night. It was a concept that strangely entranced me. My mam had an airing cupboard opposite the toilet upstairs. It was narrow and was used for drying towels. If I removed one of the badly glued rods from its place, there was just enough room for me to go in there and pretend I was Vicki. It was a pretty short game because no one else played. Essentially, I just got in and out of the cupboard a few times and pretended to boot up like a robot, while perfecting my American lilt.

In terms of British TV, unusually for someone so young, I was obsessed with Parkinson. Didn't matter who he was interviewing, I was in. I loved the format and was so taken with the way the guests would chat to each other. "Famous people just really get on," I thought.



'They kept her downstairs in a cupboard at night': Small Wonder.
Photograph: ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy

Jossy's Giants and Press Gang were a big deal for me, but of course the indomitable [Grange Hill](#) was up there. It had everything: girls I wanted to be, boys I wanted to kiss, drama, comedy and, of course, actors. I had so much identification, I didn't know what to do with myself. "God, if only there were a geordie [Grange Hill](#)," I would wail to my mam as she made the tea.

And then it happened. It was announced that a new show would be made in Newcastle to rival Grange Hill – Byker Grove. I'd had quite a bit of theatre experience by then, but never in front of a camera. I could be the next Susan Ross, I thought.



Jill Halfpenny in *The Drowning*. Photograph: Photographer - Bernard Walsh/Unstoppable Film & Television / Channel 5 / Photographer - Bernard Walsh

Unusually for me, as my life has been dogged by expectations grossly overshooting reality, *Byker Grove* was everything I'd hoped. From the moment of learning I had the part to arriving on set and shooting my first scene, I adored it. Whatever lives I had imagined the Grange Hill lot living, this was it! I adored having the heavy storylines. I revelled in all the chat and gossip off set. I loved having a job, earning money and, well, just being an actor.

We tackled storylines that kids' telly hadn't touched. We felt like we were part of a show that was "pushing the limits". Of course, being in Newcastle was very different from filming in London. London is used to cameras and actors, and you see famous people on the tube or the streets a fair bit, and it's kind of low-key, but cool. Newcastle in 1989 was little different. If you were

thinking people would recognise me in the street and be really impressed and ask for an autograph (pre-selfie days), it went more like this.

“Are you that lass off Byker Grove?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s shit.”

And off I’d trot into MK One to spend my hard-earned cash.

Byker Grove tackled storylines that kids’ telly hadn’t touched

It was a pretty crazy experience to be a fan of kids’ telly and then be on it. And then IT happened. Fantasy really met reality. The Grange Hill lot and the Byker Grove gang were to meet up and play a charity football game together. “OMG,” I thought, this is going to be amazing. We’re all gonna love each other ’cos that’s what famous people do; they just get on. I saw it on Parkinson. Turns out it was a bit awkward. We were teenagers and were trying to be a bit aloof. I can’t remember the score, I was too busy trying to impress a boy.

Next came the Broom Cupboard with Andi Peters, Going Live! with Schof (Brother Beyond were the big guests, but I was most excited about Trev and Simon). Four years later, and with A-levels looming, it was time for me to leave the Grove. I was so sad to go, but I’d got the bug and after my exams I went off to “that there London”.

Watching telly as a kid was a great source of joy for me, but being on it was one of the happiest times of my life.

- The Drowning starts on 1 February at 9pm on Channel 5
-

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Kate Mosse

Interview

'People in their 80s and 90s are bloody brilliant!' Kate Mosse on writing – and being a carer

Emine Saner

The bestselling historical novelist has had a productive lockdown - reading 250 books and writing two, all while caring for her elderly mother-in-law



Kate Mosse: 'I'd got four books under my belt before I was an overnight success at the age of 45.' Photograph: Peter Flude/The Guardian

Kate Mosse: 'I'd got four books under my belt before I was an overnight success at the age of 45.' Photograph: Peter Flude/The Guardian



@eminesaner

Tue 19 Jan 2021 05.00 EST

It was 10 years ago that [Kate Mosse](#) got the idea for her latest series of historical novels – and immediately tried to talk herself out of it. “I just thought: ‘Don’t do this, Kate – you know nothing about the French wars of religion, nothing about the 17th and 18th centuries. This whole history is obviously a minefield,’” she recalls.

Despite those initial reservations, she eventually embarked on what would become a quartet of novels about the French Protestants known as the Huguenots, beginning in 16th-century Languedoc with [The Burning Chambers \(published in 2018\)](#) and following the diaspora across two continents and three centuries. It’s not as if she had much else on – only a few other books, a couple of plays, [keeping the Women’s prize for fiction going](#), railing against Brexit and being a carer.

Even during the pandemic, she has been incredibly productive – the initial shock of it “felt like grief” she says, and she couldn’t concentrate on writing, so instead she read more than 250 golden age detective books. The City of Tears, the sequel to The Burning Chambers, should have been released in May last year and she would have spent much of 2020 promoting it; instead, she is now working on the third instalment of the series. And then she wrote

another book, out later this year, about her role as a carer – first helping her mother look after her father, who had Parkinson’s and died in 2011, and now for her 90-year-old mother-in-law, Rosie. In order to protect Rosie, who lives with Mosse and her husband, Greg, the household has been virtually self-isolating since March.

Mosse’s move into historical fiction changed her life with the success of *Labyrinth* – a Holy Grail adventure story – in 2005, and the following two books in her Languedoc trilogy, so this return to the genre has felt exciting, she says. When her father was diagnosed, Mosse decided not to work on any research-heavy books that required long periods of travel, in order to support her parents – they also both lived with Mosse and her husband. “Sadly, my dad died in 2011 and then my ma died in 2014,” she says. “Then for a period of time, I could be back out, doing research, and it’s been a really lovely thing to have this huge project.”

It’s a cliche to draw parallels between historical fiction and modern life, yet the timing of Mosse’s novels has been striking. *The Burning Chamber* featured the persecution of the Huguenots in France and came out in 2018 during Europe’s refugee crisis. This second book has themes of what constitutes a heretical idea, free speech and an intensely polarised society. “You are either my friend or my enemy. Nothing in between,” says one character of the mood between Catholics and Huguenots and the silencing of moderate voices, but she could just as easily be talking about the latest Twitter spat. Does Mosse think we’re more polarised than ever? “It does seem like that,” she says, and points the finger at “social media, and this monstrous 24-hour news cycle that needs feeding”. The coronavirus pandemic doesn’t help. “It’s my very great hope that once the world returns to a different sort of normal, people will return to a more nuanced way of seeing things.” But, she admits with a small laugh, “I’m always optimistic.”

The Women’s Prize for fiction, which Mosse co-founded in 1996, has experienced its own social media firestorm, part of the ongoing battle over transgender issues. In October, [the organisers announced](#): “In our terms and conditions, the word ‘woman’ equates to a cis woman, a transgender woman or anyone who is legally defined as a woman or of the female sex,” after the non-binary trans author Akwaeke Emezi publicly objected to being [asked for information about their sex as defined “by law”](#). Emezi, who had been

nominated for the award in 2019, said they would not let their future novels be entered.

“There’s always a lot of talk about these things,” Mosse says today, “and a desire for people to find ways to set a very wide group of women against other women. That’s how patriarchy works.” However, she insists: “We haven’t changed our rules – we’ve always followed the legal definition of ‘women’.”

Mosse, 59, set up the prize shortly before she started work on her first book, a non-fiction work about pregnancy (she was pregnant with her second child). She had been working for a publishing house and was about to be promoted to “a properly big job and I knew that was the moment to say: ‘Is what you want from your life – to run a publishing company? If not, this is the time to go.’ It was one of those take-a-deep-breath-and-jump moments.” It was daunting to give up her salary – her husband was training to be a teacher – and she says it was tough for a couple of years “but it was absolutely the right thing to do, because the more you have a permanent job, and you rely on all of that infrastructure, the harder it will ever be to step out and start writing”.

She wrote two non-fiction books, then two novels that were “not very good. They’re always described as ‘literary’, but what that actually means is they didn’t sell.” She laughs. “I’d got four books under my belt before I was an overnight success at the age of 45.” For *Labyrinth*, Mosse abandoned the idea of creating the kind of literary novels she loved to read and wrote something more like the adventure stories her father would read to her as a child – and she has now sold more than 8m books. She also credits Carcassonne, which she visited for the first time in 1989 and where she spends part of each year, for unlocking the storyteller in her (“It really felt like a physical reaction”). As a Francophile, she describes Brexit as “very depressing”.

This has been the longest period for more than three decades that Mosse hasn’t been to France, though she doesn’t expect anyone to feel sorry for her. Compared with so many people, she says, the last year has been “nothing to complain about”. Writing her book about caring (she was one of a number of novelists [commissioned by the Wellcome Trust](#) to write about issues of

social or medical care) against the backdrop of lockdowns and a more intense focus on vulnerable people has been interesting, she says. “Everybody’s lives have become more contained and more domestic. People understand now about being at home all the time.” And the definition of carer has become broader in people’s minds. “As lots of people showed during the first lockdown, it can be anything from taking food round for people or walking somebody else’s dog, to being there 24 hours a day for somebody who is at the end of their life.”

The title of her book, *An Extra Pair of Hands*, is how she views her care roles, first for her mother in her widowhood, and now for Rosie, who has lived with Mosse and her husband for 25 years. She and her husband share her mother-in-law’s care, “in so far as no 90-year-old woman wants her son in the bathroom with her”. She describes Rosie, whom she has known since she was a teenager, as “a pal … a complete riot”. And, despite her innate positivity, she acknowledges that her circumstances mean she has it easier than many carers. “The gamechanger for most people is if they are caring for somebody with dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, so the person may be lost to them, even if they are physically there. I’ve been very fortunate – my wonderful dad had Parkinson’s, my mum was herself until this day six years ago, and Granny Rosie uses a wheelchair and needs physical support, but is as sharp as a tack.” She and Greg have lots of nearby family support and she doesn’t add, though could, that she is in a fortunate financial position compared with the [600 people who give up paid work each day](#) to look after someone. Nearly a quarter of adult carers are living in poverty, according to the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s latest annual report](#).

“I do think it’s important to have positive experiences out there about caring as well as the much tougher ones,” says Mosse. “The language around ageing is often very negative … I spend a lot of my time with people in their 80s and 90s and they’re bloody brilliant company. I’ve always believed that it’s not your age that makes you a great companion, it’s who you are, what you’ve done and what you do.” What has she learned from caring? “I loved my parents, and I love Granny Rosie. I did feel that there was a lesson for me, which was if you are loved unconditionally, if you’re brought up seeing what it means to be cared for, then if the time comes for you, it’s much easier to step up.” At which point it’s time to go – not quite the hour for

Mosse and her mother-in-law to share their daily early evening tipple, but almost.

The City of Tears by Kate Mosse is published by Pan Macmillan (£20). To order a copy for £17.40, go to [guardianbookshop.com](https://www.guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply.

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[Ceramics](#)

Phil Rogers obituary

Welsh studio potter, tutor and author in the anglo-oriental tradition whose work is found in museums worldwide



Phil Rogers had a lifelong belief in the value of potters using natural materials, sourced from their own environs. Photograph: Jay Goldmark

Phil Rogers had a lifelong belief in the value of potters using natural materials, sourced from their own environs. Photograph: Jay Goldmark

[Isabella Smith](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 14.49 EST

Phil Rogers, who has died aged 69, was one of Britain's leading potters and advocates for his craft. From his rural studio near the village of Rhayader in Powys, [Wales](#), Rogers created work that drew on an eclectic range of global styles, from medieval German salt-glazed wares to 15th-century Korean porcelain.

His jugs, platters, bottles, teapots, bowls and cups were decorated with abstract brushwork, impressed marks, designs painted in wax-resist, or simply by a swipe of the fingers through a still-wet glaze, combining robust forms with a sense of spontaneity.

These pots embodied his lifelong belief in the value of potters using natural materials, sourced from their own environs. Rogers mixed a palette of soft greys, greens, browns and black glazes from wood ash, burning trees that had fallen or needed to be felled; he also used stone dust from nearby quarries and a red clay dug in his local woods.

As a chair of the Craft Potters Association of Great Britain (serving four terms, the first in 1991), a member of the International Academy of [Ceramics](#) from 1999, and director in 1999 of the Festival of International [Ceramics](#) (among various other appointments), Rogers took part in the global potting community with vigour. His belief in the importance of cultivating the next generation of potters was manifest in his work as a trustee in 2009 for the apprenticeship-support charity Adopt a Potter. In his own studio, he cultivated a succession of apprentices who would go on to become professionals, most notably the Danish potter Anne Mette Hjortshøj.



Phil Rogers in his studio in 2014. Photograph: Jay Goldmark

Rogers was an author of books and articles about ceramics, of which *Ash Glazes* (1992), a historical overview and practical handbook, sold very well in the UK and North America. Other titles included *Salt Glazing* (2003) and *Throwing Pots* (2005).

Born in Newport in south Wales, Phil was the son of Raymond, a design engineer, and his wife, Florence (nee Marston), a solicitor's secretary. Wishing to become a painter, he enrolled at Swansea School of [Art](#) in 1971. However, as he was newly married to Lynne, and they had a daughter, Claire, family responsibilities took precedence over his artistic career. After an introductory class in ceramics, he spent the next five years teaching pottery at comprehensive schools in Cambridgeshire.



A squared bottle hakeme and iron brush pattern from Phil Rogers' May 2020 exhibition at Goldmark. Photograph: Jay Goldmark

His discovery of Bernard Leach's seminal text *A Potter's Book* (1940) was a turning point. Rogers was enthralled by Leach's account of rural self-sufficiency and creative fulfilment. Leach's anglo-oriental aesthetic and philosophy would go on to inform the rest of Rogers' professional life.

During this time, Rogers often visited the Primavera craft gallery in Cambridge, where he scrutinised ceramics by Walter Keeler, [Ray Finch](#), Richard Batterham and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie to understand how they were made. Considering himself self-taught, he described these potters as his "absentee tutors".

After an argument with the headteacher of St Peter's school, and disillusioned by staffroom politics, in 1977 Rogers stopped teaching in schools. The family moved to a cottage that had belonged to his grandparents in the village of Rhayader. In 1984, a government grant and other loans allowed them to buy Lower Cefn-faes, a 17th-century hall house near the River Wye, where the couple opened Marston Pottery. Here Rogers built a 75-cubic-ft oil-fired kiln in a stable and potted in a stone cowshed. Later additions included a salt glaze kiln and a wood-firing kiln, from which he experimented with a wide range of firings.

Rogers was benefiting from the fashion for what he called "wholemeal pots": rustic tableware designed for a wholesome lifestyle, as popularised by the Cranks chain of vegetarian restaurants. However, as the 1970s waned, this aesthetic was replaced by the brighter, bolder hues and hard-edged industrial-chic of the 80s. He was a vocal critic of this new approach to ceramics, arguing in magazines and journals that the studio potter was wrong to attempt to compete with the slick effects of factory production or the intellectualism of postmodern art.



A collection of Phil Rogers' work. Photograph: Jay Goldmark

Tutoring adults, with which he had supplemented his income, became increasingly central. Demand for his teaching took him to the US, Canada,

South Africa and Germany, and he led more than 60 workshops. A 1997 trip to teach at Chungnam National University in South Korea proved formative, as exposure to Joseon dynasty-era Buncheong pottery inspired him in a new creative direction, to work in dark clay, overlaid with white slip and iron brushwork. Other trips abroad included visits to Ethiopia in 2000 and 2002 in the aftermath of its civil war, where Rogers helped to establish a pottery for local women in Gondar.

Rogers' work is held in the collections of more than 50 museums worldwide, including the V&A, the British Museum, the National Museum of Wales, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and the Museum of Modern Ceramic Art in Mino, Japan. Many of his fellow potters remember the generosity with which he used his international reputation to help them secure their own exhibitions overseas. His final major exhibition took place at Goldmark gallery in Rutland in May 2020, shortly before he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour.

His first marriage ended in divorce. He is survived by his second wife, Hajeong Lee, whom he married in 2012, their son, Ethan, and by Claire.

- Philip Marston Hughes Rogers, potter, born 28 May 1951; died 22 December 2020
-

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/jan/19/phil-rogers-obituary>.

Booksellers

Closure of an iconic Paris bookshop alarms French bibliophiles

Hit hard by the pandemic, the flagship Gibert Jeune store is closing its doors – one of many booksellers in the city feeling the strain of Covid-19



‘It’s a historic place’ ... Gibert Jeune’s flagship store in the Place Saint-Michel, Paris, pictured before the pandemic. Photograph: Public domain

‘It’s a historic place’ ... Gibert Jeune’s flagship store in the Place Saint-Michel, Paris, pictured before the pandemic. Photograph: Public domain

Julia Webster Ayuso

Tue 19 Jan 2021 05.00 EST

Paris, a great literary city, is losing one of its most celebrated bookshops. Gibert Jeune, a popular chain, has announced it will be closing its flagship shop in the Latin Quarter in March – the latest in a series of closures and appeals for help that threaten the future of the city’s booksellers.

Gibert Jeune once attracted long queues of students in search of cheap secondhand books before the start of each academic year; most students who

have studied in Paris will have paid a visit to the six-floor shop at some point to find a book for their course. The family-owned company was founded in 1886 and started out as a bookstall on the banks of the Seine, quickly expanding into several shops in the fifth arrondissement, selling a mixture of new and secondhand books. Its bright yellow awnings along the Boulevard St Michel became a familiar landmark of the Latin Quarter, historically Paris's literary and intellectual neighbourhood, and home to the Sorbonne.

[Through gilets jaunes, strikes and Covid, Paris's 400-year-old book stalls fight to survive](#)

[Read more](#)

Now, with sales down 60% due to the pandemic, the chain's most iconic shop – 5 Place Saint-Michel – will be closing as part of a restructuring plan, after the owner of the building decided to sell. It follows the move of Boulinier, another much-loved bookshop, which was forced to leave its historic location due to rising rents (it is now in a different shop on the same street). Meanwhile the centuries-old *bouquinistes* just across the road on the quays of the Seine are [struggling to survive](#).



A *bouquiniste* (right) talks to a customer at his book stall on the Seine this month. Photograph: Kiran Ridley/Getty Images

The pandemic has emptied the area of people for months. “Covid arrived and suddenly there were no more tourists and no more students,” said Rodolphe Bazin de Caix, marketing manager of Gibert Jeune. “We’re talking about a bookshop whose DNA is 80% textbooks, many of them secondhand. This shop was impacted much more than the others.”

When France was put into a second lockdown in October, there was a huge outcry from booksellers, who asked to be treated as essential services and remain open. Shakespeare and Company, one of Paris’s most famous bookshops and a neighbour of Gibert Jeune, appealed to customers for help as it faced “hard times”: customers and well-wishers around the world piled in with purchases and donations to save the shop.

[Shelf mythology: 100 years of Paris bookshop Shakespeare and Company](#)
[Read more](#)

But it is not just the virus that has weakened Gibert Jeune. Before the pandemic, disruption caused by the *gilet jaunes* demonstrations and transport strikes reduced footfall in the Place Saint-Michel. Gibert Jeune and its sister company Gibert Joseph have also been slow to react to the threat of Amazon; while the French secondhand book market is booming (book prices are much higher than in the UK, making secondhand books 63% cheaper than new ones on average), trade has mostly been captured by online platforms.

“Gibert Jeune is not dead,” said De Caix, but it’s having to reinvent itself. The first Gibert Jeune bookshop, opposite Notre-Dame, is staying put. The company is currently renovating its shop in the 10th arrondissement, after an independent bookstore owner’s project to buy it and make it into a “co-operative of ideas” failed. There are even plans to open at least four smaller Gibert Jeunes, spread out across the city, by April. In any case, the future lies not in the tourist centre, but in residential neighbourhoods, De Caix said: “What we learned from the lockdown is that people aren’t leaving their areas any more. We realised that the shop, which used to be a destination, no longer serves that purpose. It’s our turn to move to where the customer is.”

But the imminent closure of 5 Place Saint-Michel, which opened 50 years ago in 1971, has led to mourning among book lovers, who find it difficult to

imagine what the square and surrounding neighbourhood will look like after it's gone. "It's a historic place" says Laure Davidian, who works in the area and visits the shop to buy comic books for her daughter. "It will be much duller without it."

The Latin Quarter is known for its independent bookshops and for being the home of several publishing houses. But in recent years, the area has been slowly invaded by food retailers and fast fashion brands, which some residents regard as an erosion of its cultural identity. The fifth and sixth arrondissements have around a 100 bookshops each, but the French capital has lost [27% of its bookshops in the past 18 years, according to a study](#) by the Centre for Observation of Commerce, Industry and Services.

"It is catastrophic. It's like the Champs Elysées without the luxury boutiques. They might as well close the Sorbonne," said Frédéric, a resident of the neighbourhood since the 1980s who declined to give his last name. He had stopped to browse the books in the stall outside Gibert Jeune, which he often passes on his daily walk. "That used to be a cafe that took up the entire pavement, where customers would sit," he said, pointing to the branch of beauty products chain Sephora across the street. He's worried the same will happen with the building in front of him. "Who knows what they will replace it with? I expect the worst," he said. "Every place where there is a bookshop is a place with one less fast food chain, one less Sephora."

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Music streaming

MP says record boss 'in cloud cuckoo land' over music streaming claims

John Nicolson responds to Universal Music UK chair after he says artists 'very happy' with payments



David Joseph, the chairman and chief executive of Universal Music UK and Ireland, gives evidence to the digital, culture, media and sport select committee. Photograph: House of Commons/PA

David Joseph, the chairman and chief executive of Universal Music UK and Ireland, gives evidence to the digital, culture, media and sport select committee. Photograph: House of Commons/PA

Lanre Bakare Arts and culture correspondent

@lanre_bakare

Tue 19 Jan 2021 10.39 EST

The boss of a major record label has been described as “living in cloud cuckoo land” after he claimed artists were happy with the music streaming model.

The heads of three major labels – Universal, Sony Music and Warner Music Group – gave evidence before the digital, culture, media and sport (DCMS) committee inquiry into the [economics of music streaming](#), in often testy exchanges about whether the model was fair.

Universal Music UK's chairman and chief executive, [David Joseph](#), told the inquiry that artists were “very happy with the investment, very happy with advances” they currently received, before the SNP MP John Nicolson interrupted, saying: “I think you’re living in cloud cuckoo land here if you really believe that.”

Joseph also refused to answer a question about whether the lower royalty fees his label agreed with Spotify [as part of a multi-year deal in 2017](#) had affected artists.

After he claimed he couldn’t answer the question because it would reveal information that could give his competitors an advantage, the committee chair, Julian Knight, intervened and directed him to answer. After being pushed, he said that the label had “increased the amount” it paid to artists as a result of streaming deals.

[Jason Iley](#), the chairman and chief executive of Sony Music UK, and [Tony Harlow](#), the chairman and chief executive of Warner Music UK, also gave evidence, with Iley saying 80% of his company’s revenue currently comes from streaming and that £190m has been spent on talent scouting and the artistic development of recording artists, known as A&R.

The label bosses appeared in front of the inquiry after earlier sessions in which MPs had heard from musicians who painted a bleak picture of the streaming industry at present. Established artists told the inquiry they were [struggling to make money](#) now that touring revenues had stopped due to the pandemic.

The Conservative MP Steve Brine discussed the evidence given by [Nadine Shah](#) at an earlier session in which she said that despite being a successful, critically respected artist, she was finding it difficult to make ends meet.



Nadine Shah at the Roundhouse in London in March shortly before the first Covid lockdown. Photograph: Jim Dyson/Getty Images

He said: “We can dance around these issues as many times as we want but the bottom line is successful artists can’t afford to pay their rent. There’s something going wrong, surely.”

Joseph responded by saying some artists who relied on the live circuit had been hit hard by the pandemic but that it was “not logical” that lost revenue would be instantly replaced by streaming. “That was never how their earnings were shaped,” he added.

The three record bosses claimed that they were huge investors in British musical talent via their A&R spend, while arguing that more regulation of the streaming industry would be counterproductive.

Harlow said streaming was “an evolving situation” that was being well governed, adding that any change or disruption could “diminish UK competitiveness”.

Before the session, the BPI, which represents the three major labels, released data it claimed showed that of the money labels received from [Spotify](#) subscriptions, the vast majority was put back into the industry via A&R.

Nicolson questioned that argument and claimed that Warner Music had given out more to passive investors than had been spent on artist development. Harlow said that was inaccurate and that in 2020 the company had spent \$1.15bn (£840m) on A&R globally, with dividends totalling \$280m.

The inquiry continues and will hear from streaming services, such as Spotify. The aim of the hearings is to establish whether the streaming models are “fair to the writers and performers who provide the material”.

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Kitchen aideFood

Roast, grill or grate, and heap with flavour: how to cook cauliflower

Treat a piece of cauli as you would a piece of meat, add spices and marinade, or bake it into a pie

- Do you have a culinary dilemma? Email feast@theguardian.com



Meera Sodha loads cauli into tacos with lashings of spicy sauce. Photograph: Louise Hagger/The Guardian. Food styling: Emily Kydd. Prop styling: Louie Waller

Meera Sodha loads cauli into tacos with lashings of spicy sauce. Photograph: Louise Hagger/The Guardian. Food styling: Emily Kydd. Prop styling: Louie Waller

[Anna Berrill](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.00 EST

My partner hates cauliflower, but I love it. How can I make him see the error of his ways?

Hannah, London N4

“Cauliflower is social,” says [Ravinder Bhogal](#), chef-patron of [Jikoni](#) in London. “Its mild flavour invites the company of all manner of nuts, seeds, spices and herbs. Open your larder – find the heavy hitters, from soy and miso to tahini – and cauliflower will stand up to every one of them.” She’s not kidding about its versatility, either – you can grill it, grate it into rice or pizza bases, blitz it into bolognese, fritters or soup, mash it (to top lentil pies, say) or cut it into florets for curries. This should, in theory, help convince sceptics.

The obvious solution to Hannah’s issue is to treat cauliflower as a piece of meat, Bhogal says: “Marinate and roast it whole, or bury it in the pit of a barbecue.” She makes a baste of miso, tahini, honey, ginger, chilli oil and vinegar, which “seeps into the head as it cooks and forms a charred crust”, then serves it sprinkled with sesame seeds and slivers of toasted nori. If you’re going to roast cauliflower whole, though, it’s best to start it off before you put it in the oven, says [Chris Lyon](#), head chef at [Nutshell](#) in London, the Iranian restaurant from [Marwa Alkhala](#)f and Mohammad Pakneja. “Remove the outer leaves, score the base and submerge the head in a pot of boiling salted water for a minute,” he says. “Tip it out, let it steam and cool down, then add the marinade.” For flavourings, Lyon naturally looks to Iran and the Middle East: “I’d suggest toasting and blending cardamom, cumin, a little cinnamon, fenugreek and dried mint into a powder and mixing with olive oil.” Rub into the cauliflower, leave to marinate, then pop on a barbecue or bake. “You’ll get these lovely, smoky aromas.”

You could even stay away from heat altogether: “I like cauliflower raw,” says Adrian Luck, chef-owner of Birmingham’s plant-based [Land](#). He finely slices it on a mandoline, then pickles it to put in salads. “Use a basic pickle of salt, sugar and cider vinegar, then add spices such as cumin and coriander.” Cajun spices are a good match for roast florets, Luck says, especially if tacos are on the cards. “You can disguise the cauliflower with a chimichurri, so you may never know it’s even there.” Similarly, [Meera Sodha](#) roasts the white stuff with sweet potato, rapeseed oil, ground chipotle, ground cinnamon and salt, before piling on to tortillas with black bean puree and coriander chilli salsa.

Then there’s [Yotam Ottolenghi](#)’s curried [cauliflower cheese pie](#). Cheddar-loaded bechamel is spooned into a springform cake tin lined with filo,

followed by florets (roasted with curry powder, oil, salt and pepper) and more bechamel. Scrunch the pastry overhang into a “messy border”, brush with melted butter and oil, and bake at 170C fan for 30 minutes. Remove the outer circle of the tin, bake for another 25 minutes until golden, then top with parsley and lemon zest for “happy bellies all around”. Now, you can’t argue with that.

- Do you have a culinary dilemma? Email feast@theguardian.com
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Nigel Slater's midweek dinner Vegetables

Nigel Slater's recipe for greens with lemongrass and chillies



Turn over a new leaf: greens with lemongrass and chillies. Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

Turn over a new leaf: greens with lemongrass and chillies. Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

A tasty, quick and healthy supper



Nigel Slater

Tue 19 Jan 2021 07.00 EST

The recipe

Thoroughly wash and trim 400g of **greens**. Separate the stalks and slice them finely. Slice or tear the leaves into manageable pieces.

Make a spice paste by putting 3 peeled cloves of **garlic** in a spice mill or food processor with 2 seeded medium-sized **red chillies**, 1 large stalk of **lemongrass** very finely sliced, 1 tsp of ground **turmeric** and half a tsp of **sea salt** flakes. Reduce to a coarse paste.

Warm a wok or large frying pan, add 3 tbsp of **groundnut** or **vegetable oil** then stir in the spice paste and let it fry for a minute or two. Add the sliced stalks to the pan and leave to fry for 2 or 3 minutes with the occasional stir.

Mix together 1 tbsp of **dark soy sauce**, 2 tbsp of **fish sauce**, 2 tbsp of **lime juice** and 1 lightly heaped tsp of **caster sugar**.

Add the torn leaves to the pan and let them soften, turning them over occasionally with kitchen tongs until they are bright and tender. Add the

dressing and toss the leaves and stalks in it. Lastly, add a handful of **mint** and **coriander** leaves and serve in bowls. *Enough for 2*

The trick

The stalks – far too good to waste – need a minute or two longer to come to tenderness than the leaves. Give them a good 2 or 3 minutes cooking before you introduce the leaves. Depending on which vegetables you use, the cooking time will vary, but shouldn't be longer than 5 or 6 minutes in total. I suggest getting the dressing ready and waiting.

The twist

Cabbage – all varieties except red – the **kales**, **cavolo nero** and **mustard greens** are good here, but the best results come from a mixture of leaves. If you include **spinach**, even the tougher, pointed leaf variety, then add it only at the very last minute.

Follow Nigel on Twitter [@NigelSlater](#)

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Samsung

Galaxy Buds Pro review: Samsung's AirPods Pro-beating earbuds

Great sound, solid noise-cancelling, decent battery, comfortable fit and small case are potent combination



Samsung's latest true wireless earbuds are small, comfortable, sound great and have active noise cancelling. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

Samsung's latest true wireless earbuds are small, comfortable, sound great and have active noise cancelling. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

[Samuel Gibbs](#) Consumer technology editor

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Samsung's latest Galaxy Buds Pro earbuds add noise-cancelling, virtual surround and improved sound, making them a challenger to Apple's AirPods Pro.

At £219, they are the new top-of-the-range earbuds from Samsung, sitting above the £179 [Galaxy Buds Live](#) and £159 [Galaxy Buds+](#).

The Buds Pro have silicone ear tips and a general shape similar to the Buds+ but look more like the Buds Live. They are stored in an excellent, compact, square charging case that easily fits into the money pocket of a pair of jeans.



The design of the Buds Pro is an amalgam of the company's previous efforts. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The new earbuds are bigger and heavier than the Buds+ and do not twist to fit in the concha of your ear in quite the same way, protruding slightly further, but are still small compared with rivals. They do a good job of avoiding putting pressure on the delicate parts of the ear, held in place by the oval ear tips – of which there are three sizes in the box.

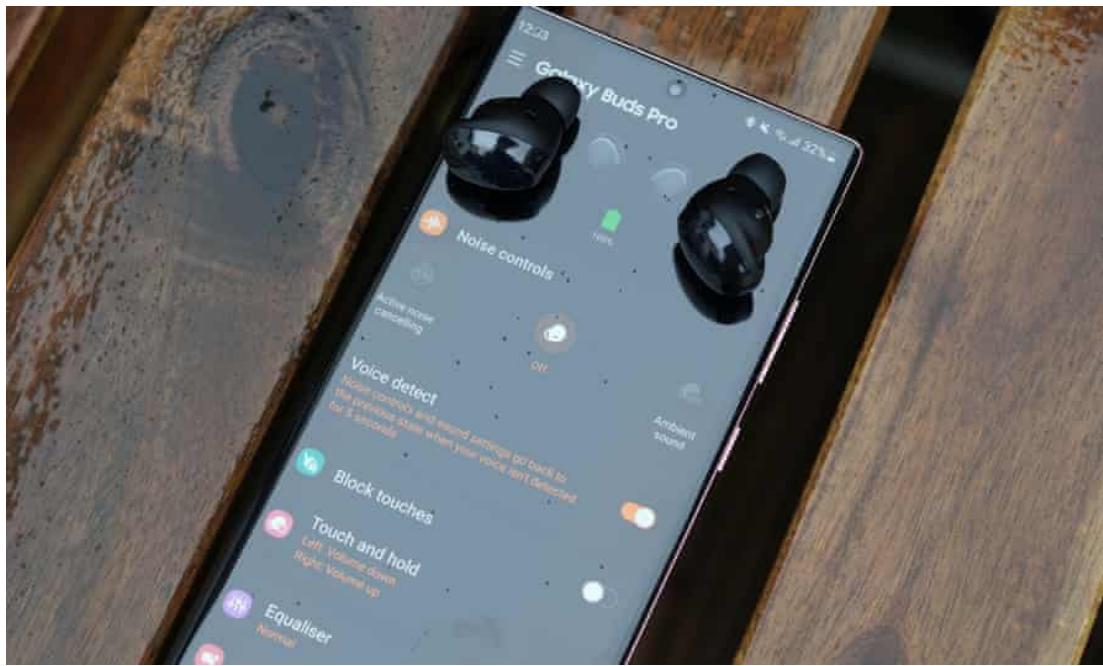
They were comfortable and stayed securely in my ears but you can twist a small lip of the earbud under the cartilage of your ear to lock them in place if needed. The earbuds are water resistant to IPX7 standards, which means they can be submerged in up to one metre of water for up to 30 minutes, making them some of the most water-resistant earbuds available.

Specifications

- **Water resistance:** IPX7 (one metre up to 30 minutes)

- **Connectivity:** Bluetooth 5.0, SBC, AAC, SSC
- **Battery life:** five hours ANC on (up to 18 hours with case; 28 hours with ANC off)
- **Earbud dimensions:** 19.5 x 20.5 x 20.8 mm
- **Earbud weight:** 6.3g each
- **Driver size:** 11mm woofer + 6.5mm tweeter
- **Charging case dimensions:** 50 x 50.2 x 27.8 mm
- **Charging case weight:** 44.9g
- **Case charging:** USB-C, Qi wireless charging

Connectivity and controls



The Galaxy Wearable app on Android handles pairing, controls, updates and noise-cancelling settings. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The Buds Pro support Bluetooth 5 with both the universal SBC and AAC audio standards used by most devices. But they also support Samsung's own

“[scalable audio codec](#)”, which can provide higher-quality audio but only works with Samsung devices. They are compatible with all standard Bluetooth devices and support automatic pairing with Samsung and other Android devices via the [Galaxy Wearable app](#) plus Swift Pairing with Windows 10 PCs. Unlike their predecessors, the Buds Pro are not supported by the Galaxy Buds app on an iPhone, so iOS users can use the earbuds but will not be able to change settings or update them.

The earbuds only connect to one device at a time but support seamless switching (so you don’t have to manually disconnect) and a new auto-switch system that can be used with Samsung devices running OneUI 3.1 or higher such as the new [Galaxy S21 series](#). Either earbud can be used on its own.

Connectivity to a [Galaxy Z Fold 2](#), [iPhone 12](#), [MacBook Air M1](#) and other devices was excellent.

The exterior of the earbud is touch sensitive. Tap once for pause/play, twice and thrice for track skip. A tap-and-hold gesture can be set to control the volume (left for down, right for up), control noise-cancelling settings, activate the voice assistant or trigger Spotify on compatible phones. Take both earbuds out and the music pauses; take only one out and ambient sound mode activates on the other. The controls work well with good audible feedback.

Battery life



The compact case charges via USB-C or wireless charging. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The earbuds last for up to five hours with noise-cancelling active and can be charged 2.6 times in the case for a total of 18 hours. Turn off noise-cancelling and the earbuds last up to eight hours and up to 28 hours with the case. Five minutes charging will add up to one hour of playback.

The case is charged via a Qi wireless charging coil in its base or the USB-C socket in the back. A cable is included in the box but not a power adaptor.

Sustainability

Samsung does not provide an estimate of the number of full-charge cycles the batteries in the case or earbuds should last. Batteries in similar devices can typically last for 500 cycles while maintaining at least 80% of their original capacity.

Samsung does not sell individual replacement buds or cases. The Buds Pro [are repairable](#) but [unlike previous Samsung earbuds](#) the battery cannot be replaced, ultimately making them disposable.

[How we are changing the way we rate sustainability of consumer electronics](#)

[Read more](#)

The earbuds and case are made from 20% post-consumer recycled materials. Samsung operates recycling and trade-in schemes for smartphones but not for its earbuds. The company publishes [annual sustainability reports](#) but not impact assessments for individual products.

Excellent sound



The oval silicone ear tips create a good seal aiding in bass and sound quality.
Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The Buds Pro take the easy-listening, everyday sound of the Buds+ and improve the audio quality in all dimensions. They produce rich and well-controlled bass, warm mids and precise high notes that make them some of the best-sounding true wireless earbuds available.

They handle many music genres well, with a wider soundscape than most earbuds. Acoustic, guitar-based tracks such as the live version of the Eagles' Hotel California sound warm, inviting and full of detail. There's plenty of punch and raw energy in grunge or rock tracks, while high-tempo electronica sounds suitably energised. The earbuds do an admirable job of

rendering really deep bass, while even orchestral scores such as Holst's *Planets* sound grand and full of nuance.

Occasionally, you can get hit with a little too much treble, such as overly prominent trumpets at higher volumes, but overall they sound really great, matching top rivals such as the [Jabra Elite 85t](#). There's a limited equaliser that can switch between preset modes such as "dynamic" or "bass boost" in the companion app.

Active noise cancelling



Mics on the outside, including inside a wind-noise reducing chamber, detect unwanted noise that is then cancelled out. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

The Buds Pro have several active noise-cancelling and ambient sound modes. There are two levels of noise-cancelling available. On high, the noise-cancelling is effective at reducing low rumbles and some mid-frequency sounds but falls slightly short of the effectiveness of the Elite 85t and AirPods Pro. The Buds Pro were also affected to a greater extent by the fit of the earbuds – twisting and locking them in place against the inside of my ear significantly improved the amount of noise they blocked out.

The ambient sound mode, which pipes the noise of the outside world into your ears, has four levels and can be automatically triggered when the earbuds detect you speaking. It works pretty well for quick conversations or hearing announcements but doesn't sound as natural as the best available.

The earbuds also have Dolby technology that tracks the movements of your head in relation to a phone or tablet to create a virtual surround sound Samsung calls 360 Audio. It only works with devices running Samsung's latest software OneUI 3.1 but, unlike rival systems from Apple and others, it is able to create the virtual surround effect for any video, not only those with Dolby soundtracks, anchoring the sound to the screen. The effect is surprisingly good.

Observations



The case is easily pocketable, which helps keep the buds safe and charged.
Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

- You can set Samsung's Bixby voice assistant to listen for the wakeword "Hey Bixby".

- Game Mode reduces latency for audio that is in sync with the action on screen for games with Samsung devices.
- Call quality was reasonable: my voice was clear and background noise was minimised but I sounded a little distant and not as crisp as the best rivals.
- Sneezing, blowing my nose and coughing triggered the auto-ambient sound mode when active.

Price

The Samsung Galaxy Buds Pro cost [£219](#) and are available in black, silver or purple, shipping on 28 January.

For comparison, the [Galaxy Buds Live](#) have an RRP of [£179](#), the [Galaxy Buds+](#) cost [£129](#), the [Jabra Elite 85t](#) cost [£219.99](#), the [Bose QC Earbuds](#) cost [£249.95](#), the [Sony WF-1000XM3](#) cost [£149](#) and the [Apple AirPods Pro](#) cost [£249](#).

Verdict

The Galaxy Buds Pro are Samsung's best true wireless earbuds yet.

They pack excellent sound with solid noise-cancelling into small and comfortable earbuds without stalks, which have good battery life and a great, compact case – a combination that's still hard to find. They are also water-resistant to a high standard, which can't be said for most competitors, and are made with recycled materials.

They are not cheap, costing £219, which puts them in the top end of the market, beating Apple's AirPods Pro on sound but falling short of the Jabra Elite 85t on noise-cancelling. If other Samsung earbuds are any indication, you should be able to find them with a reasonable discount if you shop around in the near future.

Unlike previous Samsung earbuds, the batteries in the Buds Pro cannot be replaced, which is a disappointing step back and ultimately makes them

disposable, similar to most other true wireless earbuds, [losing them a star](#). Samsung does not recycle the earbuds either. They can be used with an iPhone but are not supported by the Galaxy Buds app, so you can't change the settings or keep them up to date.

The Galaxy Buds Pro are Samsung's true AirPods Pro-beaters for Android – an excellent set of premium everyday true wireless earbuds.

Pros: great sound, solid noise-cancelling, seamless switching, good controls, comfortable fit, excellent case, solid battery, no stalks, IPX7 water resistance, made of recycled materials.

Cons: expensive, battery cannot be replaced, some features restricted to Samsung devices, can only connect to one device at a time.



The earbuds clip into the case via magnets and the lid shuts with a satisfying snap. Photograph: Samuel Gibbs/The Guardian

Other reviews

- [Galaxy Buds+ review: Samsung's AirPods killers are now for everyone](#)

- [Samsung Galaxy Buds Live review: novel bean-shaped AirPod rivals](#)
 - [Bose QuietComfort Earbuds review: just shy of noise-cancelling greatness](#)
 - [Jabra Elite 85t review: AirPods Pro-beating noise-cancelling Bluetooth earbuds](#)
 - [Sony WF-1000XM3 review: updated noise-cancelling earbuds sound great](#)
 - [AirPods Pro review: a touch of Apple magic](#)
 - [Best true wireless earbuds 2020: AirPods, Samsung, Jabra, Bose, Beats and Anker compared and ranked](#)
-

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How to live nowHomes

The green cleaner: 15 natural ways to spruce up your home – from nettles to rainwater

Former Bake Off winner Nancy Birtwhistle says we have been ‘brainwashed’ into believing we need harsh chemicals to clean our homes. Here’s how to take a more environmentally friendly approach



Natural cleaning tools: soap, vinegar, salt, lemon and sodium bicarbonate
Photograph: Andrei Naumenka/Getty Images/iStockphoto
Natural cleaning tools: soap, vinegar, salt, lemon and sodium bicarbonate
Photograph: Andrei Naumenka/Getty Images/iStockphoto



[Emine Saner](#)

[@eminesaner](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 06.47 EST

It was a filthy washing machine that prompted Nancy Birtwhistle to embrace the power of eco-friendly cleaning. “I was nearly at the point where I thought I needed a new washing machine, because it was a disgrace,” she says. “And that’s the sort of culture we’ve become: ‘I’ll replace it.’” Instead, she gave it a thorough clean and switched to homemade detergent. She says her machine no longer gets gunked up from chemical overload.

Birtwhistle, a no-nonsense retired GP practice manager and grandmother of nine, won the fifth series of The Great British Bake Off in 2014, but she has also become known on social media for her green cleaning tips. Once a fan of bleach and strongly perfumed products, she now makes everything herself. “We’ve been brainwashed into thinking that natural products are inferior to synthetic ones. I used to use bicarbonate of soda in the 1970s, but I stopped using it because there were products I thought would do a quicker job, but they’re causing such a lot of damage to the environment.” She has now written a book, *Clean & Green: 101 Hints and Tips for a More Eco-friendly Home*, which is packed with advice and ingenious tricks. Green cleaning, she says, is “accessible for everybody. I made the point of making it affordable.” Here are a few of her tips to get you started.



Nancy Birtwhistle at home ... 'I made the point of making it affordable.'
Photograph: Richard Saker/The Observer

Bulk-buy ingredients

Birtwhistle buys her most-used ingredients in bulk – an initial outlay, but money-saving in the long run. Her main ingredients include bicarbonate of soda, “because that’s used a lot”, a big bag of citric acid, a bottle of surgical spirit, sodium carbonate (known as washing soda, which can be a skin and eye irritant) and a bag of sodium percarbonate (known as “oxygen” or “green” bleach; it’s not as toxic as chlorine bleach, though you still have to be careful with it, as you do with all these ingredients, which, while considered acceptable natural cleaning alternatives, aren’t entirely benign. So keep out of the reach of children, wear gloves if needed and follow the safety instructions on the packaging). “And I bought myself a variety pack of essential oils, because I do still like a little bit of perfume in fabric conditioner, or my ironing water.”

Forage for soap

It sounds miraculous, but Birtwhistle swears by ivy as a laundry detergent (about 60g, cut up and put in a muslin bag, then put in the drum). “It excites me so much; my husband thinks I’m crackers. I knew in the depths of my

memory something about ivy and saponin [a natural foaming detergent], so I Googled it. Conkers have it as well.” Birtwhistle uses ivy “when I can be bothered to go out and cut some. I’ve got lots of it in the garden.” (Although remember that ivy can be a skin irritant for some people.) In the autumn, she collects conkers and boils them up to create a creamy laundry liquid.



Take water from your water butt for your iron. Photograph: EJ-J/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Harvest rainwater

This is what Birtwhistle uses in her iron, rather than buying expensive distilled “ironing water” or using hard tap water, which can fur up an iron with limescale. She takes it from her water butt a litre at a time. “Boil it and, when it’s cold, add two or three drops of lily of the valley essential oil.”

Make an all-purpose cleaner

Birtwhistle’s recipe is 150ml water, 60ml white vinegar and 40ml surgical spirit, with essential oil for fragrance. “I use it pretty much for anything,” she says. “It’s non-streaky and quick-drying. It started off as a kitchen cleaner for worktops, the hob, cupboards, cutting through greasy marks on shelves and things like that. Then I moved it into the bathroom and

everywhere else. It's good for mirrors, glass, inside the car. It's brilliant for tiles."

Decrease dry cleaning

The chemicals used at the dry cleaner are notoriously toxic. "When I worked in offices and used to wear suits, I would often send jackets to the cleaner just because the collar was grubby. But all you need is a pad dipped in surgical spirit; it will clean it up without having to use the dry cleaners."



Bicarbonate of soda and water can work as oven cleaner. Photograph: filistimlyanin/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Clean the oven without harsh chemicals

"Start by softening all the burnt-on bits with steam," says Birtwhistle. Put a large roasting tin in the bottom of the warm oven and fill it with boiling water, close the door and leave it for 20 minutes. A paste made from bicarbonate of soda and water (add some xanthan gum if you want to make it a bit stickier) can then be painted all around with a pastry brush. Leave for 30 minutes, then remove with a scraper and fine wire wool.

Miracle oven-shelf cleaner

A horrible job – and one for which Birtwhistle used to use harsh chemicals in a big plastic bag. There are two methods, she says. “One is to simply put them out on the lawn overnight. The best results I’ve had is to do it when the grass has just been cut, and cover the shelf with grass clippings as well. It creates a sort of steamy environment and then the next day they just wipe clean.” One of her social media followers from South Africa gave her this tip. However, if you don’t have a garden or grass, “submerge them in washing soda overnight”.

Stained casserole dishes

Birtwhistle says she “lived for years and years” with stains on the inside of her cast iron casseroles. “Then it just took a tablespoon of sodium percarbonate and a kettle of boiling water and it was clean.”

Brightening whites

Yellowing fabrics, such as pillow cases, can be transformed, says Birtwhistle. “Put them in a lemon juice or citric acid solution [3tbsp added to 600ml hot water], with salt, and leave to soak. You need a sunny day. Peg them outside – don’t rinse or wring them – and the sun will bleach them.”

Screen clean

A fine mist made with white vinegar and surgical spirit, diluted with water, makes a good screen cleaner, says Birtwhistle: it removes dirty fingerprints and bacteria from keyboards. The vinegar reduces the static cling, she adds, “so it stops your TV collecting dust”.



Citric acid will dissolve limescale and kill germs. Photograph: kali9/Getty Images

Deep-clean the loo

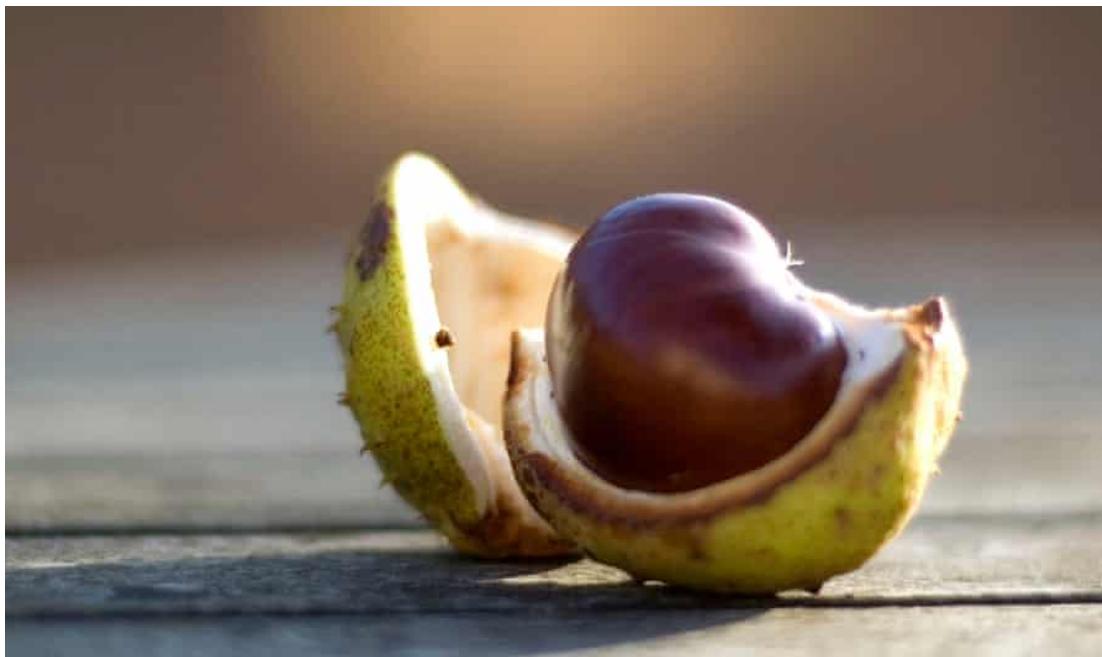
Birtwhistle says citric acid will “dissolve limescale and kill germs. When you move away from bleach, you find all these stains appearing, because all you’ve been doing is bleaching them out, but the limescale is still there. Use citric acid to get rid of that.” She makes her own loo cleaner using 200g citric acid and 150ml water, emulsified with a squirt of eco-friendly washing-up liquid. “The only downside is you need to rinse your nozzle afterwards. Otherwise, it does crystallise there.”

Restore shower screens

Marks on glass screens come from “a combination of soap scum and limescale. Make a spray of citric acid and water and it comes off in a jiffy. Make sure you rinse it off, because it dries sticky.”

Banish mould

This will work on mouldy spots on grout, sealant and fridge seals, says Birtwhistle. “Salt and vinegar will kill mould. I keep white vinegar in a spray bottle, so you can get it into awkward places like that. I squirt it, then dip an old toothbrush into ordinary table salt and rub away at it. Once you’ve done that, you could then use a spray of sodium percarbonate if there are any stained bits.”



Conkers ... contain natural detergent. Photograph: Katie Shires Photography/Getty Images

Remove scuff marks

After a run-in with a rubber parking bollard (“These things happen”), Birtwhistle dabbed some bicarbonate of soda on the mark with a damp cloth and it was as if it had never happened. It also works on walls, skirting boards and appliances.

Home-brew pesticide

Last summer, Birtwhistle had two different sprays to keep bugs at bay. She made one from nettles (60g boiled in 600ml water) and another using rhubarb leaves (500g of leaves in a litre of water). Both also contained clove bud oil, thought to deter insects. “The oxalic acid in rhubarb is a mild

poison, so I didn't use that on my veg," she says. "I used the nettle spray there and I used the rhubarb spray on non-edible plants." Both were effective, she says. "I was delighted."

Clean & Green by Nancy Birtwhistle is published on 21 January by Pan Macmillan (£12.99). To order a copy for £10.39, go to guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/19/the-green-cleaner-15-natural-ways-to-spruce-up-your-home-from-nettles-to-rainwater>

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Consumer championsConsumer affairs

How can we get a refund from Virgin Atlantic?

We are owed £1,163 for cancelled flights and have been waiting for many months



Many Virgin Atlantic flights have been cancelled in the Covid pandemic.
Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images

Many Virgin Atlantic flights have been cancelled in the Covid pandemic.
Photograph: Oli Scarff/AFP/Getty Images



Miles Brignall

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

In January 2020 we paid £1,163 to [Virgin Atlantic](#) for return flights for a July visit to see our grandchildren in Boston. When the flights were cancelled in May we requested a refund as, at the ages of 72 and 74, and with health conditions, we could not be certain of our future ability to fly and were therefore unable to accept credits.

Many months on we are still waiting. We feel we have been patient, accepting the situation faced by the airline. The chief executive, Shai Weiss, said all refunds would be completed by the end of October, but not ours, seemingly.

All of our attempts to contact the company have met with no response. We left a WhatsApp text as requested – but still nothing. We are at a loss to know what to do.

DC, Basildon

We received this letter in late December – long after the company's boss said all refunds would be paid. However, in fairness to Virgin Atlantic, your refund was paid very quickly after we took up your case.

Last year was horrible for all of the airlines, but Virgin Atlantic had a particularly torrid time.

This week the consumer group Which? named Virgin Atlantic and [Ryanair](#) as the worst two airlines for processing refunds. It said 84% of Virgin customers surveyed were dissatisfied with the customer service they received. Just 13% for both airlines were happy with their experience.

Virgin Atlantic said: “We recognise that at the height of the pandemic, the huge volume of refund requests we received, combined with the constraints on our teams and systems, meant that refunds took longer than usual to process, and we sincerely apologise to our customers for this.

“We delivered on our previous timeframe commitments, except for a very small number of administrative issues, related primarily to outstanding bank details that were required from the customer to process the refund.”

You are not entirely convinced, but are happy your money has been returned. It will be interesting to see how airline passengers, and holidaymakers in general, behave when things return to normal.

Will customers who felt badly treated this year rebook with the firms that they feel that let them down? More next week.

We welcome letters but cannot answer individually. Email us at consumer.champions@theguardian.com. Please include a daytime phone number. Submission and publication of all letters is subject to our [terms and conditions](#)

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2021/jan/19/refund-virgin-atlantic-cancelled-flight>

How we metLife and style

How we met: ‘A fortune teller told me how I would meet my partner. She was right’

Teachers Naomi and Huw Beynon, 41 and 49, met at a salsa class in 2005. They live with their children in Swansea



‘We’re very outdoorsy’ ... Naomi and Huw on holiday in west Wales in 2018. Photograph: Provided by Naomi Beynon

‘We’re very outdoorsy’ ... Naomi and Huw on holiday in west Wales in 2018. Photograph: Provided by Naomi Beynon

[Lizzie Cernik](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

Naomi Lewis was nursing a broken heart at the start of 2005, after splitting up with her boyfriend a few months earlier. She had recently moved into a new flat in Swansea, alone, and befriended Saffron, a woman who lived above her in the building. “In January, Saffron went on a bad blind date to a salsa class,” she says. “Although there was no spark, she loved the dancing

and begged me to go back with her. I've got two left feet and didn't fancy it, but she persuaded me."

When they arrived, Saffron's date from the previous week was there – and he had brought a friend. "I'd not long broken up with someone and I went with my friend Julian because it seemed like something to do on a Wednesday night," says Huw Lewis. While Saffron told Naomi that Julian's friend "was cute", Naomi insisted Huw wasn't her type. But after the class they got chatting and realised they had a lot in common. "We discovered we were both teachers and that both our parents were from the Welsh valleys," remembers Naomi. Their personalities clicked; when Huw went to the toilet, Naomi told her friend she was going to marry him. "I must have had a special power," laughs Huw. "I don't think she'd even had a drink. When I started talking to her, I really liked her. She was quirky and interesting."

They became friends over the next few weeks of salsa classes and even discovered that their families knew each other. "One day, I asked him back to my flat to see my jam collection, as an excuse to speak to him for longer," laughs Naomi. Although he liked her, Huw was freshly out of a relationship and told her he didn't feel ready for them to get closer. "I told him not to worry because jam keeps."



At a wedding in 2017 with their sons, Alfie and George. Photograph: Provided by Naomi Beynon

In February 2005, they decided to give things a go and went on their first date, to a pub. From then on, they became a couple. “We’d go to each other’s houses for dinner, as well as to gigs and festivals. We also loved going to the beach,” says Huw. “Then, in 2006, my mum sadly passed away. I think we just knew we wanted to be together and didn’t want to waste time.” They moved into Huw’s house, a pink cottage overlooking the sea. The following year, they went on a trip to Cornwall, where Huw proposed. “It wasn’t a fancy diamond ring and down on one knee thing,” says Naomi. “We both love real ale and we were drinking in a pub. He said if I wasn’t so drunk he’d ask me to marry him. I told him to ask anyway.”

In 2008, they celebrated their wedding in a converted farm in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. They had two boys, Alfie and George, in 2010 and 2012. “We’re very outdoorsy. We love going camping, walking, cycling and spending time at the beach together as a family,” says Naomi. Although they miss friends and family, not too much has changed for the couple during the past year. “We’re still taking the dog out a lot and both still teaching,” says Huw.

Since getting together, the couple have realised they have many old connections. “Once, we were looking through a box of photographs at my parents’ house and found a picture of me on the beach at the age of 10. Huw was teaching windsurfing at the time and his car can be seen in the background!” says Naomi. “I had also been told by a fortune teller, a long time ago, that I would meet my partner while learning a new skill. I thought she was talking nonsense, but I wrote it down and found it years later.”

Naomi feels lucky to have met Huw when she did. “What I love most about him is that he’s very kind and generous and always thinks about other people,” she says. Huw enjoys his wife’s sense of humour. “Naomi’s funny, but she’s also loyal and really committed to her work and family. She’s mad as a box of frogs, but in a good way.”

Want to share your story? Tell us a little about you, your partner and how you got together by [filling in the form here](#).

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/18/how-we-met-a-fortune-teller-told-me-how-i-would-meet-my-partner-she-was-right>

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2021.01.20 - Take part

- [UK small businesses How have you been affected by Brexit?](#)
- [Coronavirus Have you become a UK delivery driver during the pandemic?](#)
- [Tell us Has your pub received financial support during the pandemic?](#)
- [Barking Did you live on the Becontree estate?](#)

Brexit

UK small businesses: how have you been affected by Brexit?

We would like to hear from small and medium enterprises on their Brexit experiences



Have you encountered any difficulties? Photograph: Betsie Van Der Meer/Getty Images

Have you encountered any difficulties? Photograph: Betsie Van Der Meer/Getty Images

[Guardian community team](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.55 EST

Small businesses in the UK have been suffering since the country left the EU on 1 January, experiencing problems such as [delays at borders](#) and complicated paperwork.

We would like to hear from small and medium enterprises on their [Brexit](#) experiences. Have you encountered any difficulties? Do you have any concerns?

Share your experiences

You can get in touch by filling in the form below or [via WhatsApp](#) by [clicking here](#) or adding the contact +44(0)7867825056. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions. One of our journalists will be in contact before we publish, so please do leave contact details.

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Coronavirus

Have you become a delivery driver during the coronavirus pandemic in the UK?

We'd like to hear from people who have started jobs as delivery drivers during the coronavirus pandemic



A delivery driver packing a full white van with parcels. Photograph: Britpix/Alamy Stock Photo

A delivery driver packing a full white van with parcels. Photograph: Britpix/Alamy Stock Photo

[Guardian community team](#)

Thu 14 Jan 2021 10.43 EST

With the pandemic worsening and the nation going into another lockdown, Britain has never been more reliant on delivery drivers. Online grocery sales now [account for 13% of all food sales](#), up from 7.4% in March and experts expect to see this figure rise in the coming months.

We'd like to hear from those who have got new jobs as delivery drivers during the pandemic, alongside more experienced drivers.

Share your experiences

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Hospitality industry

Tell us: has your pub received financial support during the pandemic?

We would like to hear from pubs across England who have been promised a £1,000 grant during the pandemic



A man stands outside a closed pub, in London. The industry body warns many are on the verge of financial ruin. Photograph: Hannah McKay/Reuters

A man stands outside a closed pub, in London. The industry body warns many are on the verge of financial ruin. Photograph: Hannah McKay/Reuters

[Guardian community team](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.39 EST

Nearly three-quarters of the pubs [promised](#) a £1,000 grant by the prime minister to help them survive the [loss of Christmas](#) sales in England are still waiting for the money, the industry trade body has warned.

The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) said it was “scandalous” that many of its members were still awaiting cash promised in December, warning that much of the industry was on the verge of financial ruin.

We would like to hear from both “wet-led” pubs, which do not serve food and rely on alcohol sales, and pubs which sell food.

Share your experiences

Has your business encountered any difficulties? Do you have any concerns?

You can get in touch by filling in the form below, anonymously if you wish or [via WhatsApp](#) by [clicking here](#) or adding the contact +44(0)7867825056. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions. One of our journalists will be in contact before we publish, so please do leave contact details.

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Society

Did you live on Barking's Becontree estate?

We'd like to hear from people who have lived on the Becontree estate about their memories and experiences on its 100th anniversary



A satellite dish near the sign for the Becontree Estate, Dagenham, east London. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

A satellite dish near the sign for the Becontree Estate, Dagenham, east London. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

[Guardian community team](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.36 EST

The Becontree estate in the East London borough of Barking and Dagenham was a landmark developing in public housing development. The first homes in the social housing estate were built in 1921 and were described as the world's largest council estate.

On its 100th anniversary, the Guardian is keen to speak to current and former residents about their memories of the area. We'd also like to see your

pictures.

Share your experiences

You can get in touch by filling in the form below. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions. One of our journalists will be in contact before we publish, so please do leave contact details.

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2021.01.20 - Explore

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- ['Capitol riot was our Chernobyl' James Comey on Trump, the 'pee tape' and Clinton's emails](#)
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[**Donald Trump**](#)

How will Trump pass 'nuclear football' to Biden if he's not at swearing-in?

Physical transfer of brief case containing nuclear attack plans has become part of inauguration ritual



Donald Trump leaving the CIA headquarters in January 2017 in Langley, Virginia. In the background a military aid carries the 'football', with launch codes for nuclear weapons. Photograph: Getty Images

Donald Trump leaving the CIA headquarters in January 2017 in Langley, Virginia. In the background a military aid carries the 'football', with launch codes for nuclear weapons. Photograph: Getty Images



Peter Beaumont

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.31 EST

It is a responsibility that has passed to every president since John F Kennedy – the custody of the so called “nuclear football” – the hardened brief case that is handed over on the day of the inauguration of new presidents by their predecessor.

The question being asked, given Trump’s almost unprecedented decision not to meet Joe Biden or attend his swearing in, is what will happen to the nuclear football?

The reality is that while the briefcase, carried by a military aide, and containing nuclear attack plans, access to command and control systems and the mechanism for authorising the nuclear codes has become a shorthand for the president’s singular responsibility to order a nuclear attack, the mechanisms are a little more complex.

[Lights go out on Trump's reality TV presidency but dark legacy remains](#)
[Read more](#)

The “football” itself – also known as the “emergency satchel” or simply “the button” is a metal Zero Halliburton briefcase covered in leather to look rather like an old fashioned doctor’s bag, weighing around 20kg.

The bag is said to contain a copy – in some form – of the Black Book, the options for nuclear retaliation, the “biscuit”, an active electronic card identifying the president as the person able to authorise the “watch signal” triggering the use of nuclear weapons and the ability to communicate with command and control hubs.

Finally, perhaps most important, the briefcase contains an emergency broadcast system to allow the president to communicate any orders.

The football itself, however, is very much a backup, designed for use when the president is away from the fixed and protected command and control centres such as the White House situation room, where he would expect to be briefed by key officials in most circumstances ahead of authorising a nuclear retaliation as the US, while not having an all-encompassing no first strike nuclear policy, does have a “negative security assurance” on nuclear weapons use with 180 countries, although excluding the likes of Russia, China and North Korea.



A military aide carries the ‘football’ across the South Lawn for Barack Obama. Photograph: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

In 2013 Dick Cheney, Gerald Ford’s former chief of staff, described what usually happens on inauguration day when the responsibility for that attack

moves to a new president.

“The passing of the football occurs at high noon. No one says a word but I knew what to look for.

“So you got the ceremony going down front, [but] behind one of the big pillars there, these two guys are standing in their uniforms. And at the right moment, [the outgoing military aide] reaches over and hands it to the newly designated military aide and he takes it from that moment on.”

While the physical transfer has become part of the ritual of the transfer of power, albeit an unseen one among the pomp and circumstance, described by one of Bill Clinton’s aides as a “sacred duty”, the real transfer of responsibilities is actually somewhat more prosaic.

During the briefing about the nuclear codes and the briefcase on the morning of the inauguration, the key thing that happens is that “the biscuit” or rather “a biscuit” is reprogrammed and given to the new president or his designated military aide activating at noon on the day of the swearing, meaning that the new president can identify himself.

According to reports, the Pentagon has long had a plan for the transfer of responsibility in the event of Trump skipping the transfer of power.

Given the importance of the football, with its antenna protruding from it, it seems unlikely that there would be no redundancy in so important a system, a fact underlined by reports that there are actually three physical briefcases, not a solitary presidential satchel, one that can be assigned to the vice president and one to the “designated survivor” – usually a member of the cabinet designated by the president to ensure continuity if both the president and vice president are incapacitated.

“We war-game this stuff, and we practise it ad nauseam for years and years,” Buzz Patterson, who carried the football for Clinton, told Business Insider, adding that the transfer needed to be instantaneous.

“There are systems in place to make sure that happens instantaneously. There won’t be any kind of question about who has it, who is in charge at

that point in time.

“We don’t take this stuff lightly. There won’t be any kind of hiccup. It’ll just go down without anybody even noticing, which is what is supposed to happen.”

At midday, as Joe Biden is sworn in, Trump’s “nuclear biscuit” will become inactive. The most frightening of his powers will be gone.

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Donald Trump

Trump's presidency: a lesson in the true meaning of 'American carnage'



Donald Trump holds a campaign rally at Pittsburgh-Butler regional airport in Butler, Pennsylvania , on 31 October. Photograph: Carlos Barría/Reuters

Donald Trump holds a campaign rally at Pittsburgh-Butler regional airport in Butler, Pennsylvania , on 31 October. Photograph: Carlos Barría/Reuters

For four years the outrages piled up so high they were hard to keep track of but the coronavirus pandemic proved to be one crisis he couldn't bluster away



[David Smith in Washington](#)

[@smithinamerica](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.58 EST

Sign up for the Guardian's First Thing newsletter

In a cold, sombre, damp Washington four years ago this Wednesday, Donald Trump took the oath of office as the 45th president of the United States and delivered [an inaugural address](#) now remembered for two words: American carnage.

He delivered, but not as he promised. Trump pledged to end the carnage of inner-city poverty, rusting factories, broken schools and the scourge of criminal gangs and drugs. Instead his presidency visited upon the nation the carnage of about 400,000 coronavirus deaths, the worst year for jobs since the second world war and the biggest stress test for American democracy since the civil war.

[Democracy in Trumpland: I won because I say so | Ed Pilkington](#)

[Read more](#)

“It’s not just physical carnage,” said [Moe Vela](#), a former White House official. “There’s also mental carnage and there’s spiritual carnage and there’s emotional carnage. He has left a very wide swath of American

carnage and that is the last way I would want to be remembered by history, but that is how he will be remembered.”

Trump campaigned for president as a change agent but millions came to regard him as an agent of chaos. His line-crossing, envelope-pushing, wrecking-ball reign at the White House crashed in a fireball of lies about his election defeat and [deadly insurrection at the US Capitol](#). Future generations of schoolchildren will read about him in textbooks as a twice-impeached one-term president.

It all began in earnest in June 2015 when the property tycoon trundled down an escalator at Trump Tower in New York and announced a presidential run based on “America first” nationalism and building a border wall. Exploiting white grievance, economic dislocation and celebrity culture, he clinched the Republican nomination and promised: [“I alone can fix it.”](#) He lost the national popular vote to Hillary Clinton but lucked his way to victory in the electoral college.

The first person elected to the White House with no previous political or military experience, he represented a shock to the system and rebuke to the establishment.

Ian McEwan, the British novelist, [observed in the Guardian:](#) “Charles Darwin could not believe that a kindly God would create a parasitic wasp that injects its eggs into the body of a caterpillar so that the larva may consume the host alive ... We may share his bewilderment as we contemplate the American body politic and what vile thing now squats within it, waiting to be hatched and begin its meal.”



Trump tosses out ‘Keep America Great’ caps at a campaign rally at Oakland County international airport in Waterford Township, Michigan, in October 2020. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters

Hopes that Trump would “pivot” and become “presidential” were dashed by that speech on 20 January 2017. A day later, the press secretary, Sean Spicer, tried to mislead the nation about the size of the inaugural crowd, and soon after the White House counsellor Kellyanne Conway was [defending Spicer’s “alternative facts”](#). It was the outbreak of a disinformation pandemic.

Trump, by all accounts, tried to govern by gut instinct, refusing to read national security briefs but hanging on the words of hosts on the Fox News network. His Twitter feed gave an astonishing window on his thinking and frayed the nation’s nerves. He showed a narcissist’s craving for attention from the media and affirmation from West Wing staff, who came and went at a record rate.

He assailed government bureaucracy, sought to [undo Barack Obama’s legacy](#) and displayed the brashness and shamelessness that served his business career: hurl insults, never apologize, hit back harder and throw out constant distractions. He aped demagogues of the past by handing his family top jobs and deriding the media as “fake news” and [“the enemy of the people”](#).

In his first year alone, Trump signed an executive order to prevent people from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US, fired the FBI director, James Comey, and other officials whose loyalty was less than absolute, announced America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement and responded to deadly [white nationalist violence in Charlottesville](#), Virginia, by insisting that there were "very fine people on both sides".

Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people

Jim Mattis

As his term went on, Trump oversaw a "zero-tolerance" policy at the border that separated immigrant parents from children and stripped away environmental regulations. He encouraged the QAnon conspiracy movement, described as a domestic terror threat by the FBI. In language often laced with violent imagery, it was all about "[owning the libs](#)" and mesmerising the "Make America great again" base at cultish rallies.

Jim Mattis, a retired four-star Marine Corps general who served as his first defence secretary, [said last year](#): "Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people – does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us."

Yet for three years, his beginner's luck held and re-election seemed possible. An investigation into links between Russian meddling in the 2016 election and Trump's campaign led to several criminal convictions but ultimately ended in anticlimax. He was impeached by the House of Representatives for pressuring Ukraine for political favours but was comfortably [acquitted by the Senate](#).

Trump gratified Republicans by naming [three supreme court justices](#) and more than 220 federal judges, giving the judiciary an enduring conservative bent, and enacting the biggest tax cuts and reforms for a generation. He invested in the military and brought troops home, negotiated a new trade deal with Canada and Mexico and helped broker agreements between close ally Israel and three Arab states.



Trump observes a demonstration with the US army's 10th Mountain Division troops, an attack helicopter and artillery, as he visits Fort Drum, New York, in August 2018. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters

[Newt Gingrich](#), a former Republican House speaker, said: “It was a remarkably effective populist disruption of the old order. It changed regulations, it rebuilt the American military, it recentred American foreign policy on American interests, it renegotiated trade policy around American jobs, it began to fundamentally shift the judiciary system back to a constitutional basis. And at the same time it was generating economic growth so you had the lowest Black and Latino unemployment in American history.”

Using a term that had led to widespread criticism of Trump for fuelling racism, Gingrich added: “Except for the enormous intrusion of the Chinese virus, it was an astonishingly successful period.”

But the coronavirus did change everything. From the start, Trump deliberately played down the threat and failed to build a national testing strategy. He sidelined public health officials by refusing to embrace mask-wearing and suggesting unproven treatments, including the [injection of disinfectant](#), and was eventually hospitalised with the virus himself.

Vaccines came at historic speed but their distribution lagged and was described by President-elect Joe Biden as a “dismal failure”.

Trump was a symptom of many problems, not the cause

Arisha Hatch

The summer brought another crisis. Faced with mass protests against racial injustice, Trump responded with brute force, law-and-order rhetoric and a renewed culture war over statues and Confederate symbols. On 1 June, security forces chased away peaceful protesters with teargas outside the White House before the president staged a photo op, awkwardly clutching a Bible at a historic church.

But for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The Trump era was also the era of #MeToo and Black Lives Matter. His inauguration was immediately followed by women’s marches including a record 4 million people in Washington. The “resistance” was maintained by activists, journalists, politicians, satirists, watchdogs, whistleblowers and voters, who delivered their verdict by handing Democrats the House, then the White House, then the Senate.

By tapping America’s id, the president inadvertently did it a favor by bringing all its internal tensions and tormented histories to the surface, making them far harder to deny. Arisha Hatch, vice-president of the activist group Color of Change, said: “Trump’s four years in office led to a huge degree of suffering but it will also be remembered as a time of racial reckoning, a time when racial justice finally became a majoritarian issue.

“Trump will be remembered for exposing the flaws in our democracy that have, for decades, kept us from achieving racial equity. Trump was a symptom of many problems, not the cause.”



Trump hosts a coronavirus response task force briefing at the White House in July 2020. Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Trump once boasted that he could shoot somebody on New York's Fifth Avenue and not lose any voters, an insight vindicated time and again, including when he grew his support from 63m votes in 2016 to 74m in 2020, more than any incumbent president in history. But his opponent, Biden, gained a record 81m votes [and won 306-232 in the electoral college](#). Trump refused to concede and launched a scorched earth campaign of lawsuits, fantasies and propaganda to overturn the result.

But the officials, courts, civil society and media held firm. As Trump turned on his closest allies, including even Vice-President Mike Pence, weeks of election denialism and years of inflammatory rhetoric reached a fiery climax when a mob sacked the US Capitol, flaunting the Confederate flag and other far-right iconography. Five people died and members of Congress cowered in fear.

That was the first time I thought, 'It really could happen here'

Gwenda Blair

[Gwenda Blair](#), a Trump biographer, said: "That was perhaps the first time I was truly shocked and truly, personally, physically frightened. I've been

frightened on every other level before but that was the first time I thought, ‘It really could happen here’. It was the first time that all of the norms and all the notions of it being somewhere else were completely blown away.”

Blair was [interviewed by the Guardian](#) in a New York diner in July 2015 as Trump began his political ascent. Looking back on all that has happened since then, she reflected: “It’s a combination of exactly what I expected and worse than I could have imagined. It’s utterly consistent with his entire career but, even as someone who has been watching him for more than 30 years, it’s hard to wrap my mind around.”

From carnival barker to world’s most powerful man, Trump, 74, leaves a legacy of division, destruction and death. He accelerated [Americans’ distrust in institutions](#) and in each other, waging war on truth itself. He still has millions of acolytes whose divorce from the reality of a Biden’s presidency threatens further instability and violence from domestic terrorists. Overseas, Trump made America an object of ridicule, scorn or pity as he gravitated towards foreign autocrats and alienated longtime allies.



Trump speaks at the Suresnes American Cemetery and Memorial in Paris, France, on 11 November 2018. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters

Leon Panetta, a former defence secretary and CIA director, said: “Future historians will say that it was perhaps the worst presidency the United States has had because of the person Trump is and because he had little respect for the values associated with the presidency, did not believe that there were any rules that constrained him and generally undermined the strength of the United States at a very critical time, both at home and abroad.”

But on Wednesday the lights will go out on the reality TV presidency as Trump exits the White House in defeat and disgrace, facing another impeachment trial in the Senate. A Pew Research Center poll found that his approval rating has collapsed to 29%, the lowest of his presidency. He has even been banned from social media, depriving him of the Twitter megaphone that gave diplomats and journalists sleepless nights.

In addition to being the worst president, he’s a terrible person. What a combination

Larry Sabato

Biden will be inaugurated in a city resembling a fortress and begin clearing up four years of carnage. Former president Gerald Ford’s proclamation after the departure of Richard Nixon – “our long national nightmare is over” – will be widely quoted. Many will hope that Trump was a mere heartbeat in historical terms, a blip as the baton passed from Obama to Biden, and a warning to the future: let’s not do that again.

Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia, said: “If history is honest, it will remember Donald Trump as by far the worst president ever. No one else even comes close. Not Warren Harding, not James Buchanan, not Richard Nixon. Nobody comes close.

“And beyond that he is, in my view, the most horrible human being who has ever sat in the Oval Office. In addition to being the worst president, he’s a terrible person. What a combination. I hope we’ve learned this lesson. This ought to remind all Americans what happens when you make a mistake with your vote.”

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James Comey

‘The Capitol riot was our Chernobyl’: James Comey on Trump, the ‘pee tape’ and Clinton’s emails



‘You want to believe and respect the president’ ... James Comey in Washington DC last year. Photograph: Jared Soares/New York Times/Eyevine

‘You want to believe and respect the president’ ... James Comey in Washington DC last year. Photograph: Jared Soares/New York Times/Eyevine

The former FBI director was sickened and angered by the attack incited by the president. But has he come to terms with his part in getting him elected?



[David Smith](#) in Washington

[@smithinamerica](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

As an investigator turned author, James Comey has developed a forensic eye for detail. The colour of the curtains in the Oval Office. The length of Donald Trump's tie. Something about the US president that the camera often misses.

"Donald Trump conveys a menace, a meanness in private that is not evident in most public views of him," says Comey, a former director of the FBI, from his home in McLean, Virginia, a suburb of Washington DC.

That menace came flooding out to engulf the US on 6 January when a pro-Trump mob [stormed the Capitol in Washington](#). Five people, including a police officer, [were killed in the mayhem](#). Comey, whose [unorthodox interventions in the 2016 election](#) are blamed by many liberals for putting Trump in the White House, watched in horror.

"I was sickened to watch an attack on the literal and symbolic heart of our democracy, and, as a law enforcement person, I was angered. I am mystified and angry that Capitol Hill wasn't defended. It's a hill! If you wanted to defend it, you could defend it, and for some reason it was not defended. I

think that's a 9/11-size failure and we're going to need a 9/11-type commission to understand it so that we don't repeat it."

If he were still at work in the FBI's brutalist building on Pennsylvania Avenue, Comey would be at the heart of the hunt for the domestic terrorists. He misses the job. Aged 60, a father of five and grandfather of one, he has spent the pandemic learning yoga, training to become a foster parent again and preparing for a teaching job at Columbia University in New York.

Comey has also written another memoir, [Saving Justice: Truth, Transparency and Trust](#), a slender sequel to his 2018 bestseller, [A Higher Loyalty](#). It includes anecdotes from his law enforcement career, tangling with the New York mafia and others, and quotations from William Shakespeare and Trump (who reported to Comey that "Putin told me: 'We have some of the most beautiful hookers in the world'"). It acknowledges the flawed history of his beloved FBI while defending the nobility of its purpose; he calls for it to strip the name of the former director J Edgar Hoover from its headquarters and rename it in honour of the civil rights hero John Lewis.



'I bent in small ways that I convinced myself were tactical' ... Donald Trump and Comey, then the FBI director, in the Oval Office two days after the president's inauguration in January 2017. Photograph: Rex/Shutterstock

But there is no escaping the 2016 election and the explosive investigation of [Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server](#), at her home in New York, while she was secretary of state. “I didn’t want to put it in the book and I ended up having to because my editors convinced me,” he says. “How do you talk about transparency and all these things without at least touching it?”

Driven by transparency, Comey broke protocol during the campaign by publicly opining that, although she would not be prosecuted, [Clinton had been “extremely careless”](#) in her handling of classified information. Then, just 11 days before the election, he notified Congress that [the FBI was reviewing more Clinton emails](#).

Comey is sure the news would have leaked anyway. [Clinton blames him for her shock defeat](#); he maintains that an FBI director’s decisions cannot be guided by their preference for president. “I’m sure that strikes people as stubborn and righteous and all kinds of stuff, but I don’t think so. Between bad and terrible, we chose bad in a way that we had to.” (The “terrible” option would have been to stay silent, which would have seemed like a cover-up, especially considering the justice department was already compromised as a result of [an impromptu meeting between Bill Clinton and the attorney general](#).)

But, looking back, was he truthful and transparent to a fault? Did Trump’s baseless rants about bias in the FBI and the deep state prompt Comey to overcorrect in a way that he would not have done if Clinton’s opponent had been a conventional candidate such as [Jeb Bush](#)?

“Maybe. But I’m not sure what you do about that,” he says. “It is totally legitimate to think about what the American people will think about this decision or that decision.”

Last year, A Higher Loyalty was turned into a TV drama, [The Comey Rule](#), with Jeff Daniels and Brendan Gleeson cast supremely as Comey and Trump respectively. Among the most wrenching scenes were those in which Comey faced his wife, Patrice (Jennifer Ehle), before, during and after decisions that could tilt the election away from the woman who would be the first female president and towards a man who boasted about [grabbing women by the genitals](#).

Hillary Clinton? I'm sorry for her pain. I remember reading that she said I shivved her

"She knew that I was in agony about the whole thing and I couldn't talk to her about a lot of it," he says. "I would tend to tell her things just before they went public so she would be prepared it was going to be on the news.

"Her strongest reaction was in October, first: 'Why does it have to be you? You're going to get slaughtered for this. Oh my God, I wish it weren't you.' Then, second: 'It's too close, it's too close to the election.' That was a worry both about me and that I might do something to help Donald Trump. She really wanted a woman to be elected president."

The mood in the Comey household was "sombre" on the morning after Trump's victory, but, after Comey explained his actions, his wife and daughters understood, he says. Liberal Twitter, however, has been less forgiving.

When he posted a photo last year showing him wearing a T-shirt that said "Elect more women", the former Clinton spokesperson Nick Merrill tweeted: "A lot of us tried. You fucked it up. But the tee shirt definitely makes up for it." Tom D'Angora, a producer, director and activist, added: "Every horrifying thing Trump has done to this world started with you Comey! YOU have blood on your hands."

He has grown a thick skin. "I've learned to push that out. I can't open that window, because you get overwhelmed with bile, so I don't ever read comments on Twitter, but I have to open it enough in case there's something thoughtful that shows me I missed something. What am I going to do? It doesn't change my life. I'm not a public person and I don't want to run for office. I've never been to a Washington DC party. It doesn't affect me."

Comey and Clinton have never met. If they did, what would he say? "I think I would tell her that I'm sorry for her pain. I remember reading that she said I shivved [stabbed] her. I'm sick of talking about it, but if she wanted to, I would try to have her understand why we made the decisions we made."



‘The “pee tape” stuff is more likely than it was when I was fired’ ... Comey at a Senate intelligence committee hearing in June 2017, shortly after he was fired. Photograph: Andrew Harnik/AP

In fact, Comey was overseeing not one but two investigations – the other was into mysterious contacts between Trump’s campaign and Russia. This included [a dossier compiled by Christopher Steele](#), a former MI6 officer, that contained the salacious – and unverified – allegation that the Russian government has a video of Trump watching sex workers urinate on each other in a Moscow hotel room in 2013.

“It came to us in late September. We had information since the summer with which it was consistent and I didn’t know what to make of it, but, because it was from a source who had a track record with the FBI, our team dove into it to see if they could replicate it. I still don’t know. I actually think [the Senate intelligence committee report](#), coupled with [former Trump lawyer] Michael Cohen’s account in his book, probably makes the ‘pee tape’ stuff more likely than it was when I was fired.”

Eventually, Comey had to inform Trump of the allegations, which was “nerve-racking” and “almost an out-of-body experience”. He went on to endure several excruciating months as FBI director, witnessing up close the 45th president’s corrosive disregard for institutions, the intelligence

community and the rule of law. One night, Comey faced a test of his loyalty to Trump in the form of a private White House dinner of salad, shrimp scampi, chicken parmesan with pasta and vanilla ice-cream.

“So, I’m thinking, sitting at the table, I have to protect the FBI, I have to protect myself, I have to avoid a war with the president of the United States and I’ve got to remember every word he says, because he may commit a crime in my presence. You’re trying to do all four of those things and eat and he never stops talking, so it’s one of those sweat-through-your-suit moments – not that it’s warm in the room.

The Republican party needs to be burned down ... It’s just not a healthy political organisation

“There’s so many things going on in your head at the same time that it’s exhausting. The 90 minutes or so just flew by and then I’m out of there trying to remember what he said so I could write it down right away.”

Such encounters gave Comey – [who was fired in May 2017](#) – cause to reflect on why so many collaborators, enablers and enforcers have bowed to Trump’s will and embraced his alternative reality, defending the indefensible and proclaiming that two plus two equals five if the president has decreed it so.

“He rarely stops talking in a way that not only is filled with constant lying, but draws those to whom he’s speaking into an involuntary circle of assent. He has this way of lying and saying: ‘Everybody agrees and of course we all agree,’ and a wave of lies hits you.

“But it’s more complicated than that, because the person speaking is in some sense an object of reverence in the American civic religion: he’s sitting in the Oval Office and he’s the president of the United States, so you want to believe him and respect him.

“I think it’s something about that combination that makes him uniquely able to bend people – and he has bent lot of people. It’s a really hard thing to resist. I bent in small ways that I convinced myself were tactical. I gave silence in response to a request for loyalty and I said: ‘I’ll be honest,’ and

then when I got ‘honest loyalty’ I agreed to that to get out of that conversation.”



‘The ugly radioactive violence and racism of America’ ... rioters storm the US Capitol on 6 January, after being encouraged by Trump to march on the building. Photograph: Roberto Schmidt/AFP/Getty Images

Trump tends to attract people who lack a solid moral framework, Comey says. “They tell themselves stories like: ‘I’ve got to deal with this to protect the country; because I’m so important to the nation, I’ll make these compromises.’ And then he’s eaten your soul, it’s too late, and then you’re [the attorney general of the United States marching across Lafayette Square](#) thick with choking pepper smoke after protesters have been cleared so the man can hold the Bible up. That’s where you end up.”

The constant appeasement of Trump as he crossed every line and trashed every norm reaped its whirlwind on 6 January with the [mob attack on the US Capitol](#).

Comey offers an arresting metaphor: the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the former Soviet Union. The US has always had a “radioactive stew” of violence, he suggests, but in recent decades it has been largely kept inside a

containment building (the law) and tamed by control rods (cultural expectations, such as use of the N-word becoming taboo).

“What Donald Trump has done for the last five years is attack the building from the outside to weaken its foundation,” says Comey. “He’s withdrawn the control rods, and that’s a recipe for a nuclear disaster, a radioactive release. That’s what you saw on Capitol Hill, our own Chernobyl, when the ugly radioactive violence and racism of America explodes in public view.”

Comey was a Republican for most of his life, but now describes himself as an independent. He acknowledges that the party’s decay started well before Trump, with partisan bomb throwers such as [Newt Gingrich](#) and [Sarah Palin](#). But Trump is the first president to have been impeached twice, [this time for inciting an insurrection against the US government](#).

Let local prosecutors in New York pursue Trump for the fraudster he was before he took office

“The Republican party needs to be burned down or changed,” Comey says. “Something is shifting and I’m hoping it’s the fault breaking apart, a break between the Trumpists and those people who want to try and build a responsible conservative party, because everybody should know that we need one. Who would want to be part of an organisation that at its core is built on lies and racism and know-nothingism? It’s just not a healthy political organisation.”

The purge could be accelerated if Trump were to face criminal prosecution after he left office. Comey believes that a case at state level, pursuing allegations of bank and insurance fraud by Trump’s businesses in New York, would be a less divisive way to bring him to justice than [a blockbuster trial in federal courts](#).

“At the end of the day, I still come down in the place that the best interests of the country would not be served by giving him that Donald Trump daily drama in our nation’s capital for three years as part of the United States versus Trump. That would give him the oxygen and the attention that he so craves and make it so much harder for a new president to heal the country

both spiritually and physically, and to get some people out of the fog of lies that they're trapped in.

"I just think, on balance, the country is better served by impeaching him, convicting him in the Senate and letting local prosecutors in New York pursue him for the fraudster he was before he took office. That mixture accommodates the important public interest of the rule of law being asserted, but doesn't do it in a way that makes it impossible for a new president to move the country on."

On Wednesday afternoon, Comey's longtime nemesis will be exiting the White House in disgrace and defeat. It follows an election in which people voted in record numbers despite the pandemic, officials (including Republicans) ensured a fair count, courts (including Trump-appointed judges) threw out preposterous lawsuits and, hours after the mob's failed putsch, Congress voted to certify Joe Biden's victory.

US democracy had a near-death experience, but survived. "I'm deeply optimistic," Comey says. "America is a wonderful, complicated, screwed-up country, but it's always getting better. It usually gets worse before it gets better, but the better succeeds, so we make progress. I am optimistic this will be the inflection point that we so desperately needed. I wish it weren't so, but this, I think, is going to awaken Americans to the things that matter."

Saving Justice: Truth, Transparency and Trust by James Comey is published by Macmillan (£20). To order a copy for £17.40, go to guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply.

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Namibia

Simple change to fishing gear saves thousands of birds in Namibia

Birds that became tangled in baited lines appear to be scared off by coloured pipes



Crewmen attaching bird-scaring lines to an industrial trawler in Namibia.
Photograph: RSPB

Crewmen attaching bird-scaring lines to an industrial trawler in Namibia.
Photograph: RSPB

Chris Baraniuk

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.55 EST

A cheap and simple change to the equipment used by Namibian fishing boats is saving tens of thousands of vulnerable seabirds annually, researchers have estimated.

Some industrial fleets often use long lines fitted with thousands of baited hooks, which attract seabirds. In attempting to snatch away the bait, the birds can become tangled in the lines and die.

But by fitting pieces of red or yellow hosepipe, each a few metres long, to separate lines towed behind boats, they have succeeded in scaring away the birds and preventing huge numbers of deaths, according to [a study in the Biological Conservation journal](#).

More than 22,000 birds were estimated to have been accidentally killed by long-line fishing gear in 2009. But just 215 are thought to have died in 2018, despite boats using more hooks that year.

Among the many species to have benefited are white-chinned petrels, Atlantic yellow-nosed albatrosses and cape gannets, whose populations are all declining.



Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross Photograph: EduardoMSNeves/Alamy Stock Photo

“In many other areas where I work where we lose threatened species, it would be unheard of to reduce mortality by 90% over a decade,” said co-author Steffen Oppel at the RSPB Centre for [Conservation](#) Science in Cambridge. He and his team used data from onboard surveys of Namibian shipping vessels to gauge the overall number of seabird deaths annually.

The waters off Namibia’s coast are rich in nutrients and support an abundance of marine life. For seabirds, it is a crucial feeding ground.

But, in the past, boats would sometimes collect boxes full of dead birds that had snagged themselves on fishing lines.

“The fact that we have done something about it … that gives me a great sense of joy and achievement,” said the report’s co-author, Titus Shaanika of BirdLife International’s Albatross Task Force in Namibia.

The use of bird-scaring devices on fishing lines became mandatory in Namibia in 2015.

Shaanika added that the local industry is generally supportive of methods to cut bird deaths, partly because of the relatively low cost. Installing hosepipe streamers on a long fishing line costs about N\$4,000, or £200.

Besides the colourful hosepipe, which is prepared by a team of five women working at the port of Walvis Bay, conservationists have also promoted the use of weights attached to the baited hooks. These cause the hooks to sink to 10 metres or more below the surface – too deep for seabirds to reach when diving.

“I think it’s a real success story,” said Prof Ed Melvin at the University of Washington, who was not involved in the research but who has [designed bird-scaring line systems](#).

Experiments going back decades show the effectiveness of such methods, he added, but it is rare to find a case study proving that they work on such a scale.

Because albatrosses do not begin to breed until later in life – and even then only sparingly – their populations are particularly sensitive to adult deaths, Melvin said. This was why efforts to protect them are so important.

Namibia’s trawler ships – which drag nets through the water to catch fish – have also switched to using streamers on their gear. The study found that the number of birds killed had fallen although the reduction was not as dramatic as for ships using long, baited lines.

The study authors suggest that this was likely down to the fact that some crews are reluctant to use bird-scaring lines in case they get tangled in their

fishing gear.

Shaanika said his group was now working with trawlers to install equipment that would reduce the chance of this happening. “It just shows how much we can achieve if we work together and listen to each other,” he said.

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The day my voice broke: what an injury taught me about the power of speech

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[Joe Biden](#)

Biden to target Covid and the economy amid stack of orders in first 100 days



Joe Biden in Delaware last week. In a memo, his incoming chief of staff wrote: ‘President-elect Biden is assuming the presidency in a moment of profound crisis for our nation.’ Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Joe Biden in Delaware last week. In a memo, his incoming chief of staff wrote: ‘President-elect Biden is assuming the presidency in a moment of profound crisis for our nation.’ Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Analysis: The incoming president is pushing a huge stimulus plan, and wants action on vaccines, racial justice and climate change

[Daniel Strauss](#) in Washington

[@danielstrauss4](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 08.13 EST

When [Joe Biden](#) is sworn in as president on Wednesday, he plans to trigger a range of executive orders aimed at solving two of the biggest crises facing the country: the economic downturn and the coronavirus pandemic.

[Biden inauguration: Donald Trump's last full day as US president - live updates](#)

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The president-elect's team has been floating its ideal scenario for how Biden's first hundred days in office will go. That includes almost a dozen executive orders and pushing for a massive \$1.9tn coronavirus and economic stimulus plan. The Biden team is also planning another proposal aimed at reinforcing the economy.

The executive orders concern fighting climate change, battling Covid, pausing payments on student loans, rejoining the Paris climate agreement and ending the travel ban from Muslim-majority countries. He also plans to quickly take steps to change the country's criminal justice system and expanding healthcare to low-income Americans.

“President-elect Biden is assuming the presidency in a moment of profound crisis for our nation. We face four overlapping and compounding crises: the Covid-19 crisis, the resulting economic crisis, the climate crisis and a racial equity crisis,” Biden’s incoming chief of staff, Ron Klain, circulated in a memo the campaign released to the public over the weekend.

Klain added: “All of these crises demand urgent action. In his first 10 days in office, President-elect Biden will take decisive action to address these four crises, prevent other urgent and irreversible harms, and restore America’s place in the world.”

On immigration, Biden is aiming to end some of the hardline immigration policies of the Trump administration. He plans to unveil proposals that will offer a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and foreign aid to countries in Central America.

At the same time, however, a Biden official cautioned to [NBC](#) that did not mean the next administration would grant entry to all asylum seekers coming to the country.

In laying out his agenda, Biden has worked to frame it as more of a moment for the nation to rally and forget partisan divides.

“It’s not hard to see that we’re in the middle of a once-in-several-generations economic crisis with a once-in-several-generations public health crisis,” Biden said during a press conference over the weekend.

The stimulus proposal and the executive actions underscore Biden’s hypothesis that his decades-long career in the Senate and deep ties in Washington can help heal the partisan rancor and political divides that kept Congress in gridlock through multiple presidencies.

“Unity is not some pie-in-the-sky dream, it’s a practical step to getting the things we have to get done as a country get done together,” Biden said at the press conference.

The incoming president has shown more interest in trying to work with Republicans and [Democrats](#) rather than vowing that this presidency would fulfill progressives’ legislative wishlists.

Unity is not some pie-in-the-sky dream, it’s a practical step to get things done

Joe Biden

Democratic control of the House of Representatives, and the slimmest of majorities in the Senate (a 50-50 split where Kamala Harris, as vice-president, will play the tie-breaker) also means that much of Biden’s first – and possibly only – term as president depends on whether [enough senators](#) support a bill to overcome a filibuster.

This is unlike the beginning of the Trump administration, where the new president opted to fulfill the No 1 item on Republicans’ wishlist: gutting Obamacare. That decision resulted only in a partial victory. It also erased any tiny vestige of openness Democrats may have secretly kept that maybe some kind of bipartisanship was possible under Trump.

Biden, though, is starting out advertising priorities that, at least in the abstract, aren’t obviously objectionable to Republicans or Democrats: curbing the virus, helping small businesses and improving the economy.

Biden has also set a goal of 100m vaccine shots in the first 100 days of his presidency.

“We’ll have to move heaven and earth to get more people vaccinated,” Biden said.

One Biden transition adviser who is joining his administration said of the \$1.9tn plan: “We believe that across this plan are proposals that are pragmatic, that have support not only in Washington but in capitals and cities and communities across the country and are urgently necessary. And so the president-elect will make the case that we need to come together and move on this as well.”

Asked which part of Biden’s first 100 days in office would be the toughest, the House majority whip, Jim Clyburn, the most influential African American Democrat in Congress, said stimulus payments.

“Because all that’s wrapped into one. Everybody’s out for that, so I don’t see them being able to turn around for that,” Clyburn told the Guardian. “I think the toughest thing is going to be his infrastructure package.”

Clyburn said “you’ve got to have some ‘pay-fors’. I don’t think he ought to put all of that on the credit card. The Republicans are always going to try to keep Wall Street from paying for anything, but I think the time has come, and I’m going to be very vocal, and other people are going to be very vocal about it.

“We can’t keep doing these infrastructure programs and having them paid for by rural farmers, rural communities. We’ve just got to stop doing that.”

['We weren't intimidated': A diary of Cori Bush's first two weeks in the House](#)
[Read more](#)

Despite Biden’s vocal optimism that the Trump fever will leave with his administration, there are already signs of top Republicans getting ready to stonewall Biden’s agenda and paint it as a thinly veiled push by progressives and the left.

“I think we are going to have, in the first 100 days by the Biden administration, the most aggressive socialized policy effort in the history of the country,” Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said during a recent appearance on Fox News.

Still, that opposition may be weaker than the obstruction put up during Barack Obama’s administration.

Biden and Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the top Senate Republican, have a longstanding relationship, and Republican and Democratic veterans of Washington say they are in closer contact than is publicly known. Publicly they have both been relatively quiet, refraining from lobbing potshots.

That detente could turn into a quiet working relationship where bipartisan policy proposals become law, just as Biden has hoped.

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Universal credit

Scrap benefits cut to stop millions falling into poverty, Boris Johnson told

Thinktank adds to pressure on PM from opposition to extend £20-a-week universal credit uplift



Tory backbenchers representing 65 northern seats, many of them ex-Labour, have joined calls for the PM to cancel a planned reduction in UC.
Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/AFP/Getty Images

Tory backbenchers representing 65 northern seats, many of them ex-Labour, have joined calls for the PM to cancel a planned reduction in UC.
Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/AFP/Getty Images

[Heather Stewart](#) Political editor

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Boris Johnson cannot claim to be “[levelling up](#)” the UK if he persists with a planned cut in universal credit for 6 million families, an influential thinktank has said, as pressure mounts on the prime minister over the issue from within his own party.

The Resolution Foundation joined opposition parties, [anti-poverty campaigners](#) and many Conservative MPs in urging the government to extend the [£20-a-week uplift](#) introduced during the first wave of the pandemic.

In its annual Living Standards Outlook report published on Monday, the foundation said the increase was critical in protecting the poorest households from the worst economic impacts of Covid in 2020, and warned refusing to extend it would contribute to a 730,000 increase in the number of children in poverty.

Karl Handscomb, senior economist at the Resolution Foundation, said: “The living standards outlook for 2021 looks bleak at present – but the government can directly improve it.”

“Deciding if the [£20 a week uplift to universal credit should be extended](#) will determine whether millions of households are able to enjoy any sort of living standards recovery next year. And looking further ahead, the decision on whether to keep the UC boost will help define whether this is to be a parliament of ‘levelling up’ living standards, or pushing up poverty.”

Conservative backbenchers representing 65 Northern seats, many of them [ex-Labour “red wall” constituencies](#), have joined calls for the prime minister to cancel a planned reduction in the benefit.

Carlisle MP John Stevenson of the Northern Research Group told the Guardian: “While we are still in the pandemic, we’ve still got the consequences of coming through furlough – the implications of that – it would be far better to have a stable UC environment.”

“Levelling up is about improving people’s lives, improving people’s standard of living, giving people greater opportunities. You could argue that the UC uplift is helping people get lifted.”

Labour has called an opposition day debate on the issue in the House of Commons on Monday, but Johnson has ordered his own MPs to boycott the vote rather than risk a significant rebellion.

[Universal credit cut will hit ‘red wall’ seats hardest, Tories warned](#)

[Read more](#)

In an extraordinary message sent to Conservative MPs, the prime minister claimed that after a previous opposition day debate on [free school meals](#), Labour had used its “army of momentum trolls last time to misrepresent the outcome and to lie about its meaning and frankly to intimidate and threaten colleagues”.

He suggested the government would continue refusing to take part in what he called “vacuous opposition day debates” until Labour stopped “playing politics” and “inciting the worst kind of hatred and bullying”.

Quick Guide

What is universal credit and what are the problems?

Show

What is universal credit?

[Universal credit](#) (UC) is the supposed flagship reform of the benefits system, rolling together six benefits into one, online-only system. The theoretical aim, for which there was general support across the political spectrum, was to simplify the system and increase the incentives for people to move off benefits into work. With a huge influx due to the economic impact of the coronavirus, in September 2020 there were 5.6 million people claiming UC.

How long has it been around?

The project was legislated for in 2011 under the auspices of its most vocal champion, Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith. The plan was to roll it out by 2017. However, a series of [management failures](#), expensive [IT blunders](#) and [design faults](#) mean it is now seven years behind schedule, and full rollout will not be complete until 2024. The government admitted that the delay was caused in part by claimants being too scared to sign up to the new benefit.

What is the biggest problem?

The original design set out a [minimum 42-day wait for a first payment](#) to claimants when they moved to UC (in practice this is often up to 60 days). After sustained pressure, the government announced in the autumn 2017 budget that the wait would be reduced to 35 days from February 2018. This will partially mitigate the impact on many claimants of having no income for six weeks. The wait has led to [rent arrears and evictions](#), hunger (food banks in UC areas report [notable increases in referrals](#)), use of expensive credit and mental distress.

Ministers have expanded the availability of hardship loans (now repayable over a year) to help new claimants while they wait for payment. Housing benefit will now continue for an extra two weeks after the start of a UC claim. However, critics say the five-week wait is still too long and want it reduced to two or three weeks.

Are there other problems?

Plenty. [Multibillion-pound cuts to work allowances](#) imposed by the former chancellor George Osborne mean UC is far less generous than originally envisaged. According to the Resolution Foundation thinktank, about 2.5m low-income working households will be more than £1,000 a year worse off when they move to UC, reducing work incentives.

Landlords are worried that the level of rent arrears accrued by tenants on UC could lead to a rise in evictions. It's also not very user-friendly: claimants complain the system is complex, unreliable and difficult to manage, particularly if you have no internet access.

And there is concern that UC cannot deliver key promises: a [critical study](#) found it does not deliver savings, cannot prove it gets more people into work, and has plunged vulnerable claimants into hardship.

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The debates are non-binding but they are a way for the opposition, which cannot set the agenda in the Commons, to raise questions of the day – and

they can embarrass the government by forcing its MPs to take sides on an uncomfortable issue.

Labour's deputy leader, Angela Rayner, told the Guardian the electorate would punish the Tories if they go ahead with the £20-a-week reduction in the incomes of 6 million families. "The voters will remember," she said.

"A lot of people are going to remember this because it's not a little tweak here or there. It isn't about, I can't afford to send the kids on holiday. This is about, I'm going under, and I'm going under because of this government's priorities and what they've done to me," she said.

Recounting the story of a constituent who was a care worker who had gone back to work after being in intensive care with Covid because he was struggling to make ends meet, she added: "We've got to stop this cut to universal credit because it's affecting our frontline key workers. It's affecting people and families that need it the most."

It is understood the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, is considering a range of options for his 3 March budget, with any final confirmation likely to be delayed until after it is clear whether lockdown restrictions can begin to be lifted. "No decision has been made," said the Treasury.

Sunak regards the uplift as an emergency measure, and it is understood that once the economy has begun to reopen, he would like to see the resources shifted towards helping the unemployed back into work.

But Stevenson, who said he has 8,500 UC claimants in his Carlisle constituency, many of them in work, said: "I understand that the government cannot make any commitment to making it permanent. I completely get that because we've got to look at the finances. I just think, continue it at least for the foreseeable future. That allows us to get a better understanding where we are, keeps people in a good place."

When Johnson was asked about universal credit at last week's hearing of the liaison committee of senior MPs, he said: "I think that what we want to see is jobs. We want people in employment and we want to see the economy bouncing back.

“And I think most people in this country would rather see a focus on jobs and a growth in wages than focusing on welfare but clearly we have to keep all these things under review.”

The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, said on Sunday that the government was hoping some rules could be loosened in March, depending on the success of the vaccine rollout and whether cases of the virus have begun falling consistently. Ministers are also waiting to see whether the vaccine prevents transmission of the disease.

Johnson has never precisely defined what “levelling up”, one of the key themes of his election campaign, actually means, or how he will measure whether he is succeeding.

Conservative thinktank Onward also called on Monday for the chancellor to consider reforming the tax system, including by making council tax fairer, to close the gap between north and south.

Onward’s director, Will Tanner, said, “if we don’t use the tax system as well as spending we’ll be trying to level up with one hand tied behind our back. If levelling up is to succeed, we need to use the tax system to drive regional growth too.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/boris-johnson-cannot-level-up-if-he-cuts-universal-credit-top-up-says-thinktank>

NHS

Government would recover 81% of cost of pay rise for NHS England staff – report

Study commissioned by NHS unions argues initial cost would be offset by increased tax revenues

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A nurse prepares a dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a mass vaccination centre in Epsom, Surrey. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/EPA

A nurse prepares a dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a mass vaccination centre in Epsom, Surrey. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/EPA

Richard Partington Economics correspondent

@RJPartington

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

A substantial pay rise for NHS staff in [England](#) battling the coronavirus pandemic would cost the exchequer only a fifth of the headline price tag and boost Britain's struggling economy, according to a report.

Setting out the economic case for raising the wages of England's 1 million nurses, midwives, health professionals and [NHS](#) support staff, researchers from the London Economics consultancy said 81% of the cost of a 5% or 10% pay rise would be recovered by the government.

The study argues that if pay was increased, the Treasury would receive more in taxes paid by these workers and their employers, and staff would spend more in local businesses, helping Britain's economy to escape the [deepest recession in 300 years](#) and bringing in still more taxes. Ministers would also, it found, save money on future recruitment and retention costs.

While the cost to the exchequer of a 10% pay increase would be £3.4bn this year on paper, the report, commissioned by NHS trade unions, found that these wider benefits would take the actual cost down to just £660m.

For a 5% increase, costing an upfront £1.7bn, the ultimate price tag would only be £330m – less than [the figure once printed on the side of the Brexit campaign bus](#), which Boris Johnson claimed could be added to the NHS's weekly budget if the UK were to leave the EU.

The report was published on the deadline day for submissions to the NHS pay review body, which makes recommendations to the government, ahead of a decision for the 1 million workers on its [Agenda for Change](#) pay system, which covers all NHS staff except doctors, dentists and most senior managers.

The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has exempted NHS staff from a [pay freeze for public sector workers](#) this year. However, there are concerns the government may only allow a limited NHS pay rise as the chancellor prepares for a tightened March budget in response to [record public borrowing](#) caused by the pandemic.

Despite promising a pay rise to reflect the challenges on the frontline of the pandemic, the health secretary, Matt Hancock, has [told the NHS pay review](#)

body that any increase should still “take account of the extremely challenging fiscal and economic context”. But the report from London Economics said that if affordability was important, ministers should also take account of the knock-on benefits for the Treasury.

Sara Gorton, head of health at Unison, said a pay rise now would help exhausted health staff feel their efforts were appreciated. “Staff will spend any pay rise locally, giving struggling retail, hospitality, leisure and entertainment venues a much-needed boost as lockdown eases.”

In a joint letter sent to Boris Johnson on Monday, the heads of Unison, the Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of Midwives said a pay rise was vital when hospitals were stretched to the limit. The unions are demanding a significant pay rise to reflect this strain, and to repair the damage from a decade of austerity that has left wages 10% below 2010 levels for most staff, and as much as 15% down for long-serving workers.

Dame Donna Kinnair, chief executive and general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, said: “The figures speak for themselves – the real cost to the Treasury of doing this would be a fraction of the money paid out at the outset, and deliver huge benefits in the NHS, in terms of much-needed recruitment and better retention.

“The pandemic must mark a watershed moment when ministers begin to respect our people and pay them fairly.”

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Share your stories

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A spokesperson for the Department of [Health](#) and Social Care said: “There are record numbers of doctors and nurses working in our NHS, and our dedicated NHS staff will rightly be exempt from the temporary pause on pay rises for public sector workers.

“Over 1 million NHS staff are currently benefiting from multiyear pay deals, agreed with trade unions. These have delivered a pay rise of over 12% for newly qualified nurses.

“We continue to listen to our valued staff and trade unions so everyone is rewarded fairly and, when we receive them, we will consider the recommendations of the independent NHS pay review body.”

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Home schooling

Free fast broadband offered in UK to support home schooling

Families in 37 local authority areas with poor or no connection can get service until end of summer term



Hyperoptic said it hoped to connect at least 2,500 families with the offer in the next month alone. Photograph: Jeff Holmes/Rex/Shutterstock

Hyperoptic said it hoped to connect at least 2,500 families with the offer in the next month alone. Photograph: Jeff Holmes/Rex/Shutterstock

[Mark Sweney](#) Media business correspondent

[@marksweney](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Thousands of families struggling with [home learning](#) are being offered free high-speed broadband following a partnership between internet provider Hyperoptic and dozens of local authorities across the UK.

Families in 37 local authority areas, from Tower Hamlets in London to Newcastle and Leeds that are [struggling with remote learning](#) due to poor or

no internet will be offered the chance to have a high speed connection installed with no usage charges until the end of the summer term. At that point there is no obligation to stick with the service. Telecoms regulator Ofcom has estimated that more than 880,000 children live in a household with internet access only via mobile phone.

[Horrible Histories goes mainstream with BBC home schooling slot](#) [Read more](#)

Broadband and mobile companies have answered calls to do more to support students struggling with connectivity during lockdown. The UK's biggest telecoms companies including BT, which also owns mobile company EE, Vodafone, Sky, Virgin Media, Sky, O2 and Three have all launched initiatives offering free data and internet packages to help children access online learning tools.

Liam McAvoy, senior director of business development at Hyperoptic, said: "Every child deserves to be able to virtually learn and harness the opportunities that are enabled by connectivity. We hope others in the industry join us in providing free connectivity to families that need most."

The company said that users of the package could expect a consistent service that does not fluctuate depending on what time of day it is or how many people or devices in the house are connected, and that it comes with unlimited data.

Hyperoptic said it hoped to connect at least 2,500 families with the offer in the next month alone.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/18/free-fast-broadband-service-launched-in-uk-to-support-home-schooling>

Coronavirus

London to start trialling first 24-hour Covid vaccination centres in January

Nadhim Zahawi says over-70s being invited for jabs and hints teachers could be prioritised in next phase

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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[Archie Bland](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.29 EST First published on Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.44 EST



Members of the public arrive to receive their Covid-19 vaccinations at the Olympic Office Centre, Wembley, north London. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

The first [24-hour vaccination centres](#) will be piloted in London before the end of January, the UK's vaccines minister has said.

Nadhim Zahawi said that by the beginning of February the scheme would be under way in hospitals in the capital and also pledged that 50 large vaccination centres would be open. He said that at present about 140 people a minute were being vaccinated against Covid-19.

Zahawi, who later said he had a “big worry” about [vaccination rates among BAME communities](#), said that from Monday “in some areas where they’ve done the majority of over-80s, letters are going out to the over-70s and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable”.

But he argued that for the most vulnerable cohort of over-80s, 24-hour centres were not the most important component of the government’s programme.

He told Sky News: “If you just want to chase volume, chase speed, and not accuracy, 24 hours works really well. But if you want to chase both accuracy, protecting the most vulnerable and of course speed, then you want to do what we’re doing, which is primary care networks, hospitals, large vaccination centres, and of course pharmacies last week.”

Due to limited supply, the vaccine “needs to get into the arms of the most vulnerable” first, Zahawi said.

Describing the vaccination programme as a “race against death”, Zahawi said supply “remains challenging” and is the limiting factor in the rollout of coronavirus jabs.

“We now have built a deployment infrastructure that can deploy as much vaccine as it comes through. And so it’s the vaccine supply – which remains lumpy, it remains challenging, you may have read over the weekend probably some of the challenges around Pfizer and of course Oxford/AstraZeneca – but I’m confident we can meet our target mid-Feb, [for] those top four cohorts,” he told BBC News.

He later told the BBC Radio 4’s Today programme that on Monday the proportion of care home residents vaccinated so far would go past 50%.

Asked if people should be allowed to work in care homes without having been vaccinated, he said: “We’re not the sort of country that forces people to take vaccines, we want to do it by persuasion.”

He said he disagreed with the owner of a plumbing company who said he would not employ anyone who had not had a vaccine, calling it a “discriminatory” approach.

He added that he was concerned about whether minority groups would be vaccinated at high enough rates.

As well as being disproportionately likely to die of the virus, polls have found that black, Asian and minority ethnic people are less likely to want the vaccine. Fifty seven per cent of BAME respondents to a [Royal Society for Public Health survey](#) in December said they were likely to accept a vaccine, against 79% of white respondents.

“My big worry is if 85% of the adult population gets vaccinated, if the 15% skews heavily to the BAME community the virus will very quickly infect that community,” Zahawi told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme. “People have some hesitancy … we are there to answer their questions.”

Zahawi’s update on progress with the government’s coronavirus vaccination programme comes as letters offering appointments to about 4.6 million people over 70 and 1 million extremely vulnerable people are sent out this week.

He repeated the government’s target, [made on Sunday by the foreign secretary, Dominic Raab](#), of offering all adults a first dose by September.

He said that once the most vulnerable cohorts had been vaccinated in phase one, in phase two his “very strong instinct” was to prioritise other groups likely to come into contact with the virus more often than others.

“Those who their work, through their profession, may come into contact with the virus – police men and women, shop workers, teachers, incredibly important because we want to make sure schools reopen fully … should be prioritised,” he said.

Meanwhile, the national medical director for the NHS in England, Prof Stephen Powis, said he was confident that everyone who had had their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine would get their second.

He told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "We've been planning this, this change, this extension in the time of the second dose [to] 12 weeks, and I'm confident that those supplies will be there so that everybody who's had their first dose gets their second dose."

He said the UK had the guaranteed supplies of both the Pfizer and the AstraZeneca vaccines to fulfil that pledge.

The Welsh first minister, Mark Drakeford, told Today that Wales's supply of the Pfizer vaccine had to last until February and therefore was not being used all at once.

"There will be no point, and certainly it will be logistically very damaging to try to use all of that in the first week and then to have all our vaccinators standing around with nothing to do for another month," said Drakeford, whose stance has been heavily criticised for meaning that some vaccinations will be deliberately delayed.

He said: "We will vaccinate all four priority groups by the middle of February, alongside everywhere else in the UK."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/london-to-start-trialling-first-24-hour-covid-vaccination-centres-in-january>.

Alexei Navalny

Alexei Navalny: court orders 30-day detention until parole review

Poisoned Russian opposition leader was arrested on return to Moscow from Berlin on Sunday



Alexei Navalny is detained by security forces at the Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow on Sunday. Photograph: Kira Yarmysh/EPA

Alexei Navalny is detained by security forces at the Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow on Sunday. Photograph: Kira Yarmysh/EPA

[Andrew Roth](#) in Moscow

Mon 18 Jan 2021 09.49 EST

A judge in Moscow has ordered that [Alexei Navalny](#) be held in custody for 30 days until a parole review that could imprison him for years, as Russia defied international pressure to release the Kremlin critic.

Despite international outcry led by US and European leaders and joined by activists including Edward Snowden, a Russian resident, the Kremlin has moved forward with the legal framework it would need to send one of

Vladimir Putin's most tenacious opponents to a penal colony by the end of the month.

[How Biden era could kickstart coordinated approach to Russia](#)
[Read more](#)

In response, Navalny has called for mass protests this Saturday. "There's nothing these thieves in their bunkers fear more than people on the streets," he said from a Moscow courtroom. The size of those protests could determine whether or not the Putin critic is freed or given a long prison sentence.

01:00

Navalny calls his arrest 'lawlessness of the highest order' – video

The sequence of events has seemed all but certain since Navalny said he would return home, challenging the Kremlin just five months after barely surviving [a suspected FSB poisoning attempt on his life](#).

Ahead of his trip, prison officials threatened to reverse an old three-and-a-half-year suspended sentence on embezzlement charges, turning it into real jail time without the trouble of a new trial. That decision is scheduled for 29 January.

The incoming US administration was quick to condemn the arrest, suggesting human rights will return to the agenda with Moscow when Donald Trump leaves the White House this week.

Joe Biden's incoming national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, [called for](#) Navalny's immediate release, adding that the "perpetrators of the outrageous attack on his life must be held accountable". His remarks came hours before Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, registered his complaint.

[@Navalny](#)'s arrest seems to me a repetition of mistakes made in the Soviet era, seen elsewhere now in the case against [#Assange](#) and the war on whistleblowers. States are developing an allergy to opposition—but systems that cannot accept dissent will not survive it. Let him go.

— Edward Snowden (@Snowden) [January 17, 2021](#)

But with an eye to the recent tumult in the US, the Kremlin delivered a swift message to its critics abroad. “Deal with the problems in your own country,” a foreign ministry spokesperson wrote in remarks directed at Sullivan. Threats of sanctions and notes of caution from UK and other European leaders were met with similar disdain.

The British Foreign Office said it was “deeply concerned … Instead of persecuting the victim of this terrible crime, the Russian authorities should investigate how a chemical weapon came to be used on Russian soil.” Snowden, the NSA whistleblower, who lives in Russia, [tweeted](#) in support of Navalny, calling his arrest a “repetition of mistakes made in the Soviet era”.

The court’s procedure made little sense. One night after being [arrested at the border](#) and kissing his wife goodbye, Navalny was hustled into a hastily convened court hearing held inside a police station, where a judge announced that a police chief wanted him held for 30 days.

00:46

Alexei Navalny detained after arriving at airport on return to Russia – video

His lawyers said they had one minute’s warning before the hearing began. Independent journalists were cleared from the room. On the wall behind Navalny hung a poster of Genrikh Yagoda, a secret police head under Stalin who organised show trials and set up the gulags, or prison camps.

“I have no idea what’s going on,” Navalny said in an impassioned speech. “This is lawlessness of the highest order.”

Outside the police station, up to 100 of his supporters chanted, “Putin is a thief!”, a slogan that Navalny has popularised in his decade of attacks on the Russian leader, his family and entourage, and the system he has built.



Police detain a man at Vnukovo international airport Photograph: Sergei Bobylev/TASS

From his early days as an openly nationalist politician and Livejournal blogger, Navalny has built a powerful operation that consists of a guerrilla newsroom, a campaign strategy headquarters and an investigative journalism outfit that has become a major headache for the Kremlin.

His investigations into corrupt officials, many of them with ties to Putin, as well as into his own poisoning at the hands of an apparent FSB hit squad, can receive tens of millions of YouTube views.

But he remains a polarising figure who lacks the widespread support to allow him to face the Kremlin head on, and the authorities may hope that Russians will be ready to cheer on or at least ignore his case if they decide to throw the book at him.

Largely barred from television, the place where most Russians get their news, he is portrayed there as either a dangerous revolutionary or an insignificant blogger, a status belied by the rows of riot police with helmets deployed to Moscow airports before his arrest on Sunday evening.

Later that night, Dmitry Kiselyov, the host of a weekly news show on Russian state television, compared Navalny's return from Germany to

Vladimir Lenin's journey aboard a sealed train in 1917 in what he called a "revolutionary landing force".

Throughout the ordeal, the Kremlin has kept quiet. Putin never refers to Navalny by name, only recently referring to him as the "German patient" in order to suggest that he was backed by western intelligence agencies. His spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, claimed on Sunday evening that he hadn't heard that Navalny had been detained. "Please explain. He was arrested in Germany? I'm not following," he told Russian journalists.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/alexei-navalny-calls-grow-for-release-of-arrested-russia-opposition-figure>

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Police

Fewer than one in 10 police officers fired after gross misconduct finding

Figures from England and Wales raise questions about IOPC's efficiency as police forces' watchdog

- [Families of citizens dying after contact with police still await justice](#)



Members of the public cannot complain directly to the IOPC but have to raise issues with the relevant police force. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/PA
Members of the public cannot complain directly to the IOPC but have to raise issues with the relevant police force. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/PA

[Mattha Busby](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Fewer than one in 10 British police officers found to have potentially committed gross misconduct by the watchdog are dismissed, the Guardian can reveal.

Figures released by the Independent Office for [Police](#) Conduct (IOPC) show 641 officers in England and Wales may have so seriously breached standards that they were liable to be sacked between 2015 and 2020, but just 54 (8.4%) were fired after disciplinary action was conducted internally.

Another 848 officers were found to have a case to answer over possible misconduct, but in total only 363 of the misconduct claims have so far been upheld following IOPC recommendations.

There were official warnings in 151 of these cases, and 16 retirements or resignations. Many more disciplinary cases against officers occur without the involvement of the IOPC.

The IOPC received statutory powers in February to ensure forces investigate those found to have a case to answer, but internal police disciplinary panels still have the final say and the watchdog said its role is not to be “judge and jury”.

The figures, obtained through freedom of information requests, raise questions about the efficacy of the IOPC, which receives [£71m per year](#) from the Home Office.

These issues were amplified by anti-racism protests in the UK last summer amid concern over police use of force and the number of deaths in custody without officers subsequently [facing charges](#).

Katrina Ffrench, the former CEO of StopWatch, which campaigns for fair policing, said the figures were “indicative of the IOPC’s inability to hold the police to account in any meaningful way” and that the body needed to be subject to true community oversight.

“It is incredibly concerning that people enforcing the law are able to remain in positions of power despite having gross misconduct allegations against them proven,” she said.

“If communities that are distrustful of policing, due to lived experiences, are to believe the institution is fair and there are consequences for bad behaviour, the IOPC must do a better job.”

Victor Olisa, a former Met Ch Supt, said officers “run rings round IOPC investigators” and that the relationship was unequal.

“The police service is not held to account like it ought to be,” he said. “This data shows the rate of IOPC ‘case to answer’ findings to actual disciplinary rulings really is quite low.

“The police cannot work in a vacuum. It has to face questions about how it provides its public service. It should be scrutinised and have its powers balanced.”

The IOPC succeeded the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in 2018, in a reform designed to ensure “greater accountability to the public”.

It followed condemnation over the IPCC’s handling of the death of Mark Duggan, which led to an [apology three years](#) after his death in 2014.

But the new body has also come under scrutiny – with critics pointing to the complaints process, its independence and the fact some high profile cases have taken several years.

One concern is that people cannot complain directly to the watchdog and must instead raise issues with the relevant force, which then decides whether to refer itself to the IOPC, to investigate internally, or to take no action – apart from in the event of “serious injury” [or death](#) when a referral is mandatory.

About 28% of staff in investigations have previously worked for the police service, with more than one-in-three senior investigators [being former officers](#).

Between 2015 and 2020 the IOPC referred 391 files where there was an indication of a criminal offence by an officer to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which resulted in 69 criminal prosecutions, leading to at least 22 guilty verdicts in which judges passed down four custodial sentences.

The IOPC said it was eager to work with forces, the police union, the CPS and the Home Office to speed up the investigations, and that 83% of reports

in 2019-2020 were completed within 12 months.

A spokesperson said: “The majority of public complaints and allegations of misconduct are rightly dealt with by police forces themselves. The discipline system is the responsibility of police forces and is administered by them.”

They said changes were introduced to the complaints and disciplines procedures in February 2020, which include a duty for police witnesses to cooperate with IOPC investigations and a reform so that a “case to answer” finding will now be the final decision.

“Very few cases referred to and investigated by the IOPC will result in criminal prosecution because only a small proportion of those matters involve allegations of criminal activity. Prosecution isn’t the only route for holding police officers accountable for wrongdoing and only applies where criminality is involved. Disciplinary action can range from dismissal and reduction in rank to written warnings, all of which are determined by misconduct panels led by legally qualified chairs for misconduct hearings and senior police officers for misconduct meetings, not the IOPC.

“To obtain a more accurate picture of sanctions against police, you would also have to look at cases brought forward by 43 police force professional standards departments, as they deal with the majority of public complaints and conduct matters.”

National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for professional standards, chief constable Craig Guildford said: “The recent changes have seen a shift towards resolving issues earlier, learning lessons faster and a firm focus on the most serious of cases. As these changes further embed we will see the improvement in timeliness, transparency and learning continue.

“Those who let the public, the service and themselves down will be dismissed once the process has taken its course.”

Human rights in focusGlobal development

G4S migrant workers 'forced to pay millions' in illegal fees for jobs

UK-based security firm faces calls to repay charges made by recruitment agents for jobs in Gulf states and conflict zones



Potential G4S staff in the UAE, Iraq and Afghanistan are paying recruitment fees to independent agents to secure jobs. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

Potential G4S staff in the UAE, Iraq and Afghanistan are paying recruitment fees to independent agents to secure jobs. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

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[Pete Pattisson](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.45 EST

Migrant workers working for the British security company G4S in the [United Arab Emirates](#) have collectively been forced to pay millions of pounds in illegal fees to recruitment agents to secure their jobs, the Guardian can reveal.

An investigation into G4S's recruitment practices has found that workers from south Asia and east Africa have been made to pay up to £1,775 to recruitment agents working for the British company in order to get jobs as security guards for G4S in the UAE.

Forcing workers to pay recruitment fees is a [widespread practice, but one that is illegal](#) in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The practice allows companies to pass on the costs of recruitment to [workers from some of the poorest countries in the world](#), leaving many deep in debt and vulnerable to [modern forms of slavery](#), such as debt bondage.

Some south Asian countries allow agents to charge fees, but these are capped at a level far below the rate most [G4S](#) employees have paid.

Human rights groups have told the Guardian that G4S should repay the recruitment fees to its workforce in the UAE and across the Gulf. In 2019, G4S employed about 9,000 workers in the UAE and 30,000 workers across the region. Experts estimate remediation payments to current workers alone would probably run into tens of millions of pounds.

“Businesses must repay employees who have had to pay these illegal and exploitative costs in order to get their jobs. The costs of recruitment should be borne by the employer, not the worker,” said James Lynch, a director at FairSquare Projects, which advocates for migrant rights in the Gulf.

The findings come as G4S shareholders are considering a [£3.8bn takeover bid](#) from the US security firm Allied Universal.

The Guardian interviewed 28 workers from south Asia and east Africa working as G4S security guards and labourers in Dubai who had been employed by the company for between one and 12 years. Each said they had been forced to pay recruitment agents in their home countries. Security guards paid between the equivalent of between £485 and £1,775 to get their jobs. The average fee was £936.

Many workers said they had sold family land or borrowed money at high interest rates to afford the fees, leaving them burdened with debt.

The true costs of recruitment were significantly higher, as these figures may not include additional costs such as medical tests, or the interest paid on loans taken out to pay the recruitment fees.

“If you don’t pay, they will remove your name from the list. They will deselect you,” said Dipendra, a security guard from [Nepal](#), who paid 130,000 Nepali rupees (£808) nine years ago. “It was huge amount back then. It took two years to pay back.”

G4S claims that since 2020, its migrant workers in the UAE no longer pay recruitment fees. “We have moved to an in-country, direct hiring model, which means that we rarely, if ever, use migrant worker recruitment agencies,” said G4S in a statement.

Hiring workers “directly” often involves recruiting migrants who have made their own way to the UAE in the hope of finding a job, meaning they continue to bear the major costs, debts and risks of recruitment.

Sarah, a security guard from Uganda, said that while looking for a job in Dubai she had to pay for accommodation, food, transport and two return flights. “I may have paid around 9,000 dirhams (£1,790) in total … At least I got a job. One is always better than zero,” she said.

The Guardian has seen a 2008 internal G4S report into the recruitment of Nepali workers for jobs as security guards in conflict zones in Iraq and Afghanistan, which states that, “potential recruits pay a significant sum to their local recruitment sources to be considered for … overseas contracts”.

In an interview with the Guardian in 2019, a G4S employee who oversaw the recruitment of guards in Nepal and India for conflict zones, said G4S did not charge any fees for recruitment but admitted that potential recruits might have to pay agents between £1,000 and £3,000.

“Lots of bribes happen. You really need a job, you’ve been told by a third party that you will get selected and you don’t want to miss the job so you give money,” he said.



A G4S internal report from 2008 stated: ‘Potential recruits pay a significant sum to their local recruitment sources to be considered for ... overseas contracts.’ Photograph: Matthew Horwood/Alamy

A prospective recruit hoping to get posted to Afghanistan said he was told by an agent who directed candidates to G4S: “If you don’t give money, you won’t go.”

G4S plc is one of the world’s largest security companies, employing more than half a million people in around 85 countries. It is registered, and has its headquarters, in the UK.

In its [guidelines](#) for fair recruitment, the UN’s International Labour Organization states: “No recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, workers or jobseekers.”

Legal advice commissioned by the Good Law Project, a UK-based non-profit organisation, concluded that charging recruitment fees to migrant workers looking to secure jobs overseas was: “likely to be extortion by the recruitment companies which appear to be preying on the desperate”.

Although fees were paid to recruitment agents and not G4S directly, workers in Dubai described the close links between the two. They all said G4S staff interviewed them in person, and once selected, the agent demanded a fee for their services and related costs, such as air tickets.

Workers said that G4S was aware that they had to pay to be recruited but turned a blind eye to the practice. “I can say 100% that G4S knows the agency was charging us,” said Sunil, a security guard from Sri Lanka.

“It’s easy for G4S to find out. They just have to ask. Did you pay? Everybody will say, ‘Yes, we paid’ ... it’s not rocket science,” said Lokesh, a Nepali guard.

['We're poor people': Middle East's migrant workers look for way home amid pandemic](#)

[Read more](#)

They said G4S exploited the fact that workers are desperate for a job and unaware that they should not pay, in countries where paying for recruitment is the norm. “We cannot refuse to pay when everyone else is paying,” said Arjun, another guard from Nepal.

In November 2019, Norway’s Council on Ethics, which monitors investments for the Norwegian government pension fund, excluded G4S from its investments after the council advised that the firm’s recruitment practices contributed to “an unacceptable risk” that the company was contributing to “systematic human rights violations”.

A G4S spokesperson said: “G4S is committed to the highest standards to ensure that migrant workers are treated with respect and dignity. We are working to raise global standards across the industry with all our partners.”

G4S added that it had adopted an “employer pays” principle in the UAE and where it does use recruitment agents it selects them using a code of conduct, “which includes a strict requirement not to charge migrant workers any recruitment fees”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jan/18/g4s-migrant-workers-forced-to-pay-millions-in-fees-for-jobs>

Stamp duty

Home buyers face unexpected tax bill when stamp duty kicks in

Rightmove says buyers could be hit with £15,000 bill as rush to complete is causing delays



Property website estimates that more than 600,000 sales are 'stuck in the processing logjam'. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Property website estimates that more than 600,000 sales are 'stuck in the processing logjam'. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Rupert Jones and Richard Partington

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Thousands of home buyers could be hit with an unexpected tax bill of up to £15,000 each if the stamp duty holiday ends as planned on 31 March, Rightmove has warned.

The property website said that with the stamp duty deadline approaching, some sellers who had put their property on the market during the last few

weeks were hoping to tempt buyers with a competitive price in an attempt to squeeze in a sale before the holiday ends.

However, [Rightmove](#) said its latest analysis showed that it was taking 126 days – or just over four months – from the time an offer was accepted until legal completion. It estimates that 613,000 property sales agreed in 2020 are “stuck in the processing logjam” and awaiting legal completion.

Of those, the site anticipates that about 100,000 buyers will miss out on their stamp duty saving and therefore have to find thousands of pounds to pay a tax bill they had not anticipated if the 31 March cut-off date remains in place.

The site’s findings will fuel calls for the government to extend the stamp duty holiday, which allows buyers of homes of a value up to £500,000 in England and Northern Ireland to [pay no stamp duty](#), or a reduced rate for homes above that.

For someone buying a £500,000 property, the saving – and therefore the potential bill – is worth £15,000, though for an average-priced property the figure is between £2,000 and £3,000. Previously the stamp duty threshold for residential property purchases was £125,000.

A number of commentators have called for the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, to take action, as he prepares to present the budget on 3 March. Economists at the consultancy Capital Economics have said [ministers might be forced to extend the holiday](#) “to avoid a damaging downturn”, while Yorkshire building society is among those [calling for a stamp duty ‘taper’](#), which would give a three-month grace period – until 30 June – to sales already agreed and with a mortgage in place.

The Yorkshire said that having the holiday come to a dead halt on 31 March “could even cause some transactions to fall through”.

A spokesperson for the Treasury said on Sunday: “The temporary stamp duty cut is helping to protect hundreds of thousands of jobs which rely on the property market by stimulating economic activity. Its time-limited nature is what has encouraged people to take advantage of the scheme.”

The housing market has been booming since last summer, partly as a result of buyers rushing to take advantage of the [giveaway](#), but mortgage lender Halifax recently [said growth was slowing](#), and now Rightmove has reported a 0.9% fall in average asking prices this month. This is the biggest monthly drop since December 2019.

Home moving website Reallymoving said last week that if the 31 March deadline remained in place, sellers should prepare for an increase in “gazundering” where buyers reduce their offer just before exchange. It said that a large number of buyers would have factored in the stamp duty saving and, if they failed to complete in time, they would suddenly need to find a significant amount of money or renegotiate the price.

Tim Bannister, Rightmove’s director of property data, said the challenge of processing so many house sales in less than three months “is made even tougher by the new lockdown restrictions, Covid-19 sickness and home schooling further reducing capacity in conveyancing, legal searches and mortgage lending”.

The site – whose data covers [England](#), Scotland and Wales – reported that the average asking price for a property coming on to the market in January was down by 0.9%, or £2,887, on December’s figure, at £317,058. As a result, the annual rate of asking price growth fell to 3.3%. In December it was 6.6%.

Despite that, Rightmove said home buyer activity was strong. It reported that visits to the website were up 33% on the same period at the start of 2020 as people continued to reassess their housing needs and priorities following their experience of lockdown.

Matthew Smith, sales and lettings director at estate agent Thornley Groves in Manchester, said: “The Manchester suburbs – places such as Sale and Altrincham – are absolutely flying. People are looking for more outside space, and there’s much more activity at the higher end of the market – properties being sold at £500,000 and over – compared to 12 or 18 months ago.”

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Uighurs

Uighur campaigners to target 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics sponsors

Activists will write to companies in bid to persuade them to use their influence with Chinese government



Airbnb's chief executive, Brian Chesky, will be the first to receive a letter from the campaigners. Photograph: Mike Segar/Reuters

Airbnb's chief executive, Brian Chesky, will be the first to receive a letter from the campaigners. Photograph: Mike Segar/Reuters

[Patrick Wintour](#) Diplomatic editor

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Campaigners fighting against the persecution of Uighur Muslims in China are to target private companies sponsoring the Beijing [Winter Olympics](#) in an attempt to persuade them to use their influence with the Chinese government ahead of the 2022 event.

Uighur campaigners in 10 different countries are coming together to write to companies asking them to use their platforms to educate and inform the

world of the persecution under way in [Xinjiang](#) province. The first to be targeted is the chief executive officer of Airbnb, Brian Chesky.

Calling the Winter Olympics the “Genocide Games”, the campaign group would ideally like for [Airbnb](#) to withdraw its sponsorship, but will probably graduate their demands.

The San Francisco-based Airbnb secured a £500m sponsorship of the Olympics starting with the Beijing Games.

The digital campaign will include concurrent pictures of the typical accommodation available to Airbnb customers and that available to persecuted [Uighurs](#) held in detention camps.

The aim of the campaign is to persuade the huge multinationals that they will pay a commercial price if they do not use their immense soft power to persuade [China](#) to rethink its stance.

In its letter, the group broadly entitled End the Uighur Genocide Movement asks Chesky and his executive team to meet the campaigners virtually – including some of the people that have been forced to [work in Chinese concentration camps](#) and those whose loved ones have disappeared.

The group acknowledges that Chesky’s corporate aim is to bring the world closer together, adding he has built his company around the theme of “belonging”. The authors of the letter say: “We are exiles from our country, unable to go home, unable to contact our loved ones.”

They add: “All over the world, campaigners, politicians and celebrities are waking up to the horror of what is going on. There is now a real risk that that Airbnb’s brand will be stained by your association with the Genocide Games.”

Rahima Mahmut, director of the World Uighur Congress, said Airbnb could either pull out of the games or use their involvement to speak out “clearly and unambiguously” against the attacks on the Uighurs and other Muslims. She added that staying silent on this issue was not possible for Airbnb.

The campaign is being launched in America, the UK, Canada, Norway, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Japan and Australia.

Other major multinational sponsoring companies for the Beijing Olympics include Allianz, Coca-Cola, Samsung, Intel, Visa International, Omega, Atos and [Panasonic](#).

[How I survived a Chinese 're-education' camp for Uighurs](#)

[Read more](#)

Airbnb is facing the campaigner's attention early partly because of the firm's emphasis on corporate social responsibility. Chesky has also shown a huge personal philanthropic commitment, signing Bill Gates's pledges to give the majority of his wealth away to charitable causes either during his lifetime or afterwards.

Airbnb has been contacted for comment.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/uighur-campaigners-to-target-2022-beijing-winter-olympics-sponsors>

[Crime](#)

Police break up fight in London between 40 men involving knives and a sword

Two men in their 20s were arrested and remain in police custody after the incident in Southall



Police ended a brawl in Southall, west London between 40 men using knives, bottles and a sword. Photograph: Jill Mead/The Guardian
Police ended a brawl in Southall, west London between 40 men using knives, bottles and a sword. Photograph: Jill Mead/The Guardian

Helen Sullivan

[@helenrsullivan](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 21.00 EST

A brawl between 40 men using knives, bottles and a sword has been broken up by police in west [London](#).

Police initially reported that two swords had been used in the fight in Southall in the early hours of Sunday, but later corrected this to “at least one sword”.

At 8pm on Sunday, police released a statement saying that they had been called at “around 0200hrs to a large group of males fighting with knives and at least one sword in the area of King Street, Southall”.

pic.twitter.com/ao9TIBY5oA

— Ealing Police (@ealingMPS) [January 17, 2021](#)

Two men in their 20s were arrested and remain in police custody, according to the statement.

Despite the diverse and unusual weapons used, police said: “There are no reported injuries.”

The police have asked anyone with information about those involved to come forward.

The [initial tweet](#) about the fight described the two men being, “chased into St Johns Road and identified as having carried swords during the fight. They were arrested for violent disorder and affray”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/18/police-break-up-fight-in-london-between-40-men-involving-knives-and-a-sword>

Coronavirus

Man found living in Chicago airport for three months 'due to fear of Covid'

Aditya Singh allegedly stayed in secure area of O'Hare international airport after becoming too afraid to return home to California

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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A California man was arrested after living in a secure part of O'Hare international airport in Chicago for three months because he was scared of coronavirus. Photograph: Kamil Krzaczynski/Reuters

A California man was arrested after living in a secure part of O'Hare international airport in Chicago for three months because he was scared of coronavirus. Photograph: Kamil Krzaczynski/Reuters

[Helen Sullivan](#)

[@helenrsullivan](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 00.40 EST

A man has been living in a secure section of Chicago's international airport for three months, apparently telling police he was too afraid of coronavirus to return home to Los Angeles, according to multiple reports.

The 36-year-old man, Californian Aditya Singh, was arrested this weekend and charged with criminal trespass to a restricted area of an airport, a felony, and theft, a misdemeanour, the [Chicago Tribune](#) reported.

Prosecutors said on Sunday that, according to police, the man arrived on a flight from Los Angeles to O'Hare international airport on 19 October. Nearly three months later, on Saturday afternoon, Singh was approached by two United Airlines employees who asked to see identification. Singh allegedly showed them an airport ID badge that had been reported missing by its owner, an airport operations manager, on 26 October.

[Polish man 'lost' inside São Paulo airport for 18 days](#)

[Read more](#)

Assistant state attorney Kathleen Hagerty told Cook County judge Susana Ortiz that other passengers had been giving food to Singh, who does not have a criminal background. Hagerty said Singh had found the badge in the airport and was "scared to go home due to Covid".

Ortiz reportedly told the court: "You're telling me that an unauthorised, non-employee individual was allegedly living within a secure part of the O'Hare airport terminal from 10 October, 2020, to 16 January, 2021, and was not detected? I want to understand you correctly."

After finding Singh, the United Airlines employees called 911. Police took him into custody on Saturday morning.

Singh has a master's degree in hospitality, is unemployed and lives with roommates in Orange, Los Angeles, according to assistant public defender Courtney Smallwood.

"The court finds these facts and circumstances quite shocking for the alleged period of time that this occurred," said Ortiz. "Being in a secured part of the airport under a fake ID badge allegedly, based upon the need for airports to

be absolutely secure so that people feel safe to travel, I do find those alleged actions do make him a danger to the community.”

Singh’s bail was set at \$1,000. Should he be able to post bail, he is barred from entering the airport.

The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) said in a statement: “CDA has no higher priority than the safety and security of our airports, which is maintained by a coordinated and multilayered law enforcement network.

“While this incident remains under investigation, we have been able to determine that this gentleman did not pose a security risk to the airport or to the traveling public. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners on a thorough investigation of this matter.”

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- [NHS Health service in worst position in its history, says chief executive](#)
- [US Biden plan to vaccinate 100m in 100 days 'absolutely doable', Fauci says](#)
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Morocco detects first case of UK variant – as it happened

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Coronavirus

NHS in most precarious position in its history, says chief executive

Hospitals and staff ‘under extreme pressure’, says Simon Stevens, as over-70s invited to get jabs from Monday

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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Heather Stewart Political editor

Sun 17 Jan 2021 17.30 EST First published on Sun 17 Jan 2021 15.32 EST



Inpatients in England have increased by 15,000 since Christmas Day, according to Simon Stevens. Photograph: Wiktor Szymanowicz/NurPhoto/PA Images

Dealing with the deadly second wave of Covid has left the NHS in the most precarious position in its 72-year history, chief executive Sir [Simon Stevens](#)

has warned, as ministers said they were aiming to get all adults in the UK vaccinated by September.

The over-70s and clinically extremely vulnerable, who number more than 5.5 million nationwide, will be invited to receive the vaccine from Monday in areas where most of the first priority groups of care home residents and the over-80s have now had the jab.

Stevens said on Sunday that the [NHS](#) was now giving 140 jabs a minute, as the race to vaccinate the public picks up, but warned of the stress the service was under.

Stevens said: “The facts are very clear and I’m not going to sugar coat them. Hospitals are [under extreme pressure](#) and staff are under extreme pressure.

“Since Christmas Day we’ve seen another 15,000 [increase in the inpatients in hospitals](#) across England. That’s the equivalent of filling 30 hospitals full of coronavirus patients and, staggeringly, every 30 seconds across England another patient is being admitted to hospital with coronavirus.”

Asked by the BBC’s [Andrew Marr](#) if the NHS had ever been in a more precarious position, he said: “No. I think this is a unique event in our 72-year history. It’s sort of become glib to talk about this as the worst pandemic in a century but that is clearly correct.”

He also conceded that a “small number” of patients are having to be transferred from one region to another when beds are not available for them.

However, Stevens also highlighted the rapid pace of the vaccination programme. Official figures published on Sunday showed that more than 3.8 million people have now received their first dose of a Covid vaccine in the UK.

“This is a huge team effort. This is bringing together the NHS, the St John’s Ambulance volunteers, the Royal Voluntary Society, we are vaccinating not just in health centres and hospitals, but in village halls and rugby clubs and cathedrals and shopping centres and race courses, so everybody is coming together to get this done and I think we’re off to a very strong start,” he said.



Nurses in the intensive care unit at Milton Keynes university hospital tend to a Covid-19 patient this month. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Ten mass vaccination centres will open from Monday at venues including St Helen's rugby ground, the Bournemouth International Centre and Taunton racecourse.

Commenting on the expansion of the vaccine programme to new cohorts, the health secretary, Matt Hancock, said: "Where an area has already reached the vast majority of groups one to two, they can now start opening up the programme to groups three to four.

"We are working day and night to make sure everyone who is 70 and over, our health and social care workers and the clinically extremely vulnerable are offered the vaccine by the middle of February, and our NHS heroes are making huge strides in making this happen."

The foreign secretary, [Dominic Raab](#), said on Sunday that the government hoped to inoculate all adults by September, the first time the government has set a deadline.

"The plan is to get [the first 15 million](#) most vulnerable people vaccinated with the first dose by the middle of February," he told Marr. "We then want to get, by early spring, another 17 million. At that point we'll have 99% of

those most at risk of dying of coronavirus administered their first jab, and then the entire adult population we want being offered a first jab by September. That's the roadmap."

He added: "Obviously if it can be done more swiftly than that, then that's a bonus."

In a separate interview with Sophy Ridge on Sky News, Raab was unable to guarantee that all of those who have already received a first dose of vaccine would get their second within the recommended 12-week timescale – though he said he was "quietly confident" it could be done.

"If we follow the roadmap and the supply chains ... we ought to be able to deliver on that," he said. "But right the way through this pandemic we've had to adapt to all sorts of different things. We're just focused on making sure we deliver on the roadmap we've got."

The government had already stretched the gap between the two doses on advice from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to give protection to as many people as possible, as soon as possible.

The latest data suggests that the lockdown has begun to turn the tide, with the number of new cases in the week to Sunday at 323,614, down 22.5% on the previous week.

But with hospital admissions and deaths still extremely high, experts have stressed the importance of sticking to lockdown restrictions.

Another 671 deaths were reported on Sunday to have taken place within 28 days of a positive test, and 4,179 people were admitted to hospitals with Covid.

Robust new border restrictions will come into effect at 4am on Monday morning, aimed at preventing new variants of the disease finding their way into the UK.

New arrivals will have to show they have had a negative test within 72 hours of travelling, and to quarantine for 10 days – unless they pay to take a test

after five days, which yields a negative result.

The government has repeatedly been criticised throughout the pandemic for failing to control the UK's borders, but ministers had become particularly concerned about the Brazilian variant of the virus. It is unclear yet whether this strain may be vaccine resistant.

Stevens said the appearance of virus mutations was one of the factors that would determine when lockdown restrictions can be lifted.

“It’s not going to be the case that on Valentine’s Day, or on 15 February, with one bound we are free. But equally I don’t think that we will be having to wait until the autumn. I think somewhere between those two,” he said, when asked when the rules could shift.

“Subject of course to this uncertainty about new variants of the coronavirus. And it will be very important that we don’t see those taking off in a way that undermines the effectiveness of vaccines that we currently have.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/17/nhs-in-most-precarious-position-in-its-history-says-chief-executive>

Coronavirus

Biden plan to vaccinate 100m people in 100 days ‘absolutely doable’, Fauci says

- President-elect’s ambitious initiative will face steep challenges
- [Coronavirus – live coverage](#)
- [US politics – live coverage](#)



President-elect Joe Biden outlines coronavirus vaccination plan during news conference in Wilmington, Delaware, on 15 January. Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

President-elect Joe Biden outlines coronavirus vaccination plan during news conference in Wilmington, Delaware, on 15 January. Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

[Victoria Bekiempis](#) in New York

Sun 17 Jan 2021 12.18 EST

[Joe Biden’s promise](#) to carry out 100m coronavirus vaccinations in his first 100 days in power is “absolutely a doable thing”, Dr Anthony Fauci said on Sunday.

['He just cries and cries': families grapple with US deportations amid pandemic](#)

[Read more](#)

The president-elect has announced ambitious [initiatives](#) to combat Covid-19 and its economic toll, seeking to overcome the struggles and failures of the Trump administration, which has presided over a slow start to the biggest vaccination drive in US history.

The challenge is steep: Ron Klain, the incoming White House chief of staff, told CNN on Sunday, Biden's team projected another 100,000 deaths from Covid-19 in the first five weeks of the administration.

According to Johns Hopkins University, by Sunday morning 23,760,523 cases and 395,855 deaths had been recorded in the US.

“It’s going to take a while to turn this around,” Klain said.

Fauci, the top US infectious disease doctor, told NBC’s Meet the Press: “I can tell you one thing that’s clear is that the issue of getting 100m [vaccination] doses in the first 100 days, is absolutely a doable thing. What the president-elect is going to do is where we need be, to invoke the [Defense Production Act] to get the kinds of things they need, whatever they may be, be they tests, be they vaccines or what have you.

“In other words, to just not be hesitant to use whatever mechanisms we can to get everything on track and on the flow that we predict. But the feasibility of his goal is absolutely clear, there’s no doubt about it. That can be done.”

We're inheriting a huge mess here, but we have a plan to fix it

Ron Klain

Officials have warned that continued failure to properly plan for distribution and administration might thwart gains from rapid vaccine development. The new administration must also seek to shore up [a long-fractured public health system](#) while facing probable Republican opposition to meaningful financial relief via Congress.

On Friday, Biden called for a dramatic expansion of federal aid in order to inoculate 100 million Americans in his first 100 days. Such a goal is being set as a more transmissible coronavirus strain is poised to sweep the US.

NBC host Chuck Todd asked Fauci about the Trump administration's claim that there is no vaccine stockpile, which came after an announcement that it would release reserve doses.

"Was this a miscommunication?" Todd asked. "Was this a bigger error?"

Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, said he was "not exactly sure ... but I tried and I think successfully sorted that out. I had a conversation with Gen Gustav Perna [head of the Operation Warp Speed vaccine development and distribution programme] last night and again this morning, and I think there was just a misunderstanding."

Initially, Fauci said, "there was a lot of caution" in doling out doses to ensure second doses could be delivered on time, so half were held back. When it became clear that the flow of doses was "really going to be consistent and reliable", the reserve was released.

Biden has promised to launch federally funded vaccination sites at venues such as stadiums and school gymnasiums, staffing them with "thousands" of workers. Pharmacies would also be "activated" to provide vaccines through appointment. CVS, among the largest US pharmacy chains, subsequently said its stores could provide 1m injections daily at 10,000 locations. Biden has said states will have more transparency in planning for vaccine delivery.

The incoming administration must green-light new vaccines and ramp up supply chains for personal protective equipment, so healthcare employees can safely work. Biden has said he will use the Defense Production Act, which permits the government to demand that private companies turn out needed products.

Biden must also convince Americans to get the vaccine and to follow basic public health measures. While he called on people to "mask up" for 100 days – which could potentially prevent 50,000 deaths – anti-mask sentiment persists in some hard-hit areas.

Fauci was asked if he thought new Covid variants might spur new restrictions or public health guidance such as double-masking.

Fauci said: “When you have a variant that’s really very, very different in the sense of it’s more contagious, it tells you to do two things. One, double down on the public health measures that we’ve been talking about all the time. Be very compulsive, as the president-elect says, at least for the first 100 days and maybe more, everybody wear a mask. Keep the distance. Avoid the congregate settings.

“But also, another important thing, the easiest way to evade this negative effect of these new isolates is to just when the vaccine becomes available, people should get vaccinated. Boy, if ever there was a clarion call for people to put aside vaccine hesitancy, if we can get, you know, the overwhelming majority of the population vaccinated, we’d be in very good shape and could beat even the mutant.”

01:53

'We have to act now': Joe Biden presents \$1.9tn coronavirus relief package – video

Fauci also said “we’re weeks away, to months away” from AstraZeneca and Johnson and Johnson presenting vaccine data to the Food and Drug Administration.

Klain told CNN’s State of the Union: “We’re going to measure progress by the goal the president-elect set very clearly: 100m inoculations in 100 days, that would be a successful vaccination program, unlike any we’ve seen in American history.”

[One in three Los Angeles residents has been infected with Covid, scientists say](#)

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He added that the new administration was “inheriting a huge mess here, but we have a plan to fix it”.

Biden's proposed \$1.9tn coronavirus and economic [plan](#) must get bipartisan congressional approval. Kate Bedingfield, the incoming White House communications director, was asked on ABC's This Week about politicians in both parties expressing concern about the price tag.

"There's been bipartisan support for all of these pieces," she said. "This plan reflects the urgent needs, the things that people need right now.

"We've got millions of Americans unemployed. We've got thousands of Americans dying from the virus every day. There's no question we are in a state of emergency here, and this plan is designed to get the relief that people need to them right away."

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Coronavirus

Public confidence NHS can cope with Covid at lowest ever level – poll

Ipsos Mori found only 60% think health service is able to care properly for coronavirus patients

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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[Denis Campbell](#) Health policy editor

Sun 17 Jan 2021 11.34 EST Last modified on Sun 17 Jan 2021 23.37 EST



Ambulances outside the Royal London hospital, which went into ‘disaster-medicine mode’ at the start of January. Photograph: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

Public confidence in the NHS’s ability to manage the huge number of people left seriously ill by the coronavirus pandemic has fallen to its lowest level

since the outbreak began, new polling shows.

Just six out of 10 people believe the health service is able to care properly for those with Covid-19, more than 37,000 of whom are now in hospital. That is the lowest percentage since pollsters Ipsos Mori began asking Britons about the subject in March.

The proportion of people who are not confident in the NHS's ability has risen to 35%, just 1% below the March peak of 36%.

Public confidence has dropped 12 points from 72% in November. That fall has coincided with widespread media coverage of the growing crisis in hospitals. London and the south-east and east of England have been worst affected, with the new variant of the coronavirus blamed for the rise in cases.

Graph of public confidence in NHS's ability to manage Covid

Queues of ambulances have built up outside many hospitals as A&E units have been too busy to accept patients. Intensive care units have had to expand and dilute their usual nurse-to-patient staffing ratios. One hospital in the capital became so overwhelmed that it had to go into “disaster-medicine mode”.

On Friday, it emerged that Norwich and Norfolk University hospital was so short-staffed that it had had to draft in army medics to bolster its workforce. Hospitals have been left short of key personnel due to record numbers of frontline staff – 15% in some places – being off sick or isolating because of the virus.

Confidence has dropped most sharply in London, where it now stands at 54%, Ipsos Mori found. That is down from 67% in November and is lower than the previous lowest figure – 55% – seen in March. Four in 10 Londoners say they do not have confidence in the NHS's ability to cope.

“The current situation facing the NHS is incredibly serious and this has been reflected throughout the media over the last month,” said Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers, which represents NHS trusts in England.

It is therefore understandable that public confidence in the NHS's ability to handle that Covid-19 generated pressure has dropped.

“The fact that confidence has dropped most in London, where the pressure is greatest, shows that the two issues – the degree of pressure the NHS is under and confidence in the NHS’s ability to handle that pressure – are completely linked.

“For months now, the public has been confronted with daily reports of incredibly sick patients, strained services and exhausted staff. This survey is a reflection of the huge pressure the NHS is currently under.”

Ipsos Mori interviewed a representative sample of 1,065 British adults aged 18-75 online from 8 to 11 January. The data was weighted to match the population profile.

“Public confidence in the NHS has fallen to its lowest point in the pandemic, driven by media coverage of hospitals under pressure,” said Ben Page, Ipsos Mori’s chief executive. “In one sense this may be helpful, in encouraging the public to maintain social distancing, but the challenge will be rebuilding it after the pandemic when waiting lists will likely be at record levels.”

Confidence in the health service’s ability to cope divides sharply along party political lines. While 72% of those who voted Conservative at the 2019 general election said they were confident, just 56% of Labour voters said the same.

“As the pandemic recedes, we will need to see how public confidence in the NHS more widely is affected, once the realities of dramatically longer waiting times and ongoing staff shortages sink in,” said Richard Murray, chief executive of the King’s Fund thinktank.

“This may not be as big a risk for the NHS as it appears, since public pride and confidence in the NHS as an institution is typically high. The tremendous efforts made by the NHS and its staff through the Covid crisis are well understood by the public and, just as in past crises, may lead them to look elsewhere for someone to blame – with the government usually at the top of the list,” he added.

A Department of [Health](#) and Social Care spokesperson said: “The NHS is pulling out all the stops to respond to the biggest global health threat in a century, while also ensuring that people of all ages can still access the services they need.

“We are determined to support the NHS in every possible way, investing £52bn this year and £20bn next year to help the health service fight coronavirus.

“The government is working hard to make sure the NHS has enough capacity to meet increased demand and can continue to provide vital care and services in hospital for those who need it.”

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Brazil

Bolsonaro rival hails Covid vaccinations as 'triumph of science against denialists'

São Paulo governor João Doria takes aim at Brazil's president after his state beat federal authorities to secure first coronavirus vaccines

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Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, has dismissed Covid-19 as 'a little flu'.
Photograph: Adriano Machado/Reuters

Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, has dismissed Covid-19 as 'a little flu'.
Photograph: Adriano Machado/Reuters

[Tom Phillips](#) in Rio de Janeiro
Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.31 EST

Brazil's first Covid-19 vaccine has been administered after more than 209,000 deaths, sparking an outpouring of emotion and a ferocious political

skirmish that saw one of President Jair Bolsonaro's key rivals accuse him of revelling in the "stench of death".

The China-made CoronaVac was injected into the arm of a frontline nurse in São Paulo at 3.30pm local time, after Brazil's health regulator approved the emergency use of vaccines produced by China's Sinovac and Oxford/AstraZeneca.

It was São Paulo's conservative governor, João Doria, not Bolsonaro, who oversaw the emotionally charged ceremony, because his state, rather than the federal government, spearheaded the partnership with Sinovac. To the frustration of Bolsonaro, who had reportedly hoped to kick off vaccination in the presidential palace next week, Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines are yet to arrive in Brazil, scuppering those plans.

[Bolsonaro branded 'homicidally negligent' over Brazil's vaccine planning](#)
[Read more](#)

Doria, [a former Apprentice host](#) who is widely expected to challenge Bolsonaro at the 2022 presidential election, seized the moment to savage his one-time ally, whose anti-scientific handling of the epidemic has been globally condemned.

In an indirect but unmistakable reference to Bolsonaro, who has dismissed Covid-19 as "a little flu", Doria said the first vaccination represented "the triumph of science and life against the denialists, and those who prefer the stench of death to the value and joy of life".

"Let this be a lesson to the denialists, to those who lack compassion, who have no love in their hearts, to those who show contempt for life and distance themselves from the reality of a country that suffers – and suffers with death," Doria said.

"Jair Bolsonaro and the incompetence of his government" had dealt Brazil a "fatal blow" during the epidemic, he claimed.



Brazilian nurse Monica Calazans receives the vaccine against Covid-19 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Sunday. Photograph: Xinhua/REX/Shutterstock

Bolsonaro's health minister, an army general called Eduardo Pazuello, hit back during a tetchy press conference, attacking what he called Doria's "marketing ploy".

"Our only objective right now must be saving more lives and not promoting ourselves," Pazuello said, claiming the federal government would start vaccinating Brazilians with CoronaVac shots on Wednesday morning.

Despite boasting a world-renowned immunisation program, [Brazil lags behind regional neighbours](#) in the race to vaccinate its 212 million citizens. Argentina, Chile and Mexico have all recently begun vaccination while [Bolsonaro's government has come under fire](#) for dragging its feet, undermining containment efforts, and promoting unproven remedies such as chloroquine.

Bolsonaro has [repeatedly questioned](#) the Sinovac injection and said he will refuse to be vaccinated, although the presidency recently said his vaccination record would remain [secret for 100 years](#).

Leaders from across the political spectrum commemorated Sunday's vaccinations.

“This is a victory for Brazilian science … and a defeat for Bolsonaro and his policy of death,” tweeted Guilherme Boulos, a prominent leftist.

Luiz Henrique Mandetta, Bolsonaro’s estranged former health minister, [tweeted](#): “Congratulations São Paulo. Be gone dark ages. Be gone denialism. Be gone charlatans.”

Mônica Calazans, the first Brazilian to be vaccinated, [urged citizens](#) to listen to science and embrace the vaccine. “I’m talking now as a Brazilian woman – a black Brazilian woman – who believes in the vaccine,” she said. “Just think of how many lives we’ve lost, how many families.

“Don’t be afraid,” Calazans added. “Brazilians, this is our big chance.”

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Eurostar

Eurostar warns of 'risk to survival' without government help

The cross-Channel train service has seen a 95% fall in passengers during the Covid-19 pandemic



Business leaders said the loss of Eurostar would be a blow to the whole UK economy. Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

Business leaders said the loss of Eurostar would be a blow to the whole UK economy. Photograph: Peter Summers/Getty Images

Zoe Wood

@zoewoodguardian

Sun 17 Jan 2021 13.19 EST

Eurostar has said it is facing an existential threat, as business leaders pleaded with the government to step in and save the “vital link” with Europe.

A [95% drop in passenger numbers](#) has brought the cross-Channel train service to its knees, and the company reiterated on Sunday that while

government loans had been extended to aviation, international high-speed rail had also been severely affected by the pandemic.

“Without additional funding from government, there is a real risk to the survival of Eurostar … the current situation is very serious,” it said in a statement.

Business leaders, including Brian Bickell, chief executive of the London landlord [Shaftesbury](#), have written to the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, and the transport secretary, [Grant Shapps](#), urging them to save the service. Their letter repeated the warning that Eurostar could run out of funds to operate the service in and out of London St Pancras.

The 28 executives said that, with the number of international tourists likely to remain low until at least the spring, the loss of the route would be a blow to the capital’s economy and the UK as a whole. Nearly four in every five passengers use the train to travel between London and Paris or Brussels.

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Eurostar was “not asking for special treatment” they said, but access to the same help as companies in similar positions had received, such as business rates relief and loans.

“Safeguarding the future of this connection to the continent should be a symbol of both our desire to build back better and our new cooperative relationship with our European neighbours,” the letter continued, adding: “If this viable business is allowed to fall between the cracks of support – our recovery could be damaged.”

Eurostar is majority-owned by the French state railway, SNCF, but is thought to have exhausted options for governmental assistance from Paris. The franchised UK train operators that have been [bailed out under emergency agreements](#) since the coronavirus pandemic began – at a cost of £8bn this financial year – are also largely owned or co-owned by foreign state rail operators.

In 2019, Eurostar carried 11 million passengers and was preparing to expand services with the introduction of [direct trains to Amsterdam](#). It employs 1,200 people in the UK, with a further 1,500 jobs supported by its supply chain.

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'An unmitigated disaster': America's year of Covid

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2021.01.18 - Coronavirus uk

- Hospitals Doctors face 'ongoing distress' from Covid first wave
- England Thousands of churches opt to close over Covid fears
- Exams Private entrants to GCSEs and A-levels face second year of delays
- Shed parties and illegal races Police crack down on Covid rulebreakers

Coronavirus

Doctors in UK and Ireland face 'ongoing distress' from Covid first wave

Survey of workers in emergency, anaesthetics and intensive care reveals psychological toll

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An anaesthetist working in an ICU unit in May 2020. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty

An anaesthetist working in an ICU unit in May 2020. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty

PA Media

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Nearly half of doctors working in high-pressure conditions during the first wave of coronavirus face ongoing distress, research suggests.

A study based on responses from more than 5,400 doctors in the UK and [Ireland](#) found that 45% reported psychological distress as the pandemic accelerated to its initial peak in 2020.

Researchers from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) and psychologists from the University of Bath surveyed emergency, anaesthetics and intensive care professionals during the lead up to, peak and post-peak of the first wave of infections last year.

[Nearly half of NHS critical care staff report PTSD, depression or anxiety.](#)
[Read more](#)

A total of 5,440 doctors – 16% of the 34,188 working in the field – responded to the “acceleration” survey. In the “peak” survey, 3,896 professionals subsequently responded and 3,079 to the “deceleration” survey.

Survey results, released early as a pre-print study and not yet peer-reviewed, put the prevalence of psychological distress at 44.7% of respondents in the build-up to the first wave’s peak, 36.9% at the peak and 31.5% as it declined.

Prevalence of trauma was found among 23.7% of respondents at the first pandemic peak, and 17.7% as it decelerated.

Probable post-traumatic stress disorder was also found in 12.6% of respondents at the peak and 10.1% afterwards, the research suggested. The study also found that “worry of family infection due to clinical work” was most strongly associated with both distress and trauma.

The researchers concluded: “Our findings reflect a pattern of elevated distress during the acceleration and peak phase of the current pandemic, some degree of natural recovery and a significant minority continuing to experience residual ongoing distress.”

Dr Tom Roberts from the RCEM, who led the research, said: “Our findings highlight the stark realities for many doctors across the UK and Ireland in

responding to the public health crisis and the toll this has placed on their mental health.

“The extent of the challenge has at times been overwhelming and we see from our results the real-life impact this has on individuals’ wellbeing.”

Dr Jo Daniels, a clinical psychologist and senior lecturer from the University of Bath’s department of psychology, added: “We now know that doctors are working on the frontline while carrying the heavy burden of fear of infecting themselves, or critically, family members, while some continue to battle high levels of psychological distress.

“This distress was evident in the lead up to the first peak, but our study shows it sustained well beyond this time point.

“It is now a pressing and urgent concern; doctors are at breaking point and cannot continue to work effectively in these very high pressured, high risk environments without psychological support to address their mental health needs.

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“What is at stake not only affects the long-term mental health of this vital workforce, but their ability to function and deliver the services we depend on.”

Researchers argued that it was essential that policymakers and professional bodies provided doctors with equipment to “mitigate both physical and psychological harm”, increased awareness of the signs of psychological distress and developed clear pathways to provide effective care.

This could include formalised peer and team support structures and access to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), they said.

Prof Edd Carlton from the RCEM said: “Workers across the [NHS](#) have responded to Covid-19 with incredible bravery, commitment and dedication. Over and above warm words, what we need most is proper support to help deal with impacts this has had on us all.”

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[Coronavirus](#)

Thousands of churches in England opt to close over Covid fears

England's lockdown allows communal worship, but some clergy are choosing to suspend services

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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Salisbury Cathedral has suspended public worship and is being used as a vaccination centre. Photograph: Steve Parsons/PA Media

Thousands of churches across [England](#) were closed for services on Sunday amid rising concern about the risk of Covid-19 spreading among worshippers.

Although the [lockdown rules](#) allow places of worship to remain open for communal services, the Church of England said more than half of England's 12,500 parishes had taken the decision to shut their doors.

At least 22 cathedrals had also either closed or suspended public worship by the end of last week, and another 11 had decided to limit services.

Many mosques, synagogues and other places of worship have also decided to close in order to protect their congregations from the possibility of Covid transmission. Senior faith leaders have urged local places of worship to carefully consider the risks, and not open if they believe safety could be compromised.

Although social distancing and mask-wearing is mandatory during communal services, some clergy have expressed concerns about mingling before and after worship.

“People have worked out that church is one of the few places they can see friends and family. People chat to their friends at the end of the service as they always have done. The clergy are caught in the middle and it’s hard to keep everyone safe,” said one parishioner.

A C of E spokesperson said decisions were being taken by parishes based on local circumstances. “We urge everyone to be exceptionally cautious and, in particular, to do everything possible to prevent mingling outside of households and support bubbles.”

UK cases

Some clergy resent the onus being on them to decide the threshold of risk. During the first and second lockdowns, communal worship was banned. One C of E diocese, Chelmsford, has recommended churches offer online services only.

In Scotland, communal services are banned, and Northern Ireland’s main Christian denominations announced churches would close until at least early February. Sadiq Khan, the London mayor, has called for all places of worship in the capital to shut because of the risks of Covid infection.

The Catholic church in England and Wales is keeping communal services under review. Its leader, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the archbishop of

Westminster, [challenged the government ban on collective worship](#) during November's lockdown.

One Catholic parishioner said they were “staggered” that services were still taking place. “It is totally unnecessary and hardly essential for a group of elderly people to congregate in an enclosed building to pray – I can pray any way and everywhere. The vast majority of those attending fail to maintain social distancing, and collect in groups after mass to chatter.”

The parishioner said their local priest was continuing to open the church for mass “even though he is very anxious and concerned himself. I’m sure this is down to his vow of obedience. The bishop won’t advise the parish priests to close but has left it up to them. I truly admire the priests who have made the decision to close their churches – putting their moral duty first.”

Blackburn Cathedral will open as a mass vaccination centre on Monday, joining Lichfield and [Salisbury cathedrals](#) in offering their premises for the public health drive.

“It is only right that in times of national crisis we offer our building as a safe and accessible space for this exciting vaccination programme, and be here to serve the nation in these times of deep uncertainty and fear,” said Blackburn’s dean, Peter Howell Jones.

The vaccination centre will be housed in the cathedral’s crypt, which has its own entrance, and can be open round the clock if needed.

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Education

Private entrants to GCSEs and A-levels face second year of delays

Home education advocates call for urgent action to ensure independent students do not miss out on acquiring qualifications



Many of last year's 20,000 candidates that were not affiliated with schools or colleges were left without qualifications. Photograph: Alamy

Many of last year's 20,000 candidates that were not affiliated with schools or colleges were left without qualifications. Photograph: Alamy

Damien Gayle

@damiengayle

Sun 17 Jan 2021 11.37 EST

Home education advocates have called on the government to act fast to ensure that private entrants to GCSEs, [AS-levels](#) and A-levels do not face a second year of delays to obtaining crucial qualifications after summer exams were cancelled again.

Home educators were dismayed last week when the education secretary, [Gavin Williamson](#), announced that exams would be replaced by a “teacher-assessed system”. Such assessments are unavailable to most privately entered students.

Of the 20,000 candidates not affiliated with schools or colleges entered privately for courses last year, [many were left without qualifications](#) because, having studied independently, they could not be given centre-assessed grades.

This year, with many of those applicants trying again, as well as anecdotal reports of large numbers of parents taking their children out of schools because of the risk posed by Covid-19, home education advocates say even more are likely to suffer the same fate.

Alison Sauer, of the Centre for Personalised Education, who has been in discussions over the issue with the [Department for Education](#) and Ofqual, the exams regulator, called for swift action.

She said: “We want the DfE to introduce a system of assessed portfolios of work and possibly remotely invigilated exams, to provide a means for all private candidates, including home-educated students, to obtain a grade.

“With just a month left until entry deadlines the government must act fast, otherwise thousands of young people face their lives being put on hold for a second year, postponing important milestones such as university applications or entry to work.”

In [a recent exchange of letters](#) between Williamson and Simon Lebus, interim chief regulator at Ofqual, both indicated that students entering privately for courses will not be overlooked a second time. A consultation on methods of assessment began a call for submissions on Friday. But problems remain, according to Jeremy Yallop of the Home Educators’ Qualifications Association.

Because deadlines for entry to exams had not passed before the announcement that exams were cancelled last week, most entrants had not yet signed up, Yallop said. Now, even if the government comes up with a

way for private entrants to be graded without exams, many will face difficulty in finding somewhere to sit assessments.

“A day or two after the education secretary’s announcement … [centres] started sending out emails saying, ‘I’m sorry, you are not going to be able to take your assessment here,’” Yallop said. “As a result of centres closing their doors, the ones that are remaining are putting their prices up.”

Last year Amanda Jordan, from Lossiemouth, spent more than £2,000 travelling across the country to find an examination centre where her daughter could take her AS-level exams in the special autumn series arranged by the government, after the exam centre where she was originally registered said it could not accommodate her. This year, she needs to find assessment centres for her daughter to sit A-level assessments.

She said: “We’re sick with nerves and I kept the information [about the cancellation of this year’s exams] as long as I could from my daughter, because of the impact of is it going to happen or isn’t it? Is university even going to happen now?”

Part of the frustration for many independent students is that the rationale for cancelling exams this year is that schooled candidates will miss so many lessons due to lockdowns that they will not be prepared. This does not apply to students who have studied independently.

“For my daughter, if she could take an exam safely, we would always go the exam route, because that is for us the only way we can get a fair result for our daughter,” Jordan said.

In a consultation document on assessment arrangements published on Friday, the DfE said: “A range of options for private candidates to be assessed and make sure they receive a grade are also part of considerations.”

The education secretary, Gavin Williamson, said: “Fairness to young people has been and will continue to be fundamental to every decision we take on these issues, and I’m determined that despite all the challenges posed by this pandemic, they will not prevent students getting on with and making a success of their lives.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/17/private-entrants-to-gcses-and-a-levels-face-second-year-of-delays>

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Coronavirus

Shed parties and illegal races: UK police crack down on Covid-19 rulebreakers

Police ramp up enforcement of lockdown rules, breaking up illegal gatherings and fining individuals

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

Vikram Dodd Police and crime correspondent

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.11 EST First published on Sun 17 Jan 2021 14.25 EST



Police on patrol in Hyde Park in central London on Sunday. Photograph: Jonathan Brady/PA

[Police](#) have issued fines to coronavirus rule breakers including those who held a party in a garden shed and a group of more than 40 people who gathered for illegal car racing.

In the 10th month of the pandemic, police have clamped down on those clearly breaking the rules, with forces being asked by government to increase enforcement as the [death toll](#) from the virus mounts.

Police in [Swansea](#) issued fines after finding eight people partying in a garden shed in Sketty that housed a bar.

In Romford, east [London](#), which has one of the highest infection rates in the country, 49 people face fines after allegedly turning up to an illegal car meeting. Police were called to reports of 50 cars gathered just before midnight on Saturday, speeding around a roundabout as drivers stood around and mingled.

DCS Stephen Clayman of the Metropolitan police said: “It is unacceptable that people are still [breaking the rules](#) at a time when there is so much pressure on the NHS. It is more important than ever before that people follow the regulations.

“The restrictions are clear enough and there is no excuse for this sort of selfish behaviour that puts lives at risk and causes a nuisance for nearby residents who are doing the right thing by staying at home.

“We understand that this is a very difficult time for everyone, but our top priority as police officers is keeping people safe. If that means moving quicker to enforcement action for more wilful breaches, then we will do.”

Elsewhere, police caught a man in Devizes, Wiltshire, who said he had driven all the way from Luton, Bedfordshire, to buy a McDonald’s takeaway. It was bad luck for him on three fronts: he faces a £200 fine, Devizes does not have a branch of the fast food chain, and his car was seized because it was uninsured.

Police in Manchester hit out at a “minority who think they are above the law” after they were called out to house parties and other gatherings at the weekend, with 110 fixed penalty notices issued across the [Greater Manchester](#) region.

Fines were issued after a house party with 30 people was held in Hulme, Manchester, and after police were called to a party of 40 people at a flat in Cheetham Hill.

Four people in a car on Friday evening received fines after travelling from Bolton to Preston for a takeaway. Police happened across them after their car broke down.

Ch Insp Carol Martin of Greater Manchester police said: “The majority of people across Greater Manchester are following the government’s guidance – we would like to thank them for doing their bit throughout the pandemic. However, there is a minority who think they are above the law. It is incredibly frustrating to those abiding by the rules that some people are showing such a blatant disregard for the current regulations.

“Not only are they putting their own lives and those of their loves ones at stake, they also risk undoing the hard work of everyone else continuing to make the necessary sacrifices at this time.

“We would like to reassure people that dedicated teams of officers are responding to reports of non-compliance and are continuing to follow the national lead by engaging with members of the public, explaining the law and encouraging compliance, but our officers will not hesitate to take enforcement action if people are found to be flouting the rules.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/17/uk-police-crack-down-covid-rule-breakers>

2021.01.18 - Spotlight

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How to live nowWalking

The joy of steps: 20 ways to give purpose to your daily walk



A sight to behold ... a murmuration of starlings. Photograph: mikedabell/Getty Images/iStockphoto

A sight to behold ... a murmuration of starlings. Photograph: mikedabell/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Has the novelty of a prescribed stroll long since worn off? From tracking animals to uncovering hidden history, here's how to discover a new world in your neighbourhood



Amy Fleming

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

The weather is rubbish, there is nowhere to go and, bereft of the joys of spring, the daily lockdown walk can feel pointless. But, of course, it is not: the mental and physical health perks of exercise are immune to seasonal changes. We need to gallivant around outside in daylight so that our circadian rhythms can regulate sleep and alertness. (Yes, even when the sky is resolutely leaden, it is still technically daylight.) [Walking](#) warms you up, too; when you get back indoors, it will feel positively tropical.

But if meeting these basic needs isn't enough to enthuse you, there are myriad ways to add purpose to your stride and draw your attention to the underappreciated joys of winter walking.

Aim low

Even Alex Strauss, the author of [The Mindful Walker](#), has to tackle her resistance to get out on wild winter days. Sometimes, she says, "it takes a few mind games to get motivated. When it's cold, when it's grey, instead of saying you're going to go out and do a 40-minute walk, allow yourself to say: 'I'm going to do five minutes.' Your brain is much less likely to resist that. Then, once you're out there, it often turns into a longer walk."

Spot winter birds

“It’s a big misconception that not a lot goes on in winter,” says the Springwatch presenter [Megan McCubbin](#), who will be gracing our screens again from 19 January on BBC Two with her stepdad, Chris Packham, in [Winterwatch](#). Plus, it is easier to spot birds in leafless trees. “There are some amazing winter spectacles to see, if it’s safe to do so within regulations. One of my favourites is the starling murmurations. The birds come together in their hundreds, if not thousands, in particular areas across the UK – for safety in numbers, as they’re going in to roost. They perform the most amazing synchronised movements in the sky.”

If you can get to open fields at dusk, you might spot “the beautiful white silhouettes of barn owls hunting along the hedgerows and across fields”, she says. “While our summer and spring visitors might have left on their migration, we’ve got a lot of winter visitors.” Waxwings come to the UK for some relief from freezing Russia and their fluffy crests and waxy red wing markings make them “one of the most attractive visitors we get. We often see them around car parks and in urban trees.”

Take a story walk

[The Echoes interactive “sound walks” app](#) contains audio made by artists, musicians, authors and historians around the world, with content triggered by GPS or Apple iBeacons along the route. The musical soundtrack for a Gloucestershire country walk – or a murder mystery in Coventry, or the stories of the forgotten bodies in Bath’s 19th-century workhouse burial ground – unfolds as you go.

Try mindful walking



A salve for the soul ... mindfulness can slow our heart rate and reduce anxiety. Photograph: Westend61/Getty Images

Being mindful, says Strauss, “just means to be present, focused and aware of your internal and external landscapes in any given moment. When we bring mindfulness into the equation, we take everything up a notch in terms of benefits. We know that mindfulness can slow our heart rate and reduce anxiety and depression.” When we are mindful during exercise, [our workout is more effective](#). One of the easiest ways to “drop into mindfulness” while walking, she says, is to listen to your footsteps. “I like to do a little activity where I breathe in for four steps, hold my breath for about four steps – whatever feels comfortable – and then exhale for four steps,” she says. This takes a little concentration, but it allows you to release the extraneous thoughts in your head and live in the present.

Give yourself a mission

Winter is a surprisingly good time of year to practise mindfulness outside, says Strauss: “The fact that the natural world is partly dormant can prompt us to turn our attention inward more. Things tend to come into sharper focus in the outdoors.” It is the perfect season, therefore, to try a “mindful mission”. Once you are “quiet inside” from the breathing exercise outlined earlier, “notice five things in nature you can see, four things you can hear,

three things you can feel, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste, although I don't recommend licking trees or anything. It's just a way to bring all of your senses into sharp focus."

Spy on urban foxes



'It's a great time to get to know them' ... foxes are very active in winter.
Photograph: cuppyuppcake/Getty Images

Foxes are very active now, says McCubbin, "trying to get as much food as possible ... males will be finding females ahead of the breeding season, starting in February. So if you know where your local foxes are, it's a great thing to be able to observe them from a distance and get to know them." It is a similar situation with badgers. "It's another common misconception that they hibernate," she says.

Track animals

"Because it's frosty and frozen, and slightly damp and muddy in areas, there's a lot more evidence on the ground of what's been around," says McCubbin. "Look in the mud, because often footprints will be frozen in it. It's a really great time of year to learn animal tracks and footprints and discover what species are around." Children love this activity, she says;

inviting them to investigate animal tracks is often much more successful than saying: “Right, who wants to come on a walk?”

Get a magnifying hand lens

When nature isn’t wearing its spring regalia, stopping to zoom in on rock-dwelling lichen, or to reveal the rich ecosystem beneath a rotting log, can be fascinating. On recent rainy days, Lucy Jones, the author of [Losing Eden: Why Our Minds Need the Wild](#), has been searching for moss. It thrives in the winter, when there is less tree shade. “Rain plumps the moss up and it makes it bright emerald,” she says. “There are lots of different shapes and types you can look at. If you have a hand lens, that will deepen your engagement and what you can see. I live on a busy urban street and there are all sorts of different types on the walls and in the cemetery. It’s everywhere.” Who needs a rainforest when you can get a bug’s eye view of a moss jungle?

Clue up on vegetation



Fun with fungi ... learn how to identify varieties such as the parasol mushroom. Photograph: Kathrin Ziegler/Getty Images

If you happen upon some fantastical turquoise goblet-shaped fungi, why leave it at that? You could look it up and go home with the satisfaction of

knowing that you have encountered some green elf cup mushrooms. Take wildflower or mushroom identification books out with you, or download a [tree guide from the Woodland Trust](#). Jones swears by the app [PictureThis](#) for instant plant identification. “I did it with some catkins the other day and learned that they were hazel catkins and pussy willow, so called because they look like cats’ paws.” Having an identification focus on a walk is often a hit with children, too, she says: “You can give 100 points for bracket fungi, which grow like fairy ladders up trees, 200 points for a squirrel, that kind of thing.”

Use smart maps

Another app Jones recommends is [GoJauntly](#), which helps people all over the UK find green and pleasant circular walks nearby, such as park to park through the Curry Mile in Manchester, or the Hamble Rail Trail in Southampton. If you have an idea of where you would like to explore, but not the best route, [Footpath](#) lets you trace it roughly with your finger and then shows you the best paths and roads to take, adding information on distances and climbs.

Don’t just count steps



Data dopamine ... there are many apps that can track your walk or otherwise enhance your experience. Photograph: Visual Art Agency/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Logging your achievements is a proven motivator, until you know by heart which local jaunts earn you 10,000 steps – then it gets boring. Boost your data dopamine hits with the app [MapMyWalk](#), which uses your phone's GPS to capture your route. It also provides stats on distance, elevation, speed, pace and calorie expenditure. You can save and share your favourite walks and try those posted by others in your area.

Recreate trails in your garden

Take a longer view on the distances you walk over lockdown by measuring your cumulative progress against grand routes of the world using the [World Walking](#) app. The goals are endless – crossing the Sahara, walking Route 66 – and one early adopting walking group has already reached the moon.

Hunt for treasure

[Treasure Trails](#) sells downloadable walking routes with clues and landmarks to spot as part of interactive adventure stories, or to bring local history to life in British towns and cities. Routes range from a self-guided adventure in Manchester called The Wizard's Spellbook, which promises "fantastical tales", to a historical "treasure map" of Herne Bay in Kent.

Solve a problem

Shane O'Mara, a neuroscientist and the author of [In Praise of Walking](#), once [wowed me with the many ways in which walking sharpens the mind](#) and encourages creativity – bringing on theta brainwaves and the production of brain-nourishing chemicals among them. This is why a daily walk is the perfect time to mentally plan your essay, rehearse your lines, carry out thought experiments, solve an advanced maths problem or daydream.

Look up and travel back in time



Open your eyes ... the sign for an old grocery store is still visible on the wall of this building in Oxford. Photograph: Geraint Lewis/Alamy

Ben Olins, the co-founder of the unapologetically analogue cultural guide and map company [Herb Lester](#), looks up as much as is safely possible when he is walking. “You get a better idea of what it used to be like, when you don’t see cars and modern door furniture,” he says. Even in less exciting areas, “you might spot an old sign, or different street furniture. I like looking at where pubs used to be and getting a sense of just how many there used to be, what areas were like when they were first developed”. The more looking up you do, the more of an area’s story will fall into place. In north London, Olins says, “it’s all piano factories and breweries: businesses that involved great weight, because of the canals. You start to make sense of the area, a little like with language – discovering the Latin origin of a word, then all these other words suddenly start to make sense.”

Walk your routes in reverse

“I don’t understand people who walk the same route over and over,” says Olins – unless, of course, you are rushing to the station. The beauty of lockdown walks with no destination is that there is no need to repeat routes. But even if you are wedded to your favourites, says Olins, doing them

backwards will throw up new aspects and discoveries. “There’s always a different way to do it,” he says. “You’ll see it very differently.”

Raise money for charity

In April’s lockdown, in the run-up to his 100th birthday, [Captain Tom Moore](#) raised millions for the NHS by walking laps of his garden. You could try something similar for your chosen charity, using [justgiving.co.uk](#) or [virginmoneygiving.co.uk](#), or directly with a charity such as Macmillan Cancer Support, with whom you can [register a walking challenge](#) to suit you.

Phone a friend

The give and take of human connection is often as good as medicine, so while we may not be able to meet our friends face to face, we can call them up to walk and talk. It is hard to feel like there is much to say when you are cooped up in the same four walls day in, day out, but while you are strolling along, stimulated by your senses and momentum, you might find there is suddenly plenty to talk about.

Get a physical map

Ah, printed maps: no need for good signal, full battery or to remove your gloves. Ordnance Survey maps don’t only cater for rural hikers, but also cover urban walking.

Get lost on purpose



‘There are so many hidden streets and enclaves’ ... a lane in Fitzrovia, central London. Photograph: Alexander Spatari/Getty Images

Olins, whose guides include *Clandestine London* and [An Edinburgh Companion](#), is drawn to overlooked routes. “Even if they don’t seem as if they might have that much potential, you never know,” he says. “There are so many hidden streets and enclaves. They may have no great architectural or historical significance, but they might show a community that’s obviously neighbourly and they’ve all put plant pots outside.” We all like to nose at other lives going on around us, says Olins. “It’s comforting, isn’t it?”

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[Civil service](#)

New No 10 team take on Cummings' legacy of chaos and acrimony



Allegra Stratton (left) and Dan Rosenfield (front centre) listen as Johnson holds a press conference on Christmas Eve.

Photograph: Paul Grover/AFP/Getty Images

Allegra Stratton (left) and Dan Rosenfield (front centre) listen as Johnson holds a press conference on Christmas Eve.

Photograph: Paul Grover/AFP/Getty Images

Tories cautiously optimistic about Dan Rosenfield and Allegra Stratton, who want to press reset on PM's tenure

[Jessica Elgot](#) and [Rajeev Syal](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

A subtle signal was sent across Whitehall last week when Tom Scholar, once identified by aides loyal to [Dominic Cummings](#) as on the notorious “shit list” of senior civil servants, was reappointed as permanent secretary to the Treasury.

It appeared that the war once waged against opinionated mandarins was over, and the threats of a revolution had left the building with Boris Johnson's senior aide.

The prime minister now has a new machine, most notably in his chief of staff, [Dan Rosenfield](#), and his [press secretary, Allegra Stratton](#), who plan to give his No 10 tenure a reset. Senior sources said they hoped it would mean a period of reasonable continuity and far less stories about different internal restructures.

"It makes a change to have the weekend papers mercifully free of the fascinating ways Cabinet Office rooms are being reorganised," one MP joked.

[Attacks by PM's ousted aide left new press chief in tears](#)
[Read more](#)

Johnson's boosterism, and Matt Hancock's, have led to a multitude of issues, including impossible targets being set – as well as a combative approach from the No 10 operation that sought never to give in to press criticism, but which ended up in [embarrassing U-turns](#).

Those days are far from over, but there is now a concerted attempt at diplomacy with MPs to try to predict issues before they arise, as well as heavily caveating targets as Johnson did in his press appearances this week about the [vaccine rollout](#).

Stratton held a briefing call with Conservative MPs this week, and though a number lined up to berate the government for falling into "bear traps" set by Labour and urged the comms operation to get better at rebuttal, the mood after was optimistic. "It was very good, she was extremely impressive," said one senior MP.

The relaunch has hardly gone without a hitch, because Johnson himself is the root of many of the issues. The prime minister was deeply personally reluctant to cancel the proposed [Christmas mixing](#) and so aides dutifully briefed straight after a crisis meeting with the devolved administrations that

the prime minister had saved Christmas. But within days the picture was so desperate Johnson had no alternative but to change course.

The same pattern followed with schools: it was Johnson who personally held out to keep them open until his chief scientists said they would raise the Covid alert to its highest level, meaning the NHS was under serious threat.

Cummings' big ideas for reform of the civil service and the machinery of government have been a key casualty of his departure. He promised to make it smaller, more nimble, less London-centric and open to “weirdos and misfits”, and cracked down hard on special advisers, making them report directly to him.



Cummings after departing 10 Downing Street in November. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty Images

One of those named on the “shit list”, Sir Philip Rutnam, resigned after a series of briefings to the media claimed he had obstructed and undermined several home secretaries. He claims he was forced out after standing up to Patel for bullying Home Office staff.

In all, five senior civil servants have resigned, and Rutnam is claiming constructive dismissal, but Cummings’ critics say that beyond instilling a

fear and resentment, little changed in the structures of the civil service and his reforms to recruitment policies have fallen flat.

The five replacements are predominantly from the same backgrounds as their predecessors, there has been no major overhaul of No 10's structures and recruitment policies have continued much as they were before Johnson's election.

Some within Whitehall say Cummings can claim some credit for arguing that Whitehall offices should move out of London – a proposal that appears to be coming to fruition, with plans for a new northern campus for the Treasury.

But Dave Penman, the head of the FDA union, which represents senior civil servants and “[Spads](#)”, said there was little evidence there would be much – if any – legacy of the Cummings period at No 10.

[Gazza, Caino and Roxstar: the strange world of Dominic Cummings' 'spads'](#)
[Read more](#)

“For all the talk of reform, the reality felt more like a culture war based on preconceived ideas, rather than a genuine attempt to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the civil service to implement meaningful reform. Chaos and acrimony do not lead to better government, it is not an effective way to lead. Whether those lessons will be learned by No 10, only time will tell.”

Johnson still feels strongly about improving government delivery; aides say he has been particularly frustrated in recent days by some of the bureaucratic hurdles around vaccine distribution.

Sir Michael Barber, who ran the prime minister's delivery unit under Tony Blair, has been brought back into Downing Street to oversee a rapid review of government delivery. Insiders are expecting some changes in the Downing Street policy unit, which one described as “shambolic – but mainly because we have no policy”.

Other projects spearheaded by Cummings are still alive but are being revised – including his most important personal priority pre-Covid, which was the

creation of a “high risk, high reward” research agency modelled on the US’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (Arpa), with a budget of £800m over five years.

Cummings felt so passionately about the project that his WhatsApp profile had the slogan “Get Brexit Done then Arpa”. The project was meant to launch last year but no green paper has been forthcoming.

Cummings is said to have spent his notice period continuing to work on plans for the government’s mass testing programme, Operation Moonshot. Although Whitehall never calls it so, the programme is still very much alive – though plans to test millions of schoolchildren for coronavirus every week appear to be in disarray after the UK regulator refused to formally approve the daily [testing of pupils in England](#).

Another big gamble – a planning algorithm to set targets for new housing – is being radically revised after a Tory revolt.

The departure of Johnson’s [former senior adviser Lee Cain](#) has also prompted rumours another project is in its death throes – the long-delayed [televised Downing Street briefings](#), to be fronted by Stratton. They were touted to start in October, then January and now postponed until at least the end of lockdown, though No 10 says they will go ahead.



Dominic Cummings (right) and Lee Cain (second right) during their time in Downing Street. Photograph: Simon Dawson/PA

“I would be astonished if they go ahead in the same form,” said one senior Tory source. “The timing has just never seemed right when what people need to hear is from the prime minister, not someone they’ve never heard of.

“And the communications team who are now running No 10 are the ones who have been most sceptical about the briefings. Tough restrictions will be needed for a while, then soon as you know it, it’s the summer – can they really continue if they have to delay beyond recess?”

Government sources say both Stratton and the director of communications, James Slack, are still fully committed to the briefings – and have the added imperative of having built a £2m broadcast studio. Any rumours of their demise are “total and complete bollocks”, according to one senior source.

Another acknowledged there remained some opposition. “Of course there are people who don’t want it to happen – we are dealing with Whitehall and it is a conservative beast but we will get there,” the source said.

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[Television](#)

Interview

Noel Clarke: 'Would I play Doctor Who? There's a conversation to be had'

[Toby Moses](#)



‘Jack of all trades’ ... actor, screenwriter, producer and director Noel Clarke.
Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

‘Jack of all trades’ ... actor, screenwriter, producer and director Noel Clarke.
Photograph: Linda Nylind/The Guardian

He has played a pivotal role in bringing black drama to British screens – but Noel Clarke must still battle for recognition. As his hit cop show Bulletproof returns, he talks about fighting prejudice, returning to the Tardis – and saying no to America



[@tobymoses](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

“I would love to stay out of the papers,” says Noel Clarke. “I don’t even like speaking to journalists.” It’s not what an interviewer wants to hear, but in this case it is understandable. Whether he’s pointing out his omission from a movie poster, or simply finding himself the subject of an article about how the [45-year-old has maintained his six-pack](#), Clarke’s name is never out of the headlines for long.

His aversion to the press does perhaps explain why he has [embraced social media](#) – despite Clarke’s belief that Twitter contains “the worst of humanity”. “I love all the platforms I have, even if Twitter can be vile,” he says. “I’m older and wiser now. You have to be really offensive or catch me on a bad day to get me to bite back. When I was younger I bit back all the time. People would review stuff and I’d be like, ‘I’m coming in to find you.’” He laughs – although it’s clear that though age might have calmed him, there’s still much that he finds grating about the industry he works in.

The star of hit films [Kidulthood and Adulthood](#) and a former Doctor Who companion, Clarke has been a familiar face in British TV and film for two decades. Even so, he has not always got his dues. Take that poster, for the 2019 romcom [Fisherman’s Friends](#). It featured six white co-stars, including

James Purefoy and Daniel Mays. Although Clarke's name was up there, his face was nowhere to be seen. When he raised this, and the fact that none of the cast had spoken up for him, much of the [reaction online was condemnatory](#).

"When you look at the poster, I'm probably one of the people most known, right? So let's take black out the equation for a second. You just got the name of this person who's got Baftas and Oliviers. He's got the No 1 TV show [on Sky] at the time. When you look at that person, if they are white, how are they *not* on the poster? Everyone would be asking: 'Where's so and so?' People turn it straight into a race thing. Like I'm race-baiting. But no. Just think about it."

Clarke tweeted about it and several papers picked it up. "I had one [co-star] text me and be like, 'Take that down, you've offended me.' I just said, 'Well, you can go fuck yourself.' So everyone's entitled to their opinion." However, says Clarke, many of the other actors called him afterwards with more positive responses, saying it had made them do some thinking. And he's happy to be the one to teach them, "It's not blaming them," he says. "It just sparked conversation."



'I got lucky' ... Kidulthood. Photograph: Everett Collection/Rex Feature

It's a role that Clarke has had to fulfil with weary regularity throughout his career, changing minds, breaking new ground, making space for himself in an industry that boasts few successful black actors who've remained working primarily in the UK. Unlike many of his contemporaries who moved to the US, Clarke's response was to make vehicles for himself to star in – and he's continued to do that for 15 years.

"For whatever reason, I got lucky," he says, of the 2006 film [Kidulthood](#). "I got something made when a lot of other people weren't. And then I got to direct when a lot of other people hadn't. I've been offered American things and I just don't want to go over there. I've never wanted to live there. I love the country to visit on holiday. But, y'know, guns and stuff – it's just not for me."

I've been offered American things and I just don't want to go over there. I love to visit on holiday. But, y'know, guns and stuff – it's just not for me

So Clarke has kept working constantly – writing, producing, directing, acting – to maintain his career. "It's by necessity," he laughs. "Jack of all trades, master of none. I've had to be someone that's done everything. If I hadn't, I would not be talking to you right now."



Clarke with Davey Fairbanks and Paul Keating in Metrosexuality.
Photograph: Channel 4

It's a lesson he learned early on. His first TV role was in [Rikki Beadle-Blair](#)'s groundbreaking Channel 4 series Metrosexuality, which brought a healthy dose of humour and racial diversity to the Queer As Folk formula, but never got the plaudits it deserved. "It was way ahead of its time," says Clarke, who played the son of two gay men in the series, which launched in 1999. "It was very scary for someone like me, coming from the area I came from" – he was born in Notting Hill in London – "because people weren't very accepting of shows like that. It was a big deal. But I was like, 'I need to understand these things if I'm going to progress in this diverse industry.' I learned a lot from Rikki. He was a mentor to me and still someone I speak to. He was the antithesis of the sort of people I thought I'd be hanging around with growing up where I grew up."



Mentor ... Rikki Beadle-Blair. Photograph: Chris
Montgomery/Rex/Shutterstock

When I point out that, despite the critical acclaim and cult following generated by Metrosexuality, Beadle-Blair never went on to enjoy the same opportunities or mainstream success as someone like [Russell T Davies](#), Clarke just smiles. "You said it. Here we are 20 years later and Rikki's not

done anything as big since then. That's not from a lack of talent, I can assure you.”

It’s clear how important Beadle-Blair was to him, and Clarke has taken on a similar mentoring role with young people today. “If not for that man, I’m not where I am today, these kids aren’t here right now,” he says as he gestures behind him to where his children are home-schooling diligently. “If I can give those opportunities to other people, then that’s what I’m going to do, and that’s what I have been doing. It’s so important. I’ve given so many people from similar backgrounds to me opportunities in this business – whether they remember it or not. Go back to their first movie, my name will be involved somewhere. That all comes from the way Rikki was with me. Maybe I’m not here to be [Denzel](#), maybe I’m here to facilitate the next Denzel. Which is sometimes annoying, because maybe I want to be Denzel.” He laughs.

Clarke tends to do much of his work via his own production company, Unstoppable, these days. That includes the hit police action-drama [Bulletproof](#), which has been a ratings smash for Sky, with a record high audience for the first season and more than six million downloads since. He stars alongside [Ashley Walters](#) – two black actors playing the lead roles, a rarity in itself, and something he hopes will encourage other networks to take a chance on projects with black British talent at the forefront. The latest edition of the show, shot before the pandemic, is a special, where the two holiday with their families in South Africa.



‘The issues with the country were not lost on me’ ... Clarke with Ashley Walters in Bulletproof: South Africa. Photograph: Coco Van Oppens Photography

“It wasn’t on my list of places to go,” he says, and the experience of 10 weeks filming there was clearly a challenge. “I found working over there ... wonderful.” He’s picking his words carefully. “I found the crew that we had amazing. I found the experience of working there delightful. I found the land, the landscape, the things you can see amazing. But the issues with the country were not lost on me, knowing that we were in our apartments, in our gated community, and outside that was a different world for a lot of people.

We donated to townships and made sure that, when we were in those areas, everyone was treated respectfully

“It was sad at times just to see the disparity between the haves and have-nots. So we donated to townships and made sure that, when we were in those areas, everyone was treated respectfully and looked after. But I just don’t like it. I don’t see how we can live in a world where there’s such big gaps between people. There shouldn’t be two-year-olds walking half a mile down the street with a bucket to get water in a country that’s got as much money as they do. But that [disparity] is everywhere, not just in [South Africa](#).”

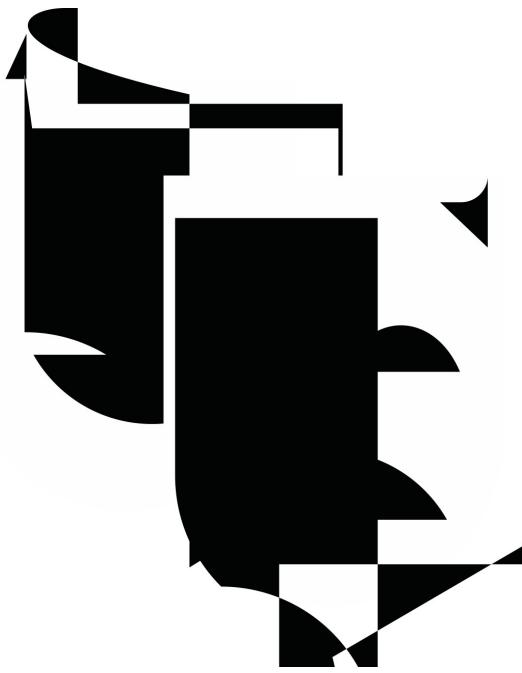


Happy to pop back ... Clarke and Billie Piper encounter the Sycorax in Doctor Who. Photograph: Adrian Rogers/BBC

Clarke spent five years on Doctor Who with Billie Piper, and he remembers the show warmly – saying he'd be happy to pop back in again were he asked. But what about the main role? With rumours Jodie Whittaker may be leaving, would he consider being the first black Doctor? “Well, there’s a conversation to be had,” he says, laughing at providing me with some headline-worthy speculation. “There, I said it. ‘Noel Clarke set to return to Doctor Who.’” For someone who doesn’t like talking to the press, he certainly provides good copy.

- Bulletproof: South Africa is on Sky One, 20 January, 9pm.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/jan/18/noel-clarke-interview-bulletproof-doctor-who>



[Culture in peril](#)
[Theatre](#)

'Another rocky road': UK theatre bosses eye 2021 with resilience and realism

Artistic directors at four venues look ahead to what challenges this year might bring



Determined ... clockwise from top left: Paul Hart, Tamara Harvey, Nikolai Foster, Bryony Shanahan and Roy Alexander Weise. Composite: Rick Matthews, Getty, PR

Determined ... clockwise from top left: Paul Hart, Tamara Harvey, Nikolai Foster, Bryony Shanahan and Roy Alexander Weise. Composite: Rick Matthews, Getty, PR



Interviews by [Arifa Akbar](#)

@Arifa_Akbar

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

‘We won’t do work that is comforting or safe’

Nikolai Foster, Curve, Leicester

Last year we cancelled five productions which was heartbreakng but we learned a lot about resilience and are so determined now. When we thought we were coming out of lockdown we planned to stage [Sunset Boulevard](#). We have a 350-seat space and a 970-seat auditorium and are able to fly out the dividing walls to create a 1,500-seat arena with a socially distanced audience of 500. Then Leicester went into tier 3 so we reconceived it for film. We asked ourselves how we could create something original: we didn’t just want to archive a piece of theatre. The production has now been seen in 36 countries.

We were incredibly grateful to receive almost £1m from the [culture recovery fund](#) and used some of it to hire 150 freelancers across a new season. So 2021 has started on a high. We’re starting online rehearsals for Blood Wedding, a co-production with De Montfort University. Because there are no certainties, we are working on two versions of everything. If The Color Purple can’t go ahead as a socially distanced production in March, there will be a streamed version. In summer we have Disney’s new production, Beauty and the Beast. We are also planning on bringing back postponed shows – Sister Act, Grease, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Fox and the Ghost King, and The Wizard of Oz at Christmas, which I will be directing. The idea of going into the studio and directing now seems like a holiday – and nectar for the soul.



‘We are so determined now’ ... Molly Lynch and Danny Mac in *Sunset Boulevard* at Leicester’s Curve. Photograph: Marc Brenner

When we welcome audiences back, we want to do it with joy and optimism. There has always been snobbery around musical theatre and pantomime but they get truly diverse audiences in and have a lot to say about the world today. We have never wanted to be anything other than progressive and bold so we will continue with what we were doing with bells on. There is no way we went through the living hell of 2020 to do work that is comforting or safe.

‘Keep telling stories, no matter what’

Tamara Harvey, Theatr Clwyd, Mold

Some of our plans are nebulous; others are fully formed. We’ll co-produce *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which will stream from 16 March. Like [What a Carve Up!](#) [directed by Harvey] it is born out of what is possible within this very locked-down state, creating theatre entirely for the screen.

We’ll be bringing the premieres for [Milky Peaks](#) and *For the Grace of You Go I* to the world in some way, shape or form, after having to cancel both last year. We have tooled up our core staff so that we now have the equipment and skills in-house to livestream everything that we do. Before

Covid-19, we were already livestreaming our panto into local hospitals and hospices. And we're going to have another outdoor season; it is one of the silver linings to have come from the pandemic. Last year, we listened to [Mared Williams'](#) haunting voice on our hillside and thought: 'Hold on, we can keep doing this even when theatres are open again.' We have a wonderful outdoor space.

The thing we are most proud of is we have kept making work, even when it hasn't been able to happen in its full form, or at all. Our lifeblood is to tell stories and we'll work with freelance creatives to do that, no matter what. Equally important is our work with the [community](#). We have received a grant from the Arts Council of Wales and are creating a space where freelance artists can spend time with the young people that social services work with, so that together they can tell us what it is that they need.

There are two other major projects: the final design stage of our capital redevelopment, which is a total reimagining of our building; and becoming an independent trust from April, enabling us to be much more fleet of foot.

'We won't pull up any drawbridges'



'The most important thing is to be investing in work that is dynamic and relevant' ... the Royal Exchange, Manchester. Photograph: Dave

Thompson/PA

Bryony Shanahan, Royal Exchange, Manchester

There are definitely multiple versions of our plans. We are moving towards a date where we can say: ‘This is when we want to put on our first performance’. We hope we’ll be able to go into rehearsals back in the building, but we also have a plan to switch to digital. We are trying to hold on as tightly as we can to that date to give us something to work towards.

We’ll start with smaller-scale work, although still excellent stories with ambitious teams and slowly ramp it up. Because of the severity of our situation but also because of who we are, we thought it would not be possible, or right, for the Royal Exchange to return exactly as it was. The most important thing is to be investing in work that is dynamic, relevant and has a breadth of invitations and perspectives. It feels crucial that we don’t pull up any drawbridges. It’s also about noticing that the pandemic has disproportionately affected certain people and making sure everyone feels included in what is their civic space.

Roy Alexander Weise, Royal Exchange, Manchester

We feel excited and optimistic but it is difficult to start the year with conversations about potential lockdowns which may affect when we were planning to open, so we have to work even harder to build momentum and hope. The one thing we are really proud of is that the stories we are considering are still of epic proportions in terms of world, society, identity, community. Our job as programmers is to give somebody a magnifying glass to allow them full rein to examine something, have a conversation with an audience and invite them to look at the world through their point of view.

We’re even more committed to bringing community engagement work to the fore. One of the biggest ambitions we have is to bring parity to the ways in which work with professionals and non-professionals is valued within our sector. We want to let the communities in our midst know that we value their voices just as much as we do the glitzier work.

‘It’s almost a relief that we are closed for a time’



‘We had to dig ourselves out of various lockdowns’ ... Benedict Salter and Hannah Edwards in *Lone Flyer* at the Watermill in 2020. Photograph: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

Paul Hart, Watermill theatre, Newbury

We are applying for the second round of the culture recovery fund to obtain some support for 2021 which will be another rocky road. [On the back of last year](#) we know we can move quickly. We’re hoping for more notice this time but the extraordinary efforts of the team last year acts as a knowledge base. The big priority is that the work must be as inclusive as possible. Placing the audience at the centre is more important than ever.

It is likely we will do another outdoor season because it went really well last year and sold out in 24 hours. As a venue with our own grounds, we are incredibly lucky to have that option. There is no point expending massive energy (and cash) on programming things we might have to cancel. The on-off nature of production last year meant we had to dig ourselves out of various lockdowns and the impact on the organisation has been profound. From that point of view, it’s almost a relief that we are closed for a period of time because we are not worrying about closing a show again, as we had to with [Lone Flyer](#) and [A Christmas Carol](#). It’s not financially viable to continue like that.

We have a couple of shows in mind for when we can open with social distancing but most have greater costs and we need larger audiences to bring them back. I'm nervous about how this year is going to play out; the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England are being optimistic about lifting restrictions but we have to be realistic to prevent the constant cycle of cancelling or postponing shows.

A year from now, we will still be standing but the question is how badly damaged our organisation, and the industry, will be. We can stand on our own feet from the moment we're allowed to play to full capacity but we need some help bridging that gap. Without further government support, it will take us a lot longer to get back up and the impact on freelancers, audiences and the local community is palpable.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/jan/18/another-rocky-road-uk-theatre-bosses-eye-2021-with-resilience-and-realism>

[TV crime drama](#)

The Investigation: why my drama about Kim Wall doesn't name her killer



Dedication ... search teams in The Investigation. Photograph: Henrik Ohsten/BBC/Misofilm & Outline Film

Dedication ... search teams in The Investigation. Photograph: Henrik Ohsten/BBC/Misofilm & Outline Film

Tobias Lindholm disliked the media circus that followed the murder of the journalist onboard a submarine in Denmark. Instead, his new series tells the story of the police, the divers and her family

Tobias Lindholm

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

Had I known how demanding it would be to make my drama series [The Investigation](#), I am not sure I would have done it. But I'm proud I did. Kim Wall was a Swedish journalist and [her murder](#), onboard a submarine in Denmark in 2017, led to a media circus. The Danish press seized on it: there

was an obsession with the darkness of what happened, with so many theories flying around. Much of the focus was on the perpetrator.

All this made me turn away from the story. Knowing that I was a film-maker, parents I'd meet would say: "Wow, what a story – that would make a great movie." I thought: "Would it?" Here's a story we've heard many times before in fiction, revolving around a man who kills a woman. The name Kim Wall was barely mentioned by the press, compared with the name of the culprit.

It was only later, when I met [Jens Møller](#), chief of homicide with the Copenhagen police, that I got a different perspective. Initially, I was interested in speaking to him about a Chechen-Belgian terrorist who had blown himself up in Denmark. But, over coffee, Jens ended up telling me a different story, about "the submarine case" [Wall was originally thought to have died in an accident while interviewing the vessel's owner, who claimed he had buried her at sea. The police didn't believe him and, 10 days later, her torso was found washed ashore.]

Jens told me about leading the investigation into how Kim had died, about his friendship with [Kim's parents, Ingrid and Joachim](#), and about the extraordinary efforts of the scientists, divers and police dogs in searching for her body. On my bike ride home, I started to think there was a different kind of story here, not just another tale of a "fascinating" man who killed a woman. We could talk about society and a justice system that actually works, rather than humanising the perpetrator.

The most beautiful thing is that Iso – her parents' dog – plays itself

I didn't want to do a cliched story about the struggle between good and evil, and all the iterations of that. That makes sense with [Mindhunter](#) [which Lindholm worked on for Netflix] because that was about the FBI and how they did things back then. But it didn't make sense for this. I wanted to tell a story about Jens, Kim's parents and the humanity of it all. A story where we didn't even need to name the perpetrator. The story was simply not about him.

Jens introduced me to Ingrid and Joachim. I expected it to be one of the most

difficult meetings of my life, but they made it easy. I listened to their story and saw how much respect they had for the Danish police, the divers and everybody who had worked on the case. I started planning the story and speaking to the people who had been there. Their participation was key: the ship that lifts the submarine from the bottom of the ocean in the first episode is the one that did it in real life, with the same crew. We had the real divers there, too, with the head diver yelling lines to the actor playing him. Accuracy was very important. If I had started to pretend, to use my own imagination, I would have been the same as the journalists who covered it. The most beautiful thing is that Iso – Ingrid and Joachim's dog – plays itself. Joachim insisted.



Emotional toll ... Søren Malling as Jens Møller with Charlotte Munck as his wife Kristine. Photograph: Per Arnesen/BBC/Misofilm & Outline Film

I also got to see the emotional toll the investigation had taken on Jens. Every time we talked, he kind of unmasked himself, occasionally becoming upset. He started to understand what an emotional burden it had been for him, why it ended up being his last case with the Copenhagen police. We brought in some of his personal life in a humane and relatable way, and how another family's tragedy affected his own relationships. I became aware of the price these people – divers, investigators, first responders – pay in doing their job.

[‘We don’t want her to be remembered as the victim’: Kim Wall’s parents on telling her story](#)

[Read more](#)

I felt blessed to have had the support of Ingrid and Joachim, but I also felt a great responsibility – and I controlled the material more than I usually would. It meant so much when they were happy with the finished series. Now one in four Danes have seen it and we’ve been able to change people’s perspective on the case. The press now talk about [Kim as a journalist](#). The series, along with everything that her parents do, is a way of making sure that she is remembered as the talented, successful, important writer that she was.

- [The Investigation](#) begins on BBC Two and iPlayer at 9pm on 22 January.
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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/jan/18/the-investigation-drama-kim-wall-killer-tobias-lindholm>

Deaths in custody

Families of citizens dying after contact with police still await justice

Relatives of Darren Cumberbatch and Rashan Charles distrustful of IOPC's ability to hold police to account

- [Fewer than one in 10 police officers fired after gross misconduct finding](#)



A protest against the death of Rashan Charles outside Stoke Newington police station in July 2017. Photograph: Zuma Press Inc/Alamy

A protest against the death of Rashan Charles outside Stoke Newington police station in July 2017. Photograph: Zuma Press Inc/Alamy

[Mattha Busby](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Relatives of people who have died after contact with the police have told of their distrust in and dissatisfaction with the ability of the complaints system to help deliver justice.

“I feel the IOPC is there to shut families up and make us believe there is a thorough investigation,” said Carla Cumberbatch, sister of electrician Darren, who died at the age of 32 in July 2017 after he was punched up to 15 times, beaten with a baton, sprayed with CS gas and Tasered multiple times by officers.

They had been called to a bail hostel in Nuneaton, west Midlands, while he was experiencing a mental health crisis – behaving “irrationally” in a toilet bloc, according to the coroner.

An inquest jury said that police use of “considerable restraint” on Cumberbatch contributed to his death and was “at times probably avoidable”.

Officers, one of whom reportedly admitted making incorrect statements on police notes after the event and copying another officer’s notes word for word in his account of the incident, have not faced disciplinary consequences, but probation staff are to receive more training to de-escalate situations.

The watchdog’s initial statement, two days after Cumberbatch died and 11 days after the incident, said only that he had become “unwell” in police presence and criticised “unhelpful” speculation.

“It was like talking to a wall,” Cumberbatch’s sister said. “The way I was spoken to was disgusting. I was originally told it could take up to eight months to investigate, but over three years on we’ve still got no report; it took two years to get to an inquest.”

It is rare for the IOPC to recommend the suspension of officers, though it did so initially in 2017 in the case of Rashan Charles, who died in east London. Video footage showed an officer who held him breaching police standards on detention and restraint.

However, the Metropolitan police said regulations stated that an officer under investigation should not be suspended if temporary redeployment to alternative duties was appropriate.

[Police officer in death case resigned before disciplinary action](#)

[Read more](#)

The police officer was placed on office duties before the watchdog eventually concluded that the “unorthodox” restraint used against the 20-year-old did not amount to misconduct as his failures were not deemed to be deliberate.

Criticism of the watchdog’s response to Charles’ death has been led by his great-uncle, retired former Met Ch Insp Rod Charles, who said the watchdog simply echoed the Met’s version of events. Writing for OpenDemocracy, he said: “In its first statement, [it] claimed: ‘The man became unwell and first aid was provided by a police officer, police medic and paramedics.’ These accounts mislead by omission.

“They fail to mention that a police officer at the scene heavily restrained Rashan, with help from a second man. Instead they direct attention towards Rashan’s own actions.”

Kevin Clarke, who had serious mental health issues, died after he was restrained by police in March 2018 in Lewisham, south-east London. Nine Met officers were placed under unspecified restricted duties while under investigation by the IOPC.

In police body-cam footage of the incident, Clarke can be heard telling officers: “I can’t breathe … I’m going to die.” One officer told the inquest, which concluded recently, that he believed the restraint – applied because Clarke was “a bit fidgety” lying on the edge of a school playing field – was necessary and safe.

However, his family said he was “restrained unnecessarily and with disproportionate force” and that police officers were among those who “let Kevin die”.

The Met agreed that seven of the officers had a case to answer for misconduct after the watchdog said the continued use of handcuffs and limb restraints once Clarke was unconscious was “unnecessary and disproportionate”.

They were dealt with by the force “by way of practice requiring improvement” through identifying any organisational and individual learning and reflecting on what happened, the IOPC said.

Cumberbatch is still waiting for the IOPC investigation into her brother’s death [to be published](#). “If I punched you 15 times, there would be a criminal investigation, but nothing has been done about it,” she said. “No restricted duties, no suspensions, no desk duties, no misconduct, nothing. I struggle to understand after a serious incident why officers are not interviewed immediately to prevent conferring.

“Who do you call when police are the killers? The IOPC, many of whom are ex-police officers. In an ideal world I’d like to have justice, but what is justice? Even where unlawful killing has been ruled by an inquest, some officers have been able to return to duty.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/18/families-of-citizens-dying-after-contact-with-police-still-await-justice>

The Great British art tourArt and design

The Great British Art Tour: chiaroscuro illuminates a Cornish card game



Drawn into the drama ... A Game of Cut-Throat Euchre by Frank Gascoigne Heath (1909). Photograph: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

Drawn into the drama ... A Game of Cut-Throat Euchre by Frank Gascoigne Heath (1909). Photograph: Penlee House Gallery & Museum

With public art collections closed we are bringing the art to you, exploring highlights and hidden gems from across the country in partnership with Art UK. Today's pick: A Game of Cut-Throat Euchre from Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance

Katie Herbert, curator/deputy director, Penlee House Gallery & Museum
Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Euchre, a five-card trick game traditionally played by four players, is still played in Cornwall and the south-west of England, where local people are immensely proud of their heritage. The game was exported by migrant

Cornish workers, and there are Euchre leagues in Canada and the US as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Frank Gascoigne Heath's work was completed in 1909 and joined Penlee House's collection in 2017. Painted with great fluency and an impressive use of chiaroscuro, the work is significant for both its style and subject matter. It bears the hallmarks of the first-generation [Newlyn School](#) ethos of painting "plein air" [social realism](#), which focused on ordinary people doing everyday activities, and it is a remarkable and arresting example of the Newlyn School painters' concern with representing scenes from modern life.

Four men are seated in the shadowy hold of a fishing boat. Only three of them are playing – their game is a variant for three players known as [cut-throat euchre](#). The powerful presence of the card players is emphasised by the size of the picture, which measures 1.5 metres across. For all its grand scale, however, the scene is intimate. The men, dressed in ganseys (a type of fisherman's smock), sit in the shadows of the hold with the sunlight streaming down through the hatch. The light is diffused by the haze from the men's pipe and cigarette smoke, and all the players appear absorbed in their game. The man seated on the lower right wears a pilot's red cap. We are drawn into their inner circle and the drama of the game by the smallness of the space and the giant scale of the figures, two of whom are cut away in the foreground by the picture frame.

The painting was acquired from a private collection in 2017 and has fast become a favourite with visitors of all ages. The image of the Cornish card players has a strong cultural resonance. Cornwall's right to national minority status was [recognised by the government in 2014](#); Penlee House recognises and celebrates Cornish culture to give young people confidence and encouragement to identify with their cultural identity.

- You can see more art from Penlee House Gallery & Museum on [Art UK](#), and find out more on the [gallery's website](#).
- *This series is brought to you in collaboration with [Art UK](#), which brings the nation's art together on one digital platform and tells the stories behind the art. The website shows works by 50,000 artists from over 3,000 venues*

including museums, universities and hospitals as well as thousands of public sculptures. Discover the art you own [here](#).

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Brazil

Emicida, a rapper on a mission to recover Brazil's black history

Musician and maker of 'heroic' Netflix documentary warns his country is on a dangerous path



Emicida's film *AmarElo* has received rave reviews. Photograph: Wendy Andrade

Emicida's film *AmarElo* has received rave reviews. Photograph: Wendy Andrade



[Tom Phillips](#) in Rio de Janeiro

Mon 18 Jan 2021 00.00 EST

When the black Brazilian rapper Emicida imagines his country's whitewashed history, he sees a textbook missing a succession of key pages.

In his songs and on stage, the São Paulo-born musician tries to correct that skewed telling, remembering the lives and times of black Brazilian academics, artists and activists in the hope of changing Brazil's future.

“If we’d been told about this story and these [black] contributions at school, we’d have a radically different sense of who we are – and this would have produced a far better society than the one we’ve got today,” the 35-year-old artist said, quoting the famous saying that those who don’t learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Emicida, real name Leandro Roque de Oliveira, has been making music for more than a decade, recording three albums and building a reputation as one of [Brazil’s top hip-hop MCs](#). In the past 12 months he has also emerged as [one of the country’s most influential cultural figures](#).

[His new documentary, AmarElo](#), which was released on Netflix last month, has received rave reviews for its shocking but inspirational depiction of the

decades-old struggle against racist violence and inequality in a country still wrestling with the pernicious legacy of slavery.

“What Emicida is doing is tremendous and heroic,” music journalist Pedro Antunes enthused in [his review](#), calling AmarElo an antidote to “centuries of amnesia and racial whitening”.

Antunes said the film – which elevates [inadequately celebrated black figures](#) from Brazilian history including the intellectual [Lélia Gonzalez](#), the dramatist [Abdias do Nascimento](#) and the 18th-century architect [Tebas](#) – needed showing “in every classroom in the land”.

Emicida said he had understood his mission to promote Brazil’s sidelined black past in 2015, while visiting Angola’s national museum of slavery during his first trip to Africa. There, in a 17th-century oceanfront chapel, he saw a font where enslaved Africans were “convinced they had no souls” and baptised before boarding ships bound for countries such as Brazil, then the world’s biggest importer of slaves.

“I asked myself about the moments in my life when I felt I didn’t have a soul either; how I spent a good chunk of my life suspended in this gloom where I felt I wasn’t worthy of being considered intelligent, or strong, or important, or handsome, or any of these positive attributes that are part of the human experience,” he said during an interview from his home in northern São Paulo.

“The idea that those [black] bodies still have no soul is still very much alive in many people’s consciousness,” the rapper said, pointing to [relentless police violence against young black Brazilians](#) and [Covid’s disproportionate impact on poor, black Brazilians](#). He called Brazil “a country where black lives matter less”.

['Enormous disparities': coronavirus death rates expose Brazil's deep racial inequalities](#)

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“This process of *desalmação* [‘de-souling’], of removing these people’s souls, is the reason black people occupy the top spots in all of our worst

rankings, when we talk about the prison population, or the number of murders, or this situation where the state feels absolutely free to kill [black] people without any restraint.”

Emicida said Brazil, the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery, had suffered “an unofficial system of apartheid” well before the 2018 election of Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right populist who has faced repeated accusations of racism against black and indigenous people. But he feared that Brazil’s pro-gum president – whom he has called a “worm” – might be the first chapter of a rollback of hard-fought civil rights.

Brazilian politics “was going down a very dangerous path”, the rapper warned. “The way I see it, if we aren’t careful, there’s a big chance of someone like Bolsonaro being just the tip of the iceberg – and we have to talk about this.”

Emicida claimed that Bolsonaro’s hostility to culture was driven by his desire to limit this kind of free, fact-based debate that would expose him as a fraud.

“He knows culture creates a space for reflection – and someone who feeds on chaos is obviously going to feel complete hatred for anything that creates this kind of space. Because if you had a healthy debate, someone like him would never hold the office he does.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/emicida-rapper-brazil-black-history-netflix-documentary>.

2021.01.18 - Opinion

- The British public are careful and calm – the problem is that the government isn't
- The weather's dismal but it shouldn't stop us enjoying our local wildlife this lockdown
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[**Opinion**](#)[**Coronavirus**](#)

The British public are careful and calm – the problem is that the government isn't

[**John Harris**](#)



A view of people as rule-breaking chancers is being used as a distraction from the Conservatives' failures. They mustn't get away with it



Illustration by Nathalie Lees

Illustration by Nathalie Lees

Sun 17 Jan 2021 09.47 EST

This is what a true crisis feels like. The UK has now recorded [more than 100,000 deaths](#) from coronavirus and, according to the government's chief scientific adviser, the daily toll will continue to be awful "[for some weeks](#)". Our capital city is so overrun that Covid patients are being moved to intensive care units [hundreds of miles away](#), and across England nearly 4.5 million people are now [waiting for operations](#).

A test-and-trace system that was meant to be "world-beating" is almost irrelevant; we now learn that the £78m plan for daily mass testing in English schools [has not been approved by the agency](#) that oversees medicines and health products. Vaccinations will eventually ease the situation, but everywhere else you look, there are government blunders, delays and failures which – in a more predictable world – would already have had huge political consequences.

What kind of country allows this to happen? [In the polls](#), the Conservatives are either ahead or neck and neck with Labour. Among many people I have interviewed and some I know, there seems to be a shrugging belief that, because the virus is unprecedented, disaster of some kind was always

inevitable, and on balance, Boris Johnson and his ministers are doing as well as anyone could. Sometimes, in fact, I wonder whether calamity is so built into our understanding of politics and power that some of the public almost expect nothing less: as Fintan O'Toole put it in his book [Heroic Failure](#), “the grand balls-up is not new, and in English historical memory it is not shameful”.

One reason, perhaps, is bound up with an ingrained unseriousness that has periodically surfaced in our national life – and which Johnson has revived, to keep people’s expectations of his government low and shield him and his colleagues from their own failures. What have been his most memorable phrases since the crisis began? “[Squash that sombrero](#)”? “[Send coronavirus packing](#)” in 12 weeks? “[Operation last gasp](#)”? Or his grim characterisation of the virus as an “[invisible mugger](#)”?

Though most observers are seemingly too polite to admit it, when Johnson hosts press briefings or makes television announcements with his hair freshly ruffled, and the sense that a smirk may not be too far from his lips, there is an implied deflation not just of the gravity of his message, but of his own accountability. And a similar spirit runs through the entire government. Last week, the fisheries minister admitted that [she had not read the Brexit trade deal](#) because she had been “very busy organising the local nativity trail”. The reason [Gavin Williamson](#) is still the education secretary has something to do with the same syndrome: given low public expectations, brazen incompetence is priced in, and the pantomime carries on.

There is an associated set of questions about what the government thinks about the public, and how those perceptions have shaped its responses to the crisis. A lot of official thinking seems to be derived from the pages of the rightwing papers, and a picture of Britain – or, more specifically, England – as a country that always verges on the ungovernable, and tends to view orders from on high with the utmost scepticism. In this reading, millions of people have greeted every new restriction with howls of anguish, captured in a long run of headlines: “[Pubs shut till Xmas](#)” (The Sun); “[Families ask when will the nightmare end](#)” (Mail Online); “[Fury of golfers](#) as they are banned from the links” (Daily Mail). There is no little irony in the fact the same outlets tend to hark back to a wartime Britain that was supposedly determined to keep calm and carry on.

This view of the country's mood has embedded the idea that, if the government has often been hasty and irresponsible in loosening the lockdowns, [it was only responding](#) to a public "clamour". Last summer, given that many people were tiring of confinement in balmy weather, the pubs simply had to reopen. Christmas is such a non-negotiable part of everyone's calendar that the government would inevitably plan to drastically relax the rules for a few days, to avoid some kind of national uprising.

In the same way, exiting the first lockdown was never going to be framed as something best done cautiously, but a spell of joyous freedom kicked off by "[happy Monday](#)", when barbecues would be lit, and all would once again be well. Even at the time, plenty of people knew what was happening was reckless. But the public gets what the public wants.

For the people at the top, one corollary of all this has now proved to be very useful. The narrative of an impatient, risk-taking population means that millions of us can be held to be complicit in the government's failures. In the last fortnight, this has been reflected in the idea that, as hospitals are nearing breaking point, much of the blame must lie with everyday rule-breakers, from [people on beaches](#) to the miscreants who think nothing of driving miles to "beauty spots". The disaster, it seems, belongs to us all: it is not that Johnson and his colleagues have screwed up, but that the whole country proved unequal to what the virus demanded (remember that Dominic Cummings, [in the prime minister's view](#), "followed the instincts of every father and every parent").

Self-evidently, this is light years from the truth. A recent [study by University College London](#) – which collected responses from more than 70,000 participants – found 96% were following most or almost all of the rules for the week ending 10 January, the highest figure since April of last year. According to YouGov, 85% of people [endorse the new lockdown](#), and 77% think it should have happened sooner. All over the country, there is a sense of dutiful and resigned acquiescence, however difficult some of the rules may be for millions of us. There are genuine echoes here, perhaps, of the autumn of 1939, and the Labour politician Richard Crossman's observation that people greeted the introduction of conscription with "an apathetic equanimity impossible a year ago".

If the government is ever going to be held to account, this is the country we need to hear a lot more about. Indeed, for the Labour party – which currently seems to be floundering around in search of a message, and bloodlessly fixating on either “competence” or the [need for tougher rules](#) – telling a story about the contrast between the country the political right imagines and the one that actually exists might be a good idea.

Most of the public are stoic rather than impatient, and possessed of a calm and a sense of duty the government seems to have long since mislaid. Make this point often enough, and the politics and morals of 2021 might become much easier to see, along with the deep ditch we have all been led into.

- John Harris is a Guardian columnist
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OpinionWinter

The weather's dismal but it shouldn't stop us enjoying our local wildlife this lockdown

[Chris Packham](#)



Winter is when you get the very best out of your senses. Bare trees mean that you can hear every sound and watch for birds



‘By the end of our walk, we had clocked about 30 species of birds – robins, wrens, great tits, woodpeckers (pictured).’ Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

‘By the end of our walk, we had clocked about 30 species of birds – robins, wrens, great tits, woodpeckers (pictured).’ Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

Do you remember the first lockdown? We were scared but for most of us it was easier than this gloomy winter shutdown. We hadn’t endured a year of the coronavirus crisis – of fears for vulnerable family members, of economic shock, mental health challenges and ruined livelihoods. It was also the sunniest spring ever. The traffic stopped, the birds sang and so many people reported positive benefits for their mental and physical wellbeing from connecting with nature.

I hoped that we would all remember those physical and mental health benefits of spending time in wild green places. But I fear it’s not happening.

It’s mostly cold, wet and dismal outdoors, and many of us dismiss winter as a time of death and decay, absence, hibernation and senescence until spring can begin again.

That couldn’t be further from the truth. Nature can’t stop. [Winter](#) is not our nature’s seasonal holiday. It doesn’t just go for a great big nap or all clear off

to sunnier climes.

Every day, I look on to the grass beyond my window and see 150 wood pigeons. Fat grey birds picking their way across the lawn, scoffing acorns. It's joyous. When I returned from my walk this morning, there was this enormous blast of applause as all these pigeons took to the sky with their wings clapping. Wow. That's a real winter experience.

[Country diary: the woodworm's map of whimsy](#)

[Read more](#)

At night, the tawny owls are calling. They're in every city, wherever there are mature trees. I've heard them outside my place. Every night they're going berserk. It's that big early spring territorial push. So they're all getting cross with one another. It's hugely entertaining.

Beneath my feet, the heart-shaped leaves of [celandines](#) pushing through. The green leaves of bluebells are showing too. Snowdrops are only days away.

Winter weather may be dismal but it shouldn't stop us enjoying the wildlife on our local patch this lockdown. Rainproof clothing is cheap nowadays. We can cope.

A winter morning in the woods is when you get the very best out of all of your senses. Because there are no leaves on the trees you can hear every sound – I heard a male fox going “wuh-wuh-wuh” this morning, and the bark of a deer. Each noise is so much brighter and bigger and alive. Without leaf-clad trees, you can also see birds that you'd never catch sight of in winter.

The other day, it was misty and damp, definitely winter, and I went for a socially distanced woodland walk with sound recordist Gary Moore to make a short film for Winterwatch. Most of the time I'm out in nature alone, but I realised that I enjoyed the company too – the sharing of sights, sounds and this special winter experience.

We know a wander around in a green space will improve our mental health but our walk reminded me that to really get the most out of it, you have to

pick something in that space, and join with it and really connect with it. You could search for seeds. Or look at leaf shapes. Or feel the textures of tree bark. Or concentrate on the winter smells. I always think of the winter decay – those rotting leaves – as nature's fruitcake. It's a complex, heady aroma of indulgent richness. I love that smell.

On this walk, we stopped and listened to birdsong. Really listened. And by the end of our walk, we had clocked about 30 species of birds – robins, wrens, great tits, woodpeckers. We identified some songs that we didn't know. For a couple of old duffers, that's great news. We've got so much more to learn!

We may be locked down in the same old local patch but there is always something new to discover. Scuffing through the woods recently, I noticed that a lot of the acorns on the ground have turned scarlet this winter. I'm 59, I've lived in oak woodland for many years and I've never noticed that happening before. What's going on? Nature is an inexhaustible well to excite a curious mind.

So please don't forget how being outside made you feel during the first lockdown. I know it is dark and sometimes depressing but get yourself a cheap waterproof, pull on some wellies, walk out there and take care of yourself. We will get through it.

- The new series of Winterwatch begins on [BBC Two](#) on Tuesday
- Chris Packham is a naturalist, nature photographer and author, and one of the presenters of BBC Two's Springwatch

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[**Opinion**](#)[**Coronavirus**](#)

Now the vaccine is here, I feel a sudden urge to make the most of lockdown

[**Emma Brockes**](#)



It is easier to weather the first flush of a crisis than beat out time in its dying days – but some good can come of this moment



In New York ‘time has slowed to a crawl. Nothing is happening’.

Photograph: Kena Betancur/AFP/Getty Images

In New York ‘time has slowed to a crawl. Nothing is happening’.

Photograph: Kena Betancur/AFP/Getty Images

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

For the last week or so, a new type of text has been reliably coming in, in various states of excitement and relief, from friends – medics, teachers – sending photos of their [vaccination certificates](#). Some received stickers after the jab, rather as one does after voting, bearing the legend: “I got my Covid-19 vaccine”. One wonders if, in the design departments of the large New York hospitals, there was a temptation to round out that statement with the exclamation mark we’re all surely feeling.

It is tremendously good news, obviously, that despite continuing problems with rollout, [more than 370,000 people](#) in New York have been vaccinated up until the end of Saturday. It also raises to the level of frank incredulity the cognitive dissonance of this bizarre period. While a tiny proportion of the population is now safe from the virus, in a single week in January, more than 3,000 people died of Covid in California alone and infection rates in the US – as in Britain – remain staggeringly high. A new president will soon be inaugurated, but the old one continues to foment trouble. Things are,

assuredly, looking up. Meanwhile, members of the National Guard [sleep on the floor](#) of the Capitol.

As with every anticipated turning point of the last year, the hardest thing about all this is the waiting. How, exactly, is one to organise a response to the promise of better days, when the start line keeps being pushed back? It is striking, going over the past 12 months and with the anniversary of the first lockdown approaching, to recall how naive our expectations once were. I remember the shock, last spring, of understanding for the first time that nothing would be resolved by the summer; of realising, a few weeks later, that the schools wouldn't go back full-time in the autumn; of coming to terms, slowly, with the realisation that despite the vaccine, the new year would bring no greater clarity.

[New York confirms state's first case of more contagious Covid strain](#)
[Read more](#)

So here we are in January, a time of year, for all its grimness, usually dedicated to optimism and renewal. Relative to every other stage of the past 12 months, it should be possible to drum up some excitement, or at least a sense of expectant joy for the coming year. Our parents are being vaccinated. We may be able to travel again, modestly, this summer. Surely – surely – there will be no further disruption to the schools come the next academic year. By Christmas, won't things be more or less back to normal?

The sense of suspended animation has either gone on too long, or the number of raised and dashed hopes been too high, that "Christmas 2021" does not seem like a reachable shore at this point, and none of these happy projections are landing. The current feeling, at least in [New York](#), is that the holding pattern of deferred plans and reunions, of lightweight fear every time you consider taking the subway or hiring a babysitter, only to cancel because the risk seems too great, is one that will never be broken. Each peak and crisis will simply hand over to the next one. We will never be on the other side of this. We will remain in this situation for ever.

It's a delusion, of course, galvanised by the fact that the adrenaline of the first waves has worn off and most of us are now running on empty. In the US, this feeling has only been hardened by the political crisis and the

knowledge that, for all the relief of an incoming Biden administration, the forces unleashed by Trump aren't going away. And while this year of the pandemic will, surely, be better than the last, it is perhaps easier to weather the first flush of a crisis than beat out time in its dying days. No matter how bad the implementation, the majority of the population will eventually receive the vaccine and normal life will return, a certainty that, paradoxically, replaces shock and resignation with what feels like a much harder line in impatience.

The only consolation, in keeping with the pious reflections of the first lockdown, is to make good use of this time, not by writing a novel or clearing your to-do list (although if you can, all power to you), but by somehow making a virtue of the drag of the days. In among the dreariness of this season of waiting, I find myself subject, occasionally, to sudden gusts of joy. Time has slowed to a crawl. Nothing is happening. My children are lately turned six, and if time continues to pass in this manner of a never-ending present, won't turn seven for fully a decade. Seize it.

- Emma Brockes is a Guardian columnist

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OpinionFamily

Who deserves the wifi? The war is on in my house – and I am losing

Zoe Williams



Last year, it was simple: if you had proper work, you deserved it; if you were keeping a pig alive in Minecraft, you were kicked off. Those rules have now come back to bite me



Priority internet users only ... ‘Never have I been bitten so hard by one of my own rules’ (posed by models). Photograph: Luca Sage/Getty Images

Priority internet users only ... ‘Never have I been bitten so hard by one of my own rules’ (posed by models). Photograph: Luca Sage/Getty Images

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Last year – forgive me, you’ve heard it all before – working from home in a lockdown meant the perpetual shuffling and reshuffling of the family hierarchy, like being a croupier in a casino of the mundane. Who deserved the best Zoom background, the person meeting the NHS mental health commissioners, or the one interviewing a well-loved face from daytime TV? Who should stack the dishwasher, the person who tessellated the best, or the person who didn’t do it the last four times?

It boiled down to whose work was the most important, and it is surprising just how much variety you can work up around that single argument. The pinnacle was wifi, and that was pretty simple: if you had proper work, you deserved it, and if you were trying to keep a pig alive in Minecraft, you could be kicked off as the situation demanded.

Never have I been bitten so hard by one of my own rules. Remote learning has taken a wild turn. The school is doing live lessons all day long, and you can’t walk past anyone’s door without hearing something you didn’t know

about Descartes (everything, in truth) or the gentle patience of a maths teacher wondering out loud whether everyone's finished. Even the two children who are both in the same year have different timetables, and even if they're not WhatsAppending their friends, which they always are, the bandwidth is straining its seams. Mr Z can still make a solid case for his internet usage, as he is solving the mental health crisis all day long, and such work can only be undertaken in partnership with everyone else who wants to solve it.

The weak link here is me. Everyone wonders why I need to be online. One of the 13 year-olds asked yesterday why I couldn't do it all longhand and type it up later. Did I even really need a computer? I felt like King Lear. O reason not the need! Allow not nature more Twitter-hours than nature needs, man's life's as cheap as beast's!

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[Opinion](#)[Coronavirus](#)

I never thought of Zimbabwe as a haven of stability. This year, I finally could

[Michelle Kambasha](#)

My family fled the country in the 1990s, but its cautious handling of the pandemic has made it feel safer than Britain

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‘Many African countries, scarred by previous pandemics, realised quickly that there was very little room for error, and did what they needed to do.’ A man has his temperature checked in a shop Harare, Zimbabwe, in October. Photograph: Aaron Ufumeli/EPA

‘Many African countries, scarred by previous pandemics, realised quickly that there was very little room for error, and did what they needed to do.’ A man has his temperature checked in a shop Harare, Zimbabwe, in October. Photograph: Aaron Ufumeli/EPA

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

When I tell white British people I'm going to [Zimbabwe](#), I'm used to seeing two emotions quickly flash across their faces. The first is excitement and the second is fear. Who can blame them? Excitement and fear are how the continent of Africa has been painted for decades – long before malnourished children with flies orbiting the crowns of their head became a staple of charity appeals.

It's not just British people who have been taught to feel this way. The political and economic upheavals of post-colonial [Africa](#) have even coloured how the colonised feel about their lives and their futures. [Africa](#) as a “basket case” is an idea that has infiltrated even Africans’ minds. But the truth is always far more complicated than any lazy stereotype can convey – and recent events have brought that home to me in dramatic fashion.

My family moved to England as economic immigrants wanting to make a better life for their children. The collapse of the Zimbabwean economy in the 1990s spelled the end of their time as freewheeling twentysomethings, raising a small child. So, in 1996, when I was four, we packed up. England offered education, amenities, healthcare and a stable government. As children of Rhodesia, where speaking English was mandatory, my parents’ language skills were especially good – they had been taught at the best schools in Salisbury (now Harare). This made their assimilation easier and quicker.

[Zimbabwe enters Covid lockdown amid fears over crowded new year parties](#)
[Read more](#)

For years, we never looked back. At that time being Zimbabwean was particularly stigmatised and my parents would often deny their true nationality, opting instead for South African. In year six, I found myself at primary school with a white Zimbabwean. Testing the waters, I'd told her where I was really from, thinking we'd have something in common. But the ensuing discussion about white Zimbabweans being thrown off their farms on the orders of Robert Mugabe proved too contentious for my little 11-year-old brain, and for years afterwards I assumed my parent’s pseudo-South African identity.

As the political climate settled, so did our qualms. Ten years ago, we began going back to Zimbabwe every other Christmas. At first it was a culture shock. It's not easy to readapt to a land that you know is yours, but somehow doesn't feel like that.

That slight discomfort lingered. But flying to Zimbabwe this Christmas felt different. Yes, there was a pandemic on. For the first time, though, I was fully at ease.

Why? It's no secret that England's response to the coronavirus pandemic has been at best lacklustre and at worst fatal. Lockdown was delayed until it was too late, frontline workers were left without PPE, testing was woefully inadequate, among many other things. England alone has seen about [77,400 people die](#) after contracting Covid – roughly the same as the [entire continent of Africa](#). There are scientific and demographic reasons for this, sure – the population skews younger, and the weather can be less conducive to viral transmission. But that's not the whole story. Because many African countries, scarred by previous pandemics, realised quickly that there was very little room for error, and did what they needed to do.

Under the tutelage of World Health Organization regional director for Africa, [Matshidiso Moeti](#), governments like Zimbabwe's did as much as they could. With her four-decade long experience of containing outbreaks across the region, most infamously HIV, Moeti urged pre-emptive lockdown measures right at the beginning of the pandemic, conscious of the fragility of healthcare systems on the continent. Countries were encouraged to repurpose existing disease control operations. Moeti [told the Financial Times](#) that it's “only when you get to know the communities that are affected that you can find the most effective way to intervene”.

The days ahead are undoubtedly going to be difficult. Infections have jumped recently, partly as a result of Zimbabweans returning from South Africa, where the new variant has been spreading rapidly, for the holidays. This is clearly a virus that is going to keep presenting us with new challenges, and no one has a magic wand to wave it all away. I was reassured, though, by the fact that the reaction to the rise wasn't dithering and debate, but [a swift 30-day national lockdown](#).

And while Boris Johnson proved his incompetence as a leader in crisis, I couldn't help but be reminded of [his comments](#) about Britain's former African colonies: "The problem is not that we were once in charge, but that we are not in charge any more." Those words seem even more laden with hubris now than when they were written in 2002, especially as just before Christmas the UK faced [potential food shortages](#) and travel bans – the kind of chaos people normally associate with developing countries. I felt no schadenfreude, but as I sat on my flight to the relative safety of an African country, I considered whether there were some lessons in humility to learn among an elite that projected such confidence in its ability to mount a "world-beating" response to the virus.

While my friends in England acquainted themselves with [tier 4 restrictions](#), my family had big plans. We stayed at a lodge just three hours outside Harare. Our temperatures were checked every day and all staff and visitors, without exception, wore PPE to ensure our safety. We went on a game drive and saw animals that many will never see in their lifetimes – impalas, lions, giraffes, zebras. We bonded with the lodge's pet water hog, who most evenings we'd find splayed across the sofa closest to fireplace in the deepest, peaceful looking sleep. It was the first time since March that I'd felt safe.

Before Covid-19, going to Zimbabwe felt like an obligation to my ancestry. This time it felt like a luxury, and one that I'd know to never take for granted. It was like escaping a burning building into one that stood firm – at least for the time being. The irony of our reverse scramble to Africa wasn't lost on us. In today's Zimbabwe we found the exact opposite of what my parents had run away from in the 1990s. I overcame the naive embarrassment of being Zimbabwean many years ago but am left with guilt and anger at this inferiority complex that had been slowly embedded in me all these years. I wonder how long it will take to undo that.

- Michelle Kambasha works in the music industry
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[OpinionIsrael](#)

The Guardian view on Israel and apartheid: prophecy or description?

[Editorial](#)

With no roadmap for peace, Israel risks being compared to the old South Africa



‘There is a serious argument about injustices to be had.’ An Israeli border guard gestures at a Palestinian protester in July 2020. Photograph: Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP/Getty Images

‘There is a serious argument about injustices to be had.’ An Israeli border guard gestures at a Palestinian protester in July 2020. Photograph: Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP/Getty Images

Sun 17 Jan 2021 13.42 EST

It was a deliberate provocation by [B'Tselem](#), Israel’s largest human rights group, to describe the Palestinians in the Holy Land as living under [an apartheid regime](#). Many Israelis detest the idea that their country, one they see as a democracy that rose from a genocidal pyre, could be compared to

the old [racist Afrikaner regime](#). Yet figures such as [Desmond Tutu](#) and [Jimmy Carter](#) have done so.

There is a serious argument about injustices to be had. Palestinians – unlike Israeli Jews – live under a fragmented mosaic of laws, often discriminatory, and public authorities which seem indifferent to their plight. Apartheid is a crime against humanity. It is a charge that should not be lightly made, for else it can be shrugged off. Some might [agree](#) with the use of such incendiary language, but many will recoil. The crime of apartheid has been [defined](#) as “inhumane acts committed in the context of a regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups with the intention of maintaining that regime”.

There are nearly 5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, all without Israeli citizenship. In the West Bank, Palestinians are bereft of civil rights, while Israelis in the occupied territory enjoy the full support of the state. Hamas won Gaza’s election in 2006, but the blockade that Israel imposes means it is in charge. Egypt has sealed its border, but nothing and nobody can get in or out without [Israeli permission](#). Meeting the needs of Gaza’s growing population, say [relief agencies](#), is at the whim of Israel. About 300,000 Palestinians in the areas formally annexed in 1967 – East Jerusalem and surrounding villages – do not have full [citizenship and equal rights](#). Last year, the Israeli NGO Yesh Din [found](#) that Israeli officials were culpable of the crime of apartheid in the West Bank. Such a finding can only be a tragedy for all, including this newspaper, who wish the state of Israel well.

B’Tselem [argues](#) that Palestinians are afforded various levels of rights depending on where they live, but always below Jewish people. The group says it is becoming impossible to insulate Israel from its prolonged occupation project, leading it to run an apartheid regime not just outside its sovereign territory but inside it. There are about 2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel, a minority under pressure not to antagonise the Jewish majority. Within Israel, discriminatory policies are not difficult to find. National security is invoked to justify often racist citizenship laws. Jewish-only communities have admission committees that can legally reject Palestinians on the grounds of “cultural incompatibility”. A web of land and

planning laws squeeze Palestinians into a shrinking space. There are Israeli Arabs whose prominence in society belies the [poverty of the majority](#).

Israel has a problem of historic discrimination. But under [Benjamin Netanyahu](#)'s government there has been the enactment of the [nation state law](#) that constitutionally enshrines Jewish supremacy and a plan to formally annex parts of the West Bank. Some prominent Jewish intellectuals, such as the writer [Peter Beinart](#), have given up on the idea of a Jewish state. No government formed after the [forthcoming election](#) will support genuine Palestinian statehood or have a viable peace plan.

This begs B'Tselem's [heretical](#) question: what if there is only, in reality, one regime between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, rather than one political power that controls the territory in which there are distinct regimes? A system of separate and unequal law and systemic discrimination against Palestinians has been justified because it was meant to be temporary. But decades have passed and the situation worsens. If this is a twilight for democracy and equality in the Holy Land, one can only hope that the night will be short.

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2021.01.18 - Sport

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England in Sri Lanka 2020-21

England wrap up seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka in first Test

- Day five: [Sri Lanka 135 and 359 all out; England 421 and 76-3](#)
- Tourists seal victory with minimum of fuss at Galle



Dan Lawrence (left) and Jonny Bairstow celebrate England's victory in Galle on day five of the first Test. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

Dan Lawrence (left) and Jonny Bairstow celebrate England's victory in Galle on day five of the first Test. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

[Ali Martin](#)

[@Cricket_Ali](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 00.55 EST

England needed little more than half an hour to wrap up a seven-wicket victory over Sri Lanka on the fifth morning in Galle, as Jonny Bairstow and debutant Dan Lawrence knocked off the remaining 36 runs to secure a 1-0 series lead.

The pair had resumed first thing with England 38 for three, their pursuit of 73 having wobbled the previous evening when Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley and Joe Root all fell in quick succession as Sri Lanka's spinners induced a spell of panic.

[Sri Lanka v England: Visitors win first Test by seven wickets – as it happened](#)

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But Bairstow and Lawrence combined for a stand of 52 that saw England home in the 25th over, the former sealing the win – and England's fourth successive victory away from home – when sweeping Dilruwan Perera for his second boundary of the morning.

Bairstow finished unbeaten on 35 on his return to the side after a year-long absence, having made 47 the first innings, while Lawrence completed an encouraging Test debut by following the 73 he made on day two with 21 not out.

“To come in with the little preparation we've had and play in the manner we have is impressive,” said Joe Root, player of the match for his 228 in England's first innings.

“The whole bowling group in general. To perform the way we did after lunch yesterday was brilliant. It's a good start to the tour but we'll keep looking to get better. There's still more to come from the group and it's important we have that attitude.”

This was Root's 24th Test victory as England captain – seeing him go level with predecessors Alastair Cook and Andrew Strauss, and just two away from Michael Vaughan's record – and a first on the road without his deputy, Ben Stokes, alongside him.

While there was obvious delight about his own performance – “The thing that pleased me the most was my mindset” – Root also used the presentation to talk up the five-wicket hauls secured by spinners Dom Bess and Jack Leach.

This was the first time since 1982 that two England spinners have got on the honours board in the same Test, with Root calling it “a brilliant achievement” and one that “shouldn’t be overlooked” as he looks to build the pair’s confidence with five Tests on the subcontinent still to come this winter.

Dinesh Chandimal, Sri Lanka’s stand-in captain, was left to rue a first innings implosion of 135 all out from his side. “We were outplayed in the first innings with bat and ball,” he said. “As a batting unit, we have to get a big total in the first innings. It cost us the game.”

Sri Lanka had gone into the final morning knowing they needed a miracle and after the fourth ball of the day Chandimal sent a review upstairs for lbw against Lawrence.

Kumar Dharmasena, the on-field umpire, appeared to gesture that the right-hander was struck outside the line when sweeping Perera, when in fact it was a brush of glove that made his not out decision correct.

[Dom Bess storms to centre stage after a whirlwind journey to the top | Jonathan Liew](#)
[Read more](#)

Had Chandimal made use of the system during Perera’s next over, however, he would have secured the breakthrough. Lawrence was struck in front by one that spun in from the off-spinner and though the angle made lbw appear problematic, the ball-tracking suggested Dharmasena’s not out call would have been flipped.

These two moments were as close as Sri Lanka got to inducing a repeat of the previous evening’s drama, with the hosts instead left to rue what might have been had they not collapsed on the first day.

Their characterful second innings of 359, driven by a century from Lahiru Thirimanne and 71 from Angelo Mathews, should give them confidence, however, as they head into Friday’s second Test on the same ground looking to draw the series.

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England in Sri Lanka 2020-21

Sri Lanka v England: Visitors win first Test by seven wickets – as it happened

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/live/2021/jan/18/sri-lanka-v-england-first-test-day-five-live>

[SportblogEngland in Sri Lanka 2020-21](#)

Dom Bess storms to centre stage after a whirlwind journey to the top

The unorthodox spinner may always attract criticism but against Sri Lanka he has shown the value of his turbulent style



Dom Bess celebrates the wicket of Kusal Perera on the first day of the first Test. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

Dom Bess celebrates the wicket of Kusal Perera on the first day of the first Test. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket



[Jonathan Liew](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 11.43 EST

Dom Bess is at school. He's reading out loud in class. He's never been the most gifted of students, but he tries hard and desperately wants to do well. But now – for some reason – the words aren't coming out. His classmates snigger. His teacher tells him to keep going. Still the words refuse to come. There's no escape. Breath quickening, cheeks burning with embarrassment and wet with tears, Bess breaks down.

A few years later, in 2018, Bess and his girlfriend are in Ikea looking at sofas for their new home. His phone rings. It's Ed Smith, England's national selector. Bess may only be 20 years old, a raw talent with just 16 first-class appearances. But Jack Leach has broken a thumb, Moeen Ali is burnt out, and so Bess – not even Somerset's first-choice spinner – is speculatively thrust into the crucible of [a Test debut at Lord's](#).

[England require 36 to beat Sri Lanka after Jack Leach shines with five wickets](#)

[Read more](#)

The following year, Bess is sitting in an office behind the dressing room at Taunton, crying his eyes out. Since those two Tests the previous summer, he

has lost his England place, lost his Somerset place, lost himself. A few months after that, he is on the outfield at Cape Town, beer in hand, savouring a Test match win with his mates Zak Crawley and Matt Parkinson, and marvelling at just how quickly this game can change.

There are some spinners who look like they were born to spin. Nonchalant, natural, at ease. As if the ball is simply a fizzing extension of their hand. Bess, by contrast, examines it as if it were a fascinating toy, a piece of alien rock. He tosses it uncertainly from hand to hand. And then he runs in: not in the manner of an artist or a maestro, but a man desperate to turn the page and see what happens next.

What happens next is anyone's guess. Bess has received plenty of criticism in Galle this week for his inconsistency: the variable lengths, the occasional four-balls. By his own admission he hasn't performed brilliantly. And yet here he is, [taking eight wickets](#) and probably bowling England to a rare Test victory in Asia.



Dom Bess (right) celebrates with Sam Curran on day three. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

There was a CricViz stat doing the rounds on Thursday. Apparently, the “expected wickets” value of his first-innings haul of five for 30, based on the

deliveries he bowled, was just 0.18. As if to underline the point, in his first over on Sunday, Lasith Embuldeniya plopped an innocuous length ball straight to cover. All of which feeds into the prevailing narrative about Bess: that he is a bowler riding on blind luck, who will inevitably be exposed by better batsmen in India and Australia.

Partly, of course, Bess is a victim of the curious moral distinction between “deserved” and “undeserved” wickets. Bowled through the gate: deserved. Bowled off a bottom-edged pull: lucky. Caught behind: deserved. Sliced to point: lucky. But what if there’s something else going on here? What if Bess is weirdly good at encouraging batsmen into bad shots? To take on more risk than is good for them?

The Spin: sign up and get our weekly cricket email

One length delivery is not the same as another. Bess is not a big turner of the ball but he delivers with a deceptively high arm, giving him bounce and dip. This makes him relatively easy to defend but dangerous to attack. The most valuable wickets in Test cricket are top-six batsmen on between 10 and 40, just as they are beginning to settle and bed in. For Bess, such wickets account for 56% of his tally (15 out of 27). For Leach, the figure is 28% (11 out of 40).

Perhaps the fact that Bess always gives you a chance gives him a chance. This is the part of spin bowling that numbers barely illuminate: showmanship, misdirection, timing. And maybe the reason Bess is so good at it is because of his own experience of cricket and life.

Consider again Bess’s journey into international cricket from 2018-20: the spectacular rise, the spectacular disappearance, the gnawing fear of ending his career as a pub quiz answer. And then, suddenly and quite by chance, he’s back at the mercy of English cricket and its wild, incoherent expectations. Here, bowl a few with the old ball to give the seamers a rest. Here, carry the drinks. Here, win a Test match for England on a raging turner. If you’re a young, anxiety-prone cricketer, how do you make sense of this trajectory? And what sort of player do we think emerges from it?

[England's Jack Leach says he is spurred on by his year in Test wilderness](#)

[Read more](#)

Perhaps, ultimately, one who sees this game as wild, windy and liable to change violently in an instant. This is doubly true in the subcontinent, where wickets fall in clusters and entire Tests can crumble in a session, where nothing happens for ages and then everything happens at once. And it is surely just as true of life itself. Bess refers to his mental health struggles in terms of “triggers”. Bad weather can bring it on. So, too, darkness and closed doors. One brings two brings three.

If life has taught Bess anything about cricket, perhaps it is that the only way of ploughing through the maelstrom is not by fighting or dwelling on the game’s fluctuations but accepting and embracing them. By acknowledging that not everything happens to a pattern. He is a young player with bags of talent and precious little experience, and these things can go either way. Sometimes all you can do is turn the page and see what happens next.

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Mon 15 May 2017 07.00 EDT

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[Ten things to look out for this weekend](#)[Premier League](#)

Premier League: 10 talking points from the weekend action

Ole Gunnar Solskjær takes a leaf out of Fergie's book, Mason Mount channels vintage Lampard and Wolves' woes go on



Left to right: Kalvin Phillips; Mo Salah and Scott McTominay; Burnley's Dwight McNeil. Composite: Getty/EPA/Rex

Left to right: Kalvin Phillips; Mo Salah and Scott McTominay; Burnley's Dwight McNeil. Composite: Getty/EPA/Rex

[Guardian sport](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

1) Solskjær returns to Fergie blueprint at Anfield

There has been recent evidence that Ole Gunnar Solskjær's adherence to the lessons learned at Sir Alex Ferguson's feet was wavering. His Manchester United have lately shown something of their own identity, but here Solskjær used a classic Fergie blueprint. Even when United were far superior to

Liverpool, Anfield was where the old master's team would sit deep and try to score on the counter, or from set pieces. It is not difficult to imagine unsung players like Scott McTominay and Fred being handed a Ferguson detail of sweeping up the bits and pieces in midfield in the mould of a Phil Neville or Quinton Fortune. There was to be no unlikely goalscoring hero in the mould of a John O'Shea, Diego Forlan or Gary Pallister. Instead, Sunday will be recalled in future for Anfield's emptiness, a match endured rather than enjoyed. And Ferguson, even during his imperial period, would probably have been happy with a point. **John Brewin**

- *Match report: [Liverpool 0-0 Manchester United](#)*

2) City's assist king De Bruyne keeps delivering

Kevin De Bruyne recorded his 100th assist for Manchester City on Sunday night, swinging an inch-perfect cross in to allow John Stones to head home his first league goal for the club. It also nudged the Belgian into the Premier League's top 10 all-time goal creators; he has topped the assist charts in three of the last four seasons and is second only to Harry Kane this term. A running joke among City fans is that De Bruyne would rather add assists to his tally than goals, but his interventions this season are far from stat-padding. He set up the solitary goal in wins against [Sheffield United](#), Brighton and Southampton, the pivotal second for Phil Foden at Stamford Bridge, and Gabriel Jesus' equaliser against Liverpool. De Bruyne's missed penalty in that match was an outlier; had he scored, City would be top of the table now. If he keeps up his current form, it feels like a matter of time. **Niall McVeigh**

- *Match report: [Manchester City 4-0 Crystal Palace](#)*



Kevin De Bruyne made another important intervention to set up Manchester City's opener against Palace. Photograph: Matt McNulty/Manchester City FC/Getty Images

3) Squad depth helps Leicester maintain top-four push

Brendan Rodgers is confident Leicester have greater maturity, experience and strength in depth to avoid a similar drop-off to last season. This win cemented their top-four place as key players such as Ricardo Pereira and Caglar Soyuncu edge back into contention after a spell with injuries during which James Justin and Wesley Fofana have proved superb deputies. “We’re certainly not going to win every game between now and the end of the season but we’re going to do our best,” Rodgers said. “If you look at the team a year on, we’ve made developments both tactically and also from a mentality stance. That’s just maturity. It’s important you learn from mistakes but the biggest common denominator in our drop-off at the end of last season was we were missing our best players without that depth of squad.”

Peter Lansley

- *Match report: [Leicester 2-0 Southampton](#)*

[Steve Bruce turns to brutal honesty as moment of truth looms for Newcastle](#)
[| Louise Taylor](#)
[Read more](#)

4) Mount channels Lampard the player to break duck

It was a goal that evoked memories of Frank Lampard at his best: a midfielder driving into the box and floating into space before sending a loose ball into the net. Those late runs were Lampard's signature move as a player and now, as Chelsea's manager, he wants similar from Mason Mount after his winner at Fulham. It was Mount's first [Premier League](#) goal since September and although he brings energy and creativity to midfield, he is aware he needs to find the net more consistently. "There are times when we have the ball he can just get higher up the pitch," Lampard said. "When he gets older it'll be very natural for him to understand the moments he can get in there. If you keep getting in there he will score more. Rather than a 25-yarder, goals in the box are what Mason can definitely add." **Jacob Steinberg**

- Match report: [Fulham 0-1 Chelsea](#)



Mason Mount scores Chelsea's winner at Fulham. Photograph: Javier García/BPI/Shutterstock

5) Brewster needs game time at doomed Blades

Sheffield United are going down with a whimper. David McGoldrick's flicked header was only their 10th goal of the Premier League campaign, six of which have been scored by the striker. Alongside the veteran forward against Spurs was Oliver Burke, a winger by trade who scored once in 31 appearances while on loan at Alavés last season. On the bench was Rhian Brewster, who scored 10 in 20 for Swansea last season but is yet to get off the mark for the Blades. Brewster is the club's record signing but has only started six league matches, completing two of them. When the Blades are inevitably relegated, Brewster will be the man needed to fire them straight back up – so it is worth getting him in the team sooner rather than later to ensure he progresses under Chris Wilder. The young forward risks going backwards sat on the bench, potentially harming United's chances of returning to the top flight. **Will Unwin**

- Match report: [Sheffield United 1-3 Tottenham](#)

6) Minamino deserves chance to end Liverpool drought

A week is a long time in this rapid, relentless season; a month feels like an eternity. It was one month ago on Monday that Liverpool tore Crystal Palace apart, a 7-0 away win off the back of a win over Spurs that had some pundits asking exactly who could stop them defending their title. Jürgen Klopp's team have scored one league goal since, and that came early on against West Brom. The barren run now stands at 348 minutes (plus stoppage time) after [Manchester United](#) held the champions at bay with relative ease. The deployment of Takumi Minamino was effective at Selhurst Park, with the Japanese winger opening the scoring and completing the 90 minutes, allowing Klopp to rotate Sadio Mané and Mohamed Salah. It is strange that since then, Minamino has not played a minute while Liverpool's weary first-choice front three have started every league game. Minamino's time at

Liverpool has been hit-and-miss, but he surely deserves a chance to make an impact against Burnley on Thursday. **Niall McVeigh**

- [Klopp concedes Liverpool are in top-four fight](#)

[Jürgen Klopp's tepid attack is feeling ripple effects of a drained defence](#) |
[Barney Ronay](#)

[Read more](#)

7) Labouring Leeds miss Phillips ... and White

Alexis Mac Allister was arguably the game's brightest star but Ben White deserves a big share of the plaudits for his integral role in Brighton's first Premier League win since November. The former loanee Leeds centre-half showed Marcelo Bielsa and company what they're missing courtesy of an incisive performance in his new central-midfield habitat. Many games are effectively won and lost in that department and White's part in the visitors' dominance, not properly reflected by the slender scoreline, cannot be overestimated. His display also emphasised how much Leeds depend on their own midfield anchor, Kalvin Phillips, whose absence through suspension surely played a big part in a third successive defeat for a side whose next fixture – at Newcastle on Tuesday week – has suddenly assumed an unforeseen importance. **Louise Taylor**

- *Match report:* [Leeds 0-1 Brighton](#)

8) Wolves slip deeper into rut with derby defeat

Nuno Espírito Santo had hoped a win in the first Black Country derby for nine years would lift Wolves out of a rut. Instead his team fell to an error-strewn home defeat against West Brom that felt like a new low. When good players keep erring, something is on their minds. Adapting to a new system while trying to integrate inexperienced players to replace stalwarts is taking a toll. If the club do not buy reinforcements in this transfer window – especially a striker, even though Fabio Silva scored his second Premier League goal on Saturday and Patrick Cutrone has been recalled from loan – then Wolves will continue to look like a mishmash of a side. It does not help

that Nuno is persisting with a back four rather than the three-man defence to which Wolves had been accustomed. **Paul Doyle**

- *Match report: [Wolves 2-3 West Brom](#)*



Nuno Espírito Santo has problems to address at Wolves. Photograph: Nigel Keene/ProSports/Shutterstock

9) McNeil can help Clarets boost dire goals tally

For Sean Dyche, the solution is simple: [Burnley](#) need to score more goals. Dyche's side have managed just nine all season, the lowest in the division, but still find themselves outside the relegation zone with almost half of the campaign completed. The form of Dwight McNeil – who impressed in the 1-0 defeat at the London Stadium after being brought on at half-time – could be key for their chances of staying out of trouble after [Burnley](#) travel to Anfield on Thursday. “I thought there was a lot of creativity, especially from Dwight when he came on,” Dyche said. “The only question I have made of our wide players is to get to the far post in attacking situations. Defensively, generally we have been solid but it is now about operating better in the final third, no matter who is playing.” **Ed Aarons**

- *Match report: [West Ham 1-0 Burnley](#)*

10) Shape of relegation race is in the balance

While the top of the table is in a constant state of flux, the current bottom five have been in place since mid-October. Logic dictated that three teams from this group would go down, but recent results may have changed the picture. Burnley's revival saw them briefly leapfrog Brighton, but the Seagulls eased the pressure with victory at Leeds. Promoted [Fulham](#) and West Brom have improved in recent weeks but must keep picking up points to stop the gap from growing. They will contest a six-pointer at the Hawthorns in 12 days while [Fulham](#) face Brighton, West Brom go to Burnley and both teams play Sheffield United in the next month. It is hard to envisage both sides escaping but if either can put a run together, the drifting quartet above the bottom five – Leeds, Wolves, Palace and Newcastle – might finally have cause to look over their shoulders. **Niall McVeigh**

Pos	Team	P	GD	Pts
1	Man Utd	18	10	37
2	Man City	17	16	35
3	Leicester	18	12	35
4	Liverpool	18	16	34
5	Tottenham Hotspur	18	16	33
6	Everton	17	7	32
7	Chelsea	18	12	29
8	Southampton	18	5	29
9	West Ham	18	4	29
10	Aston Villa	15	13	26
11	Arsenal	18	1	24
12	Leeds	18	-4	23
13	Crystal Palace	19	-11	23
14	Wolverhampton	19	-8	22
15	Newcastle	17	-9	19
16	Brighton	19	-7	17
17	Burnley	17	-13	16
18	Fulham	17	-11	12

19	West Brom	18	-27	11
20	Sheff Utd	19	-22	5

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It's worth considering. Composite: AFP/Getty/Rex Shutterstock

[Will Unwin](#)

Wed 8 Jan 2020 10.57 EST

A PALMING INFLUENCE

Anyone who witnessed Manchester United being trampled on by their noisy neighbours in the Worthington Cup will have noticed a slight gulf in class. Red Devils boss Ole Gunnar Solskjær is also aware of it but the club are intent on only signing players who will improve the squad, meaning William Prunier and David Bellion are waiting by the phone.

How do you improve on perfect mid-table mediocrity? Well ... The Fiver has been scouting to help Ole replace the outgoing Ashley Young, who [looks likely to swap the Lowry Outlet for the chic streets of Milan](#). If a former Watford winger-cum-full-back is not what is required then the only answer is to find an even more versatile ex-Hornet to bring to Old Trafford. The finest utility man around is Steve Palmer, aged 51.

[Internazionale in talks with Manchester United over Ashley Young transfer](#)
[Read more](#)

Before we even start on his footballing capabilities, Palmer is a Cambridge graduate. The cerebral qualities of a man with a degree in software engineering could be useful for the ticket office, something Youngy cannot boast. During the 1997-98 season (yes, he brings a wealth of experience) [Palmer started the penultimate game in goal](#) just so he could wear the No 1 shirt, eventually sporting every number from 1-14 during the campaign. He swapped shirts with Alec Chamberlain after roughly four seconds, so has never conceded as a goalkeeper. With David De Gea chucking a few into his own net in recent weeks, it could be useful to have an extra pair of hands.

Joking aside, Palmer's main position is defensive midfield and United are crying out for someone there to replace the injured Scott McTominay and provide more mobility than Nemanja Matic. Alternatively, he is no stranger to playing at centre-back and with the defensive crisis at United caused by varying degrees of knack suffered by Harry Maguire, Eric Bailly and calamity's Phil Jones – not to mention Victor Lindelof forgetting what football was on Tuesday night – he could do a job there, too.

Palmer can slot in alongside whoever is left. He can also operate as a target man up top, a figure United have lacked, instead opting for young, quick players with skill and ingenuity which has worked infrequently. Palmer could offer the variation that top clubs need and be a focal point in attack when the going gets even tougher. Furthermore, Solskjær's side is highly reliant on kids, whereas Palmer has over 500 league appearances to his name, something that United could find invaluable. Ed Woodward will also be pleased that he's available at the right price: free.

LIVE ON BIG WEBSITE

Join Simon Burnton [at 8pm GMT for red-hot coverage of Leicester 3-1 Aston Villa](#) in the first leg of the Rumbelows Cup semi-final.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” – shy and retiring Ian Holloway describes how he’s feeling about life at Grimsby. [For more Mary Poppins references read Ben Fisher’s interview with him here.](#)



‘She blew in when needed and I feel like I’ve blown in when Grimsby need me.’ Photograph: Ryan Crockett/JMP/Shutterstock

FIVER LETTERS

“Any soccerball watchers in the USA! USA!! USA!!! who’ve had the bad luck to suffer through one of Alexi Lalas’s half-time TV tirades won’t have been surprised by the poor judgement and sheer inanity of his latest Sopranos critique (Tuesday’s Quote of the Day). Like everything emanating from this rent-a-quote’s big American pie hole, his opinions are usually long, loud, and instantly fuggetable” – Justin Kavanagh (and plenty of others).

“Re Alexi Lalas. I’d love to see him say that directly to Phil Leotardo. Or Chrissy. Or Silvio. Or Pauly. Or Johnny Sack etc etc etc (everyone, in fact, except Bobby Baccalieri)” – Tim Woods.

“It may reveal that I am a bigger fan of the Sopranos than the wider footballing scene, but all I can say in response to Quote of the Day is ‘Who is Alexi Lalas?’” – Carol Stewart.

“Opta statistics have Aston Villa’s midfield playmaker Jack Grealish as by far the most fouled player this season, a full 20 fouls ahead of nearest rival for most fouled (Wilfred Zaha). It’s got to be that haircut hasn’t it?” – John Myles.

“Whilst I’m sure we all appreciated the novelty of being schooled by a flamin’ Australian, could I point out that the next decade can’t be here yet. The clue is the word ‘next’” – Andy Turner.

Send your letters to the.boss@theguardian.com. And you can always tweet The Fiver via [@guardian_sport](https://twitter.com/@guardian_sport). Today’s winner of our prizeless letter o’the day is ... Carol Stewart.

NEWS, BITS AND BOBS

Kevin De Bruyne has revealed just how hard it was for Manchester City to plan their first-half evisceration of United. [“We did 15 minutes’ \[work on it\] – that’s all.”](#) Ouch.

The FA is under fire after FA Cup games were streamed globally by betting companies despite announcing it had cut all ties with gambling firms in 2017.

[Lazio have been fined €20,000](#) for their fans’ racial abuse of Mario Balotelli. Yup, that’ll stop them.

Everton director of football Marcel Brands had to use his unique skillset [to direct angry fans away from the training ground](#) after the club’s FA Cup defeat by some Liverpool schoolchildren.

Sadio Mané has got one over Mo Salah for not passing to him at Burnley by pipping his Liverpool teammate to [the men's African Footballer of the Year gong](#). Barcelona and Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala was named women's player of the year.

“The way my name is out there now it feels like I have been thrown under a bus. I went to [Big Dan Stendel] to try and have a word. He was watching videos of the Hibs game and said he didn’t have time to speak to me. That was the last of it for me at Hearts.” Glenn Whelan is the latest happy camper to have been hoofed through the door marked Do One by Hearts’ new sheriff in town.



The big man, right there. Photograph: Malcolm Mackenzie/ProSports/Shutterstock

[Moussa Sissoko will not play again for Spurs until at least April](#) after having surgery to fix a troublesome case of knee-knick.

Crystal Palace have told Bayern Munich to jog on after the brass-necked Bundesliga giants [asked if they could borrow Wilfried Zaha for the rest of the season](#).

[Darren Randolph's £4m move from Middlesbrough to West Ham has been delayed](#) so that further checks can be done on thigh-gah! that has kept him

on the sidelines in recent weeks.

And after AFC Fylde's groundsman did some Columbo-esque investigating, the club believe their Mill Farm pitch has been in a sorry state because of sabotage. "We found a brick covered in a cloth lodged deep in the drainage pipe," sleuthed head groundsman Ian Forshaw.

STILL WANT MORE?

Marina Hyde gets her teeth into the latest Scandi crime drama that is [the curious case of the perpetually vandalised Zlatan statue](#).



That's a nasty bit of ankle-knack. Photograph: TT News Agency/Reuters

The Supercopa's Saudi Arabian misadventure [is proving less than a hit with Spanish fans](#), writes Sid Lowe.

Suzanne Wrack on Emma Mitchell's move to Spurs and [why club rivalries aren't the same in the WSL](#).

Richard Foster invites us to [meet the stadium announcers](#) who have soundtracked Anfield and Griffin Park for decades.

Manchester City's shape-shifting was all too much for Manchester United in the first leg of their Milk Cup semi, [writes Jonathan Liew](#), while Paul Doyle [previews Wednesday's tie](#) between Leicester and Villa.

The Knowledge is [talking record non-league attendances](#), as we all should be.

Oh, and if it's your thing ... [you can follow Big Website on Big Social FaceSpace](#). And [INSTACHAT, TOO!](#)

SWIPE RIGHT FOR DUNDALK'S NEW SIGNING

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[SportblogAthletics](#)

Athletics has served 196 doping bans since 2017. There's a lesson here for other sports

[Sean Ingle](#)



Track and field takes doping seriously, banning 66 Olympic and world medallists since the Athletics Integrity Unit's launch in 2017



Brianna McNeal has been provisionally suspended after being charged with breaching anti-doping rules. Photograph: Fadel Senna/AFP/Getty Images

Brianna McNeal has been provisionally suspended after being charged with breaching anti-doping rules. Photograph: Fadel Senna/AFP/Getty Images

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

And still the headlines come. On Thursday the Rio Olympic 100m hurdles champion, Brianna McNeal, was provisionally suspended and [could face an eight-year doping ban](#) for “tampering”. The week before, the 2017 long jump world champion Luvo Manyonga was suspended and [could face a four-year ban](#) for whereabouts violations. Both cases are yet to be prosecuted, and the usual caveats about being innocent until proven guilty apply, but the message is increasingly clear. Track and field is a sport which takes anti-doping seriously.

[Brianna McNeal, Olympic 100m hurdles champion, could face eight-year ban](#)

[Read more](#)

How seriously? Well, since the [Athletics](#) Integrity Unit was set up in April 2017 to oversee drug testing and investigations, 66 Olympic and world medallists have served a doping ban. That is an astonishing statistic. Another 130 athletes, many of them winners on the prestigious Diamond League

circuit or major road races, have also been banned, bringing the total to 196. These are big numbers and big stars – and they don't include prominent cases under appeal to the court of arbitration for sport, either.

There will be some who will shudder at this news. Think of the bad publicity, they will mutter. I disagree. The high numbers should be celebrated, shouted from the rooftops. Because they indicate that track and field doesn't pay lip service to catching cheats but is actively going after its biggest stars.

How big? Take a roll call of those sanctioned in the past year or two:

- The world 100m champion Christian Coleman, who was [banned in October](#) after the AIU showed his claims that he had come back in time from a Christmas shopping trip to be tested was false. Coleman could have been one of the faces of the Tokyo Olympics. Now he will miss the Games.
- The former world marathon record holder Wilson Kipsang, who is [serving a four-year ban](#) after the AIU's investigators uncovered his use of a fake photograph of an overturned lorry to justify one of his missed tests.
- The Rio 2016 steeplechase gold medallist Ruth Jebet, who was banned for four years for testing positive for EPO.
- Jemima Sumgong, the Olympic marathon champion [whose ban was doubled to eight years](#) after her claims she was injected with EPO by an "impostor" at a Kenyan hospital during a doctor's strike were shown to be fraudulent.

There are plenty more, of course. However there is nothing inherent in track and field that makes athletes more likely to cheat. So the logical conclusion is that other sports have similar problems – but lack the resources and perhaps the resolve to uncover them.



Russia's Danil Lysenko was banned in 2018 for missing three doping tests in 12 months. Photograph: Matt Dunham/AP

So what could they learn from the AIU? The first is that catching cheats costs serious money. According to its annual report, World Athletics devotes 12% of its budget, around £6m a year, to the AIU. It allows the AIU to have nine staff in intelligence and investigations, eight in testing, five in case management and two each in education and admin. What might football, rugby or the International Olympic Committee achieve if they devoted similar resources to fighting the good fight?

The second key takeaway is that the AIU explicitly acknowledges that testing athletes rarely works in isolation. How can it when banned drugs can be in and out of an athletes' body in hours? As Victor Conte, the pharmacist who was sent to jail for his role in the Balco scandal in 2003, once told me: "Can athletes microdose with EPO and testosterone and get away with it? Yes, they can ... It's like taking candy from a baby." However when athletes are relentlessly target-tested, based on tip-offs and intelligence work, [the scales can be tipped in the authorities' favour](#).

Crucially the AIU makes heavy use of the rule that three missed tests in a 12-month period equates to a positive drugs test – even if someone has never

tested positive. It is the doping equivalent of getting Al Capone for tax evasion. But who cares if it works?

[Sebastian Coe shrugs off concerns that Nike track spikes give unfair advantage](#)

[Read more](#)

Finally, the AIU conducts serious investigations. Look at what happened when the 2017 world indoor high jump champion Danil Lysenko was suspended in 2018 for missing tests. It led to a 15-month investigation, involving 22 witness interviews and an extensive digital forensic analysis of more than six terabytes of electronic data. The result? Not only was Lysenko banned but the board of Russian Athletics stepped down after a wider conspiracy was unearthed, that involved using fake notes from a bogus clinic in Moscow.

The World Athletics president, Sebastian Coe, deserves credit here too. Certainly there were missteps early in his reign, including his reluctance to give up a consultancy role with Nike, but his decision to make the AIU independent and properly funded has been a gamechanger. And it has helped the sport off its knees after senior figures – including Coe's predecessor as president, Lamine Diack – were revealed to have extorted 22 Russian athletes for bribes in exchange for having their doping bans hushed up.

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“Being high profile no longer protects you from the investigative powers of the sport,” [Coe said recently](#). “The AIU has restored some confidence among the athletes that we’ve got an organisation that will fearlessly and ruthlessly weed out the cheats when and where they surface.”

True, there remains some way to go. Many cheats still prosper. But when it comes to anti-doping, at least athletics is out of the starting blocks and into the drive phase. Most sports are not even in the race.

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Australia cricket team

Series in balance with India needing 328 to beat Australia in decisive final Test

- [Day four: Australia 369 and 294; India 336 and 4-0](#)
- Rain could yet decide result of fourth Test at Gabba



India's Mohammed Siraj (third right) took five wickets in Australia's second innings on day four of the fourth Test at the Gabba. Photograph: Tertius Pickard/AP

India's Mohammed Siraj (third right) took five wickets in Australia's second innings on day four of the fourth Test at the Gabba. Photograph: Tertius Pickard/AP

Australian Associated Press

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.22 EST

An epic four-Test series between Australia and India will be in the lap of the weather gods on its decisive final day at the Gabba, where the tourists will resume on 4-0 after being set a target of 328.

Australia were bowled out for 294 on a topsy-turvy fourth day of the series-deciding fourth Test. India were slated to face 25 overs on Monday afternoon but wet weather, having earlier resulted in a brief delay at tea, meant stumps were pulled after 1.5 overs.

[Australia v India: fourth Test, day four – as it happened](#)

[Read more](#)

Two dropped catches and a wagging tail helped the hosts push their lead beyond 300 on Monday. The highest successful chase in a Gabba Test came in 1951, when Australia finished 236-7.

However, the hosts have fresher memories of how India incredibly salvaged a draw after threatening to reel in a target of 407 last week at the SCG. Tim Paine's team require a victory to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar trophy but further showers are predicted for the final day of the series.

"I believe a drawn series here for Australia ... it's actually as bad as a loss," Ricky Ponting said on the Seven Network.

Speculation bubbled throughout Monday as to when Paine might declare but India, as they have at every juncture since being skittled for 36 en route to a heavy defeat in Adelaide, fought back whenever Australia looked to be on top.

Mohammed Siraj finished with 5-73, the second best figures by any Indian fast bowler at the Gabba, after grabbing two wickets in a chaotic Australian collapse of 34-4 on Monday morning.

Siraj, who debuted at the MCG but is now spearheading India's unheralded attack, put down two crucial chances after lunch. The paceman was fielding on the rope when he reprieved Steve Smith on 42 then grassed a return catch offered by Cameron Green on 14.

Siraj produced a nasty delivery that reared off the pitch to remove Smith for 55, while Shardul Thakur's dismissals of Green (37) and Paine (27) were also crucial.

Pat Cummins, Nathan Lyon and Josh Hazlewood added 47 runs for the final two wickets. David Warner (48) and Marcus Harris (38) enjoyed a productive start to the day, adding 40 runs during the first seven overs after Australia resumed at 21-0.

First-change bowlers Thakur and Washington Sundar, who combined in an unforgettable seventh-wicket stand of 123 runs, built dot-ball pressure to ignite yet another momentum shift.

Thakur ended the highest opening partnership that either side has managed during the series, an 89-run effort between Warner and Harris. The paceman is the first tourist since Dale Steyn in 2008 to snare seven-plus wickets and score a half-century during a Test in Australia.

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[Cricket](#)

Australia v India: fourth Test, day four – as it happened

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/live/2021/jan/18/australia-cricket-vs-india-fourth-test-live-2021-gabba-day-four-international-aus-v-ind-series-match-game-start-time-teams-latest-scores-updates>

Premier League

Klopp concedes Liverpool face top-four fight after Manchester United stalemate

- Klopp: ‘This season will be a tough race for the top four’
- Solskjær says Anfield draw ‘an opportunity missed’



Jürgen Klopp, Thiago Alcântara and Ole Gunnar Solskjær walk off the pitch after the goalless draw at Anfield. Photograph: Michael Regan/PA

Jürgen Klopp, Thiago Alcântara and Ole Gunnar Solskjær walk off the pitch after the goalless draw at Anfield. Photograph: Michael Regan/PA

[Mark Dobson](#)

[@kellysheroesmd](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 16.16 EST

Jürgen Klopp defended his misfiring champions after Liverpool failed to knock [Manchester United](#) off their Premier League perch but admits his side now face a battle to stay in the top four.

The front three of Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mané endured an off-day as Klopp's men could not break down United at Anfield. It was Liverpool's third successive league match without a goal.

[Manchester United stay top after taking point in tense tussle with Liverpool](#) [Read more](#)

Indeed, United could have snatched victory had it not been for two fine saves by Alisson who denied Bruno Fernandes and Paul Pogba in the second half. The stalemate left Liverpool with some work to do if they are to defend their title but Klopp is seemingly more concerned about remaining in the Champions League places.

He said: "I have to qualify for the Champions League and I know how difficult that is. This season will be a tough race for the top four that is for sure. Football fans are not the most patience species on this planet. They want to win each football game.

"I am not too different from that. But I am long enough in the business to know that there are more difficult periods. And this is not the most difficult period I have been through in my life, it's not even close. We have to be patient."

On the match, Klopp was satisfied with the performance, if not the finishing. He said: "I saw my team playing tonight a really good team with a clear idea with super passes and great counter-pressing and great desire to score and we didn't score.

"We will create chances and we will score. I think the performance was good enough to win it but to win a game you have to score goals and we didn't do that, so that's why we had that result. There is nothing fundamentally different, it is just the result is different."

Since the 7-0 demolition of Crystal Palace last month, Liverpool have dropped points against West Brom, Newcastle and Southampton. They now face a testing end to January with Burnley, Tottenham and West Ham next up in the league and a trip to Old Trafford in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

Klopp, though, remains unconcerned by Liverpool's apparent drop-off. "There is no easy explanation [for their recent lack of goals]," the manager said. "You always miss chances. You have to keep going and try to ignore the talk around it. Everyone wants to see goals. You cannot force it.

"It's football. These moments happen. You have moments where you can't explain why you score from all angles. Against Crystal Palace everything ended up in the net. It's a bit annoying in between these moments.

"I like the game. I saw a lot of really good individual performances and the team performance was good. Not the result we wanted, but the result we got."

Despite coming into the match as the league leaders, United were happy to sit back for much of the contest and Ole Gunnar Solskjær left Anfield disappointed with his side's display.



The Liverpool goalkeeper, Alisson, gets to the ball ahead of Manchester United's Marcus Rashford. Photograph: Matthew Peters/Manchester United/Getty Images

Speaking to Sky Sports, he said: "I think we grew in the game and towards the end it was there for us to win. We created two massive chances and it was two brilliant saves by the keeper.

“They are a good side and they have some injury problems but we didn’t pounce on that. We can play better than this, we can be more composed, we can have the ball more. We had to defend really often today. There are a couple of things for us to improve on.”

“It’s only a good result if we win the next game. It was an opportunity missed with the chances we had but then again we were playing a very good side. I’m disappointed but still a point is OK. We were stronger towards the end. We didn’t start at all in the first half. It’s not just the result we’re disappointed with, it’s some of the performance. I know these boys can play better. Coming away from here with one point and the players are disappointed is a good feeling.’

The Liverpool captain, Jordan Henderson, pinpointed a “strange” decision from the referee Paul Tierney to blow his whistle early for half-time, when Mané was racing through on goal. “We weren’t happy with that, as you can imagine. [It was] strange, very strange,” he said.

[Manchester City 4-0 Crystal Palace: Premier League – live!](#)
[Read more](#)

“I think he’s through on goal if he doesn’t blow. We were frustrated at half-time but still plenty of time for us to score the goal, but again lacked that quality in the last bit.

“I thought we did enough to win the game, especially first half [we had] a lot of the ball, creating chances, just couldn’t find the back of the net really but they had one or two chances as well to be fair to them. Overall I felt that we were the better team to win the game. [The final third] seems to be the problem at the minute, in the box just finding that little bit of luck to drop to someone and get a clean strike on it or it ricochets off someone and goes in. That can happen in football sometimes – you’ve just got to keep working hard.”

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The United captain, Harry Maguire, said: “I thought they started the game better and then in the second half we came into it. We were a lot braver on

the ball and we created the best few chances of the game.

“It was cagey but it was two good teams matching up and we found it difficult the first half to get a rhythm to the game, the press was high – we knew it was going to be high but the intensity ... we didn’t get the rhythm with the ball.”

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NFL

Tom Brady and Drew Brees both battled time on Sunday. Guess who won?



Drew Brees and Tom Brady faced each other for what is likely to be the final time on Sunday. Photograph: Butch Dill/AP

Drew Brees and Tom Brady faced each other for what is likely to be the final time on Sunday. Photograph: Butch Dill/AP

Two future hall of fame quarterbacks faced off in the Superdome this weekend. One of them, as he always has, simply refused to lie down

[Oliver Connolly](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

The first time Tom Brady and Drew Brees met on a football field was 2 October 1999. TLC's Unpretty was hogging the top spot on the Billboard 100. Y2K was hot on the mind.

It was fitting, then, that the first and likely only playoff meeting between the two, now with a combined age of 85, delivered the most old-school matchup of the weekend. The game was billed as Tom Brady v Drew Brees, two future hall of fame quarterbacks at the end of their respective runs. Instead, we were treated to a classic bout of January football, all run games and defense and turnovers.

It's the final factor in that list that really matters. It's always about turnovers. The tally from Sunday night: Saints 4-0 Bucs. Final score: Tampa 30-20 New Orleans. 21 of the Bucs' points came from those turnovers.

Was this Brees' final game? It certainly seems like that at the time of writing on Sunday night. During the Fox Sports pre-game show, Jay Glazer reported that: "tonight will be the last game he plays at the Superdome. ... Drew Brees will be done. That's it."

It doesn't quite feel right that Brees would go out *this* way. [Three picks in a home playoff game](#), fewer than 150 yards passing, with a paltry completion percentage and an inability to drive the ball outside of the numbers. Age finally robbed Brees of the necessary skills that helped make him a beacon of efficiency, and allowed the Saints offense to subsist on craft and guile and intellect for over a decade. You need *some* level of arm strength in order to maintain a diverse playbook and to stop the defense from clogging the middle of the field. The only time the Saints picked up any kind of spark was when Jameis Winston was drafted into the game for a trick play.

That left Sean Payton in a funky situation: bench Brees in what may be his final game and [ride the Winston-coaster](#), or go down swinging with the guy who helped lift the franchise out of the horrors of Katrina and transform it from a footballing doormat into a serial contender? The former would have been the smart play, but Payton decided to roll with his heart.

This is how quarterbacks age. It's always ugly. They whiff on throws down the field, they miss the rotating linebacker, throws that used to zip between gaps in the secondary start to hover. Rarely is the decline as smooth as, well, Brady's. The end is thudding and final; quarterbacks are great and then they are bad.

[Chiefs overcome loss of Mahomes while Buccaneers end Saints' hopes](#)

[Read more](#)

Brady has carved out a tidy middle ground. He is no longer the player he was at the peak of his powers. But he remains the same old Brady who racked up titles during his final half-decade in New England, with only slight hints of erosion: still capable of streaks of greatness, prone to some errors, filled with a confidence in his arm that it no longer deserves, and capable of solving any defensive look if he sees it often enough.

Brady was far from perfect on Sunday night, but there was at least a winning formula for the Bucs, one that they will carry into snowy Lambeau Field next week. Run the ball first, play perfect defense, and bet on Brady to deliver on third-down, that was Bruce Arians' masterplan, ripped straight from the early 2000s playoff manual. It worked – to an extent. The Bucs ground out the victory, thanks to a feisty defensive display, but Brady left plenty of opportunities on the field.

Still: there were still those flashes of the old mystique, of the same homicidally competitive psyche. Even after all this time, after all the success, after basking in the Florida sun, Brady will not relent. Because, at this point, Brady's career is about more than sporting success. It's about more than a legacy. It's about more than passing yards or touchdowns. It's more existential. This is a man – as foolhardy as it is – in a battle against time. And he believes – truly believes – that he's going to win.

On Sunday, time decided football was finally over for Brees. Not for Tom. For now, Tom keeps winning.

MVP of the week



Aaron Rodgers and Matt LaFleur have developed a formidable relationship.
Photograph: Stacy Revere/Getty Images

Aaron Rodgers, QB, Green Bay Packers. Artists do not like to acquiesce to convention – and make no mistake, Rodgers is an artist. But give him this: he was willing to swallow his ego when Matt LaFleur walked through the door as the team's head coach prior to last season; he was willing to self-evaluate; he was willing to adjust. And in doing so, he has led his team to back-to-back NFC Championships. Only this time it feels real.

Rodgers was at his best on Saturday, throwing for 296 yards and two touchdowns against the league's fiercest defense, with a rushing touchdown tacked on for good measure. But this was not a vintage Rodgers display. It was the new, improved, rhythm-based Rodgers delivering exactly the kind of team-based performance the Packers needed.

It's hard to overstate how sterile things were at the end of the Rodgers-Mike McCarthy era. Rodgers would drain the play clock to nothing (a favourite pastime of his) and then tap dance in the pocket – sometimes for better but, by the end, it was often for worse.

Matt LaFleur has brought more urgency to Rodgers' play. There are the same old, Rodgers-approved staples, but they're delivered from fresh looks.

Yet while it's LaFleur's overall design, Rodgers is still the one running the show: he is modulating the tempo of offense – sometimes fast, sometimes slow – in order to keep the defense off-balance and to give himself favourable looks.

It has been this way all season – it's why Rodgers will likely walk away with the MVP award. But it was fair to wonder if he would revert to the old way against a championship-caliber defense in the playoffs. He did in bursts last season. He didn't this year. If Rodgers maintains this level – and why wouldn't he? – the Packers will be playing for it all in February.

Stat of the week

Chad Henne: 6/8, 68 yards, zero touchdowns, one interception. Only Andy Reid would have enough faith in his system to continue his overly aggressive style with his starting quarterback knocked out of the game. And not just any quarterback, but a once-in-a-lifetime quarterback like Patrick Mahomes.

And only Reid would have enough faith in Chad Henne, a career backup, to call a rollout, pass play on his own side of the field on fourth-and-inches with the game on the line:

GAME!

□: <https://t.co/F3ZHh8BQRq> pic.twitter.com/9oJ5AyXemg

— Kansas City Chiefs (@Chiefs) [January 17, 2021](#)

The Chiefs lost Mahomes early in the second-half to a concussion. Reid did not blink. It was the Browns who adapted, switching their defensive scheme and betting that Henne could not squeeze throws into tight windows the same way that Mahomes would.

[Deshawn Watson shows black NFL stars are sick of autocratic team owners](#)
[Read more](#)

Henne delivered. He wasn't perfect. But he was good enough, making plays inside and outside of Reid's carefully crafted structure, and guiding the Chiefs to an AFC title game after a fluke-break – Mahomes hitting his head on the turf – almost took a cruise-control-type victory away.

And now for a week of concussion talk. The league needs its most telegenic, likable star on the biggest stage. Will Mahomes be ready for the title game? Can the Chiefs win with Henne?

Video of the week

BILLS PICK-SIX ON LAMAR 

(via [@NFL\)pic.twitter.com/TcOSmHzg21](https://pic.twitter.com/TcOSmHzg21)

— Bleacher Report (@BleacherReport) [January 17, 2021](#)

Lamar Jackson's pick-six down in the redzone will haunt the Ravens all offseason.

It was an extraordinary play from Taron Johnson, the Bills defensive back, and a sloppy misread from Jackson, one that effectively ended the Ravens' season. Driving down the field to tie the game, Jackson's interception turned a 10-3, with the Ravens in touchdown range and the game heading to the fourth quarter, into a 17-3 deficit that the Ravens could not recover from.

Quote of the week

“Go win the whole thing” – John Harbaugh to Sean McDermott after the Bills beat the Ravens 17-3.

The Bills certainly have the right formula. Sean McDermott has built his group in the same image as the Panthers side that he helped guide to Super Bowl 50: A high-variance, big-armed, athletic quarterback paired with a fast, swarming defense that generates a ton of negative plays. McDermott was the defensive coordinator back then. Now, as the head coach, he will be looking to take his team one step further.

Elsewhere around the league

- Urban Meyer is back. Only this time, he's gone pro. Not two years after another round of 'I will never coach again' talk and a second health-induced retirement, Meyer has decided to leave college football for the NFL, taking up the head coach role in Jacksonville. Meyer is a college football legend, albeit one with a [scandal sheet](#) that would make even Donald Trump blush. He was one of the pioneers of the spread-option style that has helped transform the sport since the start of the decade. If nothing else, his first crack at the NFL will be fascinating to watch.
- Meanwhile, things have somehow gone from bad to worse for the Texans. After a week of leaks, Deshaun Watson put his name to the disgruntlement in Houston. "I was on a 2 then I took it to 10," Watson tweeted Friday, nearly identical to an ESPN report from last weekend which said Watson's anger level was a "2" when the team traded DeAndre Hopkins last year. "There is a growing sense from people in and around the Texans' organization that Deshaun Watson has played his last snap for the team," ESPN's Adam Schefter [reported](#) on Sunday.

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[Talking Horses](#) Ascot

Talking Horses: Royal Ascot expands schedule to seven races per day

Racecourse makes move after ‘temporary’ revision to six-race daily card in 2020 proved popular with punters



Frankie Dettori riding Campanelle (yellow) wins the Queen Mary Stakes at Royal Ascot last year. Photograph: Alan Crowhurst/AFP/Getty Images



[Greg Wood](#)

[@Greg_Wood](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 05.46 EST

Ascot racecourse said on Monday morning that it will permanently expand the schedule at its showpiece Royal meeting in June to seven races per day from this year, after what was described as a “temporary” revision to the traditional six-race daily card in 2020 proved popular with both participants and punters.

[Talking Horses: Mullins expresses 'huge relief' as VAT travel fears ease](#)
[Read more](#)

Last year’s change was made to allow for extra runners at the Royal meeting, which was staged just over a fortnight after racing returned after a two-and-a-half month suspension due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The new programme required the creation of three new handicaps – the Copper Horse Stakes, the Palace of Holyroodhouse Stakes and the Golden Gates Stakes – as well as the return of the Buckingham Palace Stakes, also a handicap, which had been discontinued in 2015.

These races will be retained and another new race – the Kensington Palace Stakes handicap for fillies and mares over a mile – has been added to the

schedule. However, two “Silver” handicaps – for horses eliminated from the Royal Hunt Cup and Wokingham – have been discontinued. As a result, the Saturday card will also have seven races, rather than [the eight at last year's meeting.](#)

Quick Guide

Dreal Deal boosts Cheltenham hopes at Punchestown

Show



Dreal Deal’s swift and [occasionally controversial](#) rise through the ranks continued on Sunday, as he passed all six of his rivals in the home straight to win the Grade Two Moscow Flyer Novice Hurdle at Punchestown, establishing himself as a live 16-1 chance for Cheltenham’s Supreme Novice Hurdle at Cheltenham in March.

Ronan McNally’s gelding first attracted attention when he won a handicap hurdle at Navan in September off a mark of 84, having been backed in from 20-1 to start at 6-4 favourite. He then won two handicaps on the Flat (off 45 and 51) before adding two more handicap hurdles from official marks of 106 and 111, starting at odds-on each time.

Dreal Deal's price went in the opposite direction on Sunday, however, as he set off at 22-1 after opening at 9-1. He was several lengths behind the rest of the field for much of the race but accelerated impressively turning for home to cross, crossing the line three lengths in front of Ganapathi. After the race, McNally outlined a series of possible reasons for Dreal Deal's weakness in the market and set his sights on the Cheltenham Festival.

"That was the dream, but he had to go and do that today," McNally said. "We had a poor preparation, because he got a stone bruise during the week and that's why he didn't go to Fairyhouse [on Tuesday].

"All my horses were a wee bit off around Christmas and then with the frost, they missed work as well, so to be honest he'd done no galloping," the Irish trainer said. "Also his coat wasn't great the last couple of weeks, and he hasn't eaten as well as he could. Nothing really was clicking. I knew anything he did today, that he'd go forward from it."

A much-anticipated meeting between Envoi Allen and the Grade One-winning hurdler Asterion Forlonge in the Killiney Novice Chase fell flat, Asterion Forlonge falling after a clumsy attempt to get over the first fence.

Envoi Allen, the 1-2 favourite at Punchestown, did not need to leave second gear to extend his unbeaten career record to a dozen races. He is around even-money to make it 13 out of 13 in the Marsh Novice Chase at Cheltenham in March.

"He's in everything at Leopardstown [in February] for fear something happened [with Covid restrictions on travel]," Gordon Elliott, Envoi Allen's trainer, said, "but I'd say we'd go straight to Cheltenham."

Photograph: PA Wire/PA

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

"The concept of extended cards last year was well received, and we are very pleased to be able to offer additional opportunities to the horsemen community, the public, broadcasters and media going forward," Nick Smith, Ascot's director of racing and public affairs, said on Monday.

“Following consultation with the BHA, we decided to remove the two reserve races and bring in another high-quality handicap, as we are actually reducing the number of races run by one from last year, where eight races were staged on the Saturday. It occurred to us that the Old (round) Mile course is only used twice during Royal Ascot and another race on this track would add to the variety on offer.

[Notachance grinds down Achille to triumph in Classic Chase](#)

[Read more](#)

“Last year’s extended cards were only possible by reducing some field sizes slightly, and because no overnight stabling was allowed under Covid-19 protocols.

“In order that field sizes can go up to their maximums again and with overnight stabling extremely important, we have commissioned extra temporary stabling to be built to the required high BHA standards.”

This year’s Royal meeting will effectively see a return to the six-race programme in 2019 – for instance, with three Group One races on the first day and the meeting opening with the Queen Anne Stakes – but with an additional race at the end of the afternoon. The only exception is Saturday’s card, which will still conclude with the Royal meeting’s traditional closing event, the Queen Alexandra Stakes.

Quick Guide

Monday's tips, by Greg Wood

Show

Lingfield

- 12.15 Rose Ohara
- 12.45 Miss Austen
- 1.15 Not That Fuisse
- 1.45 Timberman
- 2.20 Getariver
- 2.50 Aronius

3.25 Mystic Dreamer
3.55 Vegas Blue

Ayr

12.25 Bass Rock
12.55 Gold Miner
1.25 Cornerstone Lad
1.55 Strong Economy (nap)
2.30 Skipping On
3.00 Hot Gossip
3.35 Made For You
4.05 Fortescue Wood

Wolverhampton

4.10 Livia The Empress (nb)
4.40 Lethal Lunch
5.10 It Must Be Faith
5.40 Jumira Bridge
6.10 Rainbow Dreamer
6.40 Power Of States
7.10 Wallem
7.40 Critical Thinking
8.10 City Escape

Was this helpful?
Thank you for your feedback.

Monday's best bets, by Greg Wood

The stayers' handicap chase at Ayr is the obvious place for punters to start today, with all seven runners priced up between 7-2 and 10-1 and **Strong Economy** (1.55), three times a course winner already, on offer at 6-1.

Ian Duncan's runner has made 19 of his 20 career starts at this track and while he is stepping up to three-and-a-quarter miles for the first time today,

there was nothing in his latest win over three to suggest that it will be a problem.

A 3lb rise looks perfectly fair for **Skipping On** (2.30) as he looks to follow up a win in a late December, while at Wolverhampton later this afternoon, **Livia The Empress** (4.10) will appreciate a drop back to an extended mile after just failing to last home over 10 furlongs last time.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/18/talking-horses-dreal-deal-cheltenham-punchestown-horse-racing>.

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Saracens

'We're not going anywhere': Lucy Wray plots Saracens' future

Chief executive says she and her father want to repair the damage caused by the salary cap scandal and relegation



Lucy Wray, with her father Nigel: 'We want to stay involved and we will stay involved. It's not like we're walking away from anything.' Photograph: Matthew Impey/Shutterstock

Lucy Wray, with her father Nigel: 'We want to stay involved and we will stay involved. It's not like we're walking away from anything.' Photograph: Matthew Impey/Shutterstock



[Robert Kitson](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

Last year was a grim one for Saracens and, at first glance, 2021 has not started much better. Their [27-26 defeat against Ealing](#) on Saturday may not have involved Sarries' strongest team but it was a reminder that nothing can be guaranteed as they begin the slow climb back from the salary cap scandal that cost them their Premiership status and bruised their reputation.

[Saracens shake off the rust but slip up at Ealing in long-awaited return](#)
[Read more](#)

Covid-19 has not helped and Lucy Wray, daughter of the former chairman Nigel and now the club's chief executive, makes no attempt to sugar-coat the past 15 months. "We obviously made mistakes and we're taking the punishment," she says, referring to Saracens' steep descent from European and Premiership champions to the Championship. "You look back and think: 'What a year!' It's been incredibly tough for so many reasons."

For the Wray family the simplest thing would have been to walk away, with Nigel having already stepped down last January after years at the helm. Instead they want to hang around – Lucy, 39, has followed Saracens since she was 15 and is married to the former prop Tom Mercey – and help restore

some pride and honour. According to his daughter, Wray senior, now 72, remains infatuated with rugby – “I can’t ever see that changing, he just adores it” – and despite potential fresh investment on the horizon she is adamant the family will not be selling out.

[Covid and dementia leave rugby union fretting over an uncertain future |](#)

[Paul Rees](#)

[Read more](#)

“We want to stay involved and we will stay involved. It’s not like we’re walking away from anything. We’re not planning to take any money out of the club whatsoever and the club is definitely not for sale. We’re not going anywhere.

“What we’d like is to find the right partners. But we very much want to stay involved and have a good healthy stake in the club going forward. Nothing has changed yet. We still own the club, 100%. We will always want a big stake in Saracens but it’s not an ego thing. Dad’s not precious about retaining control.

“If it’s the right thing for the future of the club, it doesn’t matter if we have a controlling stake or not. It won’t be a fun journey if we’re worried about financing the whole time. We need the right level of funding to achieve everything we want to achieve. You can’t have a table with only one leg propping it up. We want to stay involved and we will stay involved.”

Wray, though, acknowledges the best way to rebuild trust is to be what she calls “good citizens” as the club pursue a five-year plan to break even financially and recapture former glories on the pitch.

“It’s not all about money, we want caring to remain important as well. One of Dad’s favourite quotes, which he has drilled into me, is ‘people don’t care how much you know until you know how much they care’. Our community, foundation, our high school, our fans ... looking after them is far more of a barometer of success than any trophy. The trophies are fun but the rest is really important.”

Sponsorship deals with StoneX Financial, and its subsidiary City Index, have been very timely, however, with ticket income presently nonexistent. “The last year has definitely brought us all closer together,” says Wray. “I think we were pretty resilient already because we’d been through a pretty terrible six months. We’ve all worked so hard to turn a corner, which I think we’ve done. We acknowledge we need to rebuild the brand and actions will speak louder than words.

[Eddie Jones's England squad limited to 28 players for Six Nations due to Covid](#)
[Read more](#)

“Covid has obviously delayed things but in a strange way it has allowed us to step back and put in a huge amount of foundation work. Things are moving in the right direction and hopefully we should have some good news with regards our stadium plans quite shortly.” The American investment firm MSD Capital, founded by the personal computer billionaire Michael Dell, is among those in discussions to help fund a proposed £23m redevelopment of the west stand.

Wray also foresees private equity investment making a significant impact on the sport in the near future. “I think the long-term outlook for rugby’s really exciting. In CVC you’ve got people with a track record in Formula One. If rugby is fragmented, their ambition is to bring it together and then optimise everything. I think they’ll do it, I genuinely do.

“There are some incredibly bright people with a good strategy. You’ve got another private equity firm, Silver Lake, looking at the All Blacks. Everyone can see there is huge potential in rugby.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/18/rugby-union-saracens-lucy-wray-interview>

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Unemployment

Over-50s who lose jobs much more likely to stay unemployed, study finds

Older people more than twice as likely to be unemployed for two years or longer if they lose job



Experts say the pandemic is worsening inequalities which have always existed for older people in the jobs market. Photograph: Philip Toscano/PA
Experts say the pandemic is worsening inequalities which have always existed for older people in the jobs market. Photograph: Philip Toscano/PA

[Amelia Hill](#)

[@byameliahill](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

People aged over 50 who lose their jobs are significantly more likely to suffer long-term unemployment than other age groups, analysis has revealed.

Older workers who lose their jobs are more than twice as likely as other age groups to be unemployed for at least two years.

There are 407,000 unemployed over-50s in the UK, making up one in four (24%) of all unemployed people, according to new unemployment data from the [Office for National Statistics](#) commissioned by [Rest Less](#), the digital community for the over-50s.

One-third of unemployed people over 50 have been out of work for at least a year while one in five have been out of work for at least two years. This compares with 20% and 8% of those aged under 50 respectively.

“With the state pension age having risen to 66, we are particularly worried that this drift from short to long-term unemployment ultimately risks a lost generation of unemployed over-50s forced into an early retirement they neither want nor can afford,” said Stuart Lewis, founder of Rest Less.

“Too often, highly skilled workers in their 50s and 60s suffer from age discrimination in the recruitment process, often being told they are ‘overqualified’ – a concept that simply doesn’t make sense,” he said.

Before the pandemic hit, 80% of employment growth in the UK came from workers over the age of 50. But experts said the pandemic is exacerbating inequalities that have always existed in the jobs market: pre-pandemic, the over-50s were more likely to face redundancy, have less access to in-work training and to be long-term unemployed.

“Even industries that haven’t been forced to shut down during the pandemic but have still been impacted, are cutting jobs and in many cases, it’s older workers who are losing their jobs first,” said Lewis.

[HMRC data](#) showed that while the proportion of under-25s on furlough had fallen at the end of October, the proportion of over-55s on furlough had increased – an indication, said Lewis, that businesses might be bringing back their younger workers first.

Emily Andrews, senior evidence manager at the [Centre for Ageing Better](#), said over-50s faced different struggles getting back into work from younger workers, including age bias in the recruitment process and the prevalence of ageist views: [a 2019 survey showed 37% of employees believed there was age discrimination](#) in their workplace.

These issues, she said, meant older workers were much more likely to remain unemployed in the long term and could fall out of the workforce for good.

“Government back-to-work programmes haven’t worked for this age group – just one in five people age 50+ gained a job outcome from the Work Programme, compared to one in three 25-49s, and 40% of 18-24s,” she said.

“In terms of why over-50s are being hit so hard by the pandemic, we understand it’s more because they are less likely to get back into work than because they are in jobs that are particularly at risk,” she added.

Health is also an issue: in June/July, the IFS found that workers aged 54 and over with a disability or limiting health condition were 34 percentage points more likely to be worried about job security than those without.

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Gambling

UK gambling firms accused of exaggerating scale of black market betting

Report by PwC under fire as industry expects tougher regulation in upcoming government review



Neil McArthur, who runs the Gambling Commission, said the report from the industry was ‘not consistent with the intelligence picture’. Photograph: Richard Stonehouse/Stonehouse Photographic/PA

Neil McArthur, who runs the Gambling Commission, said the report from the industry was ‘not consistent with the intelligence picture’. Photograph: Richard Stonehouse/Stonehouse Photographic/PA

[Rob Davies](#)

[@ByRobDavies](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Gambling firms have been accused of concocting a “dodgy dossier” to exaggerate the scale of black market betting, in an attempt to influence an

upcoming government review expected to result in tougher regulation.

Gambling industry figures recently seized on a report claiming that 200,000 people in the UK spend £1.4bn on black market sites every year, warning that tougher regulation could drive more people into the arms of “unscrupulous” operators.

But in a letter to a cross-party group of MPs examining gambling-related harm, the Gambling Commission’s chief executive, Neil McArthur, delivered a withering assessment of the report.

The boss of the gambling regulator said the report, written by consultancy [PwC](#), was “not consistent with the intelligence picture” and did not distinguish between real consumers using black market sites and bots or other automated systems.

He said the report should be treated cautiously, adding that it lacked any evidence to show an increase in illicit betting.

“We know that licensed operators and their trade bodies are concerned about the impact of the illegal market, but our own evidence suggests that the impact may be being exaggerated,” he said.

McArthur said black market concerns should be kept in proportion “despite ... reports from consultants paid for by the industry, and should not distract from the need to continue to drive up standards and make gambling safer in the regulated market”.

Such direct criticism from the regulator will be a blow for the industry lobby group, the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC), which has repeatedly referred to the report to back its arguments against stricter regulations.

The government is considering a range of measures that could involve limiting stakes on online virtual slot machines, or forcing web-based casinos to carry out thorough affordability checks if customers deposit a certain amount per month.

McArthur dismissed the BGC’s suggestion that such measures could fuel a surge in black market operations.

“In any event, we are not convinced by the argument that suggests that raising standards in the licensed market will prompt consumers to gamble with illegal operators,” he said.

The Labour MP Carolyn Harris, who chairs the MPs’ group that receive the letter, said: “The online gambling industry talks up the threat of the black market in an attempt to resist regulation and protect its profits, but trying to hijack the debate by manufacturing dodgy dossiers of information to further their own ends is an incredibly transparent tactic and will not be any kind of excuse to hold down standards.”

The BGC and several of the UK’s major betting companies, which commissioned the report, refused a request to provide a copy.

But the Guardian has since obtained both a draft version, dated April 2019, and a final version, dated July 2019.

The two appear identical except that the final version removed a reference to the three firms that commissioned it, Ladbrokes owner GVC, William Hill and The Stars Group, which owned SkyBet and has since merged with Paddy Power owner Flutter.

Matt Zarb-Cousin, a former adviser to Jeremy Corbyn who runs the campaign group Clean Up Gambling, said: “The gambling industry has been quoting from this report as it attempts to drive a race to the bottom in regulation. Having finally seen the contents, it’s clear why it was reluctant to make this report available for public scrutiny.”

A BGC spokesperson said countries with tougher regulation than the UK had bigger black market problems.

“We have repeatedly called on the government to use the online harms bill to crack down on access to these sites, and we would support financial service providers being obliged to block black market transactions,” he said.

The industry’s use of the report has echoes of a similar tactic deployed when the government was weighing up whether to slash the maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2.

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In 2018, the Guardian revealed that a government decision to delay the cut was [influenced by a “discredited” report](#) about the potential impact of the policy on jobs.

Like the black market dossier, the FOBT report was commissioned by the industry and written by a major accounting firm, in this case KPMG.

It claimed up to 21,000 jobs could be lost if FOBT stakes were capped, a prediction that has [since proved to be an overstatement](#).

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/uk-gambling-firms-accused-of-exaggerating-scale-of-black-market-betting>.

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Music industry

Take That producer sells rights to string of early hits

Deal includes Ian Levine's producer royalties to A Million Love Songs, Could It Be Magic and I Found Heaven



Take That's Robbie Williams, Mark Owen, Gary Barlow, Jason Orange and Howard Donald in the early 1990s. Photograph: Tim Roney/Getty Images
Take That's Robbie Williams, Mark Owen, Gary Barlow, Jason Orange and Howard Donald in the early 1990s. Photograph: Tim Roney/Getty Images

[Kalyeena Makortoff](#)

[@kalyeena](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.27 EST

British songwriter and producer Ian Levine has sold his rights to a string of smash hits by pop group [Take That](#) to music publisher One Media iP Group.

The deal covers producer royalties to tracks from the group's 1992 debut album *Take That & Party* – which was certified platinum twice in the UK – including *A Million Love Songs*, *Could It Be Magic* and *I Found Heaven*.

The company has also snapped up Levine's rights to two other recorded Take That tracks that have never been released. One Media iP did not disclose the cost, saying only that it had acquired the rights for a "modest consideration".

Levine is the latest musician to sell his rights to investors who are on the hunt for hits that can bring in extra revenue in the new streaming era. Artists including Shakira and Fleetwood Mac members Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks have also cashed in on their back catalogues, selling rights to companies including Primary Wave, Hipgnosis and BMG.

Bob Dylan is believed to have struck the one of the most lucrative deals to date, having sold off publishing rights to his entire catalogue of songs to Universal Music for an estimated \$300m (£221m).

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Rights owners receive a cut of royalties when songs are played or covered on the radio, when they are streamed, or played in stores. They also claim income from album sales and when songs are used in TV adverts and films.

The One Media iP chief executive, Michael Infante, said: "Given the current global crisis and corresponding impact on the live music sector, we have found an increasing number of artists are evaluating alternative income opportunities and are looking favourably upon our initiative.

"We remain focused on building momentum and scaling the business, and look forward to keeping the market updated on our progress."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/18/take-that-producer-rights-hits-ian-levine>

Donald Trump

Inflated ego: Trump baby blimp joins Museum of London collection

The 6-metre-high orange inflatable became a symbol of British protest against the outgoing US president



The Trump baby blimp being prepared for its inaugural flight in July 2018.
Photograph: Yui Mok/PA Media

The Trump baby blimp being prepared for its inaugural flight in July 2018.
Photograph: Yui Mok/PA Media

[Caroline Davies](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The the [Donald Trump baby blimp](#), a 6-metre-high inflatable caricature that became a symbol of UK protest against the US president, has secured its place in history at a leading museum.

The helium-filled balloon, paid for through crowdfunding, depicts the outgoing president as a snarling orange baby wearing a nappy, with its tiny hands clutching a smartphone. It first took to the skies above Parliament

Square during protests over Trump's first presidential [visit to the UK](#) in 2018.

It was present again on his state visit in 2019, and has also been flown in France, Argentina, Ireland, Denmark and various locations in the US.

Now, after a global tour, the Trump baby, designed by Matt Bonner, and constructed by Imagine Inflatables of Leicester, has been acquired by the [Museum of London](#). It will be conserved and could be displayed as part of the museum's protest collection, which includes artefacts from the Suffragette movement, climate-crisis rallies and peace activism.

The creators of the effigy said they hoped it served as a reminder of the fight against the “politics of hate”.

“While we’re pleased that the Trump baby can now be consigned to history along with the man himself, we’re under no illusions that this is the end of the story,” they said in a statement to PA Media.

“We hope the baby’s place in the museum will stand as a reminder of when London stood against Mr Trump – but will prompt those who see it to examine how they can continue the fight against the politics of hate.

“Most of all, we hope the Trump baby serves as a reminder of the politics of resistance that took place during Trump’s time in office.”

On the blimp’s first outing in 2018, Nigel Farage called it “the biggest insult to a sitting US president ever”. Trump himself said: “I guess when they put out blimps to make me feel unwelcome, no reason for me to go to London.”

Sharon Ament, the director of the Museum of London, said: “Of course the museum is not political, and does not have any view about the state of politics in the States.” But the blimp touched on a typical British response, she said: satire. “We use humour a lot. And we poke fun at politicians. This is a big – literally – example of that.”

The blimp had just arrived at the museum, she said, squashed into a suitcase. “It is timely, because it’s coming to us in the final days of President Trump being President Trump … the most ironic and fitting thing now is that it’s

currently in quarantine in the museum. All objects have to be put into quarantine before they go into the collection because they could have insects.”

The museum is a fitting home for the effigy, which is “a response from Londoners”, she said. “It was born in London … it was an extraordinary and imaginative idea.”

“This large inflatable was just a tiny part of a global movement,” said the blimp’s creators. “A movement that was led by the marginalised people who Trump’s politics most endangered – and whose role in this moment should never be underestimated.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/18/trump-baby-blimp-joins-museum-of-london-collection>

Scottish politics

MSP Monica Lennon joins Anas Sarwar in race to lead Scottish Labour

Bid by successful campaigner for free period products prevents ‘coronation’ of sole other candidate



Health spokesperson Monica Lennon announced her bid to lead Labour at Holyrood only hours before the deadline. Photograph: Fraser Bremner/Scottish Daily Mail/PA

Health spokesperson Monica Lennon announced her bid to lead Labour at Holyrood only hours before the deadline. Photograph: Fraser Bremner/Scottish Daily Mail/PA

[Libby Brooks](#) Scotland correspondent

Sun 17 Jan 2021 19.07 EST

Monica Lennon, the MSP who led the successful campaign for [Scotland](#) to become the first country to provide free, universal access to period products, has announced her aim to be the next leader of Scottish Labour, challenging Anas Sarwar for the position.

Confirming her intention to replace Richard Leonard, [who resigned last Thursday](#), just hours before the midnight deadline for potential candidates, Lennon, who is currently her party's health spokesperson, requires support from at least four of the party's MSPs or its sole Scottish MP by midday on Tuesday to be formally nominated.

Before her declaration, Sarwar, the centrist MSP who was recently made Scottish Labour's constitution spokesman and who lost to Leonard in the last leadership contest in 2017, was the only candidate. He [announced his own plans to run in the Observer](#), and has already secured nominations from eight Holyrood colleagues.

Making her announcement on Twitter, Lennon – who was first elected to Holyrood in 2016 and enjoys strong grassroots support – wrote: “Following discussions with party members, I have decided to put my name forward to lead the Scottish [Labour](#) party. Our members deserve to have their say about the best way to take forward our vision for a fairer and more equal Scotland.”

The election of Scottish Labour's fifth leader in a decade comes after Leonard stood down, suggesting speculation about his leadership had become “a distraction”. Many in the party were taken by surprise at the timing of his decision, with Labour trailing the Scottish National party by at least 35 points in opinion polls and at risk of losing a dozen or more seats in May's Scottish parliament elections.

Leonard is believed to have made his decision after losing the confidence of trade union allies, including his own union, GMB Scotland. He narrowly survived a [short-lived rebellion](#) over his leadership by fellow MSPs last September.

Writing for the Observer, Sarwar said that he had gained a new perspective on party politics and decided “we spend too much time highlighting our differences, rather than focusing on what unites us”.

He went on: “I firmly believe we cannot go back to society as it was before the pandemic – insecure work, hollowed-out public services, an underfunded

health service, and the constant focus on another independence referendum when there's far more important things we need to be dealing with."

Before Lennon's announcement, several Scottish Labour sources said that an unopposed coronation would not serve any new leader who would require a mandate to take the radical action required to overhaul the party's fortunes.

On Saturday, the party's executive agreed to a condensed timescale for any contest, with the Holyrood elections less than four months away. A new leader is due to be in place by the end of February.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/18/msp-monica-lennon-joins-anas-sarwar-in-race-to-lead-scottish-labour>

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Military

UK trained military of 15 countries with poor human rights records

Campaigners seek inquiry into whether skills gained in UK were used to commit abuses in countries such as Bahrain, China and Saudi Arabia



Role-playing actors prepare to take part in a scenario, or ‘serial’, during a mission rehearsal exercise on Salisbury Plain last October. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

Role-playing actors prepare to take part in a scenario, or ‘serial’, during a mission rehearsal exercise on Salisbury Plain last October. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

[Diane Taylor](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 13.25 EST

The UK government has trained the armies of two-thirds of the world’s countries, including 15 it has rebuked for human rights violations.

An anti-arms trade organisation has called for an investigation into the use of UK military training by other countries to determine whether it has been

used to perpetrate human rights abuses.

The call from Campaign Against the Arms Trade came after the Guardian obtained a freedom of information response from the [Ministry of Defence](#) that revealed in the years 2018/19 and 2019/20, the government provided training on UK soil to around two-thirds of the world's countries – 130 countries in 2018/19 and 120 in 2019/20 – including some with appalling human rights records.

The countries with concerning human rights records that received military training from the UK include Bahrain, China, [Saudi Arabia](#), Sri Lanka, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

While the Ministry of Defence provided a full list of military training provided in the UK to foreign countries, it declined, on the grounds of the cost of obtaining this information, to respond to questions about UK military training provided overseas to other countries.

The UK government produces [an annual list](#) of countries it has human rights concerns about. These 30 countries listed in the first half of 2020 include 15 for which it has provided military training, including Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The UK government has a list of 20 countries for which an arms export embargo is in place. The government said [guidance](#) relating to this list applied until 31 December 2020. It has provided military training to eight countries on the list where an arms embargo is in place, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan.

In 2018/19 the government provided 1,169 separate courses in the UK. In 2019/20 it provided 1,096 courses.

The introduction to the British Army International Defence Training [catalogue](#) stated of the UK: “It is rightly acknowledged as a leader in the provision of world-class military training.”

Courses in the catalogue include preparing and commanding armoured troops on operations, infantry courses, including a platoon commander battle

course, which involves five weeks of live firing tactical training and the throwing of live grenades on purpose-built ranges, offensive and defensive operations in jungle environments, and instruction in how to operate 81-millimetre and 60-millimetre mortars. There is also training on offer for snipers in basic and advanced marksmanship.

The brochure also includes courses in gentler aspects of military life, such as music courses for pipers, photography courses and training for military chefs.

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against the Arms Trade said: “This raises very serious questions for the government. Many of these armies are responsible for upholding brutal and repressive laws, and have been accused of torture and other human rights violations. UK forces should not be doing anything to support or strengthen them.

“The message that this training sends to those forces is one of support. It shows a total disregard for people who have suffered under these cruel regimes. There must be a full investigation into the forces that have taken part in UK training to find out if any of those personnel or units have been implicated in abuses.”

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: “Defence engagement makes an important contribution to international diplomacy. Military support is determined on a country-by-country basis, often including the provision of peacekeeping, medical, and language training.

“UK engagement is informed by a thorough assessment of potential risks relating to human rights and international law, along with options to mitigate them and opportunities to promote compliance with international standards, including international humanitarian law.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/17/uk-trained-military-of-13-countries-with-poor-human-rights-records>

Shaun Bailey

Tories' London mayoral candidate criticised for comments that 'attack working class families'

Labour's Angela Rayner among those angered by past and recent remarks about poor or homeless people



Shaun Bailey's 2011 comments were seen as suggesting poor people cannot budget effectively. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

Shaun Bailey's 2011 comments were seen as suggesting poor people cannot budget effectively. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

[Heather Stewart](#) Political editor

Sun 17 Jan 2021 12.33 EST

The Conservatives' London mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey has been accused of an "attack on working class families", after comments emerged in which he appeared to suggest that poor people cannot be trusted with money.

Bailey is running against the Labour incumbent, Sadiq Khan, in May's election, which was [delayed for a year](#) by the Covid pandemic. A YouGov poll in November suggested Khan has a 21-point lead over his rival.

Bailey has already been criticised for a series of controversial comments, including suggesting [homeless Londoners could save up a £5,000 deposit for a mortgage](#).

Giving evidence to a House of Commons select committee in 2011, Bailey said: "The key thing about poverty and poor people is that poverty is as much about mindset as it is about money. If you give poor people lots of money, they buy things, and not always what they need; they buy what they want."

The remarks were made when Bailey was an ambassador for David Cameron's 'big society' volunteering initiative.

Labour's deputy leader, [Angela Rayner](#), said: "This is a disgusting attack on working class families, which reveals the true colours of the Conservative candidate for mayor of London".

In a 2005 pamphlet for the thinktank the Centre for Policy Studies, Bailey had previously claimed that "a culture of dependency rules the working class", and "this liberal agenda hasn't benefited the working class. The working class look to rules. The rules are important to them. Take away the rules and they are left in limbo."

He was also criticised last week when he claimed in an interview with [Inside Housing](#) magazine that his plans for affordable housing would help homeless people trapped in temporary accommodation because they could save up the necessary £5,000 deposit and secure a mortgage.

"I don't think the £5,000 will [be a problem]," he said. "The mortgage application thing might be a bit tougher ... they could save for it, yeah."

Pressed by the interviewer on whether he was suggesting a homeless family in bed and breakfast accommodation could afford a deposit, Bailey replied: "Not all of them, but some people could. A full proportion of people could."

In response to Rayner's criticism of his 2011 comments, Bailey said: "I grew up in a council house. I was raised by a single mum. I've been poor and I've been homeless. I'm proud of my working-class roots.

"The only attack is coming from City Hall, where Sadiq Khan is raising council tax on working-class families by 10%. Something even [Keir Starmer](#) called absurd."

In a recent speech, Starmer called on the government to provide more funding to local authorities to prevent them from having to impose council tax increases at a time when people can ill afford it.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/17/tories-london-mayoral-candidate-criticised-for-comments-that-attack-working-class-families>

Ethical business

Church of England to step up pressure on firms to improve diversity

Exclusive: ‘You want to be in a world where boards of directors look like the communities in which they exist’



Some of the Church fund’s holdings include companies such as Alphabet, Royal Dutch Shell, Samsung, Unilever, Facebook, Tesco and AstraZeneca.
Photograph: Bebeto Matthews/AP

Some of the Church fund’s holdings include companies such as Alphabet, Royal Dutch Shell, Samsung, Unilever, Facebook, Tesco and AstraZeneca.
Photograph: Bebeto Matthews/AP

*[Kalyeena Makortoff](#) Banking correspondent
[@kalyeena](#)*

Sun 17 Jan 2021 11.17 EST

The Church of England’s investment arm is to warn companies that they must do more to [protect biodiversity](#) and increase the ethnic diversity of their senior teams or risk protest votes at upcoming shareholder meetings.

The Church Commissioners, which manages the religious group's £8.7bn fund, will start sending letters outlining their demands to some of the worst-offending companies in the fund's investment portfolio by mid-February.

The team is drawing up its benchmarks and the shortlist of companies – both public and private – that will be targeted in its new campaign. Bess Joffe, the Church Commissioners' new head of responsible investment, said the fund would ratchet up the pressure by casting protest votes at annual shareholder meetings within months if companies fail to comply.

We [want companies to] have respect for the planet and respect for the people – Bess Joffe

“I think you'll see some vote impact as early as 2021. But of course it's not going to be taking companies off guard – we will be communicating our expectations in the next four to six weeks,” she told the Guardian.

Some of the fund's holdings, according to a list released last June, include Google's parent firm, Alphabet, Royal Dutch Shell, Samsung, Unilever, Facebook, Tesco and AstraZeneca. That is on top of property investments including London's Hyde Park Estate and the Metrocentre in Gateshead, near Newcastle.

The body has previously voted against companies for poor climate change policies and all-male boards. Last year, it voted against members of the Prudential's board over an “unacceptably low” number of female directors and [put pressure on the energy giant Exxon](#) over emissions disclosures.

The new focus on biodiversity and ethnicity is part of a three-year ethical investment plan being crafted by Joffe's team. “We thought about recasting the way we think about things into two broad themes, so we have respect for the planet and respect for people. And I think that fits really well with the Church's overall mission,” she said.

Joffe, a Canadian who joined from Lloyds Banking Group in August and previously held roles with Goldman Sachs and Hermes, said the shift to biodiversity was meant to encourage a holistic approach to the way

companies take responsibility for protecting life on earth and enabling the planet to thrive.

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“Ethnic diversity has not been a priority in any real way for companies,” she said. “They have to play their part in improving the lives of people who have been disenfranchised and left behind and who are going to suffer [[disproportionately\] as a result of Covid](#).”

The UK’s biggest fund manager, L&G, has already committed to voting against all-white boards who fail to diversify their leadership teams by 2022. In February 2020, the [Parker Review](#) showed that only 178 or 6.8% of 2,625 director positions across the FTSE 350 index weren’t held by white people.

Joffe and the Church Commissioners are expecting progress. “You want to be in a world where boards of directors, management teams and pipelines of talent look like the communities in which they exist,” she said.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/17/church-of-england-to-step-up-pressure-on-firms-to-improve-diversity>

[The Observer](#)
[Brexit](#)

Shock Brexit charges are hurting us, say small British businesses

Levies to cover the increase in red tape, VAT and customs declarations are hitting trade to the European Union



A Belgian customs officer in the port of Zeebrugge. Businesses are having to pay increased charges to cover administration after Brexit, putting pressure on the viability of exporting to the EU. Photograph: Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP/Getty Images

A Belgian customs officer in the port of Zeebrugge. Businesses are having to pay increased charges to cover administration after Brexit, putting pressure on the viability of exporting to the EU. Photograph: Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP/Getty Images

[Toby Helm](#) and [Michael Savage](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 01.45 EST

Government ministers describe the post-Brexit headaches that British exporters have suffered since 1 January as [mere “teething problems”](#). But

Alex Paul, who jointly runs a successful family business that features in the Department for International Trade's list of national "export champions", disagrees. And he wants the real story to be told.

Two weeks into the supposed golden era of global Britain, Paul and many other British entrepreneurs, large and small, are running into [very serious problems](#).

UK fish exporters are unable to sell into European markets because of delays at borders and complain that Boris Johnson and others misled them about Brexit. Leading supermarket chains are warning ministers of food shortages in Northern Ireland because of new border rules and bureaucracy. And small UK companies such as Paul's, which thrived as part of the EU single market, are saying they may have no future at all in exporting into continental [Europe](#) because of the crippling new costs.

Paul is a director of Leon Paul, based in Hendon, north London, which employs 50 people. It is a niche business, which has been in his family since it was set up in 1921. It designs and manufactures equipment for the Olympic sport of sword fencing. But in many ways it is typical of tens of thousands of small companies that sold some of their goods at home and some abroad, and enjoyed seamless access to the border-free EU market for decades. "Previously the business of sending orders direct to customers in Europe was very straightforward," he says.

"You put something in a box, sent it off with a courier and it got to the customer in a day or two days without any friction, just like sending something within this country."

Almost a third of Leon Paul's £7m annual turnover is to customers in EU countries. On average each order to the EU has been worth about £200. But the European export side of the business is now looking increasingly unsustainable.

[If Brexit is 'done', then where's the dividend? | Martin Kettle](#)
[Read more](#)

“We did everything we could to prepare for Brexit and are part of the DTI’s export champion community,” says Paul. But since 1 January, his firm – like other UK exporters – has been hit by three new charges. And four days ago the firm discovered another one [that his customers in the EU](#) will have to pay on receiving the goods.

“As far as I can see, currently, companies like ours in the UK are not going to be able to do ‘end sales’ to customers in the EU any more. Particularly, small orders for anything under £100 will be completely impossible,” says Paul.

The new export levies, which he says will amount to £160,000 a year for Leon Paul, are first, a “Brexit charge”, as the couriers are calling it, an export fee of £4.50 for every parcel shipped to the EU to cover costs of extra administration and form filling that couriers must carry out.

Second, there is a “deferment account fee” of £5 per parcel that covers couriers’ costs of pre-paying import charges in the destination country; and third, a “disbursement charge” which is set at different levels in each EU country with a minimum of about €14 per parcel, or calculated as a percentage of the value of the goods, whichever is the higher, plus VAT in the destination country. This covers the costs of the tax authority in the recipient country inspecting and processing the parcels.

For the past fortnight Paul has been trying to work out how to absorb the extra costs. But he is struggling to see an easy way.

“Jobs lost will be lost here,” he says. “That is the reality. All of these fees will come straight off profit margins.

“We might save some of the increased costs of doing business in Europe by setting up a warehouse there – and thereby avoid paying charges on every consignment – but we would have to make redundancies in our warehouse here and reduce the size of the business footprint in the UK. We are of course a relatively small business but all exporters will be hit with similar charges.”

Were it not for Covid-19, such stories would be dominating the news. Privately ministers know things will get worse. Behind the scenes civil servants in Whitehall are letting it be known that there is little that can be done because the exhaustively negotiated trade deal is largely set in stone.

“There is the potential to make some changes if both sides agree – that is in the deal,” said one leader of a UK business organisation. “But there is not much goodwill in the EU to help British business now. Business people like us can ask for more talks with the EU but optimism that we will get anywhere is in short supply.”



Fishing boats at Tarbert harbour in Argyll and Bute last week. The Scottish fishing industry says it is losing £1m a day as EU customers are cancelling orders. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

On Wednesday the Northern Ireland secretary Brandon Lewis will appear before the all-party Northern Ireland select committee. He is sure to be grilled on why Boris Johnson and he both insisted there would be no such problems. On 1 January Lewis tweeted: “There is no ‘Irish Sea Border’. As we have seen today, the important preparations the Govt and businesses have taken to prepare for the end of the Transition Period are keeping goods flowing freely around the country, including between GB and NI.”

As discontent grows ministers are also being warned that Scottish fishing vessels will begin heading in larger numbers to Denmark to land their catches from this week as a result of the bureaucracy created by the Brexit deal.

An increase in boats making a two-day round trip to Danish ports has already been detected as trawlers face slumping prices in Scottish ports as a result of difficulties in selling on their catches to the EU in time. Industry figures are already demanding compensation for the businesses that are being hit as a result of the disruption.

“It’s not just something you do at the drop of a hat, it’s a couple of days round trip,” said Elspeth Macdonald, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation. “But it does at least give the vessels a decent chance of getting a decent price. Talking to some of the folks in our association, they suggest there would be an increased number of vessels that would probably do that next week. Clearly, that has an impact on the businesses this side, in terms of the auction markets and the processors.

“The prime minister has said he recognised that businesses are being affected by these problems and that there would be compensation for businesses affected. While obviously we want the problems to be resolved, it’s really important that those businesses that have lost significant amounts of money – fishing businesses and processing businesses – are able to be compensated for the losses because they have been significant. And we want to see the details of that scheme come forward as quickly as we can.”

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[UK weather](#)

UK weather: heavy downpours expected in coming week

Met Office issues yellow warning with potential for flooding where rain combines with snowmelt



Parts of the UK recorded 4-8cm of snow at the start of the weekend.
Photograph: Andrew Milligan/PA

Parts of the UK recorded 4-8cm of snow at the start of the weekend.
Photograph: Andrew Milligan/PA

PA Media

Sun 17 Jan 2021 07.05 EST

Parts of the UK are expected to see heavy downpours in the coming days, with forecasters warning of potential flooding.

About 30-60mm of rain could fall across large parts of western England and [Wales](#) between Monday and Wednesday. The Met Office has issued a yellow rain warning, saying to expect “heavy and prolonged” downpours with some snowmelt across hilly areas.

It comes after parts of the UK recorded 4-8cm (1.5-3in) of snow [at the start of the weekend](#).

[Heavy snow hits parts of UK as wetter weather looms](#)

[Read more](#)

Southern and eastern parts of the UK will mostly have “dry, sunny spells” on Sunday, according to the Met Office. North-western regions are expected to experience showers, with a “spell of more persistent rain” later on in the day.

Craig Snell, a Met Office forecaster, said: “Sunday will certainly be a calm day for many, with dry, sunny spells across southern regions in England and Wales. Although it will start rather chilly with some icy patches across eastern areas still in place from the day before.

“But it will also be the slightly warmer day of the weekend, with highs of about 9C in parts during the afternoon.”

However, torrential downpours were expected to move in from Monday, which could cause flooding as it “combines with melting snow”, Snell said.

The Met Office yellow rain warning – for Monday evening until Wednesday – covers parts of north-west England and large swathes of Wales, where there could be a “danger to life” from possible “fast flowing or deep floodwater”.

Such conditions could bring delays to public transport, damage to buildings or power cuts, the Met Office said.

Snell added: “Around 30-60mm of rain could be seen in the worst-affected regions, with 200mm in the most hilly areas. This could cause some snowmelt flooding issues, so people are advised to be very careful when travelling to work.”

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Indonesia

Indonesia earthquake: monsoon rains slow search for survivors as death toll passes 80

Heavy rain could lead to further collapses, rescue workers fear, as thousands of homeless seek refuge



Rescuers work on damaged buildings after a 6.2-magnitude earthquake hit Mitra Manakarra hospital in Mamuju, West Sulawesi, Indonesia.
Photograph: Xinhua/REX/Shutterstock

Rescuers work on damaged buildings after a 6.2-magnitude earthquake hit Mitra Manakarra hospital in Mamuju, West Sulawesi, Indonesia.
Photograph: Xinhua/REX/Shutterstock

Agencies

Sun 17 Jan 2021 20.58 EST

Torrential monsoon rains have hampered the hunt for survivors of Friday's powerful earthquake on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, as the death toll rose to at least 81, with thousands left homeless.

Excavators and cranes were deployed across the devastated seaside city of Mamuju, where buildings were reduced to a mass of twisted metal and chunks of concrete, including a hospital and the regional governor's office.

It was unclear how many people could still be trapped in the debris in the aftermath of [Friday's 6.2-magnitude quake](#).

"The rain poses risks because damaged buildings could collapse if it gets too heavy ... and aftershocks could move them, too," said rescuer Octavianto.

Excavating debris too fast with heavy equipment could crush and kill any buried survivors, he added. "All the victims we've found so far were dead," said Octavianto, 37, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "It is most likely any more victims are already dead if 24 hours has passed," he said.

[Indonesia earthquake: dozens dead after tremors and landslides hit Sulawesi](#)
[Read more](#)

Scores of rescuers combed through the destruction, while police on Sunday deployed a unit of sniffer dogs to help in the search at a badly damaged hospital.

"We also use our own sense of smell to find possible victims," said rescuer Kustang Firman at the hospital scene. "If there's a strong scent, we'll focus on that spot."

Most victims of the tremors were found in Mamuju, but some were also recovered south of the city of 110,000 people in West Sulawesi province.

Friday's quake triggered panic among residents, which was hit by a 2018 quake-tsunami disaster that killed thousands.

"We heard a roaring sound and the house started shaking," said survivor Jumardi, 50, from a shelter where he and six family members took refuge. "All I had in my mind was that I would die ... Everyone was panicking."

Authorities have not given a figure for how many survivors have been rescued, though heartening reports have emerged, for example, of a pair of

young sisters who were plucked from under the mass of concrete and other debris and are now being treated in hospital.



Indonesian soldiers distribute relief goods for those affected by the earthquake at a stadium in Mamuju, West Sulawesi, Indonesia. Photograph: Daeng Mansur/AP

Doctors treated patients with broken limbs and other injuries at a makeshift medical centre, set up outside the only hospital in Mamuju that survived relatively intact.

Wawan, who was buried under his house until neighbours pulled him to freedom, initially didn't want to go into a hospital to treat his broken foot, fearing another quake.

"I was traumatised," the 27-year-old said. "But people convinced me that the doctors were treating patients outside the building, so I agreed to go."

Raditya Jati, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency's spokesperson, said that at least 1,150 houses in Majene have been damaged and that the agency was still collecting data on damaged houses and buildings in Mamuju, the provincial capital of nearly 300,000 people.

The agency said the army corps of engineers cleared the road connecting Mamuju and Majene that was blocked by landslides. They also rebuilt a damaged bridge.

The disaster agency's data showed that nearly 27,850 survivors had been moved to shelters. Most of them went to makeshift shelters that have been lashed by heavy monsoon downpours. Only a few were lucky to be protected by tarpaulin-covered tents.

They said they were running low on food, blankets and other aid, as emergency supplies were rushed to the hard-hit region.

Many survivors are unable to return to their destroyed homes, or are too scared to go back, fearing a tsunami sparked by aftershocks, common after strong earthquakes.

"It's better to take shelter before something worse happens," said Mamuju resident Abdul Wahab, from inside a tent with his wife and four children, one of whom is a baby.

"We are unable to return to our destroyed homes," said a father of three who identified himself only as Robert. He said he fled from his bed while being treated at Mamuju's Mitra Manakarra hospital, which was flattened by the quake. He and his family were among thousands of displaced people who took shelter in a hilly area.

He said his bed was shaking when he awoke and realised that it was an earthquake. He then removed a drip from his hand and ran out. He had seen several nurses helping patients who were unable to move before the building collapsed.

"I cried when I saw the hospital where I was being treated collapse with people still inside. I could have died if I got out late," he said.

Rescuers have managed to retrieve four survivors and four bodies from the rubble of the flattened hospital.

Fearing an outbreak of coronavirus in the crowded camps, authorities were trying to separate high- and low-risk groups.

Indonesia, a south-east Asian archipelago of nearly 270 million people, has been hit by a series of natural disasters this week.

Landslides sparked by torrential rains killed at least 32 on Java island, while dozens are dead or missing after severe flooding pounded another part of Sulawesi and Kalimantan, Indonesia's section of Borneo.

On Saturday night, volcano Mount Semeru shot a plume of ash and debris some 4.5 km (2.8 miles) into the sky as bright red lava flowed down from its crater. There were no reports of casualties.

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

In 2018, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi left more than 4,300 people dead or missing.

And on December 26, 2004, a massive 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra, triggering a tsunami that killed 220,000 throughout the region, including 170,000 in Indonesia – among the worst recorded disasters in history.

With Agence France-Presse and Associated Press

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US news

Del Monte \$20 bill set to sell for nearly \$60,000 – barring banana skins

Rare printing error – or creative addition by bored employee – makes 2004 banknote a collector's item, auctioneer says



The Del Monte banknote. Photograph: HA.com

The Del Monte banknote. Photograph: HA.com

[Richard Luscombe](#)

[@richlusc](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Officially, it is classified as “an obstructed printing error with retained obstruction”. In reality, it appears to be a simple slip-up.

A \$20 banknote which had a sticker from a bunch of bananas attached to it before it was overprinted with security numbering is now up for auction at a Texas dealer, the rare error elevating its worth to \$57,500, almost 3,000 times its face value.

The so-called Del Monte banknote is unusual, and so valuable, because the sticker is still affixed and clearly shows a serial number and US Department of the Treasury seal printed over it, according to Heritage Auctions of [Dallas](#).

“Most obstructions fall off shortly after printing, leaving behind a blank area of paper lacking the design, but errors with objects that ‘stick’ to the note and enter circulation are very rare,” a [description of the lot](#) on the seller’s website said.

“When this note was printed at the Fort Worth western currency facility, it went through the first and second printings normally before the Del Monte sticker found its way on to the surface,” the seller continued, describing the misprint as “one of the greatest paper money errors in history”.

Bidding on the banknote, from the US treasury’s 1996 design series and released into circulation in 2004, will end on 22 January. According to the [Heritage Auctions website](#) on Sunday afternoon, the highest bid was \$57,500, which would actually cost the bidder more than \$69,000, including a buyer’s premium.

The banknote sold at auction in 2006, for more than \$25,000. Two years earlier it was “a bargain” at \$10,000, when it was sold on eBay by a student in Ohio who received it as part of an ATM withdrawal.

The original estimate for the current sale was between \$25,000 and \$50,000, Heritage Auctions said.

All US banknotes produced since 1968 go through three print stages, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), which manufactures paper money for the US treasury, [says on its website](#).

The colorful banana sticker, bearing the words “Ecuador Del Monte Quality” and the number #4011, would have been added after the first two stages, printing the front and back of the note, but before the final print that added the security logo and individual identification detail.

Because of this, Heritage said, “most would conjecture that this error note was no accident and probably the result of some very bored or creative BEP employee”.

Banknotes produced in Fort Worth have been found with “Band-Aid, paper fragments, scotch tape and wood shavings” attached, Heritage Auctions said.

Misprinted banknotes are prized by notaphilists, those who collect paper money. Currency featuring overprints, mismatching serial numbers, misalignments and missing ink regularly sell for hundreds of dollars on eBay.

Heritage claims a world record for the most expensive banknote of its type ever sold, \$384,000 for a 1934 federal reserve bill which had a face value of \$10,000 in a [September 2020 auction](#).

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[Animals farmed](#)[Environment](#)

'We need answers': why are people living near Dutch goat farms getting sick?

A decade after an outbreak of Q fever killed 95 people in the Netherlands, scientists fear the emergence of a new disease



Goats on a dairy farm in the Netherlands, where scientists are investigating a link between human cases of pneumonia and goats. Photograph: Rob Engelaar/EPA

Goats on a dairy farm in the Netherlands, where scientists are investigating a link between human cases of pneumonia and goats. Photograph: Rob Engelaar/EPA

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[About this content](#)

[Sophie Kevany](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.15 EST

In early 2008, Jeannette van de Ven began to see a slightly higher rate of miscarriages among the goats on her dairy farm in the south of the [Netherlands](#).

“We sent the samples to the veterinary authority. Nine out of 10 results showed no explanation. Only maybe toxoplasmosis from cats. We had no cats,” she says.

Van de Ven, who keeps a herd of around 1,700 dairy goats in Noord-Brabant, a province [densely populated](#) with goat farms, kept sending samples. Finally, in May 2008 an outbreak of the respiratory infection [Q fever](#) was confirmed. It infects livestock including goats, sheep and cattle, and is found in placenta, amniotic fluid, urine, faeces and milk.

The disease turned into a nightmare for the Netherlands after thousands of people also became infected [during the outbreak](#), which lasted from 2007 to 2010. The Dutch government [culled](#) more than 50,000 dairy goats on 55 farms in an effort to stop the spread of the disease.

About half of the humans infected ended up developing complications, such as heart failure, and [95 people](#) died.

[Covid and farm animals: nine pandemics that changed the world](#)

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A decade on, another zoonotic disease risk is worrying Dutch goat farmers and scientists, as studies by public health and veterinary experts [have linked](#) human cases of pneumonia to goat farms.

People living near goat farms have a 20% to 55% higher risk of developing pneumonia, says Dick Heederik, a human-animal disease risk expert at the University of Utrecht. The closer to the goat farm, the higher the risk, he adds: “Analysis indicates that the increased risk is seen at a radius of 1–1.5km.”



A vet vaccinates a goat against Q-fever in 2008. Photograph: Ed Oudenaarden/AFP/Getty Images

The effects vary, with some people having no symptoms and others developing fever, chills, fatigue and muscle pain.

Having a second zoonotic disease risk linked to goats is, says farmers, frustrating, confusing and stressful. “The money is still good for milk, but

there is more stress around permits and for the public the news in the papers is negative about goats,” said Egbert ter Veen, who has about 50 dairy goats on his farm.

The Q fever outbreak followed a period of [rapid growth](#) in goat dairying in the Netherlands and its aftermath heightened tensions around [zoonotic disease threats](#), especially in the south of the country where the highest numbers of goat farms and infection rates were found.

There has also been an intense debate over the size and regulation of the livestock sector in the country, with calls for a [halving of livestock numbers](#) to tackle the environmental impact.

By the time the Q fever outbreak was contained in 2010, more than 4,000 human cases had been reported and an estimated 50,000 people had been infected, says Johanna van der Giessen, a veterinary microbiologist and zoonotic disease specialist at the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment.

[Could a deadly pig virus transform Germany's fixation on 'cheap meat'?](#)
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Since the Q fever cull, goat farmers have been slowly restocking – national goat milk production has [boomed over the past two decades](#) with export markets including cheese to Germany and goat milk-based infant formula to China. The cull, and other measures including an annual goat vaccination programme, mean Q fever is no longer a risk, says Van der Giessen.

But the pneumonia findings, which first emerged in 2013, led to restrictions on the sector starting in 2017, even as demand for goat milk continued to rise.

In Noord-Brabant, and several other provinces, expansion has effectively been frozen until the links to higher pneumonia rates can be identified and managed, says Van de Ven.

In general, “a larger density of animals per farm may contribute to infectious diseases”, says Lidwien Smit, who is based at the University of Utrecht’s

veterinary faculty and part of the team that first discovered higher pneumonia rates in people living near goat farms. Smit stressed, however, that in relation to goat farms, there is as yet no “clear link between farm size and disease incidence around those farms.”

Our hypothesis is that this could be a new zoonotic disease but we really don't know

Johanna van der Giessen, scientist

Dutch researchers are continuing to investigate the pneumonia link. Jos Tolboom, who chairs the goat department at Dutch farmer union the Netherlands Agricultural and Horticultural Association (LTO), argues that because there is no definite causal link yet between the goats and higher pneumonia risk, other factors could be at play. “It could be that since the Q fever outbreak people living near goat farms are more quick to go to the doctor,” he says.

For Van der Giessen, a zoonotic cause is plausible. That is partly because a similar pneumonia risk for poultry farms has now been linked to a dust issue. This is not the case for goat farms.

“We are now looking for a cause and since there is no Q fever and there is not so much evidence of it being related to the fine dust particles, our hypothesis is that this could be a new zoonotic disease, but we really don't know,” she says.

Without an answer for now, Tolboom fears the goat farm restrictions will continue and “people may start doubting if [livestock farming] is worth it.”

“We will probably hit the current expansion limits this year. A few years ago, the growth in the dairy goat herd was about 15% a year. Now it is about 3%. I can't see those limits changing for the next year or two until the questions around pneumonia risks are resolved.”

Sign up for the [Animals farmed monthly update](#) to get a roundup of the best farming and food stories across the world and keep up with our

investigations. You can send us your stories and thoughts at
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[Republicans](#)

Billionaire backer feels 'deceived' by Josh Hawley over election objections

Jeffrey Yass, Club for Growth donor, told associate he did not foresee senator's role in attempt to overturn US democracy

- [Hawley has publisher for book dropped by Simon & Schuster](#)



Josh Hawley speaks at the US Capitol on 6 January, the day of the Capitol attack. Photograph: AP

Josh Hawley speaks at the US Capitol on 6 January, the day of the Capitol attack. Photograph: AP

*Stephanie Kirchgaessner in Washington
@skirchy*

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

A secretive [billionaire supporter of Josh Hawley](#) and other rightwing lawmakers suggested he had been “deceived” by the Republican senator from Missouri, who led the effort to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

[Billionaires backed Republicans who sought to reverse US election results](#)
[Read more](#)

Jeffrey Yass is a co-founder of Susquehanna International Group – headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a critical swing state – who has donated tens of millions of dollars to hardline Republican groups who supported Donald Trump’s effort to invalidate his defeat at the polls by Joe Biden.

Yass privately told a longtime associate he had not foreseen how his contributions would lead to attempts to overturn US democracy.

“Do you think anyone knew Hawley was going to do that?” Yass wrote to Laura Goldman, a former stockbroker who has known him for more than three decades.

“Sometimes politicians deceive their donors.”

Yass, who does not give interviews and generally avoids publicity, also told Goldman he did not believe the 2020 election had been “stolen”, even though he has directly and indirectly supported rightwing [Republicans](#) who have repeatedly – and falsely – sought to discredit the results.

The latest fallout of the 6 January attempt to invalidate the election, in which 147 Republicans in Congress objected to electoral college results in the aftermath of the attack on the Capitol, comes as both Hawley and his donors face pressure and criticism for his role.

Hawley has said he objected to the counting of electoral votes in order to instigate a “debate” on the issue of election integrity. He has denied that his actions helped to incite the violent outburst and breach of the Capitol in which five people died, including a police officer.

Goldman told the Guardian she emailed Yass because she was upset to learn about his support for Hawley and other Republicans, especially since the lawmakers were seeking to invalidate the election results in their home state, Pennsylvania, which helped Biden clinch the White House.

“I approached Jeff Yass upset after reading the Guardian’s article [about his involvement in donations] because I was shocked he would allow my vote and the vote of his neighbors to possibly be invalidated by politicians to whom he gives millions of dollars,” she said.

She added: “Yass lives here. He knows local politicians … he could simply call them and ask questions if he thought the election results were funky, which they absolutely were not. He doesn’t need Josh Hawley, a senator

from [Missouri](#), or Ted Cruz, a senator from Texas, to question the election results in the state that he has lived almost 40 years.”

Goldman published snippets of Yass’s private remarks to her on Twitter. The Guardian was able to verify the authenticity of the statements.

Yass, a trader and poker aficionado [who is an active Republican donor](#) and has been a force in Pennsylvania elections, donated about \$30m to conservative Super PACs in the 2020 election cycle, making him the eighth-largest donor in the election, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.

Most of those donations were made to the Club for Growth, an anti-tax group that in 2018 and 2020 supported 42 Republican hardliners who ultimately voted to overturn election results even after insurrectionists stormed the US Capitol.

The Club for Growth has been a major backer of both Hawley and Cruz, his partner in seeking to invalidate the election.

Yass has not responded to requests for comment from the Guardian. Nor has he responded to questions about whether he will continue to donate to the Club for Growth or whether he discussed issues with Hawley and others. Goldman said she sought out a discussion with him in part because she knows he is a “hands on” political donor.

The Club for Growth did not respond to a request for comment. The group’s president, David McIntosh, has been an avid supporter of some of the most anti-democratic lawmakers elected in 2020, including Lauren Boebert, a QAnon follower and gun rights advocate from Colorado who has been criticized for tweeting the location of the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, during the riot in the Capitol, against the advice of police.

In an [endorsement of Boebert in July 2020](#), McIntosh lauded the restaurant owner and political novice for her understanding of the “irreparable harm” caused by “government overreach” and said he had no doubt Boebert would be a “conservative firebrand” in Washington.

Yass told Goldman he donated to the Club for Growth a year ago and suggested he could not have anticipated what Hawley and others might do.

But public records show Yass also donated \$2.5m to the Protect Freedom Pac on 10 November 2020, a week after the US election. The Protect Freedom Pac, affiliated with the Kentucky Republican senator Rand Paul, ran advertisements against Democrats ahead of two January runoff elections in Georgia, including ads that claimed Democrats were seeking to defund the police, institute “socialist healthcare” and raise “trillions in new taxes”.

The Protect Freedom Pac’s website currently – and falsely – states that Democrats “stole” the 2020 election and used the Covid-19 crisis to illegally change election laws. It has also endorsed an in-person voter ID law, a policy that would disproportionately block minority voters.

Yass has received far less attention than other billionaire donors, such as Mike Bloomberg or the late Sheldon Adelson, but has been known to get involved in local politics, donating money to candidates who support charter schools.

Goldman told the Guardian Yass has been a longtime supporter of the Republican majority in the Pennsylvania legislature that led the fight to stop mail-in ballots from being counted until election day. Pennsylvania’s final results were not known until days after the election and Biden’s victory was clinched in large part because of hundreds of thousands of mail-in ballots that were counted after in-person ballots.

Hawley’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

- *Got a tip? Please email Stephanie.Kirchgaessner@theguardian.com*

Biden inauguration

Biden will appeal for unity as US braces for violence by Trump supporters



Members of the Virginia national guard walk by the US Capitol in Washington on Sunday. Photograph: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Members of the Virginia national guard walk by the US Capitol in Washington on Sunday. Photograph: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

- America on edge as troops guard state capitols
- [Biden orders will reverse Trump on climate, Iran, Covid](#)
- [US politics – live coverage](#)

[Richard Luscombe](#), with [Julian Borger](#) and [Lois Beckett](#) in Washington

Sun 17 Jan 2021 18.34 EST

Joe Biden will deliver a message of national unity when he assumes the presidency on Wednesday, seeking to begin healing [a country fractured](#) by the acrimony of Donald Trump's administration and ongoing threats of violence by his supporters.

[America is broken – can Biden and Harris put it back together?](#)

[Read more](#)

The preview of the theme of Biden's inauguration address came as cities across the US braced for violent protests and Washington DC resembled a fortress with up to 25,000 national guard troops deployed.

"It's a message of moving this country forward, it's a message of unity, it's a message of getting things done," Ron Klain, the incoming White House chief of staff, told CNN's State of the Union.

"There's no question we've seen the most divisive four years in over a century from President Trump, it's one reason [Joe Biden](#) ran, to restore the soul of America. The events of the past few weeks have proven out just how damaged the soul of America has been, and how important it is to restore it. That work starts on Wednesday."

Biden will act quickly to reverse many of Trump's most controversial policies, Klain said, beginning with a [10-day flurry of executive orders](#) that will return the US to the Paris climate agreement and Iran nuclear deal, aim to [speed the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines](#) and erase the immigration ban on Muslim-majority countries.

The promise of new beginnings, however, is set against the backdrop of threats of domestic terrorism this weekend and around the inauguration. Throughout the day on Sunday, small groups of rightwing protesters gathered outside statehouses across the country, outnumbered by national guard troops and police. By late afternoon Sunday, no incidents were reported.

There was an attack on our people. This was the most terrible crime ever by a president against our country

Jamie Raskin

The Washington DC mayor, Muriel Bowser, told NBC's Meet the Press she was concerned about several areas of her city following FBI warnings of armed individuals heading there, and to state capitals, bent on repeating the

insurrection that left five dead when a mob incited by Trump overran the US Capitol on 6 January.

With the massive national guard presence in Washington, and federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies including the Secret Service working with local police, Bowser said she was confident Wednesday's inauguration would be "a safe event".

But, she said, "this will be an inauguration unlike any other. It was already destined to be given Covid concerns and limited seating and public access. But having our fellow Americans storm the Capitol, in an attempt to overthrow the government, certainly warrants heightened security."

Adam Schiff, the Democratic chair of the House intelligence committee, likened the scene in Washington to Baghdad's Green Zone, "with so much military presence and barricades".

"I never thought I would see that in our own capital or that it would be necessary, but there was a profound threat from domestic violent extremists of the nature we saw on 6 January," he said told CBS's Face the Nation.

"There are people coming to the Washington DC area that are bringing weapons, and we see threats to all 50 state capitals. There will be gatherings of individuals and those gatherings could turn violent, so there's a very high level of risk."

An FBI bulletin warned of the likelihood of violence from armed protesters in Washington and every state capital between 16 and 20 January, Trump's last day in office. The president, [impeached for the second time](#) for inciting the Capitol attack with lies about a stolen election, remained isolated and silent in the White House on Sunday, reportedly assembling a legal team for his Senate trial.

Christopher Wray, the FBI director, outlined on Thursday threats by rightwing agitators including QAnon and white supremacist groups such as the Proud Boys.

[Biden plan to vaccinate 100m people in 100 days ‘absolutely doable’, Fauci says](#)

[Read more](#)

“We are seeing an extensive amount of concerning online chatter,” he said. “One of the real challenges is trying to distinguish what’s aspirational versus what’s intentional.”

As a precaution, Capitol buildings were boarded up and extra law enforcement resources deployed in numerous states. On Saturday, Washington police [arrested a Virginia man](#) found with a fake inaugural ID, a loaded handgun and ammunition. The man later told the Washington Post he had been working security in the capital all week and pulled up to the checkpoint after getting lost. He told the paper he forgot the gun was in his truck and denied having so much ammunition. He was released after an initial court appearance and is due back in court in June, records show.

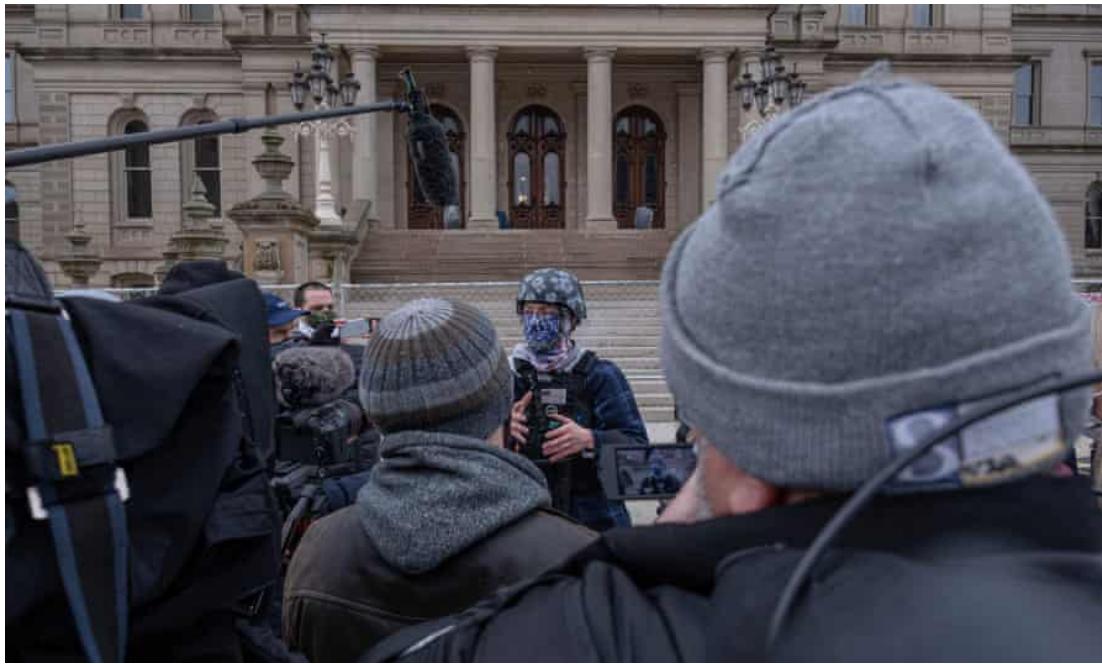
“We have intelligence that there’s going to be activity around our capital and capitals across the country,” Asa Hutchinson, the Republican governor of Arkansas, told Fox News Sunday. “We’re taking necessary precautions to protect our capital and our citizens. I know some governors have beefed up even more, but I think the deterrent value hopefully has diminished that threat level.”

In Washington, a large area including the White House, the Capitol, the National Mall and several blocks on either side was sealed off by thousands of national guard troops. High steel fences on concrete stands protected government buildings.

In the run-up to the inauguration, troops from DC and neighbouring states will garrison the city. By several measures, it is a bigger response than the aftermath of 9/11. Large numbers of soldiers resting in the corridors of the Capitol have not been seen since the civil war.

The protected area was divided into a highly restricted “red zone” and around that a “green zone” accessible to residents, an echo of the Iraq war, and the fortified government and diplomatic area in central Baghdad.

By lunchtime on Sunday, the city was quiet, with white supremacist militia leaders telling followers to stay away.



A member of the Boogaloo Bois, an anti-government group, speaks to the press in front the Capitol building in Lansing, Michigan, on Sunday. Photograph: Seth Herald/AFP/Getty Images

In an email to supporters on Thursday, Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the Oath Keepers, joined other extremists in begging Trump to declare martial law. But he also told supporters they should not gather at state capitols, warning them of “false-flag traps”.

Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the neo-fascist Proud Boys, told USA Today his group was not mobilising, saying: “I feel like this part of the battle is over.”

A majority of respondents in a [USA Today/Suffolk poll](#) published on Sunday said they were still expecting violence.

[How US police failed to stop the rise of the far right and the Capitol attack](#)
[Read more](#)

Trump was consumed on Sunday with his Senate trial for “incitement of insurrection”, which could begin as early as Wednesday afternoon.

Jamie Raskin, a Democratic congressman from Maryland and the lead impeachment manager, gave a moving interview to CNN in which he recalled the Capitol riot and remembered his son Tommy, who died on New Year's Eve at the age of 25.

“When we went to count the electoral college votes and [the Capitol] came under that ludicrous attack, I felt my son with me and I was most concerned with our youngest daughter and my son-in-law, who is married to our other daughter, who were with me that day and who got caught in a room off of the House floor,” he said.

“In between them and me was a rampaging armed mob, that could have killed them easily. These events are personal to me. There was an attack on our country, there was an attack on our people.

“This was the most terrible crime ever by a president of the United States against our country.”

Reuters contributed to this report

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/17/biden-inauguration-unity-us-braces-for-violence-trump-supporters>

[Keystone XL pipeline](#)

Biden to cancel \$9bn Keystone XL pipeline's permit, says source

Rescinding permit is on list of executive actions thought to be scheduled for first day in office



Indigenous leaders protest against the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines in front of the White House in March 2017. Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Indigenous leaders protest against the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines in front of the White House in March 2017. Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Reuters

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.48 EST

Joe Biden is planning to cancel the permit for the \$9bn [Keystone XL pipeline](#) project as one of his first acts as president, perhaps as soon as his first day in office, according to a source familiar with his thinking.

Donald Trump had made building the pipeline a central promise of his presidential campaign. Biden, who will be [inaugurated on Wednesday](#), was vice-president in the Obama administration when it rejected the project as contrary to its efforts to combat the climate crisis.

The words “rescind Keystone XL pipeline permit” appear on a list of executive actions likely to be scheduled for the first day of Biden’s presidency, according to an [earlier report](#) by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

[Biden must be our 'climate president'. He can start by ending pipeline projects | Faith Spotted Eagle and Kendall Mackey](#)

[Read more](#)

Biden had previously vowed to scrap the oil pipeline’s presidential permit if he became president.

The project, which would move oil from the Canadian province of Alberta to Nebraska, had been slowed by legal issues in the US. It also faced opposition [from environmentalists](#) seeking to check the expansion of Canada’s oil sands by opposing new pipelines to move its crude to refineries.

Canada’s ambassador to the US said she would continue to promote a project that she said fitted with both countries’ environmental plans. “There is no better partner for the US on climate action than [Canada](#) as we work together for green transition,” Kirsten Hillman said in a statement.

The Alberta premier, Jason Kenney, said on Twitter that cancellation would eliminate jobs, weaken US-Canada relations and undermine American national security by making the country more dependent on [Opec](#) oil imports.

TC [Energy](#) Corp, which operates the pipeline, said it would achieve net zero emissions by 2023 when it enters service. The company also pledged to use only renewable energy sources by 2030 in an attempt to win Biden’s support.

Construction is well under way in Canada, with the international border crossing complete. In the US, TC has started construction on pump stations in each of the states the line will pass through, but legal setbacks cost it much of the 2020 construction season.

Barack Obama [axed the project in 2015](#), saying Canada would reap most of the economic benefits, while the project would add to greenhouse gas emissions.

Trump [issued a presidential permit in 2017](#) that allowed the plans to move forward, and several environmental groups sued the US government.

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Business live

Business

China's economic recovery picks up speed; FTSE 100 dips – as it happened

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[The Pacific project](#)[Palau](#)

Palau's new president vows to stand up to 'bully' China

Former senator Surangel Whipps Jr promises to stand by allies US and Taiwan when he takes office on Thursday



President-elect of Palau Surangel Whipps Jr will be sworn in as leader of the Pacific archipelago this week. Photograph: Richard Brooks/Lightning Strikes Media

President-elect of Palau Surangel Whipps Jr will be sworn in as leader of the Pacific archipelago this week. Photograph: Richard Brooks/Lightning Strikes Media

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[Bernadette Carreon](#) in Koror

Sun 17 Jan 2021 20.08 EST

Palau's president-elect has vowed to stand up to Chinese "bullying" in the Pacific, and said the small archipelago nation will stand by its alliances with "true friends", the United States and Taiwan.

Fifty-two-year-old Surangel Whipps Jr, a supermarket owner and two-time senator from a prominent Palauan family, will be sworn in as the new president on 21 January, succeeding his brother-in-law Tommy Remengesau Jr.

[Life without Covid: the nations that have sidestepped the pandemic so far](#)

[Read more](#)

In a forthright interview with the Guardian, Whipps said the US had demonstrated over the years it was a reliable friend of Palau, most recently shown by its delivery of 6,000 doses of the Moderna coronavirus vaccine as part of the US's Operation Warp Speed.

"It's important for countries to have shared values support each and work together. There is a competition, yes [between the US and China] but that's their competition. It's about what we believe."

“There are thoughts that the ‘United States and China are in a race’; I think what it is really about is freedom and the exercise of democracy and many times, we feel big countries want to bully small countries. It’s important to have a strong partner that is there for us.”

In December, the US Coast Guard and Palauan maritime authorities [seized a Chinese fishing vessel](#) suspected of illegally harvesting sea cucumber inside Palau’s territorial waters.

“This is about securing our borders, and other countries that don’t respect other countries’ borders are not acceptable,” Whipps said.

“Stealing and offering bribes, that’s just got to stop, illegal fishing has to stop. As countries, we should also be responsible to our people and tell them not to go to other countries and do these kinds of things,” he said.



A Chinese fishing boat detained by Palauan authorities on suspicion of illegally harvesting sea cucumber. Photograph: Richard Brooks/Lightning Strike Media Productions

Whipps said countries that wanted to be regarded as global leaders should take responsibility for the actions of their citizens.

He said the outgoing vice-president of Palau, also the country's justice minister, had tried to contact the Chinese government about the vessel's unlawful entry into Palau.

"But they don't seem to care and that is unacceptable. They should take responsibility for their people, and it is like they encouraged them by ignoring them. It's not good."

Whipps also pledged Palau would continue formal recognition of, and its close relations with, Taiwan, despite the growing presence of China in the Pacific.

"Palau's position, as a friend of Taiwan, has caused a lot of collateral damage for Palau. Other countries that do not like this relationship, do things in the international community, like the UN and other Pacific organisations, to try to disrupt what Palau is promoting. I think that's the nature of larger nations who want to bully," Whipps told the Guardian.

Palau is one of Taiwan's 15 remaining diplomatic allies, and one of only four remaining in the Pacific (after [Solomon Islands](#) and [Kiribati switched in 2019](#)). As a pointed show of support, Taiwan's foreign minister, Joseph Wu, will attend Whipps's presidential inauguration this week, and the two administrations have been in discussions over a travel bubble, given low cases numbers in Taiwan and [Palau, which remains Covid-free](#).

But Palau's allegiance to Taiwan has not been without consequence: the nation is subject to an [unofficial travel ban for Chinese tourists](#) which has hurt the country's tourism-dependent economy.



Palau's largest city, Koror.

Whipps was portrayed as a generational change during the spirited, but comparatively good-natured, presidential campaign held over two rounds in October and November. Palau's electoral cycle mirrors that of the United States, with which it has a compact of free association, which covers [military co-operation](#) and financial assistance.

Whipps said re-starting Palau's tourism-dependent economy post-Covid was a priority, and that he hoped to vaccinate most of his country's 18,000-strong population by the northern hemisphere summer.

[Tiny Pacific nation of Palau detains 'illegal' Chinese fishing vessel](#)
[Read more](#)

But he said climate change presented Palau's greatest long-term challenge. Most of the population lives close to the water, and the country's only hospital is near the coast where it is at risk of being wiped out by a typhoon or storm surge.

"We see [climate change] on a daily basis, other people don't," Whipps said. "We need to make people understand, especially the larger countries, that the threat is real and we should work together to find a solution."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/palaus-new-president-vows-to-stand-up-to-bully-china>

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[China](#)

Chinese miners trapped by blast a week ago send note to rescuers

At least 12 of 22 gold miners survived the blast in eastern Shandong province, note sent to surface suggests

01:21

Reuters

Sun 17 Jan 2021 23.30 EST

Twelve workers trapped underground after an explosion at a gold mine in eastern [China](#) a week ago are still alive, according to a note retrieved from the site, the official Xinhua news agency reported, citing local authorities.

A total of 22 workers were trapped in the Hushan mine, in Shandong province, after the blast on 10 January. It was not until 30 hours later that the accident was reported, however, leading to severe criticism of those responsible and the sacking of two senior local officials.

Xinhua provided no further details on what the retrieved “paper slip” said, but it said rescuers also felt people pulling on iron ropes that had been lowered into the mine, which was still under construction.

The condition of the other 10 workers was unclear, Xinhua said.

The news agency reported earlier on Sunday that when rescuers knocked on a drilling pipe, they heard knocking sounds in response.

The workers’ communication system was damaged in the blast, while debris blocking the mine shaft and the late reporting of the accident have also hampered the rescue effort.

The mine is owned by Shandong Wucailong Investment Co, which China’s fourth-biggest gold miner, Zhaojin [Mining](#) Industry Co, describes as a “subsidiary of an associate”.

Zhaojin has not commented publicly on the accident.

Mining accidents are common in China, where the industry has a poor safety record and regulations are often weakly enforced. In December, [18 miners died](#) in a carbon monoxide leak at a coal mine in the southwestern city of Chongqing.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/chinese-miners-trapped-by-blast-a-week-ago-are-alive-state-media>

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[Egypt](#)

50 ancient coffins uncovered at Egypt's Saqqara necropolis

Wooden sarcophagi discovered at site south of Cairo along with funerary temple of Queen Naert



One of the wooden sarcophagi found by Zahi Hawass's team. Photograph: Khaled Desouki/AFP/Getty Images

One of the wooden sarcophagi found by Zahi Hawass's team. Photograph: Khaled Desouki/AFP/Getty Images

Agence France-Presse in Cairo

Sun 17 Jan 2021 08.31 EST

Egypt has announced the discovery of a new trove of treasures at the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo, including an ancient funerary temple.

The tourism and antiquities ministry said the “major discoveries” made by a team of archaeologists headed by the Egyptologist Zahi Hawass also included more than 50 sarcophagi.

The wooden sarcophagi, which date back to the New Kingdom period – between the 16th and the 11th century BC – were found in 52 burial shafts at depths of 10 to 12 metres (40 feet).

Hawass said the funerary temple of Queen Naert, the wife of King Teti, as well as three warehouses made of bricks were also found on the site.

Saqqara, home to more than a dozen pyramids, ancient monasteries and animal burial sites, was a vast necropolis of the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis that has become a Unesco world heritage site.

In November, Egypt announced the discovery of [more than 100 intact sarcophagi](#), in the largest such find of the year.



A mummy dating back to the New Kingdom found at the funerary temple of Queen Naert. Photograph: Mohamed Hossam/EPA

The sealed wooden coffins, unveiled alongside statues of ancient deities, dated back more than 2,500 years and belonged to top officials of the Late period and the Ptolemaic period of ancient Egypt. At the time, the antiquities and tourism minister, Khaled al-Anani, predicted that “Saqqara has yet to reveal all of its contents”.

Hawass said the latest discoveries could shed new light on the history of Saqqara during the New Kingdom. The find was made near the pyramid where King Teti, the first pharaoh of the sixth dynasty of the Old Kingdom, is buried.

Egypt hopes archaeological discoveries will spur tourism, a sector that has endured multiple shocks, from [the 2011 uprisings](#) to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Later this year, and after several delays, authorities hope to inaugurate a new museum – the [Grand Egyptian Museum](#) – at the Giza plateau.

There has been a flurry of excavations in recent years in Saqqara, home to the step pyramid [of Djoser](#), one of the earliest built in ancient Egypt.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/17/archaeologists-uncover-new-treasure-trove-at-egypt-saqqara-necropolis>

2021.01.18 - Climate crisis

- [Carbon capture Technology is vital to meeting goals, scientists tell green critics](#)
- [Air pollution Issue will lead to mass migration, say experts after landmark ruling](#)
- ['Neptune balls' Seagrass sieve millions of plastic particles from water, study finds](#)

[The Observer](#)

[Carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#)

Carbon capture is vital to meeting climate goals, scientists tell green critics

Supporters insist that storage technology is not a costly mistake but the best way for UK to cut emissions from heavy industry

[Robin McKie](#)

Sat 16 Jan 2021 12.36 EST First published on Sat 16 Jan 2021 12.32 EST



A cement factory in Derbyshire. Carbon capture can help to reduce emissions of key industries. Photograph: John Finney Photography/Getty Images

Engineers and geologists have strongly criticised green groups who last week claimed that carbon capture and storage schemes – for reducing fossil fuel emissions – are costly mistakes.

The scientists insisted that such schemes are vital weapons in the battle against global heating and warn that failure to set up ways to trap carbon dioxide and store it underground would make it almost impossible to hold net emissions to below zero by 2050.

“[Carbon capture and storage](#) is going to be the only effective way we have in the short term to prevent our steel industry, cement manufacture and many other processes from continuing to pour emissions into the atmosphere,” said Professor Stuart Haszeldine, of Edinburgh University.

“If we are to have any hope of keeping global temperature [increases] down below 2 degrees C then we desperately need to develop ways to capture and store carbon dioxide.”

Carbon capture and storage involves the extraction of emissions from power plants and factories, condensing them and then pumping the resulting carbon dioxide into underground stores. Britain is considered to be well placed to develop and operate such technology given its many depleted North Sea oil fields where this sequestered carbon dioxide could be stored.

Several CCS development programmes have been launched over the past 20 years but have been cancelled as governments have vacillated over funding.

However, Boris Johnson – as part of his commitment to fight climate change – has pledged £1bn of public funds to help develop [four major CCS schemes](#) in Britain by 2030 as part of his plan for a “green industrial revolution”.

The aim is to make the UK a “world leader” in the technology and create thousands of jobs. But campaigners at Global Witness and [Friends of the Earth](#) Scotland said last week that a reliance on CCS was not a reliable way to decarbonise the energy system, and published a paper last Monday from the Tyndall Manchester climate change research centre that they said proved that CCS has a “history of over-promising and under-delivering”.

Both groups claimed CCS would not make “a meaningful contribution to 2030 climate targets” despite the investment, and instead urged the construction of more renewable energy plants to be given priority.

How carbon capture works

But the claims were last week dismissed by engineers and geologists. “These claims are quite unfair,” said Michael Stephenson, director of science and technology at the British Geological Survey.

“The science behind carbon capture and storage is extremely good. It offers us a genuine solution to some of the problems we face in trying to tackle global warming.”

At present, most successes in reducing UK carbon emissions have come from the power industry where renewable energy sources have taken over electricity generation from coal, gas and oil plants.

However, some industries – such as steel and cement industries – emit vast amounts of carbon dioxide on top of those produced by generating the power they consume.

It will be much more difficult to bring down carbon emissions from these plants even though these industries are vital to the UK’s economic strength.

This point was stressed by Haszeldine. “When CCS was first touted, it was seen as a way of cleaning up electricity generated by fossil fuels, in particular those burning coal. But now it is clear it can play a key role in cleaning up other industries.

“We just need to push ahead with its development so that Britain can find ways of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The longer we delay then the worst things are going to be and claims that CCS will not work do not help.”

Bob Ward, policy director at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, was also critical of the green groups’ claims.

“The opposition to CCS technology from some campaigners seems driven by a hatred of fossil fuel companies that is preventing a level-headed understanding of how we can stop climate change,” he told the *Observer*.

“Together with dithering policymakers, they share responsibility for stopping the UK from leading a global effort to develop this technology.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/16/carbon-capture-vital-meeting-climate-goals-scientists-cut-emissions>

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[Environment](#)

Air pollution will lead to mass migration, say experts after landmark ruling

Call for world leaders to act in wake of French extradition case that turned on environmental concerns



People wearing facemasks to protect themselves against air pollution in Beijing, China, in 2018. Photograph: Wu Hong/EPA-EFE

People wearing facemasks to protect themselves against air pollution in Beijing, China, in 2018. Photograph: Wu Hong/EPA-EFE

[Diane Taylor](#)

Fri 15 Jan 2021 06.28 EST

Air pollution does not respect national boundaries and environmental degradation will lead to mass migration in the future, said a leading barrister in the wake of a landmark migration ruling, as experts warned that government action must be taken as a matter of urgency.

Sailesh Mehta, a barrister specialising in environmental cases, said: “The link between migration and environmental degradation is clear. As global warming makes parts of our planet uninhabitable, mass migration will become the norm. Air and water pollution do not respect national boundaries. We can stop a humanitarian and political crisis from becoming an existential one. But our leaders must act now.”

He added: “We have a right to breathe clean air. Governments and courts are beginning to recognise this fundamental human right. The problem is not just that of [Bangladesh](#) and the developing world. Air pollution contributes to around 200,000 deaths a year in the UK. One in four deaths worldwide can be linked to pollution.”

The comments follow a [decision](#) by a French court this week, which is believed to be the first time environment was cited by a court in an extradition hearing. The case involved a Bangladeshi man with asthma who avoided deportation from France after his lawyer argued that he risked a severe deterioration in his condition, and possibly premature death, due to the dangerous levels of pollution in his homeland.

The appeals court in Bordeaux overturned an expulsion order against the 40-year-old man because he would face “a worsening of his respiratory pathology due to air pollution” in his country of origin.

Yale and Columbia universities’ environmental performance index [ranks Bangladesh 179th in the world](#) for air quality in 2020, while the concentration of fine particles in the air is six times the World Health Organization’s recommended maximum.

Dr David R Boyd, [UN special rapporteur on human rights and environment](#), agreed with Mehta’s analysis, telling the Guardian: “Air pollution causes 7 million premature deaths annually, so it is understandable if people feel compelled to migrate in search of clean air to safeguard their health. Air pollution is a global public health disaster that does not get the attention it deserves because most of the people who die are poor or otherwise vulnerable.”

He explained: “My work is really focused on increasing recognition and implementation of everyone’s right to live in a healthy environment, which surely includes [clean air](#). I’m involved in a couple of really important lawsuits on this issue in South Africa and Indonesia. The good news is that we have solutions that simultaneously address air pollution and climate change primarily by rapidly phasing out fossil fuel use.”

Q&A

Why is air pollution so bad in Bangladesh?

Show

In recent years, Bangladesh has become one of the worst countries in the world for air pollution. According to the World Health Organization, Bangladesh is [in the top 10](#) countries for concentrations of PM2.5, the harmful pollution particles in the air.

The emphasis on modernisation through industrialisation and construction has proved devastating for Bangladesh's air and the biggest causes of pollution are vehicle emissions, waste burning and toxic industrial emissions from concrete, steel and brick plants which are pumped into the air. Air pollution, both ambient and household, was an extremely high risk factor in the 572,600 deaths in 2018 from noncommunicable diseases in Bangladesh, according to these [WHO figures](#). According to [one report](#), around 72% of national households in Bangladesh still use solid fuel for heating and cooking, which contributes heavily to air pollution.

Efforts by the government to tackle pollution have mostly been lacklustre and ineffective. In 2019, the government attempted to close down thousands of illegal brick-making kilns in the cities. A clean air bill has recently been drafted, which includes draconian punishments for illegal industrial operations who are big polluters, but has yet to be passed by parliament.

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Alex Randall, coordinator at the Climate & [Migration](#) Coalition, said safe and legal routes to allow people to migrate needed to be established.

“Cases such as this, where air quality or other pollution become a reason for preventing deportation, are certainly important steps forward. They may potentially lay the foundations for other future cases in which the impacts of climate change provide grounds for allowing people to stay. In fact, several other cases mostly relating to people from climate vulnerable Pacific island nations have started to do this.

“However, these cases do not usually set legal precedents and people moving across borders due to climate change impacts remain in a legal grey area.”

According to the [Environmental Justice Foundation](#), one person every 1.3 seconds is forced to leave their homes and communities due to the climate crisis but millions lack legal protection. It has called on all countries to rapidly and fully implement the Paris climate agreement.

A [ruling](#) by the [United Nations](#) human rights committee a year ago found it is unlawful for governments to return people to countries where their lives might be threatened by the climate crisis.

Tens of millions of people are expected to be [displaced by global heating](#) in the next decade.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/15/air-pollution-will-lead-to-mass-migration-say-experts-after-landmark-ruling>

Plastics

Seagrass 'Neptune balls' sieve millions of plastic particles from water, study finds

Researchers counted particles in seaballs that washed up on beaches in Spain



An underwater view of a *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadow in the Mediterranean sea that may help catch plastic pollution in the water.
Photograph: Jordi Regas/University of Barcelona/AFP/Getty

An underwater view of a *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadow in the Mediterranean sea that may help catch plastic pollution in the water.
Photograph: Jordi Regas/University of Barcelona/AFP/Getty

Agence France-Presse

Thu 14 Jan 2021 20.15 EST

Underwater seagrass in coastal areas appear to trap plastic pollution in natural bundles of fibre known as "Neptune balls", researchers have found.

With no help from humans, the swaying plants – anchored to shallow seabeds – may collect nearly 900m plastic items in the Mediterranean alone every year, a study reported in the journal Scientific Reports said.

“We show that plastic debris in the seafloor can be trapped in seagrass remains, eventually leaving the marine environment through beaching,” lead author Anna Sanchez-Vidal, a marine biologist at the University of Barcelona, told AFP.

This clean-up “represents a continuous purge of plastic debris out of the sea,” she added.

The study adds to the long list of services that seagrass provides – for ocean ecosystems, and the humans who live near the water’s edge. They play a vital role in improving water quality, absorb CO₂ and exude oxygen, and are a natural nursery and refuge for hundreds of species of fish. They are also the foundation of coastal food webs.

[Clothes washing linked to ‘pervasive’ plastic pollution in the Arctic](#)
[Read more](#)

By anchoring in shallow waters, they help prevent beach erosion, and dampen the impact of destructive storm surges.

There are 70 species of marine seagrass, grouped in several families of flowering plants that – originally on land – recolonised the ocean 80m to 100m years ago.

Growing from the Arctic to the tropics, most species have long, grass-like leaves that can form vast underwater meadows.

It is unclear if collecting the plastic damages the seagrass itself.



The plastic-riddle ‘Neptune balls’.

Photograph: Marta Veny/UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA/AFP/Getty Images

To better understand the plastic bundling capabilities of seagrass, Sanchez-Vidal and her team studied a species found only in the Mediterranean sea, *Posidonia oceanica*.

In 2018 and 2019, they counted the number of plastic particles found in seaballs that had washed up on four beaches in Mallorca, [Spain](#), which has large seagrass meadows offshore.

There was plastic debris in half of the loose seagrass leaf samples, up to 600 bits per kilogram of leaves.

Only 17% of the tighter bundled seagrass fibre known as Neptune balls contained plastic, but at a much higher density – nearly 1,500 pieces per kilogram of seaball.

Using estimates of seagrass fibre production in the Mediterranean, the researchers worked up an estimate of how much plastic might be filtered in the entire basin.

The oval orbs – the shape of a rugby ball – form from the base of leaves that have been shredded by the action of ocean currents but remain attached to stems, called rhizomes.

As they are slowly buried by sedimentation, the damaged leaf sheaths form stiff fibres that intertwine into a ball, collecting plastic in the process.

“We don’t know where they travel,” said Sanchez-Vidal. “We only know that some of them are beached during storms.”

In 2018 WWF estimated that in a matter of weeks over the holiday season in the Mediterranean, the rise in plastic marine pollution [contributed to around 150m tonnes of plastic in the ocean.](#)

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/15/seagrass-neptune-balls-sieve-millions-of-plastic-particles-from-water-study-finds>

2021.01.18 - Culture

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Inside the Guardian Television

'It can unite a nation': Guardian TV writers on why the small screen has prevailed

As the art form has come into its own in Covid-19, our writers reflect on surprise hits, what readers are watching, and how it's evolving



Shaniqua Okwok and Amarah-Jae St Aubyn in *Lovers Rock*, one of the films in Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* series. Photograph: Parisa Taghizadeh/BBC/McQueen Limited

Shaniqua Okwok and Amarah-Jae St Aubyn in *Lovers Rock*, one of the films in Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* series. Photograph: Parisa Taghizadeh/BBC/McQueen Limited

[Lanre Bakare](#), [Hannah J Davies](#), and [Toby Moses](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.30 EST

Lanre Bakare, arts and culture correspondent

TV has traditionally been seen as one of the poorer arts. Derided as something that's on in between adverts, the prestige of the big screen simply didn't apply to its smaller cousin. But those boundaries and prejudices – already beginning to fragment before the pandemic – have been shattered during Covid-19.

The line between film and TV has completely blurred. Think of [Steve McQueen's Small Axe](#): was it a TV show or a series of films? Does that categorisation even matter to anyone other than those deciding which awards to put it up for? The small screen is the most accessible and creative area of the arts at the moment, partly because of the restraints of the pandemic but also because there has never been so much focus on making television.

It also helps that last year was such a strong 12 months for TV. James Graham's [Quiz](#), Lucy Prebble's [I Hate Suzie](#), McQueen's Small Axe, Michaela Coel's [I May Destroy You](#), Adult Material, [The Crown](#), The Last Dance, [The Queen's Gambit](#) and [Normal People](#) ensured Guardian readers were spoiled for choice during lockdown(s).



Phoebe Dynevor and Regé-Jean Page in Bridgerton. Photograph: Liam Daniel/Netflix

The number of scripted shows continues to rise year-on-year, with new streaming competitors meaning viewers, if anything, have too much choice. Peak TV, the Golden Age, call it what you like – a few years ago when I worked on the Guide I genuinely thought it couldn't last and there would be a reset. That hasn't happened. In fact, the cultural moments that regularly generate the strongest response from our readership are increasingly found on our TV screens or laptop: just look at [Bridgerton](#) or speculation over who might [occupy the Tardis after Jodie Whittaker](#). So much for being the poor relation.

Toby Moses, acting TV editor

TV has been one of the least impacted of the arts during the pandemic. Shooting was delayed, schedules shuffled around – but by and large television has been what has kept many of us informed, entertained and sane during repeated lockdowns. What has been missing for many, though, is that sense of communal viewing, whether it be because flatmates have fled back to their parents' house for the duration, or because you can't have friends over to enjoy the week's episode of Strictly.

Our liveblogs have thus taken on an even greater importance. We experimented with our first retro-liveblog, when [Sarah Hughes guided us all through a rewatch](#) of the still impressive first season of Spooks, and the interaction between our readers and our regular liveblogs (the superlative [Heidi Stephens on Strictly](#) duty and the dream team of [Scott Bryan and Michael Chakraverty on Bake Off](#)) has been incredibly gratifying – both professionally and personally.



Oti Mabuse and Bill Bailey in action on Strictly Come Dancing. Photograph: Guy Levy/BBC/PA

Liveblogs may seem like a relatively time-efficient way of producing content, but both the writers and editors involved prepare diligently to deliver *bon mots* in the moment and prepare for any technical mishaps that may occur. Nobody noticed, but it took a couple of weeks to work out why the start of every entry in the Bake Off liveblog began with a giant capital letter. And it's all worth it when hundreds of readers get involved, cheering on Bill Bailey or bemoaning Bake Off's mango obsession.

And it provided a sense of community for us too. I started on the TV desk just a few days before lockdown 1.0 started, and have been mostly working with a new team remotely ever since. The WhatsApp group between writers and editors that sprang up around the Bake Off liveblog was an absolute joy to be a part of, adding some of that “office gossip” vibe that has been sorely missing from our lives, and bringing me closer to my new colleagues.

One of the great things about TV is the way it can bring people together in a way unsurpassed by almost any other art form – it can unite a nation in horror as we huddle to watch the prime minister’s latest press conference, or in laughter at the antics of Ant and Dec on I’m a Celebrity. It’s been a joy to see that feed down into my working life too.

Hannah J Davies, deputy TV editor

Working on the Guardian TV desk during the pandemic has been like no other time in my professional life. I spent several years freelancing so I quickly adjusted to working from home, but if you'd told me this time last year that I would have interviewed Samuel L Jackson from my kitchen table, pyjama-clad from the waist down (it was rather late in the evening, to be fair) I would have been very bemused indeed.

I also got a new boss, the Guardian's TV editor, Toby Moses, and we spent a single day together in the office before going our separate ways (though luckily we catch up most days on Google Hangouts and, of course, via email).

TV has been a huge part of the Guardian's cultural output over lockdown, and we've balanced our coverage of landmark shows like *I May Destroy You* and *Small Axe* with recaps and watchalongs, and pieces on the escapist comfort TV we've all desperately clung to, from [Jonathan Creek](#) to [Schitt's Creek](#). We've covered TV's best attempts at representing pandemic-era life and the surge in interest around Black Lives Matter, while also balancing reality with the huge worlds our readers want – and need right now – to escape into (for me that's *Masterchef: The Professionals*).

This balancing act might sound challenging, and it was, but our TV output is extremely varied, even in “normal” times. This past year we've looked at everything from why [The Sopranos](#) is still so relatable, to whether colour-blind casting is always a good idea, to the [end of Keeping Up With the Kardashians](#), and interviewed everyone from Tom Hanks to the cast of the BBC's gently ambling crime drama *Death in Paradise*. One of the best things about working at a newspaper like the Guardian is that we do have so much scope to do different things, both serious and frivolous, and to work with different sections; I've just got off the phone with Today in Focus, the Guardian's daily podcast, about a TV story.



Robert Iler, James Gandolfini and Edie Falco in *The Sopranos*. Photograph: © HBO/Everett/Rex Features

It's been a thrilling, exciting, tiring, at times challenging period to be working in culture journalism, but our aims haven't really changed all that much. I still spend a good chunk of time each day catching up with what our competitors have been up to, checking what shows people are raving about on Twitter, and trying to commission and write exciting pieces that express how important TV is to all of us. The only difference is that I'm doing it from my kitchen table and, being at home all year, I finally stopped watching iPlayer on my laptop and treated myself to a TV. It's definitely come in handy.

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TV tonightTelevision & radio

TV tonight: Glenn Howerton returns with another series of AP Bio



Breaking news ... Glenn Howerton as Jack Griffin. Photograph: NBC/Ron Batzdorff

Breaking news ... Glenn Howerton as Jack Griffin. Photograph: NBC/Ron Batzdorff

More goings on from Whitlock high school's science department. Plus: Junior Bake Off. Here's what to watch this evening

Ammar Kalia, Jack Seale, Phil Harrison, Hannah Verdier and Paul Howlett
Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.20 EST

AP Bio

9pm, Sky Comedy

Whitlock High School's reluctant biology teacher Jack Carson Griffin (It's Always Sunny's Glenn Howerton) returns for a third season of this gentle

comedy on the goings-on of the world of public schooling in small-town America. We open with Jack plotting revenge, with the help of his willing students, on the manufacturers of a disappointing popcorn maker he has ordered, while principal's secretary Helen (Paula Pell) goes back to education to get her high school diploma, sparking chaos in her boss Principal Durbin's (Patton Oswalt) office. **Ammar Kalia**

Junior Bake Off

5pm Channel 4

It's Cake Week for our amateur kid bakers, and in their first technical challenge the group have to undertake an intricate construction that will reveal a pattern when cut into, as well as putting together a cupcake showstopper themed for someone they love. Judges Liam Charles and Ravneet Gill taste the results. **AK**

Cornwall: This Fishing Life

9pm, BBC Two

In a week stuffed with Cornwall-themed documentaries, here's season two of a pretty gnarly one about the hard realities of British fishing. It's summer 2020, and in Newquay, a tourist town wounded by the year's strict lockdown, the gradual resumption of fishing as restrictions lift is a lifeline people grasp tightly. **Jack Seale**

Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema: Pop Music Movies



Talking pictures ... Mark Kermode. Photograph: Bethany Hobbs/BBC

9pm, BBC Four

Kermode's enjoyable series about cinematic genres continues, this time exploring the evolving relationship between movies and pop. It's always been symbiotic, but from the Beatles' madcap romps to pop in the Marvel universe, how do they measure up aesthetically? **Phil Harrison**

Murdoch Mysteries

9pm, Alibi

The retro crime show returns with a mystery that combines vaudeville fun and murder. When Murdoch and Crabtree investigate the case of a man who's fallen to his death, they come across a few familiar faces, including Charlie Chaplin, Stan Laurel and Buster Keaton. But whose hat is a clue? **Hannah Verdier**

Shut-Ins: Britain's Fattest People

10pm, Channel 4

This series documenting the day-to-day challenges of living for some of Britain's most overweight people returns for a second outing. We begin with the first of a two-part story concerning 23-year-old AJ, who has spent the last six years largely behind closed doors. **AK**

Film choice

Fargo (the Coen brothers, 1996) 11.45pm, ITV4



Ooh yah ... Frances McDormand in *Fargo*. Photograph: Everett Collection/Rex

Snowy North Dakota is the setting for the Coen brothers' surreal and brilliant dark comedy, a study of evil deeds arising from mundane motives. Frances McDormand won an Oscar for her heavily pregnant, small-town police chief landed with a triple murder case, and William H Macy is superb as a weaselly salesman-turned-kidnapper. **Paul Howlett**

Live sport

Cricket: Sri Lanka v England 6am, Sky Sports Cricket. Coverage of the final day of the first Test in the series.

Bowls: world championships 2021 3pm, BBC Two. Coverage of the open pairs final.

Premier League Football: Arsenal v Newcastle United 7pm, Sky Sports Main Event. Top-flight clash from Emirates stadium.

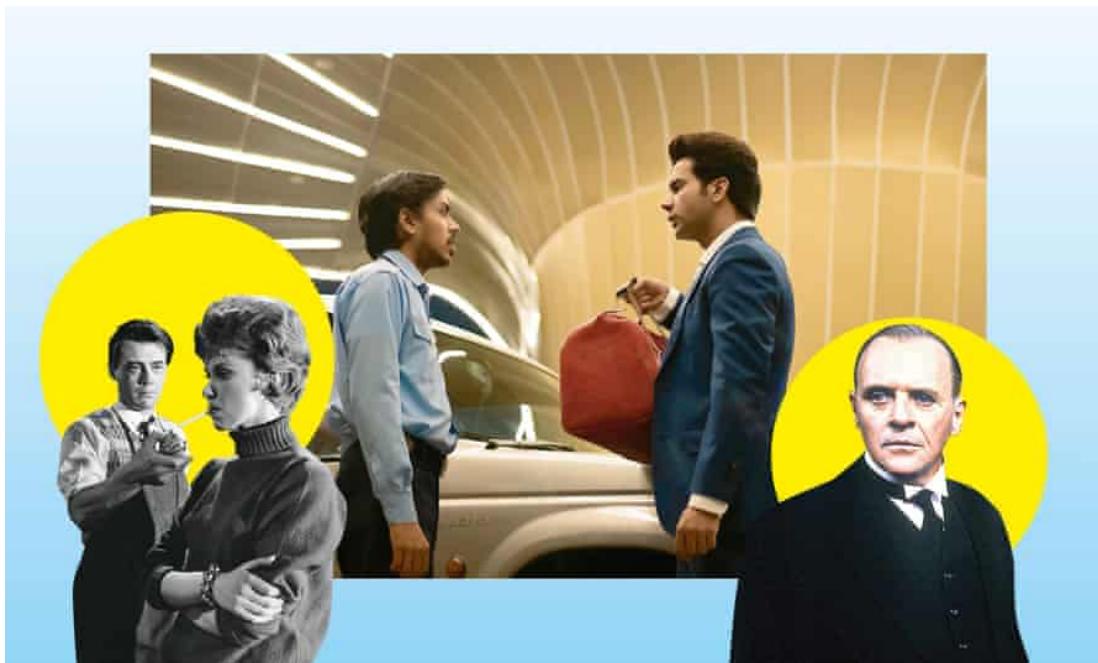
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Steve Rose on filmFilm

Serve the servants: why cinema loves to play with class stereotypes

As a new drama about India's caste system shows, films about the upper crust and their downstairs domestics are often surprisingly subversive



The drudge report ... (l-r) *The Servant*; *The White Tiger*; *The Remains of the Day*.

The drudge report ... (l-r) *The Servant*; *The White Tiger*; *The Remains of the Day*.

Steve Rose

@steverose7

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

“India is two countries in one,” our hero Balram observes in [The White Tiger](#): there is an India of light, preserve of the rich and powerful; and an India of darkness, where millions toil in poverty. *The White Tiger* is a vivid study of caste and servility, as Balram (Adarsh Gourav) ingratiates his way into the service of a wealthy family, until he realises he is consigned to

reside in the darkness. “And don’t believe for a second there’s a million-rupee gameshow you can win to get out of it,” he says, in a dig at that other fantasy of Indian class mobility, *Slumdog Millionaire*. There is rarely a magical mechanism by which people are lifted out of poverty, but the movies are often happy to peddle that notion.

[The Guide: Staying In – sign up for our home entertainment tips](#)
[Read more](#)

We would be kidding ourselves if we thought *The White Tiger*’s class/caste analysis only applied to India. Elsewhere, it is either better disguised or presented as a fact of life, especially when it comes to stories about servants. The Hollywood equivalent to *Slumdog* would be a Cinderella fantasy such as *Maid in Manhattan*, in which Jennifer Lopez’s lowly hotel cleaner is whisked into the light by senator Ralph Fiennes. Nor is there much difference between Balram and, say, PG Wodehouse’s Jeeves, or the dozens of other downstairs domestics in British period fare such as *Gosford Park* or even the recent [Bridgerton](#). They might detest their overlords but they know their place – usually serving tea in the background.

It doesn’t have to be this way. *The White Tiger* readily brings to mind *The Servant*, Joseph Losey and Harold Pinter’s subversive 1963 study of a sly manservant (Dirk Bogarde) who steadily takes over the Chelsea home of his upper-crust employer (James Fox). Similar tales abound in European cinema: Losey’s follow-up *The Go-Between* for one, or *Diary of a Chambermaid* – following a young woman’s ordeal at the hands of the haute bourgeoisie. Jean Renoir filmed it in 1946; Luis Buñuel turned in a more unsettling version in 1964; there was also a 2015 remake.

France’s infamous Papin sisters – maids who murdered their mistress in 1933 – inspired a host of works including Jean Genet’s play *The Maids* (Glenda Jackson and Susannah York starred in the 1975 film), *Sister My Sister*, and Claude Chabrol’s terrific *La Cérémonie*, starring Sandrine Bonnaire and Isabelle Huppert. Then there is that masterclass in British servility *The Remains of the Day*, in which Anthony Hopkins’s terminally repressed butler rues a lifetime of loyalty to a Nazi-sympathising toff (Fox again).

Many of these stories are conveniently set in the past, which makes *The White Tiger* a dangerous modern rarity, although last year's *Parasite* struck a very similar chord. Let's not pretend the gap between the haves and have-nots has narrowed. Maybe the movies have some catching up to do.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jan/18/serve-the-servants-why-cinema-loves-to-play-with-class-stereotypes>

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[The ObserverFiction](#)

Asylum Road by Olivia Sudjic review – quiet menace on a trip to Sarajevo

The fragmentations of the Balkan war and Brexit are never far from the surface in this confident, timely novel



Olivia Sudjic: ‘expanding the reach of her fiction’. Photograph: Sophia Evans/The Observer

Olivia Sudjic: ‘expanding the reach of her fiction’. Photograph: Sophia Evans/The Observer

[Stephanie Merritt](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

“My writing often feels like a struggle to communicate some danger,” Olivia Sudjic says in her extended essay *Exposure*, the follow-up and postmortem to her debut novel, [Sympathy](#). Her second, *Asylum Road*, is narrated by a young woman, Anya, whose detached observations of her own actions and inner monologue feel as if they are struggling to convey an underlying menace. Anya is neurotic, paranoid; she spends her nights arguing on the

internet about Brexit: “It was not the specifics of opposing arguments that upset me, but that the things I held on to, which kept me from being sucked back into the past, were coming loose.”

Anya’s mother, suffering from Alzheimer’s, is trapped in the time of the siege, convinced they are still being shelled

The past she wants to outrun is [the legacy of the Balkan war](#), which she and her sister Daria escaped as children, leaving behind a brother who later killed himself. When Anya’s boyfriend, Luke, proposes, she takes him on a road trip to meet her estranged family in Sarajevo, where they find a region still conflicted about how to come to terms with its history. Authors are assassinated for writing about the war; Anya’s mother, suffering from Alzheimer’s, is trapped perpetually in the time of the siege, convinced they are still being shelled. Sudjic makes the parallels with a light touch, but to watch a country fragment into smaller and increasingly exclusive nationalisms has a chilling resonance for Anya, who has witnessed the logical conclusion of such division. Her prospective in-laws are not merely ardent Brexiters but Cornish nationalists, despite not being native Cornish: “She was the kind of mother who refused to knock. A fan of borders but not boundaries.”

Sudjic’s writing is spare, pared-back; as Anya’s relationship and security unravels in the wake of the unsuccessful trip home, her self-scrutiny remains clear-eyed and unsparing. The sense of quiet threat that pervades the novel, of something deeply unsettling building beneath the surface, finally erupts in the last pages with a bleak inevitability. *Asylum Road* shows Sudjic confidently expanding the reach of her fiction, with an unerring instinct for asking timely questions.

- *Asylum Road* by Olivia Sudjic is published by Bloomsbury (£14.99). To order a copy go to [guardianbookshop.com](#). Delivery charges may apply

[TV review](#)[Television](#)

Finding Alice review – thank god for Nigel Havers and Joanna Lumley

Keeley Hawes's Alice deals with her husband's death and uncovers sinister secrets in ITV's uneven new series, which is somewhat saved by the actors playing her parents



Nigel Havers and Joanna Lumley in *Finding Alice*. Photograph: Joss Barratt/Red Productions/ITV

Nigel Havers and Joanna Lumley in *Finding Alice*. Photograph: Joss Barratt/Red Productions/ITV



[Lucy Mangan](#)

[@LucyMangan](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 17.00 EST

The moment in *Finding Alice* – ITV's new blackly comic six-part drama – when Joanna Lumley and Nigel Havers turn up as the parents of Keeley Hawes's Alice briefly pulls the whole universe into alignment. It's so perfectly, utterly right. Of course Joanna Lumley and Nigel Havers should be together! Yes! Always! And certainly, most absolutely certainly, they should be the parents of Keeley Hawes. You'll have to watch it. I simply cannot convey to you the delight of seeing this beautiful piece of order suddenly arising out of the chaos of the past year. Enjoy.

The only fly in the ointment is that its perfection throws the instability of the surrounding drama, about a widow uncovering her late husband's secrets, into sharp relief. A good 15% of it seems to be about curtains, for example, which is fine in a Victoria Wood sketch but less so here.

To explain: Alice is married to property developer Harry (Jason Merrells). They have a teenage daughter, Charlotte (Isabella Pappas). Mere hours after installing the family in an architecturally exhausting smart home in which everything is controlled via wifi and iPad and which he has designed and built, Harry is found dead at the bottom of his banister-less stairs. Is this just

a lesson from the creators, Simon Nye and Roger Goldby, not to privilege form over function, or is there something more sinister going on?

There is something more sinister going on. But in the meantime, Alice has to spend a lot of time figuring out how to open the electronically controlled curtains. She can't find the fridge either, until Charlotte accidentally leans against a panelled wall that hides it. By which time, I would have been quite wishing Harry dead anyway if he hadn't been already.

Maybe it is these additional frustrations that make Alice into such a gratingly rude individual to everyone she comes across. It seems to be one of those unquestioned traditions of drama that perfectly reasonable people become horrors in the midst of grief. It doesn't actually happen in life – under pressure, you may lash out occasionally and then apologise profusely but you remain the basically decent person you always were – but it happens 90% of the time on television, and never more so than here. Alice is vile to the police, vile to the credit card people, unpleasant to the coroner and funeral director and horrible to the man in charge of the morgue when she goes to view Harry's body. The morgue man is equally unpleasant to her, which is at least fair but only doubles down on the unlikeliness.

There are equally unlikely decisions taken with the narrative, too. Would Alice really refuse even to look at, never mind fail to hand over to the police the CCTV footage from the camera positioned to give a perfect view of people walking – or fatally falling – down the stairs? (For Harry has scattered cameras with a liberal hand throughout his home, which may or may not come to make sense depending on the exact nature of the secrets we come to realise he has been hiding.) Even when the coroner has told her about unexplained bruising on Harry's upper arms? "I can't bear the thought of seeing him on film," Alice explains before tripping happily off to visit his corpse.

The plot shapes up well enough by the end of the episode, with hints of potentially dodgy dealings by Harry (his site office is ransacked the night he dies, an investor Alice had never heard of turns up to help her out with cash after the family account appears empty), a crisis involving the house deeds and Harry's parents, and the suggestion that Alice's fabulously dreadful mother is having an affair to hold the interest. Having looked ahead,

however, momentum is lost in the second episode, which dwells almost entirely on Alice's mad and hugely selfish funeral arrangements to no great dramatic end.

There are good, funny lines scattered throughout as you might expect from a Nye script (he most famously gave us Men Behaving Badly but also the darkly flashing gem that was How Do You Want Me?, with Dylan Moran and the late, lamented Charlotte Coleman) but their sudden deployment generally just adds to the sense of unevenness. This may partly be a result of the broken-backed filming and production time caused by Covid and lockdown conditions, but the result is unsatisfying. Lumley, Havers and Hawes together though – a shining moment that will do everyone good.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/jan/17/finding-alice-review-thank-god-for-nigel-havers-and-joanna-lumley>

Music

Phil Spector brought joy to pop music – and misery to so many lives

[Alexis Petridis](#)



Spector's 'Wall of Sound' technique gave his artists' music an infectious joie de vivre, but the man behind it was damaged, bitter and violent



‘Devils inside me’ ... Phil Spector in 1966. Photograph: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

‘Devils inside me’ ... Phil Spector in 1966. Photograph: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Sun 17 Jan 2021 15.55 EST

Three years before his death in 2006, [I interviewed Gene Pitney](#). Talk inevitably turned to [Phil Spector](#). He had written Spector’s real breakthrough record – the Crystals’ 1962 No 1 He’s a Rebel – unequivocally one of the greatest singles in pop history, a perfect cocktail of soaring melody, echo-drenched production and Darlene Love’s exuberant vocal. A year before that, he’d sung Every Breath I Take, which, with its rumbling timpani, overload of backing vocals and dramatic orchestration, was one of the few early Spector productions to hint at the more-is-more Wall of Sound approach that would make him a legend. And, moreover, Spector was, as Pitney put it, “kind of a hot news item”: he was awaiting trial for murder.

Like a lot of people who knew Spector, Pitney seemed horrified yet oddly unsurprised at this turn of events, as if something like that was bound to happen sooner or later: the booze, the drugs, the evident instability, the obsession with guns and the history of violence towards women. Spector, he suggested, had been in trouble from the start. “I had dinner with him the first day he arrived in New York, and he said to me that his sister was in an

asylum and she was the sane one in the family,” he recalled. “I thought, ‘Wow, where did that come from?’”



Ronnie Spector, circa 1964. Photograph: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

The truth is that everybody knew what [Phil Spector](#) was like long before he killed Lana Clarkson: by his own account, a childhood scarred by his father’s suicide and riven with bullying – by his mother, by his schoolmates – had left him “with devils inside me”. His ex-wife Ronnie Spector’s 1990 autobiography *Be My Baby* laid bare the full horror of their marriage: the house surrounded by barbed wire and guard dogs; the threats to kill her, either himself or via a hitman; the gold-plated, glass-topped coffin he installed in the basement and threatened to display her body in after she was murdered.

[Phil Spector obituary](#)

[Read more](#)

The stories about recording sessions that had gone wildly awry were legion too: he shot a gun into the ceiling of LA’s A&M Studios while working with John Lennon in 1973; he pointed a loaded gun at Leonard Cohen’s throat – Cohen subsequently compared him to Hitler – and according to their bassist,

Dee Dee, he held the Ramones hostage at gunpoint during the making of 1980s *End of the Century*. As writer Sean O'Hagan once noted, in a sense even the extraordinary music he made between 1962 and 1966 was an “act of revenge on a world that had wounded him beyond repair as a child”; every hit a vindication that he hoped would assuage his own deep-rooted feelings of inferiority.

But He's a Rebel, Da Doo Ron Ron and Be My Baby don't sound like acts of revenge; they sound utterly joyful, innocent. A lot of attention is understandably drawn by Spector's tendency to overload as a producer – the umpteen musicians required to make his singles, the doubling and tripling up of instrumentation. But Spector's excess baggage never weighed his records down. They barrel gleefully along, even the gloomiest of his ballads – the Ronettes' extraordinary Is This What I Get for Loving You? and I Wish I Never Saw the Sunshine, the latter arguably the artistic pinnacle of the Wall of Sound years – feel remarkably light on their feet. He was somehow capable of creating singles that were sonically dense but also had a sense of space. They never sound over the top or claustrophobic, with the possible exception of Ike and Tina Turner's River Deep, Mountain High – Spector's favourite among his works, but a song that might have benefited from a more stripped-back approach.

The US failure of the latter sent Spector into a tailspin from which he never truly recovered. His next high-profile job, on the Beatles' Let It Be, was a mess. The source material wasn't their finest – John Lennon memorably called it “the shittiest load of badly recorded shit with a lousy feeling to it ever” – but nevertheless, Spector submerged good songs in inappropriate orchestral and choral syrup. His production of George Harrison's All Things Must Pass was similarly controversial – “Too much echo,” Harrison complained years later, his son Dhani claiming that “making the album sound clearer was one of my dad's greatest wishes” – but his work on Lennon's Plastic Ono Band and Imagine albums was fantastic: stark, minimal, the opposite of what you might expect, with only the fabulously explosive drums on the 1970 single Instant Karma! an echo of his 60s work.

The rest of his career yielded only scattered moments that suggested his former greatness, most notably the tracks he recorded for Dion's Born To Be With You in 1975. He ended his recording career being fired by, of all

people, British indie rock band Starsailor. At the time, it seemed an ignoble fate for someone who had once presided over a succession of era-defining classics, whose work spurred Brian Wilson into creating the Beach Boys' Pet Sounds, regularly heralded as the greatest album of all time, and whose 60s sound you heard echoes of everywhere, not least in the blare of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band. But, as it turned out, far worse was to come.

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Havana: a virtual tour through food, music, films and books



Paseo de Marti in Old Havana, Cuba. Photograph: Imageplotter/Alamy
Paseo de Marti in Old Havana, Cuba. Photograph: Imageplotter/Alamy

Travel vicariously through the arts, culture and cuisine that give the city its beauty and rhythm

[Ruaridh Nicoll](#)

[@Ruaridhnicoll](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 01.30 EST

A 1950s highway, bleached to sepia by the Caribbean sun, leads from Cuba's Santa María beaches through palm and hibiscus. It passes close to the fishing village of Cojímar, crests a small rise and there is Havana, sweeping frontage wounded but upright against the turbulent waters of the Florida Straits.

During Havana's first centuries, its vast natural harbour was filled with Spanish treasure ships waiting to be shepherded home against British and

Dutch wolves. Alexander von Humboldt, visiting in 1800, wrote of “gazing upon the fortresses crowning the rocks east of the port … and the city itself half-hidden by a forest of spars and sails of shipping.”

Soon sirens set up on this rocky shore to sing to travellers. Graham Greene, in his memoir *Ways of Escape*, wrote of being drawn by the “brothel life, the roulette in every hotel”. The 1959 revolution swept all that away but, in truth, it just swept it under another layer in half a millennium of city life.

[A virtual tour of Peru through films, food, books and music](#)
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“If in 1820 Havana was the most intriguing and beautiful and rhythmic city in the New World,” Joshua Jelly-Schapiro wrote in his 2016 book [Island People](#), “it was also those things in 1920 – and it remains so, beneath the crust of decay and politics, as we near 2020, as well.”

Cojímar, that fishing village, was where Ernest Hemingway kept his fishing boat, Pilar, but there’s a sense Habaneros want to shrug off Papa’s cult. In the neighbouring barrio of Alamar, where refugees from the wars in Latin America have created an edgy community, the Chanchullero restaurant has a sign outside saying *Hemingway nunca estuvo aquí* (Hemingway was never here).



Joggers and fishermen in the rain on the Malecon, Havana's famous sea wall. Photograph: Ramón Espinosa/AP

The tunnel under the bay opens up, and I prepare for the *guagua* (bus) to dive beneath the fortresses that Von Humboldt described. I glance at the city into which I am to be thrown: at the Havana Libre hotel, the gold dome of the *Capitolio*, the waves frothing white on the corniche, or Malecon.

Adrenaline spikes the blood, as it always does. I'm as guilty as any foreigner of objectifying this city, but let me try to get under its skin.

Read



Bandleader Perez Prado (centre) in the 1950s, who makes a cameo appearance in Oscar Hijuelos' 1989 novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*. Photograph: Frank Driggs Collection/Getty Images

From the tunnel, I pop up in front of the Museum of the Revolution, the neo-classical, Tiffany-decorated pile where the pre-revolution dictator Fulgencio Batista (who built the tunnel) fled from heavily armed students. I get off near the statue of José Martí, one of maybe 10,000 in Cuba. The poet is falling dead from his horse as he charges, all but single-handedly, into

Spanish lines during the wars of independence. To understand Cuba, it helps to imagine a forlorn, romantic poet charging to certain death.

The old town lies ahead: nostalgia for life on these narrow streets has driven many of the city's best novels, often written from abroad. "Flowers spilling off balconies, and lichen on the sea-rotted walls, astragal fences and antique doors," wrote [Oscar Hijuelos](#) in his award-winning *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*.

Often the buildings are so rotted by rain they're sliding into the street. But others, restored by the recently departed city historian Eusebio Leal, shimmer in newfound glory. It all adds up to what Cuba's finest novelist Alejo Carpentier, called "the city of columns".

Here, residents suck their teeth at passersby, machismo thrives and tolerance has to be fought for. Anna Veltfort's superb graphic novel [Adiós mi Habana](#) portrays her disillusion after being attacked on the street in 1967 for being a lesbian, then persecuted by the authorities for immorality.

Now, though, Havana's streets are eerily safe. To find crime in Havana, you need the novels of [Leonardo Padura Fuentes](#) and his careworn cop hero Mario Conde.

Watch

Four Seasons in Havana trailer

Conde can also be found on Netflix, in the adaptation *Four Seasons in Havana*. He is played by Cuba's most famous resident actor, Jorge "Pichi" Perugorría (non-residents include Andy García and Ana de Armas).

Yarini, a bar Pichi's son has just opened, is now the city's hippest spot. It's a louche rooftop joint, named for a pimp who at the turn of the 20th century, with Cuba newly independent of Spain, came to represent *cubanidad*, the national identity. Chew on that alongside Yarini's excellent fried snapper.

Wandering west, I cross Parque Central, where I'm almost run down by one of the iconoclichéd cars, a '57 Chevy. These jalopies were the stars of an

extended chase scene kicking off [Fast and Furious 8](#), a blockbuster Cubans remember as a moment of hope, when in 2016 Hollywood arrived along with the Rolling Stones and Barack Obama, when it looked as if relations with the US might change.

In the barrio of Centro, the city becomes yet more gritty. I pass [La Guarida](#), a grand mansion used as the set for Cuba's most acclaimed film, [Strawberry and Chocolate](#), and now [the setting for Cuba's most famed restaurant](#).

The stories these streets produce attract documentary makers, most recently Hubert Sauper and his wonderful [Epicentro](#). Yet so much material remains hidden. "Most of the archives here have yet to be put online," says Emilio Suárez González, a young archivist who teaches at Havana university. For the moment, the best online material can be found [here](#).

Listen

Me Dicen Cuba by Alexander Abreu and Havana D'Primera

There's no music on the Malecon at the moment, which feels wrong. It's the most unsettling aspect of lockdown.

Rafa Escalona, editor of the music magazine AM:PM, misses the sounds of the city: "The rhythm of popular music – r reguetón, reparto, timba, rumba, that people used to play on loudspeakers." AM:PM is the place to go for Spotify playlists, say [the 20 songs and albums of the last 20 years](#).

Music oxygenates Cuba and triggers memories: a moment in the Karl Marx theatre as the great Pablo Milanes sang [Yolanda](#) in a voice broken by age. It didn't matter because the 5,500 strong audience was singing along, and I had started to worry we would float away on shared tears.

And where there's music, there's dancing, from the athleticism of [Carlos Acosta](#) – a dancer who rose from poverty to become hero of London's Royal Ballet – to the salsa that draws vast numbers of visitors wanting to learn their Latin from those who know how: here, [Havana D'Primera](#) and [Los Van Van](#) are your bands. Shows such as [Soy de Cuba](#) and [Kings of Salsa](#) also offer inspiration. Lia Rodriguez starred in the latter; from the Malecon, I

glance towards Bleco, a bar the dancer is building on a rooftop. She's been developing an alternative online personality: the magnificent [Zafraça](#), arguably the current exemplar of *cubanidad* – or at least of the creativity of Cubans going loco under lockdown.

See



Ruaridh Nicoll in Havana

Circumnavigating the Hotel Nacional's gardens, I enter the Vedado neighbourhood. Roots of jagüey trees push up the paving stones outside elegant villas. [Estudio Figueroa-Vives](#), on Victor Hugo park, is a private gallery representing a favourite artist, [Belkis Ayón](#), soon to be subject of a show at Madrid's Museo Reina Sofía. Dead at just 32, her affecting prints dig into the mysteries of Abakuá, the secret slave society that exists to this day.

Heading towards the sea again, I bump into [Rafael Villares](#), a young artist with a blossoming international reputation. What does he miss when he's away, I ask. "The smell of the salt," he replies. As if to illustrate his point, a breeze from the north brings in the taste of the sea.

Taste



‘Before starting to cook, have a daiquiri’. Photograph: John Dambik/Alamy

When food writer AA Gill visited Cuba he thought so little of the food he insisted on referring to it as “doof”. Slowly though, a more sophisticated culinary history is revealing itself. There’s *casabe*, crispy flatbread first made by the Caribbean’s indigenous Taino people; spicy *salsa criolla* to cut through the unctuousness of pork; and *congrí* – rice and beans – which is delicious if made with plenty of fat.

I especially recommend [*ajíaco*](#). It’s a soup that contains so many ingredients – jerked beef, a “small” hen, yam, plantains, sweet potato are just the start – that it has become a metaphor for Cuba itself. Cuba even had its own Nigella, [Nitza Villapol](#), whose show may now come across as comedy-Soviet, but whose ability to adapt recipes to shortages and hunger brought her love.

Before starting to cook, have a daiquiri. The mojito may be more famous but it doesn’t travel, and certainly not in winter. The daiquiri however, a mix of white rum, lime juice and sugar syrup, is a cocktail that stands, on one slim leg, next to the martini in sophistication.

I’m at my front door and from my terrace the sun will be setting over the sea. So I leave you with Cuba’s [biggest hit of the past two years](#). “*Me voy*

pa' mi casa," sings Cimafunk, Cuba's latest superstar, slang for: "I'm out of here."

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Nigel Slater's 10 winter vegan and vegetarian recipes

Deeply savoury miso onions, warming bowls of coconut noodles – recipes to celebrate the wealth of the cold season's vegetables



Pumpkin, ricotta and rosemary tart. Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin
Pumpkin, ricotta and rosemary tart. Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin



Nigel Slater

Mon 18 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

A collection of vegetarian and vegan recipes for you this month. Ten recipes – some old, some new and more than half of them vegan – that celebrate the wealth of seasonal vegetables, the greens and roots that make cooking at this time of year such a joy.

Vegan dishes include little cakes of kimchi and sweet potatoes; a loaf of amaranth and chickpeas; a crunchy slaw and a dish of roast onions with miso. There's also a gorgeous noodle curry with coconut and greens, and couscous with harissa-spiced roast tomatoes. (Vegans will know to ruthlessly check the labels of ingredients such as kimchi, miso and vegetable stock to check they are suitable for them.)

Vegetarian recipes include two tarts – one with cheese pastry and mushrooms and another with rosemary-flecked ricotta and pumpkin, and we have a quick pasta supper too.

Pumpkin, ricotta and rosemary tart (vegetarian)

You could measure my life in pumpkin recipes, particularly savoury ones where the sugar hit is balanced with chilli or ginger. This time, I have used

parmesan, the most umami rich of the cheeses, to quell the sweetness, and it works brilliantly. Especially when mixed with the resinous notes of rosemary. The pastry I prefer is a butter-rich puff pastry that comes in a single sheet, measuring about 35cm x 22cm and weighing 325g.

This is a light main course if eaten with something on the side – a tumble of shredded fennel and cauliflower with a dressing of lemon juice, olive oil and balsamic vinegar would be mine – but it also makes a good lunchbox addition too. Use pumpkin or butternut, it matters not, but makes sure to slice the flesh no thicker than ½cm.

Serves 6

puff pastry 1 x sheet, 325g

beaten egg a little

pumpkin or butternut squash 650g

olive oil 3 tbsp

For the filling

ricotta 250g

full fat cream cheese 200g

parmesan (or vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese) 4 tbsp, grated

egg yolk 1

rosemary 2 tbsp, chopped

To finish

parmesan (or vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese) a little, grated

olive oil

Set the oven at 180C fan/gas mark 6. Unroll the sheet of pastry and place it on a baking sheet lined with a piece of baking parchment. Score a rectangle about 2cm in from the edge – don’t go right through to the parchment. This will form the “hollow” for the filling. Brush the edges with the beaten egg and bake for 10 minutes until puffed up and lightly coloured.

Remove the skin and seeds from the pumpkin or butternut squash – you should be left with roughly 450g of flesh. Slice thinly, each piece no thicker than ½cm. Warm the olive oil in a shallow pan, place as many of the pumpkin slices as you can into it – even with a large frying pan I can never

cook them all at once – then let them cook over a moderate heat for about 3 minutes till lightly coloured. Turn and lightly brown the other side, then transfer them carefully to a plate and do the next batch.

For the filling, put the ricotta in a bowl, add the cream cheese, grated parmesan and egg yolk. Add the rosemary and a few grinds of the peppermill, then mix well.

Remove the pastry from the oven. Score the rectangle again and push the inner pastry down with the back of a spoon to form a shallow hollow. Spoon in the filling and smooth it out to the rim. Place the pumpkin slices on the surface, sprinkle a little parmesan and trickle very lightly with olive oil. Bake for 25 minutes till golden, the filling slightly puffed and fragrant. Leave to settle for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

Roast onions, miso and sesame (vegan)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

A dish of roast onions, bronze, sweet and hot, is one of those side dishes I have taken to serving as a main course. The inherent sweetness of their caramelised outer layers is a contrast to the deep, savoury quality of miso, and with a bed of brown rice this becomes a most satisfying dinner. It is

essential to simmer them long enough in their bay-scented stock to render them on the point of collapse, each layer soft and giving, before putting them in the oven.

The accompanying rice bolsters them up to a main course, but you could equally serve them with couscous or lentils.

Serves 4

bay leaves 4

black peppercorns 6

onions 8, medium

ginger a 50g piece

sake or dry sherry 4 tbsp

chilli flakes 2 good pinches

maple or brown rice syrup 2 tbsp

light miso paste 4 lightly heaped tbsp

lemon juice 3 tbsp

sesame seeds 1 tbsp

For the rice

brown or white basmati 150g

bay leaves 3

cardamom pods 6

lemon peel 5cm strip

cucumber 1

parsley 2 tbsp

rice or wine vinegar a few drops

Bring a deep pan of water to the boil with the bay leaves and peppercorns. Set the oven at 180C fan/gas mark 6.

Peel the onions, lower them into the boiling water then turn down the heat to a simmer. Leave for 25-30 minutes, until the onions are almost translucent and soft enough to pierce effortlessly with a skewer. Lift the onions out with a draining spoon and place them, just touching one another, in a roasting tin or baking dish.

Peel the ginger and grate to a paste on a very sharp, fine-toothed grater. Scrape the ginger into a small bowl and stir in the sake or dry sherry, chilli flakes, syrup and miso.

Blend in the lemon juice and 4 tbsp of warm water. Pour the resulting dressing over the onions, turning them over so they are glossily coated. Scatter the sesame seeds over the onions. Bake in the preheated oven for 40-45 minutes, occasionally basting with the juices from the baking dish.

Wash the rice in three changes of warm water, swishing the rice around in the water with your fingertips – a strangely pleasing task. Drain the rice, tip into a small saucepan and cover with enough water to come 3cm above the rice. Add the bay and cardamom pods, cracking the pods open as you go, then drop in the piece of lemon peel.

Bring the rice to the boil, lower the heat and cover with a tight lid. Leave to simmer for 10 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave, lid untouched, for a further 10.

Peel and halve the cucumber, remove the central core and seeds, then cut the flesh into matchsticks. Roughly chop the parsley leaves and toss with the cucumber. Shake over a few drops of rice or wine vinegar.

Remove the lid to the rice and run the tines of a fork through the grains to separate them, stir the parsley through the grains, then spoon on to deep plates. Place the onions on top, spooning any sauce over them, then scatter with the cucumber and parsley.

Citrus and cashew nut salad (vegan)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

There is much to be said for a crisp refreshing salad even on an ice-cold day, if only to contrast all the warming, carbs-n-cheese suppers. The crunch here comes from the beetroot, red cabbage and celeriac, but you could use carrots or kohlrabi. (Broccoli stalks, thinly sliced, get my vote too.) It's a main course in my house, but would make a fine side dish too. The dressing sounds like a lot of trouble. It isn't. Everything just needs a quick blast in the blender or food processor – although I find the texture of the cashew nuts most pleasing when I grind them using a pestle and mortar, leaving them as a rough, gravelly powder. Once made, it is probably best to eat it the same day.

Serves 4

grapefruit 1

orange 1 large

red cabbage 250g

fennel 150g

celeriac 150g

beetroot 250g

For the dressing

red wine vinegar 2 tbsp

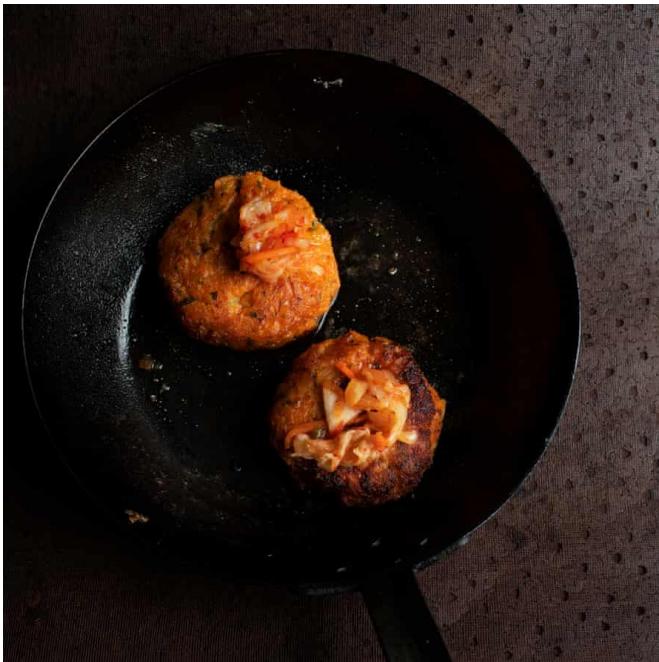
lime juice 3 tbsp
olive oil 75ml
light soy sauce 1 tbsp
ginger 35g
light muscovado sugar 3 tbsp
small hot chilli 2
cashews 75g, roasted and salted, plus a few to finish
mint leaves 20, finely shredded
coriander leaves 20

Make the dressing: put the vinegar, lime juice, olive oil and soy in a mixing bowl. Peel the ginger and grate it finely, then add to the liquids with the sugar. Finely chop the chilli (you can remove the seeds if you like a cooler dressing) and stir in. Crush the cashews to a coarse, nubbly powder with a pestle and mortar (or the end of a rolling pin), then add to the dressing with the mint leaves and the coriander leaves, torn up a little if they are particularly large. Stir the dressing and set aside.

Remove the peel and white pith from the grapefruit and orange, saving as much juice as you can. Separate the segments with a sharp knife and add them to the dressing with any juice.

Finely shred the red cabbage and fennel and add to the dressing. Peel the celeriac and beetroot, slice thinly, then cut into long, thin matchsticks. Toss with the dressing, check the seasoning and set aside for 30 minutes or more before serving. Add the reserved whole cashews just before bringing the salad to the table.

Sweet potato and kimchi cakes (vegan)



Sweet potato and kimchi cakes. Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

I sometimes make these little cakes with sweet potato alone, in which case a careful hand is needed, the mixture being particularly soft and sticky. To make them easier to deal with I now substitute a third of the sweet potato with maincrop white potatoes, instantly making them less fragile. The little cakes need 30 minutes in the fridge before cooking, in order to firm up.

I suggest you let the underside brown crisply before turning – it contrasts with the soft centre and helps them hold together. A good crust makes them easier to turn too. You will need something to eat alongside, a crisp salad such as the garnet-hued roots and fruits above, or perhaps a bowl of chickpeas with a dressing of lemon, olive oil and parsley.

Each time I make these I wonder if they would be a good candidate for filling a burger bun, with bushy emerald watercress and a squeeze of lemon.

Makes 12, enough for 4
potatoes 300g
sweet potatoes 600g
kimchi 100g
coriander leaves 15g

flour 3 tbsp, plus more for rolling
groundnut oil for frying

Put a deep pan of water on to boil, place a steamer basket or colander on top. Peel the potatoes and cut them into large chunks, as you might for roast potatoes, then put them in the steamer basket, cover tightly with a lid, and steam for 15-20 minutes. Peel the sweet potatoes, cut them into a similar size and add to the potatoes.

Test the potatoes for tenderness – the sweet ones should be bright orange and easily pierced with a skewer or knife point. Remove them from the heat and leave for a few minutes until they have stopped steaming. Mash until quite smooth using a food mixer or a potato masher (but not a food processor, which will turn them to glue).

Finely chop the kimchi and stir in. Chop the coriander leaves and stems and add to the mash with the flour. (You are unlikely to need pepper or salt.) Flour your hands very thoroughly, then take a small scoop of the mixture in your hand and pat gently into a small cake. Lay on a floured baking sheet or plate, re-flour your hands and repeat until the mixture is finished. You will have about 12 cakes.

Chill the cakes in the fridge for 30 minutes. And please, don't miss this step because the cakes are fragile and they will collapse when you cook them. Warm a $\frac{1}{2}$ cm depth of the groundnut oil in a frying pan, then carefully lift the cakes, four at a time and fry for a minute or two over a moderately high heat until crisp on the bottom. Don't move them (or poke or prod them) until the underside is crisp. Now carefully flip the cakes over and cook the other side.

As soon as the cakes are golden, lift out with a palette knife and rest on a plate and keep warm while you cook the rest – I like to use fresh oil for each batch. Serve the cakes as soon as they are all done, perhaps with a little more of the kimchi on top.

Noodles with coconut and greens (vegan)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

Comfort and spice. As the temperature drops, I relish those recipes that offer both the warmth of spice and the pacifying note of coconut milk. This one, a meal-in-a-bowl affair with ginger and chilli, noodles and greens, ticks every box for me. The inspiration are the soups I have eaten in Thailand, but the spicing is milder here, so up the chilli content if you wish. If the lime leaves prove elusive – as they so often do - make it anyway, perhaps including the zest of a lime instead. The effect is not quite the same, but good enough.

Serves 4

For the paste

ginger a 50g piece

garlic 2 cloves, peeled

red chillies 3 small

lemongrass 2 large stalks

spring onions 3, chopped

turmeric 3 tsp

fresh coriander 40g, leaves and stems

groundnut or vegetable oil 2 tbsp

For the soup

shallots 3 large

groundnut or vegetable oil 3 tbsp
vegetable stock 500ml
coconut milk 1 x 400ml tin
makrut lime leaves 4
thin noodles 150g
assorted greens 190g. such as chard and spinach
mint leaves 8g
coriander leaves 10

Make the spice paste: peel and roughly chop the ginger, then put it into the bowl of a food processor. Add the garlic, chillies (minus their stalks), lemongrass (outer leaves discarded, the rest roughly chopped), and the spring onions and turmeric. Process for a few seconds, then add the coriander and the vegetable oil. Process for a few seconds to a coarse paste, scrape the sides down with a rubber spatula, then process briefly again. If the mixture refuses to soften to a paste, add a tablespoon of water.

For the soup, peel the shallots and slice them in half lengthways. Warm the oil in a large casserole over a moderate heat, then add the shallots, cut side down together with a tablespoon of water, and let them cook for about 10 minutes, covered with a lid. Turn them from time to time and cook until almost tender. Add the spice paste and fry with the shallots for a couple of minutes, then add the stock, coconut milk and lime leaves. Leave to simmer for 10 minutes.

Put the kettle on. Put the noodles in a large heatproof jug or a large bowl and pour the boiling water over them. Meanwhile, wash and trim the chard and spinach, then cut the stalks into fine shreds and add to the soup. Place the leaves on top of one another, roll up tightly and shred with a kitchen knife. As soon as the stalks are tender add the leaves, then the mint and coriander leaves.

Drain the noodles, then use kitchen tongs to transfer them to four warm bowls. Ladle the sauce over the noodles and serve.

Tomato couscous with harissa (vegan)



Photograph: The Observer

A favourite of mine, even when tomatoes are out of season. (Harissa paste does much for a less than sublime tomato.) It is worth mentioning that harissa pastes can vary slightly in heat so I suggest starting with a tablespoon then going on from there, to suit your taste. Making this with as many varieties of tomato as I can get hold of, the vibrant scarlets and oranges bring much cheer to a grey winter day. The couscous, though softly cosseting when soaked with rust-red juices could be swapped for rice if you prefer.

Serves 3-4

assorted tomatoes 750g

garlic 3 cloves, peeled and crushed

olive oil 3 tbsp

red onion 1, medium

cumin seeds 2 tsp, lightly crushed

coriander seeds 2 tsp, coarsely crushed

harissa paste 1 tbsp

For the couscous

vegetable stock 500ml

quick-cooking couscous 200g

mint leaves 10g

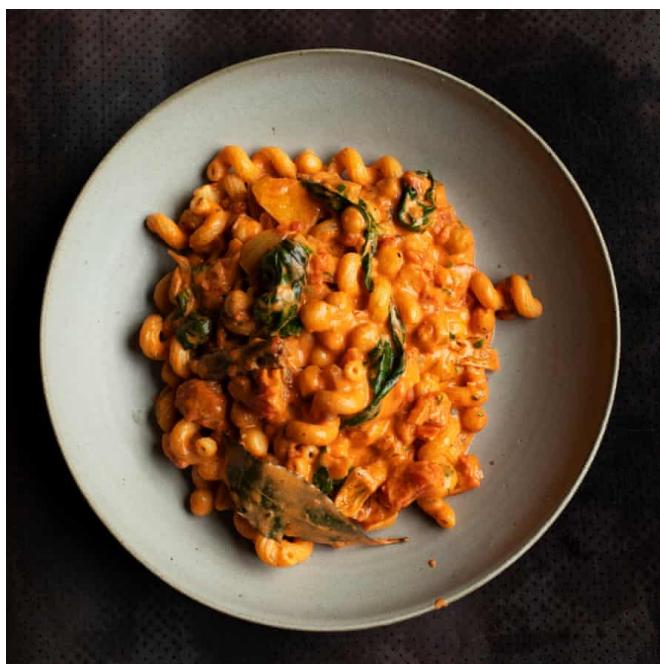
parsley leaves 15g

Cut the larger tomatoes in half and place in a roasting tin, tucking in the smaller ones. Add the garlic and olive oil. Peel and slice the red onion and add it to the tomatoes with a seasoning of salt and black pepper. Scatter the crushed cumin and coriander seeds over the tomatoes and onions. Roast at 180C fan/gas mark 6 for 35-40 minutes until the tomatoes are soft and the skins lightly browned.

Bring the vegetable stock to the boil. Place the couscous in a heat-proof bowl, then pour the boiling stock over, cover and leave for 15 minutes. Remove the leaves from the mint and parsley and roughly chop.

Use a fork to lightly crush the tomatoes so the juices bleed into the pan, then stir in the harissa paste. Run a fork through the couscous to separate the grains, then stir in the chopped herbs. Serve the roast tomatoes and their juices on top of the couscous.

Chickpeas and macaroni (vegetarian)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

As much as I love spending time in the kitchen, I am ever grateful for quick recipes I can knock up in minutes. This one, pasta and pulses tied up in a mild, creamy tomato sauce, is one of those I make time and again. This is a pacifying dish, no real heat or pizzazz, just a warm and cosy pasta supper as effortless (almost) as a takeaway.

Serves 2

onion 1, medium

garlic 3 cloves, crushed

olive oil 2 tbsp

tomato puree 1 tbsp

chopped tomatoes 1 x 400g tin

cinnamon $\frac{1}{2}$ stick

bay leaves 3

dried chilli flakes $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp

macaroni 100g

chickpeas 1 x 400g tin

double cream 100ml

parsley 2 tbsp, chopped

basil leaves 12

Peel and roughly chop the onion, then soften it in a pan with the garlic and olive oil. When the onions start to brown, add the tomato purée, tinned tomatoes, cinnamon, bay leaves, chilli flakes and pepper and salt. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Bring a deep pan of water to the boil, salt it, then cook the macaroni for 9 minutes, until tender. Drain the macaroni. Drain the chickpeas and stir both into the tomato sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes, then stir in the cream.

Add the chopped parsley and the basil leaves. Divide the pasta and chickpeas between two deep bowls and serve.

Roast spiced winter roots, haricot mash



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

Sweet root vegetables – parsnips, carrots and beetroot – work well with spices such as cumin and coriander. Chilli too. I was introduced to this by the late Jane Grigson, with her almost legendary curried parsnip soup. Tossing the roots in the ground spices before roasting lends a mild warmth to the vegetables, but you could add more if you wish.

Serves 4 (vegan)

garlic 2 large cloves
cumin seeds 2 tsp
coriander seeds 2 tsp
sea salt $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
dried chilli flakes a pinch
groundnut oil 4 tbsp
beetroot 500g, small
potatoes 500g, small
carrots 8, small, slim

For the mash

haricot, cannellini or butter beans 2 x 400g tins
olive oil 2 tbsp

parsley leaves a good handful
lemon juice 1 tbsp

Peel and crush the garlic to a paste. Using a spice mill or pestle and mortar, crush the cumin and coriander seeds to a coarse powder, then mix in the salt and several grinds of black pepper. Add the chilli flakes and stir in the crushed garlic and oil. Set the oven at 180C fan/gas mark 6.

Bring a couple of deep pans of water to the boil. Trim the beetroot, without breaking the skin, then put them in the water and let them cook for 25-30 minutes, depending on their size, until they are soft enough to pierce easily with a skewer. Cut the potatoes in half and add them to the second pan and boil them for 15 minutes.

Drain the beetroot and cut them in half. If they are large, cut them into wedges. Drain the potatoes. Slice the carrots in half. Toss the carrots, beetroot and potatoes in the spiced oil then transfer to a roasting tin and bake for 35-45 minutes. (I like to turn each one over halfway through cooking so they get evenly browned.)

To make the mash, drain the beans and put them in a small pan, just covered with water. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and leave to simmer for 10 minutes. Drain and return the beans to the empty pan, add the olive oil, parsley leaves, a little black pepper and the lemon juice, then mash to a smooth purée with a potato masher or food processor.

Pile the mashed beans on a serving dish, then place the roasted spiced roots on top and serve.

Mushroom and dill tart (vegetarian)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

A classic tart but made with cheese pastry and a deeply savoury filling. I use small shimeji mushrooms for their flavour but buttons are good too, in which case I would slice them in half. If dill isn't your thing, then use tarragon which has similar aniseed notes, or leave out the herbs altogether.

There are three distinct stages to this recipe – the pastry, the filling and the second baking, which I know feels offputting, but its crisp pastry and silky filling is worth every moment of your time.

Serves 6

For the pastry

butter 90g

plain flour 150g

egg yolk 1, lightly beaten

parmesan (or vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese) 40g, finely grated

For the filling

double cream 400ml

parmesan rind (or rind of vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese) about a 50g piece

small mushrooms 300g, such as shimeji

olive oil 3 tbsp

dill 15g

eggs 3, large

You will need a 22cm tart tin with a removable base.

To make the pastry, cut the butter into cubes and rub it into the flour with your fingertips until it resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Mix in the egg yolk and parmesan, bringing the ingredients together into a firm ball of dough, adding a tablespoon or two of cold water if necessary. You can do this in seconds using a food processor.

Tip the dough on to a lightly floured board and knead for 30 seconds or so (no longer) shaping it into a ball as you go. Wrap in clingfilm or greaseproof paper and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

While the dough chills, make the filling. Pour the cream into a medium-sized saucepan, add the parmesan rind and bring to the boil. Remove the cream from the heat immediately when it starts to boil, then cover with a lid and set aside.

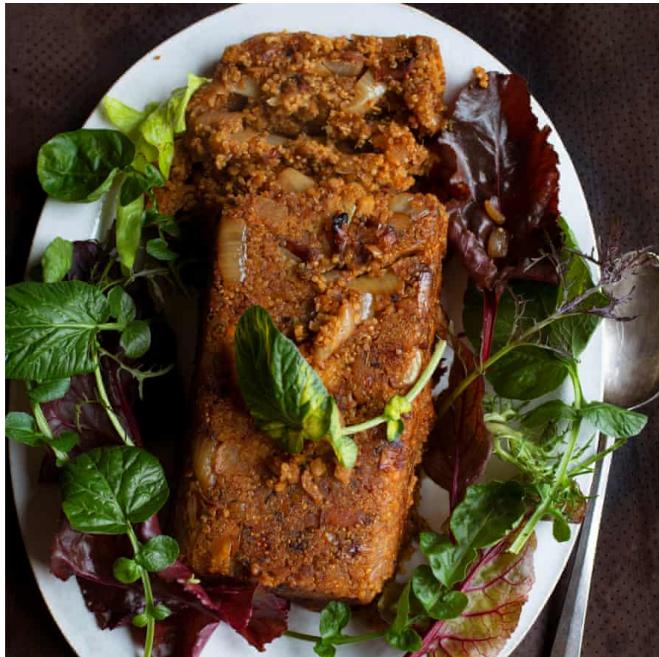
Cut the mushrooms into small pieces. In a small frying pan, warm the oil then fry the mushrooms for 4 or 5 minutes, until slightly sticky. Chop the dill and toss with the mushrooms and set aside.

Remove the dough from the fridge and tenderly roll into a disc large enough to line the tart case. Press the pastry into the edges, patching it where necessary. Make certain there are no tears or holes. Chill for 20 minutes, allowing the pastry to relax. Set the oven at 180C fan/gas mark 6 and place an upturned baking sheet on the middle shelf to heat up.

Place a sheet of baking paper or foil on top of the pastry, fill with baking beans and slide into the preheated oven on top of the warm baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes, then carefully remove the parchment and beans and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes until dry to the touch. Lower the heat to 160C fan/gas mark 4.

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat gently, then add the cream (removing the parmesan rind). Season with salt and pepper, add the fried mushrooms, then spoon into the tart case and bake for 25 minutes.

Chickpea and amaranth loaf (vegan)



Photograph: Jonathan Lovekin/The Observer

This started life as a stuffing, but recipes move on and what was once cooked inside a goose is now a dish in its own right. As much as I like a nut loaf, this softer version is less expensive to make and nicely balanced with a hint of sweetness from the dried fruits. You can make the mixture a day or more in advance. It will freeze, too. Cook it in a 20cm x 12cm parchment-lined loaf tin, then let it rest for a good 20 minutes before spooning or slicing.

You will want something with this. I have served it with spinach, cooked quickly in a hot, covered pan and a few spoons of vegetable stock, or you could make a sauce for it. Mushroom perhaps or something spicier with tomatoes and chillies.

Enough for 6
onions 3, medium

olive oil 7 tbsp
garlic 4 cloves
ground cumin 2 tsp
ground coriander 2 tsp
mild chilli powder 2 tsp
amaranth 175g
chickpeas 1 x 400g tin
dried figs 75g
dried apricots 75g
parsley 10g

Peel and finely chop the onions. Warm 3 tbsp of the olive oil in a deep pan, add the onions and let them cook over a moderate heat for 15-20 minutes until they are soft and pale gold. Take care not to brown them. Peel and finely chop the garlic, stir it in, then add the cumin, coriander, chilli and a little black pepper.

Bring a medium pan with 400ml of water to the boil, then rain in the amaranth and let it simmer, partially covered, for 15 minutes. Drain using a fine sieve. Put the pan back on the heat, add the chickpeas and their liquor and warm thoroughly. Chop the figs and apricots. Pull the leaves from the parsley. Remove the chickpeas from the heat then purée with the parsley leaves and remaining olive oil using a food processor. Set the oven at 180C fan/gas mark 6.

Combine the chickpea and parsley purée with the drained amaranth, dried fruits, onions and garlic. Transfer to the loaf tin, smoothing the surface and taking care to push the stuffing into the corners. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2021/jan/18/nigel-slater-10-winter-vegan-vegetarian-recipes>

Ask the experts: homebuyingMoney

Is our solicitor wrong when she says we owe £10,500 in stamp duty?

We are replacing our main residence but my husband owns a buy-to-let flat



The reader believes she has been given incorrect advice. Photograph: Andrew Redington/Getty

The reader believes she has been given incorrect advice. Photograph: Andrew Redington/Getty

Virginia Wallis

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Q My husband and I are due to exchange on a house today and we were under the impression during the four-month conveyancing process that we would not have to pay stamp duty because we were buying a replacement for the main residence we had sold. Our solicitor, however, has told us we are liable for £10,500 of SDLT as my husband owns a buy-to-let flat (it was his previous residence when we met five years ago) but I think she is advising us incorrectly. Based on an article of yours a few years back, and

the government guidelines detailed in it, I think we should still be exempt as we are replacing our main residence with this sale and purchase. Is it as simple as that?

FS

A Yes, it is that simple and the [stamp duty land tax \(SDLT\) guidance](#) published in March 2016 has not changed. Under the heading “higher rates for additional properties”, it says: “You will not pay the extra 3% SDLT if the property you are buying is replacing your main residence and that has already been sold”. In your case, because you have sold your main residence and are buying a new one to replace it, you should not have to pay the higher rate of SDLT. To confirm this, you might want to get your solicitor to use the [SDLT calculator](#) mentioned in the guidance.

Using it, I applied the current zero rate of SDLT to a notional purchase of £490,000 after having answered “yes” to the questions “Will the purchase of the property result in owning two or more properties?” and “Is the property being purchased replacing your main residence?”. Had I answered “no” to that last question – because the first main residence had not been sold – the higher rates would have been charged. However, a rebate would have been available as long as the main residence not yet sold was sold within three years of buying the new one.

- Want expert help finding your new mortgage? Use our new online tool to search 1000s of deals from more than 80 lenders with the [Guardian Mortgage Service](#), powered by L&C.

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Consumer championsBroadband

Vulnerable person cut off from landline and broadband for weeks

TalkTalk service was cut off when the road was dug up and Openreach has not fixed it



Trouble started when Openreach had to dig up the road and phone lines were mixed up. Photograph: Stephen Hyde/Alamy

Trouble started when Openreach had to dig up the road and phone lines were mixed up. Photograph: Stephen Hyde/Alamy

[Miles Brignall](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

I am writing on behalf of an 84-year-old friend who lives alone. Just before Christmas, on 21 December, his landline and broadband both stopped working, and, ever since, we have been trying to get him reconnected. It seems that the road was dug up and the workmen managed to mix up the phone lines. All his landline calls are going to another house's voicemail.

We called his supplier, [TalkTalk](#), and someone was sent out on New Year's Eve. We were told that the road will have to be dug up again, but nothing has happened.

There is no one else around to help and I cannot create a support bubble with him as I have an elderly mother. He has had no landline or internet for all of this time. I have also contacted the local paper and the local MP as I am running out of ideas.

CC, Beaconsfield

Guardian Money has had several pleas like this over the past few months and we have helped several older readers – and at least one GP – to get reconnected by speaking to Openreach, the BT division that manages the telecoms infrastructure on all of the phone companies' behalf.

Openreach engineers have been working in difficult conditions throughout the pandemic and their contribution needs to be recognised. Within a few hours of us calling, it swiftly got on the case and restored your friend's service. You are both very relieved.

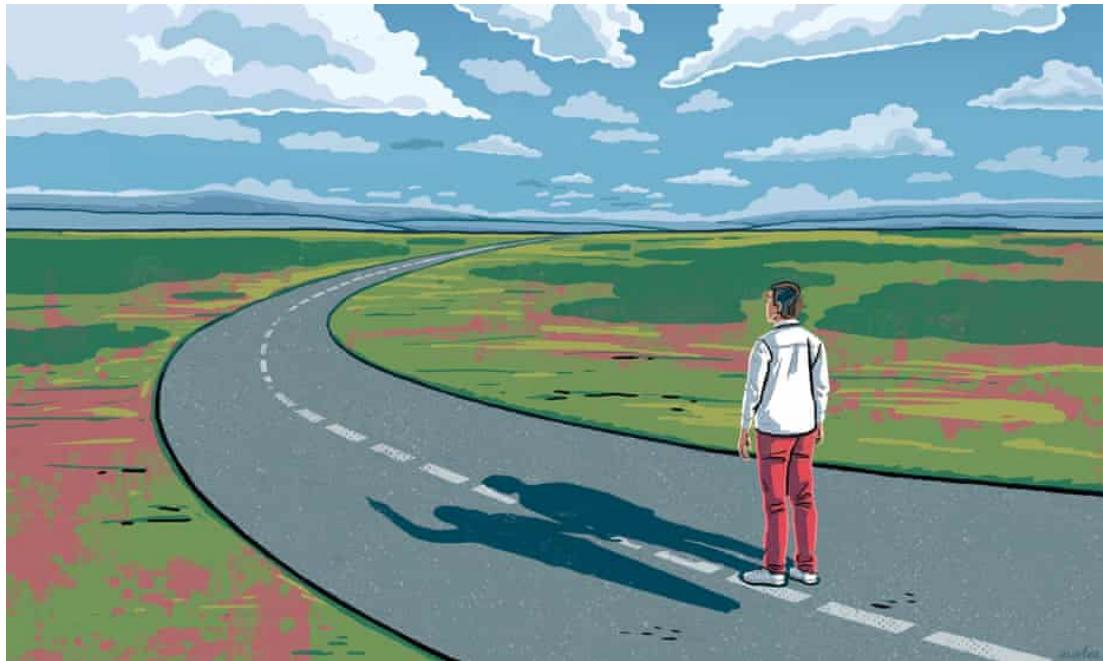
Meanwhile, with your friend's permission, it's worth you speaking to TalkTalk to explain his situation, as telecoms firms are often unaware that a customer may be vulnerable. You should also apply (on his behalf) for £8-a-day compensation for his lost service. It kicks in two days after the customer reports any loss of service if the problem remains unfixed.

We welcome letters but cannot answer individually. Email us at consumer.champions@theguardian.com. Please include a daytime phone number. Submission and publication of all letters is subject to our [terms and conditions](#)

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Self and wellbeingDeath and dying

Finding meaning in the life of a loved one who dies is part of grief



‘We’re grieving the world we have lost.’ Illustration: Eva Bee/The Observer
‘We’re grieving the world we have lost.’ Illustration: Eva Bee/The Observer

We’ve all lost so much through the pandemic, but by making sense of it we can look forward



[Joanna Moorhead](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 10.00 EST

Death came early into David Kessler's life. He was just 13 when his mother died, and her loss prompted his decision to forge a career working in palliative care. He went on to collaborate with psychiatrist [Elisabeth Kübler-Ross](#), a central figure in the field, who devised the five stages of grief. In lectures he would talk about his mother's death and remind his audiences that no one is exempt from loss; and yet, he says today, in his heart he believed his personal experience of devastating grief was behind him, rather than ahead.

And then, four years ago, another tragedy hit his family. Kessler was totally floored by it. He discovered it was one thing knowing the landscape of mourning, and quite another travelling through it. But his journey, hard and long as it was, had an important by-product: he realised that the seminal Kübler-Ross inventory was not complete. To the five stages of grief she described, he was able, with the permission of the Kübler-Ross family, to add a sixth. And now, in the midst of the pandemic, he believes that the sixth stage will be as important in our universal experience of grieving as it is in individual lives hit by loss.

The tragedy in Kessler's life came out of nowhere, as tragedies so often do. He was on a lecture tour when his son Richard, the eldest of two boys he had adopted in 2000, phoned to say his younger brother David, 21, had been found dead. As children they had a traumatic past life. Kessler says this had come back to haunt David and that he was using drugs at the time he died. In his book, Kessler describes feeling, on hearing of the loss of his son, as though he had fallen into the deepest part of the ocean. What's more, he knew he would have to stay there for some time. He knew he would experience the stages outlined by Kübler-Ross – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – and he knew these would not necessarily be linear, that there was no “right” time frame and that he would oscillate between the different stages.

But what he hadn't realised until he experienced it for himself was that there was a sixth stage. “I discovered there was something else, something beyond acceptance,” he tells me on a call from his home in Los Angeles. “It was finding meaning: the possibility of being able to discover something meaningful in my grief.”

He's not saying, he stresses, that there was anything meaningful to be found in David's death. “It's not about finding meaning in the death – there is no meaning there. What it's about is finding meaning in the dead person's life, in how knowing them shaped us, maybe in how the way they died can help us to make the world safer for others.” Finding meaning, in other words, is something the bereaved can do after the death of someone they loved very much. It's how those who are left can fold the existence of the lost individual into their lives, how they can allow it to change them, and how they can behave in response to it.

Meaning allows us to change and find ways to respond to our loss

Much of what is experienced on an individual level in grief is echoed in what we're collectively experiencing because of Covid, Kessler believes. “Many people say they are feeling a heavy sadness – and what they're describing is grief,” he says. “We're grieving the world we have lost: normal life, our routines, seeing our friends, going to work. Everything has changed. And change is actually grief – grief is a change we didn't want.”

Just as with individual loss, at the moment the whole world is going through the stages Kübler-Ross documented. Some people are denying what's happening; others are angry about it; some are trying to bargain; many are depressed; and eventually, there will have to be an acceptance of what we can never go back to. But also, there will have to be the sixth stage: a search for meaning – and indeed, the stages of grief aren't chronological or linear, and we've been seeing signs of that search from the earliest days. But certainly when it's over, says Kessler, we will need to find meaning in what we've been through. "We are going to say, what was the meaning? What post-traumatic growth can we take from this?" And, crucially, finding meaning is "the stage where the healing often resides".

Kessler thinks Kübler-Ross, who died in 2004, would have agreed. The two of them met in 1995 and went on to collaborate on a book called *On Grief and Grieving*, in which they talked about how the stages of grieving were being misinterpreted. But as Kessler sees it now, it wasn't until he experienced the loss of his son that he was able to finally get to the root of what they had grasped.

All of this matters, he says, because the global north is grief-illiterate. "The things I'm teaching are things people's great-grandparents knew very well," he says. "There are people today who think grieving takes three months, or even three weeks." In the past, he says, you could mourn for as long as was needed – and in truth the fallout of grief never ends, it only changes. "But we live in a time when we're told we should feel like this for this long, and then you're done."

One of the things we risk losing, in our grief-adverse society, is the personal growth it can enable. "We all talk about post-traumatic stress, but I'd say post-traumatic growth happens even more." He believes we need to acknowledge that loss can have this spin-off and understand what it can do for us.

This makes perfect sense to me. I've often noticed, when I've interviewed people who have experienced bereavement, that they're in a better place psychologically if they have taken what Kessler would describe as meaning from it, or when they're upfront about how it's changed them. And I know my own life has been radically changed, and achieved meaning, because of

the loss of my sister when we were both children – I simply can't imagine the other person I would have been without that experience.

When we are all grieving it's often not possible to reach out

Which brings us to another point: guilt. Because surely if we as bereaved people are gaining from loss, we will at some point feel guilty about it. Yet we should not, says Kessler, because we'd never have chosen to lose the individual we cherished. Their death is something we can't change, but what we can change is how we live in the now, without them. We'd all give up, in a blink of an eye, the growth we've experienced if it would bring anyone back; but the point is, that's the one thing we absolutely can't do. And we have to remember, too, that the person who has gone would have wanted us to find meaning in our lives because of them. "My son was proud of what I did, and he'd be pleased that my work has found a new dimension because of him," says Kessler.

The bottom line about grief, says Kessler, is this: there's no wrong way to do it. Grieving is as individual as each of us; our grieving needs are different, in every case – and that seems to be true of how we're coping with the grief of the pandemic, too. It's also incredibly lonely: people who haven't experienced grief before imagine that other family members will be able to help. But, in fact, when everyone is grieving it's often not possible to reach out to one another, all you can do sometimes, as a grieving person, is survive.

One question he's often asked, says Kessler, is which kind of loss is the worst. "People ask, is it worse to lose your child or your spouse? And I always say: the worst grief is yours."

But if that's the case, the positive message of Kessler's book is that the best gain can also be yours. He tells me a story: he was speaking at a conference in a big hotel, and there were other conferences going on in the rooms around his. "Afterwards a member of the hotel cleaning team came up to me and asked: 'What were your group working on? Because so much laughter was coming from your room.'" The reason, says Kessler, is that people who have been in the deepest depths of despair have the broadest bandwidth when it comes to enjoying life: "When you've travelled through the deepest

valleys, you surely appreciate the views from the highest hills.” And right now, as we all travel together through the deepest of valleys, that’s a very good message to hear.

*David Kessler’s website is grief.com. His book, *Finding Meaning: the Sixth Stage of Grief*, is published by Penguin Randomhouse at £14.99. Buy it for £13.04 at guardianbookshop.com*

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/17/finding-meaning-in-the-life-of-a-loved-one-who-dies-is-part-of-grief>

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Fashion

'Hate-wear' and 'sadwear': fashion's new names for lockdown dressing

NYT and Esquire coin terms for the ways people are expressing frustration through clothes

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Justin Bieber in 'sadwear' mode in November. Photograph: BG020/Bauer-Griffin/GC Images

Justin Bieber in 'sadwear' mode in November. Photograph: BG020/Bauer-Griffin/GC Images

[Priya Elan](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 12.43 EST

With [online sales booming](#) but retail in [sharp decline](#), the pandemic has changed shopping for ever. Practical, comfortable items suitable for a lifestyle of working from home and occasional trips outside – such as [Ugg](#)

boots, Crocs and trousers with elasticated waistbands – have seen rising sales.

But with many of us grappling with our emotions during lockdown, the way we feel and speak about our clothes has altered too.

Last week, two new words were coined to describe our new attitude to fashion; portmanteaus that articulate the stresses and mundanity of lockdown, but also the changing relationship we have with our clothes.

The New York Times's “hate-wear” refers to clothes that are “neither stylish nor particularly comfortable, yet constantly in rotation”, items worn for their utility rather than their style.

“Not knowing how to dress is the least of anyone’s problems,” says the NYT writer Reyhan Harmanci, “but we still do (mostly) have to put on clothes. For those of us who now work from home, that has resulted in some weird choices.”



Is Matt Hancock's zip-up top 'a symbol of stress and sadness'? Photograph: Dominic Lipisnki/EPA

Examples in the article include a sweater with holes in, jogging bottoms in the wrong size and a jumper worn so regularly it “suddenly became a

symbol of stress and sadness". You could argue that Nancy Pelosi wearing the exact same dress for Trump's [second impeachment vote](#) or Matt Hancock's [zipped, gilet-like top](#), worn during visits to Covid vaccination centres, were sartorial symbols of "stress and sadness".

Esquire, meanwhile, came up with the term "[sadwear](#)", "our collective term for clothes that make us feel better when we're sad, specifically born out of the existential ennui of lockdown", according to Charlie Teasdale, the magazine's style director.

The list of "comfort-blanket" clothing included pyjamas, hoodies and, of course, jogging bottoms (ideally with a matching hoodie). But it could, equally, encompass something unexpected or luxurious, depending on how it makes the wearer feel.

Celebrities mirrored this trend, with Harry Styles being photographed in a dressing gown (Marks & Spencer reported a fivefold increase in nightwear sales over the pandemic period), Justin Bieber in [an ill-fitting sweatshirt](#) and Jared Leto in [a beanie](#). "It might be a stupid hat or novelty jumper or even a pair of joggers that feel great, but are laughably unflattering," said Teasdale.

According to Teasdale, these words are part of a new lexicon, articulating the "various sartorial sticking plasters people can employ to alleviate the gloom." He concedes, though, that sadwear "could never really compete with succour of a night at the pub".

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2021/jan/17/hate-wear-and-sadwear-fashion-new-names-for-covid-lockdown-dressing>

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- [Coronavirus Have you had the coronavirus vaccine in the UK?](#)
- [Brexit and Northern Ireland Have your food supplies been disrupted?](#)
- [Coronavirus Has your care home been badly affected?](#)
- [Older people in the UK Share your experience of the second wave of Covid](#)

Coronavirus

Have you had the coronavirus vaccine in the UK?

We'd like to hear from people who have had the coronavirus vaccine in the UK about how they feel and what it means to them



A care home resident talks to local GP staff after receiving an injection of the coronavirus vaccine at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham, 13 January 2021. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

A care home resident talks to local GP staff after receiving an injection of the coronavirus vaccine at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham, 13 January 2021. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

[Guardian community team](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 04.29 EST

On Saturday, [3.5m doses of coronavirus vaccines](#) had been delivered in the UK, with more than 400,000 of those second doses. The jabs take the UK a step closer to some form of normality, with the prospect of seeing friends and family again getting nearer.

We'd like to hear from people who have had the jab about how they felt afterwards.

Share your experiences

You can get in touch by filling in the form below, anonymously if you wish or [via WhatsApp](#) by [clicking here](#) or adding the contact +44(0)7867825056. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions.

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Northern Ireland

Brexit and Northern Ireland: have your food supplies been disrupted?

We would like to hear from those who live and work in Northern Ireland about their experiences around food supplies and Brexit



People inspect lorries which arrived at the Port of Larne in Northern Ireland.
Photograph: Phil Noble/Reuters

People inspect lorries which arrived at the Port of Larne in Northern Ireland.
Photograph: Phil Noble/Reuters

[Guardian community team](#)

Thu 14 Jan 2021 05.32 EST

Due to incorrect or absent Brexit-related paperwork, [Northern Ireland is facing disruption to its food supplies](#). Business leaders have said freight in GB is unprepared for the new rules resulting in cancellations and delays in shipments across the Irish Sea.

We would like to hear from people who live and work in [Northern Ireland](#) about their experiences.

How to get in touch

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Coronavirus

Has your care home been badly affected by coronavirus?

We'd like to hear from staff and families of residents in UK care homes and nursing homes



Local GP staff prepare coronavirus vaccines, to be delivered to care home residents at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

Local GP staff prepare coronavirus vaccines, to be delivered to care home residents at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

[Guardian community team](#)

Fri 15 Jan 2021 05.05 EST

UK care homes have been badly affected by Covid-19 and we'd like to hear from managers and workers about how they're dealing with the situation. What are conditions like for staff and residents, how are you coping? What

are staffing levels like and how many infections have there been in the latest wave?

We'd also like families to get in touch whose relatives are living in homes that are hardest hit by the virus. Are you managing to stay in contact with residents and what are your main concerns? If you're a resident in a home, we'd like to hear from you too.

Share your experiences

You can get in contact with us by filling in the form below. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions. One of our journalists will be in contact with you before we publish any contributions, so please do leave contact details.

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Coronavirus

Older people in the UK: share your experience of the second wave of coronavirus

We'd like to hear from older people, or family members who could put us in touch, about how they've been impacted by the second wave of coronavirus



An elderly couple arrives at a mass vaccination center in Epsom, Britain, 11 January 2021. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

An elderly couple arrives at a mass vaccination center in Epsom, Britain, 11 January 2021. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

[Guardian community team](#)

Thu 14 Jan 2021 09.15 EST

With older people at much higher risk of suffering serious symptoms of, or losing their lives to, coronavirus, many have been forced to shield for long periods of time.

This has impacted both mental and physical health, with many people becoming less mobile and independent, alongside dealing with isolation.

We'd like to speak to older people about their experiences, or family members who might be able to put us in touch.

Share your experiences

You can get in touch by filling in the form below, anonymously if you wish or [via WhatsApp](#) by [clicking here](#) or adding the contact +44(0)7867825056. Your responses are secure as the form is encrypted and only the Guardian has access to your contributions.

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Forty years on from the New Cross fire, what has changed for black Britons?

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/17/forty-years-on-from-the-new-cross-fire-what-has-changed-for-black-britons>

[The ObserverCulture](#)

Remembering a tragedy: culture inspired by the New Cross fire



Poet Jay Bernard, whose collection *Surge* remembers the New Cross fire ‘with both tenderness and frankness’. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

Poet Jay Bernard, whose collection *Surge* remembers the New Cross fire ‘with both tenderness and frankness’. Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian

Poetry, music and fiction produced by artists in response to the deadly 1981 blaze in south-east London

- [Forty years on from the New Cross fire, has anything changed for black Britons?](#)

[*Kadish Morris*](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

Poetry

[Surge by Jay Bernard \(2019\)](#)

Jay Bernard's powerful and award-winning 2019 poetry collection, *Surge*, grapples with the loss of black life. The collection starts by looking over historical scars – “remember we were brought here from the clear waters of our dreams, that we might be named, numbered and forgotten” – but soon the pages are charred and bloody with the presence of new death. The horrors of the night where “flames dem ah fly” are imagined with both tenderness and frankness. These poems often speak in the voice of the New Cross party attendees. Its strong sense of place, its patois, its demand for justice, its curiosity (“Will anybody speak of this?”) are reminders that four decades on, the tragedy remains an open wound.

Watch Jay Bernard read from Surge [here](#)

Music

[New Cross Fire Page One by Sir Collins](#)

[Listen to the album here.](#)

This little-known but significant album was produced and compiled by Sir Collins, who died in 2018, as a tribute to his son, Steve, who, aged 17, lost his life in the fire. Side A features the youthful vocals of his son who sings, chants and toasts on roots and reggae instrumentals recorded as a child and teenager. Steve’s innocent recital of the alphabet is both sweet and sombre on Teach the World ABC while in United We Stand, Sir Collins calls out the names of the New Cross fire victims. Side B covers Bob Marley’s iconic Exodus, a song about freedom, while Peace and Love 1 is a buoyant calypso track that celebrates life with the joyous sound of steel pans.

Poem

[New Craas Massahkah by Linton Kwesi Johnson](#)

[Listen to Linton Kwesi Johnson perform his poem here.](#)

Celebrated poet Linton Kwesi Johnson's poem is somewhat of a sibling to his Five Nights of Bleeding, in which he recounts the Brixton riots that occurred in the spring of the same year. Steve McQueen movingly featured the poem in *Alex Wheatle* in his Small Axe series. The poem illuminates the frustrations felt by black Britain that wanted answers. Beyond its lyrical imagery of melancholy blues and fiery reds, it tells of what followed that fateful night, as Johnson remembers how the event was handled officially. "Plenty papers print pure lie," he laments, "and the police dem plot and scheme." In his celebrated dub style, he paints a picture of resistance that sought to remedy the structural biases that exposed the black community to injury and harm.

Art

[THIRTEEN DEAD 1981 by Keith Piper](#)



An installation shot of Piper's multi-media piece 13 Dead 1981. Photograph: © Keith Piper/Courtesy of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum , Coventry

British artist Keith Piper's mixed-media artwork features pictures of victims on postcards, each placed on brown and charred patterned wallpaper and

skirting board. Hand written in capital letters, next to each image is the name and the age at which “Babylon snuffed [them] out” and the repeated phrase: “Send this one back to the people and let the people demand an answer.” The artwork was recently exhibited at Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry, together with seminal works from the [BLK Art Group](#), which was founded in 1979 in Wolverhampton to combat racial prejudice in the art world.

Fiction

[East of Acre Lane by Alex Wheatle \(2001\)](#)



Writer Alex Wheatle, photographed for the Observer last year. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Observer

As historian and writer Paul Gilroy writes in the introduction to Wheatle’s book: “This novel’s historical and geographical setting should be carefully specified. It can be defined by the immediate aftermath of the New Cross Massacre.” The thriller, which culminates in the Brixton riots, begins on 27 January 1981 and follows the life of Biscuit and his sticky relationship to the streets and crime. Wheatle explores the realities of what it meant to be young, poor and black in the 80s, subjected to bad housing, high unemployment and police cruelty.

Photography

Vron Ware: The Black People's Day of Action 02.03.1981



An image from Vron Ware's series The Black People's Day of Action 02.03.1981. Photograph: Vron Ware/Autograph ABP

Vron Ware captured scenes from the Black People's Day of Action that followed the fire, when 20,000 people, including Darcus Howe, Alex Pascal and Sybil Phoenix, took to Deptford's streets, and made their way to Blackfriars Bridge and Fleet Street in order to protest at the failure of the Metropolitan police to properly investigate the tragedy. Captured in vivid detail, Ware's photographs show the mood of protesters and their powerful signs. The photographs are now part of Autograph ABP's permanent digital and print archive.

Film

Small Axe: Alex Wheatle



Sheyi Cole as Alex Wheatle in Steve McQueen's film series Small Axe.
Photograph: Parisa Taghizadeh/BBC/McQueen Limited

Steve McQueen's award-winning film series, *Small Axe*, is a brilliant depiction of London's West Indian community between 1969 and 1982. It delves deep into their battles with police, judicial and education systems and also, their moments of euphoria. *Alex Wheatle*, about the life of the author of *East of Acre Lane*, follows his journey up to imprisonment for his involvement in the 1981 Brixton riots. The film remembers the New Cross fire with a gripping four-minute montage, featuring Johnson's New Craas Massahkah and photographs of the aftermath of the fire, the funerals of victims and the Black People's Day of Action. It's an unforgettable scene that somehow commands both silence and applause.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/jan/17/remembering-a-tragedy-culture-inspired-by-the-new-cross-fire>

[The Observer Apps](#)

How Trump supporters are radicalised by the far right

A move by extremists to the encrypted Telegram app from Parler makes it harder to track where the next attack could come from



Pro-Trump rioters storm the Capitol earlier this month. Photograph: Michael Nigro/Pacific Press/Rex/Shutterstock

Pro-Trump rioters storm the Capitol earlier this month. Photograph: Michael Nigro/Pacific Press/Rex/Shutterstock

Mark Townsend Home Affairs Editor

[@townsendmark](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 05.15 EST

Far right “playbooks” teaching white nationalists how to recruit and radicalise Trump supporters have surfaced on the encrypted messaging app Telegram ahead of [Joe Biden’s inauguration](#).

The documents, seen by the *Observer*, detail how to convert mainstream conservatives who have just joined Telegram into violent white

supremacists. They were found last week by [Tech Against Terrorism](#), an initiative launched by the UN counter terrorism executive directorate.

Large numbers of Trump supporters migrated on to Telegram in recent days after [Parler](#), the social media platform favoured by the far right, was [forced offline](#) for hosting threats of violence and racist slurs after the [attack on the US Capitol](#) on 6 January.

The documents have prompted concern that far right extremists congregating on Telegram instead of [Parler](#) has made it far harder for law enforcement to track where the next attack could come from.

Already, hundreds of suspects [threatening violence](#) during this week's inauguration of Biden have been identified by the FBI.

One of the playbooks, found on a channel with 6,000 subscribers, was specially drawn up to radicalise Trump supporters who had just joined Telegram and teach them "how to have the proper OPSEC [operations security] to keep your identity concealed".

The four-page document encourages recruiters to avoid being overtly racist or antisemitic initially when approaching Trump supporters, stating: "Trying to show them racial IQ stats and facts on Jewish power will generally leave them unreceptive... that material will be instrumental later on in their ideological journey.

"The point of discussion you should focus on is the blatant anti-white agenda that is being aggressively pushed from every institution in the country, as well as white demographic decline and its consequences."

The document concludes with its author stating: "Big Tech made a serious mistake by banishing conservatives to the one place [Telegram] where we have unfettered access to them, and that's a mistake they'll come to regret!"

The document is named the "comprehensive redpill guide", a reference to the online term red-pilling, used to describe a conversion to extreme far-right views.

The document adds: “Not every normie can be redpilled, but if they’re receptive and open-minded to hearing what you have to say, you should gradually be sending them edgier pro-white/anti-Zionist content as they move along in their journey.”

Another white nationalist recruitment guide uncovered by Tech Against Terrorism, which is working with global tech firms to tackle terrorist use of the internet, shares seven steps of “conservative conversion”.



The National Guard prepare to protect Joe Biden’s inauguration, as fears grow of attacks by the far-right. Photograph: Samuel Corum/EPA

Found on a Telegram channel with 1,732 subscribers, it also advocates white supremacist recruiters hiding their true credentials because most mainstream Trump supporters would be initially wary of strangers espousing extremist views.

“To them ‘Nazism’ is the worst thing possible. So having a swastika as a pfp [picture for profile] or your name being “heilhitler88” will automatically turn them off,” states the guide.

It adds: “Ask them questions such as: ‘What are conservatives conserving? Why are we losing? Is it a coincidence that Hollywood, corporations and media are all against us? Who is responsible?’ (Don’t go into Jews

controlling everything, they worship Ben Shapiro [US conservative commentator], they need to come across that idea themselves.”

Adam Hadley, founder and director of Tech Against Terrorism, said Parler’s downfall and the resultant exodus of disenfranchised Trump supporters on to Telegram could escalate the numbers of individuals who could be classified as a threat.

“There is much to be concerned about in the far-right playbooks we have uncovered on Telegram.

“If mainstream social media platforms are too quick to ban users who post material that may be distasteful, but not illegal, we simply push them into the hands of those who seek to radicalise them.”

Hadley added: “At this pivotal moment in the fight against violent extremism, we must ensure our response upholds the very democratic principles we seek to protect, and that we cannot be accused of stifling legitimate political debate.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/jan/17/how-trump-supporters-are-radicalised-by-the-far-right>

US Capitol breach

'I had no qualms': The people turning in loved ones for the Capitol attack

The majority of more than 140,000 tips sent to the FBI about the attack have come from friends and family of those involved



A mob of Trump supporters breach the US Capitol on 6 January 2021.
Photograph: Carol Guzy/Zuma Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

A mob of Trump supporters breach the US Capitol on 6 January 2021.
Photograph: Carol Guzy/Zuma Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

Kari Paul

Sun 17 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

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When Alison Lopez discovered her uncle's sister had been part of the mob that breached the Capitol doors on 6 January, she immediately reported her to the [FBI](#). "I had no second thoughts," she said.

Lopez found out about her in-law's participation when the woman in question called her aunt from inside the Capitol to brag about "taking back

the election". Lopez, who is 42, said she had known the relative her whole life but had "no qualms" about reporting her.

['Kids can handle hard truths': teachers and their students reckon with capitol attack](#)

[Read more](#)

"If I saw my grandmother making bombs in her basement, or my aunt breaking into a home, I would have to intervene as well – it's just about doing what's right," she said.

In the week after the attacks on the Capitol, there has been a concerted effort to "unmask" rioters online, with self-styled detectives investigating who's who in videos and photos posted from the attack. Outing family members – either online or to authorities – has marked a new frontier of the rift Trumpism has created in the US.

Lopez said she was horrified but not surprised to see a loved one participate in the riot. Over the last four years she has watched helplessly as members of her family became increasingly entrenched in the world of hateful rightwing conspiracy theories.

"These are people who never really identified with politics before, and now they have just let this consume their lives," Lopez said, adding she does not consider herself a Democrat and has voted for Republican candidates in the past.

If I saw my grandmother making bombs in her basement ... I would have to intervene as well – it's about doing what's right

Alison Lopez

More than 140,000 people have sent tips to the FBI reporting participants in the attack on the Capitol, resulting in at least 200 arrests. The vast majority of those, according to the [Department of Justice](#), come from friends, family and other acquaintances of those involved in the attacks.

The Massachusetts teen Helena Duke [received](#) a flood of support this week when she posted a video outing her own mother, aunt and uncle as having

attended the Capitol protests.

The 18-year-old said her mother, who appears to be harassing a Black woman in the video shared, previously condemned her for attending Black Lives Matter protests. “If I did nothing, I felt I was as bad as them,” Duke told Good Morning America.

The decision to report a family member or publicly out them as espousing dangerous views can make a huge impact in stopping the spread of hate speech, said Talia Lavin, an expert in extremism and white supremacist groups and the author of Culture Warlords.

“I applaud the bravery of people who have called out people in their own families for this kind of radicalization,” she said. “When people experience ostracization or disavowal from one’s own family, it can lead to a kind of cooling of extremist sentiment, because individuals are for the very first time experiencing a consequence for what they have so proudly engaged in for so long.”

Online sleuthing is not new, especially among hate speech and extremism investigators, who have for years hunted down and outed racists and fascist agitators to employers in hopes to foster accountability. But in the aftermath of the insurrection, the practice has gone more mainstream, with journalists, activists and the FBI tweeting out photos and videos of the riot and encouraging followers to investigate them.

Online sleuthing has its drawbacks: a Chicago firefighter faced harassment after being falsely identified as the killer of a Capitol police officer through a blurry video image. Another photo was falsely traced to a man pictured on an antifa website, a tie that has been definitively disproven.

But the chance of mistaken identity is much lower when the accusation comes from a family member or loved one. Leslie, a woman in the midwest who asked that her last name not be used in this story, said she and her sister had both submitted screenshots of images their mother posted on social media from the steps of the Capitol during the riots to the FBI.



More than 140,000 people have sent tips to the FBI reporting participants in the riots on the Capitol on 6 January. Photograph: Michael Nigro/Pacific Press/REX/Shutterstock

Leslie, who considers herself far left politically, said she had watched in horror as vigilantes stormed the Capitol, only to learn days later that her estranged mother was one of them.

“I almost passed out,” she said of the moment she saw the images. “I was really shocked. She was in front of the scaffolding we saw people climbing on TV. It was such a helpless, horrifying feeling.”

Leslie said she and her siblings stopped speaking to their parents after they got sucked into [QAnon](#), a movement surrounding a false conspiracy theory that Donald Trump is saving the world from a secret cabal of child abusers. She said she watched her evangelical mother go from being a devout Christian to posting hate speech on Facebook and aligning herself with the far right.

“I am really, really angry that I have essentially lost my family to a cult,” she said. “I am angry that people were not taking the rise of QAnon more seriously. People kept saying, ‘nobody is actually going to do anything, it is just a bunch of idiots online’.

“Well, the people at the Capitol are the people who were looking at this online,” she said. “This is what happens when you don’t do anything.”

Leslie is not alone: [support groups](#) have emerged in recent years for the countless Americans who have lost loved ones to the conspiracy theory.

Leslie said she is hoping a call from the FBI could serve as “kind of wake-up call for them”, she said.

“Maybe if she gets a call from the authorities she will realize this is not just a game, this is not just something playing out on Facebook. This is real and people got killed,” she said.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/17/capitol-attack-reporting-family-internet-sleuths-ganon>

America is broken – can Biden and Harris put it back together?

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Germany

Merkel's successor faces uphill struggle to unite his party

Analysis: centrist Armin Laschet, the new leader of Germany's CDU, will need to deliver on promises of reconciliation



Armin Laschet's nomination received Angela Merkel's tacit support.
Photograph: Getty Images

Armin Laschet's nomination received Angela Merkel's tacit support.
Photograph: Getty Images

[Kate Connolly](#) in Berlin

Sun 17 Jan 2021 10.43 EST

The election of Armin Laschet as the new leader of Germany's Christian Democratic Union has been welcomed by those hoping for a smooth transition after the imminent departure of [Angela Merkel](#) from political leadership. But his detractors have warned he faces an uphill challenge to unite not just his party but also the country in the event that he becomes chancellor, at a time of national crisis and division.

Laschet, who is now in line to succeed Merkel as chancellor after the parliamentary elections in September, [secured victory at the weekend](#) despite the odds having been on Friedrich Merz, a prominent conservative and investment banker. Norbert Röttgen, chair of the Bundestag foreign affairs committee, dropped out after the first round, prompting many of his supporters to back Laschet. The digital vote must still be confirmed by a postal ballot.

Even as Merkel bows out of politics at the next election – having stepped down as party leader in 2018 – her influence on the weekend's leadership contest, held online for the first time in German history, became clear when she gave Laschet her tacit backing, urging continuity for her centrist course. The big question now is whether the party can stand on its own feet without her and retain those who supported the party because of her. Laschet pointed out that many people had voted for the party over the past 15 years mainly due to their support of Merkel.

[Germany: Merkel's party chooses Armin Laschet as leader](#)
[Read more](#)

Commentators on Sunday welcomed the centrist Laschet's emphasis on social cohesion and reconciliation, saying he had frequently been told that the secret to political success was the art of polarisation. "No, you don't need to polarise," he told the conference. "Polarisation is easy, the poison that is quick to grasp." In contrast, the CDU he said, "has to speak clearly, but not to polarise".

He recalled the recent chaotic scenes at the Capitol in Washington DC as a reminder of where divisive leadership could lead. Political figures in [Germany](#) had been quick to connect the Washington riots with German anti coronavirus-lockdown protesters' attempts last year to unlawfully enter the Reichstag building in Berlin and by extension with the arson attack on the Reichstag in 1933 that was central in the establishment of Nazi [Germany](#).

But German commentators were almost unanimous in their assessment of the weighty challenge Laschet now faces. "Armin Laschet campaigned as a big reconciler," said news magazine the Spiegel. "But the CDU leader must now do justice to the demand for this in the party." This would also include

the need to integrate the disappointed supporters of the rightwing Friedrich Merz, the magazine said.

Just hours after his defeat, Merz, who had been campaigning for the leadership role for a year, requested the post of economics minister. A spokesman for Merkel said that there were no plans to reshuffle the cabinet or replace the current economics minister, Peter Altmaier, a Merkel ally. Laschet also said a cabinet switch was “not on the agenda”. However, he may yet be forced to include Merz in a new lineup to keep him close to hand and appease his large band of supporters within the party.

The conservative newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung said Laschet had been “the safe choice” for Germany’s largest party. It said Laschet had won support due to his proven experience in government as leader of the most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, where he has held together a broad coalition since winning power there from the Social Democrats in 2017.

It pointed out that Merkel’s successor as CDU leader in 2018, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who announced her resignation last year, had also stood on a ticket of continuity and keeping the grand coalition with the Social Democrats intact, but that that had also been her undoing. Kramp-Karrenbauer was not mentioned in Merkel’s short speech to the party conference, her last as chancellor.

It remained to be seen, the paper said, whether Laschet could now deliver “the fresh air and clear-cut lines” that many in the party craved.

The co-leaders of the Green party, which is currently performing strongly and has the potential to enter government in September in a power-sharing deal with the CDU, welcomed the clarity of Laschet’s election. “He must now newly define the CDU after the era of Angela Merkel and clarify what the party actually stands for,” Annalena Baerbock and Robert Habeck said in a statement.

Olaf Scholz, chancellor candidate for the Social Democrats, wished Laschet luck and said: “This year … will be a challenge for us all.” Alice Weidel, leader of the far-right populist Alternative für Deutschland, the main

opposition party in the Bundestag, said Laschet's election amounted to "political lockdown" for the CDU.

Laschet will face his first big tests at two regional elections in March, in the states of Rheinland-Pfalz and Baden-Württemberg. His chance of becoming the party's chancellor candidate in this autumn's election will depend on how the CDU performs in those polls.

Markus Söder, the popular state leader of Bavaria and head of the Christian Social Union, the CDU's sister party, is his direct contender and may yet force him to stand aside. Jens Spahn, the health minister, long tipped as a candidate, has won praise for his management of the coronavirus crisis. He was elected as Laschet's deputy leader but performed much worse than expected after appearing not to respect the voting process by holding a campaign speech for Laschet.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/17/angela-merkel-successor-armin-laschet-faces-an-uphill-struggle-to-unite-his-party>.

The ObserverPsychology

Why your most important relationship is with your inner voice



How can we transform negative chatter into something more positive?

Illustration: James Melaugh/The Observer

How can we transform negative chatter into something more positive?

Illustration: James Melaugh/The Observer

Your internal monologue shapes mental wellbeing, says psychologist Ethan Kross. He has the tools to improve your mind's backchat



Rachel Cooke

[@msrachelcooke](#)

Sat 16 Jan 2021 11.00 EST

As Ethan Kross, an American experimental psychologist and neuroscientist, will cheerfully testify, the person who doesn't sometimes find themselves listening to an unhelpful voice in their head probably doesn't exist. Ten years ago, Kross found himself sitting up late at night with a baseball bat in his hand, waiting for an imaginary assailant he was convinced was about to break into his house – a figure conjured by his frantic mind after he received a threatening letter from a stranger who'd seen him on TV. Kross, whose area of research is the science of introspection, knew that he was overreacting; that he had fallen victim to what he calls “chatter”. But telling himself this did no good at all. At the peak of his anxiety, his negative thoughts running wildly on a loop, he found himself, somewhat comically, Googling “bodyguards for academics”.

Kross runs the wonderfully named Emotion and Self Control Lab at Michigan University, an institution he founded and where he has devoted the greater part of his career to studying the silent conversations people have with themselves: internal dialogues that powerfully influence how they live their lives. Why, he and his colleagues want to know, do some people benefit from turning inwards to understand their feelings, while others are apt to fall

apart when they engage in precisely the same behaviour? Are there right and wrong ways to communicate with yourself, and if so, are there techniques that might usefully be employed by those with inner voices that are just a little too loud?



The psychologist and neuroscientist Ethan Kross: ‘Avoiding our emotions across the board is not a good thing, but let’s think about distance instead.’
Photograph: EthanKross.com

Down the years, Kross has found answers to some, if not all, of these questions, and now he has collected these findings in a new book – a manual he hopes will improve the lives of those who read it. “We’re not going to rid the world of anxiety and depression,” he says, of *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head and How to Harness It*. “This is not a happy pill, and negative emotions are good in small doses. But it is possible to turn down the temperature a bit when it’s running too high, and doing this can help all of us manage our experiences more effectively.”

According to Kross, who talks to me on Zoom from his home in a snowy Ann Arbor, there now exists a robust body of research to show that when we experience distress – something MRI scans suggest has a physical component as well as an emotional one – engaging in introspection can do “significantly” more harm than good. Our thoughts, he says, don’t save us

from ourselves. Rather, they give rise to something insidious: the kind of negative cycles that turn the singular capacity of human beings for introspection into a curse rather than a blessing, with potentially grave consequences both for our mental and physical health (introspection of the wrong sort can even contribute to faster ageing).

Does this mean that it's not, after all, good to talk? That those in therapy should immediately cancel their next appointment? Not exactly. "Avoiding our emotions across the board is not a good thing," he says. "But let's think about distance instead. Some people equate this word with avoidance and repression. But I think of it as the ability to step back and reflect, to widen the lens, to get some perspective. We're not *avoiding* something by doing this, we're just not getting overwhelmed."

Those who are able to quieten their inner voice are happier; their sense of relief can be palpable

According to one study, we talk to ourselves at a rate equivalent to speaking [4,000 words per minute](#) (by way of comparison, the American president's [State of the Union address](#), which usually runs to about 6,000 words, lasts more than an hour). No wonder, then, that listening to it can be exhausting, whether it takes the form of a rambling soliloquy, or a compulsive rehashing of events, a free-associative pinballing from one thought to another or a furious internal dialogue.

But if such noise can be paralysing, it can also be self-sabotaging. What we experience on the inside can blot out almost everything else if we let it. A study published in 2010, for instance, shows that inner experiences consistently dwarf outer ones – something that, as Kross notes, speaks to the fact that once a “ruminative” thought takes hold of us, it can ruin even the best party, the most longed-for new job.

Why do some people have a louder or more troubling inner voice than others? “That’s harder to answer,” he says. “There are so many ways it can be activated, some genetic, some environmental.” What is certain is that these experiences cannot be discounted: “The data is overwhelming when it comes to the connection between anxiety and physical health conditions.”

Those who are able to quieten their inner voice are happier; their sense of relief can be palpable.



‘Our thoughts don’t save us from ourselves,’ says Ethan Kross. Photograph: Getty

What is interesting about the science involved in all this is how it both backs up, and goes against, intuition. Much of Kross’s book is devoted to what he calls the “toolbox” of techniques that can be used to dial down chatter, and while some of these seem to contradict all that we think and feel – “venting”, for instance, can do a person more harm than good, because talking about negative experiences with friends can often work as a repellent, pushing away those you need most – others confirm that when we act on certain instincts, we’re right to do so.

To take one example, if you are the kind of person who slips into the second or third person when you are in a flap (“*Rachel, you should calm down; this is not the end of the world*”), you really are doing yourself some good. What Kross calls “distanced self-talk” is, according to experiments he has run, one of the fastest and most straightforward ways of gaining emotional perspective: a “psychological hack” that is embedded in “the fabric of human language”. Talking to yourself like this – as if you were another person altogether – isn’t only calming. Kross’s work shows that it can help

you make a better impression, or improve your performance in, say, a job interview. It may also enable you to reframe what seems like an impossibility as a challenge, one to which, with your own encouragement, you may be able to rise.

Some of his other techniques are already well known: the power of touch (put your arms around someone); the power of nature (put your arms around a tree). Activities that induce “awe” – a walk in the mountains, say, or time spent in front of a magnificent work of art – are also useful, helping with that sense of perspective. Writing a daily journal can prove efficacious for some (something that felt terrible one day physically becoming old news the next), while neat freaks like me will be thrilled to discover that what he calls “compensatory control” – the creation of exterior order, better known as tidying up – really does have an impact on interior order. Reorganise your sock drawer, and you may find that your voice quietens.



The model Heidi Klum is said to take her milk teeth as a lucky charm when she flies, clutching them during turbulence. Photograph: Rex/Shutterstock

Research shows, too, that superstitions, rituals and lucky charms can be useful, though most of us will draw the line at, say, taking our milk teeth with us when we fly, as the model Heidi Klum is said to (she keeps hers in a tiny bag, which she clutches during turbulence). Placebos have been found

to work on chatter, just as they do in the case of some physical illnesses. In one study in which Kross was involved, a saline nasal spray acted as a kind of painkiller for the inner voice: data from brain scans showed that those who'd inhaled it, having believed they were inhaling a painkiller, displayed significantly less activity in their brain's social-pain circuitry compared with those who knew they had inhaled only a saline solution.

No wonder, then, that Kross believes children should be taught the science behind all of these ideas, and in the US he has already begun working with teachers to make this happen: "We want to find out if knowing this stuff influences how they regulate themselves." Does *he* make use of the toolbox? (Physician, heal thyself.) "We should probably ask my wife," he laughs. "But yes, I do, absolutely. I'm human, too." In particular, he is "very selective" when it comes to friends from whom he seeks "chatter support".

Everyday feelings of sadness are elevated for many, but there is also a lot of resilience – we often underestimate that

Kross finished his book long before the outbreak of the pandemic, let alone the [storming of the Capitol](#). But as he observes, it could hardly be published at a more opportune moment. "This is the perfect chatter episode for society: a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, political uncertainty, widespread groupthink." His most cited paper to date looked at the harmful implications of social media, often "a giant megaphone" for the inner voice – Facebook expressly asks its users: "What's on your mind?" – and an environment that he thinks we need to learn to navigate with more care.

As for the pandemic, though, he is less pessimistic than some about the effects it is likely to have long-term on mental health. "We are already seeing signs that depression and anxiety are spiking," he says. "Everyday feelings of sadness are elevated for many, and then there are more full-blown episodes. But there is also a lot of resilience, and we often underestimate that. A lot of people are doing quite well. They're managing this hardship in an adaptive way. I am an optimist. We will return, I think, to a nicer place, though how quickly that will happen, I only wish I could say."

Which technique should the pandemic-anxious deploy? "Well, one that I personally rely on is temporal distancing," he says. This requires a person to

look ahead: to see themselves determinedly in the future. Studies show that if you ask those going through a difficult experience how they will feel about it in 10 years' time, rather than tomorrow, their troubles immediately seem more temporary. Does this really help him? "Yes, it does. I ask myself how I am going to feel a year from now, when I'm back in the office, and I'm seeing my colleagues, and travelling again, and taking my kids to soccer – and it gives me hope."

It is, as he says in his book, a form of time travel: a mental Tardis that, if only we can manage to board it, may make everything from a bereavement right down to a silly argument seem less brutal, just a little easier to bear.

- *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head and How to Harness It* by Ethan Kross is published by Vermilion (£20). To order a copy go to [guardianbookshop.com](https://www.guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply
-

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Should we celebrate Trump's Twitter ban? Five free speech experts weigh in

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Childhood in custody

Australia's anguish: the Indigenous kids trapped behind bars

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are jailed at 22 times the rate of non-Indigenous young people. Photograph: David Dare Parker/The Guardian

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/18/australias-anguish-the-indigenous-kids-trapped-behind-bars>

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Lord Sumption tells stage 4 cancer patient her life is 'less valuable'

Former justice's remark made to woman with bowel cancer during TV debate on Covid lockdowns

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01:03

[Clea Skopeliti](#)

Sun 17 Jan 2021 15.38 EST

The former supreme court justice [Jonathan Sumption](#) has been criticised for telling a woman with stage 4 cancer that her life was “less valuable” during a televised discussion of the costs of coronavirus lockdowns.

Appearing on the BBC One show The Big Questions on Sunday to discuss the question of whether lockdown was “punishing too many for the greater good”, Lord Sumption, [one of the most prominent anti-lockdown campaigners](#), said he did not accept that “all lives are of equal value”.

The former justice, who [served on the supreme court until 2018](#), said he believed his children’s and grandchildren’s lives were “worth more because they’ve got a lot more of it ahead”.

Responding to Sumption’s remarks, Deborah James, who has stage 4 metastatic bowel cancer and hosts the BBC’s You, Me and the Big C podcast, said: “With all due respect, I am the person who you say their life is not valuable.”

Sumption then interrupted James, saying: “I didn’t say your life was not valuable, I said it was less valuable.”

James continued: “Who are you to put a value on life? In my view, and I think in many others, life is sacred and I don’t think we should make those judgment calls. All life is worth saving regardless of what life it is people are living.

“I’m fully aware and I’ve seen first-hand and said goodbye to best friends in terms of the collateral Covid is causing, but at the same time I’m incredibly grateful to be somebody who is kept alive because of the NHS.”

Sumption was also challenged by Catherine Foot from the Centre for [Ageing Better](#), who said she “shuddered” at his suggestion that all lives were not equal. She said that the crisis necessitated drawing “ethical red lines”, one of which is that “every human is equal”.

Sumption’s remarks were widely condemned online, with the human rights barrister Adam Wagner [describing them as “inhumane, almost grotesque”](#).

Genevieve Edwards, the chief executive of the charity Bowel [Cancer UK](#), told PA Media: “To describe someone’s life as ‘less valuable’ because they have advanced bowel cancer is callous nonsense.

“It’s also incredibly upsetting to people who have experienced disruption to their diagnosis and treatment because of pressures on the NHS, and insulting to the staff doing their absolute best for every patient they see.

“What’s important is to protect the NHS and each and every life that depends on it, not pit one person against another.”

During the programme, Sumption argued that only the “old and vulnerable” should isolate. He was challenged on this point by the host Nicky Campbell, who questioned whether his solution wasn’t “utterly simplistic” as vulnerability includes a broad spectrum of people, and people of all ages interact in society.

Sumption also claimed that government action had “virtually no impact” on mortality rates – a point rebuffed by Calum Semple, a professor of child health and outbreak medicine at Liverpool University, who described it as

“plain wrong”. Semple also underlined that “the value of life doesn’t change at the age of 70”.

The former justice later claimed that his comments had been misinterpreted, saying: “I object extremely strongly to any suggestion that I was inferring that Miss James’s life was less valuable because she had cancer.

“I thought she was responding to my earlier comments about older people being protected by a total lockdown which is causing immense harm to the young who are unaffected.

“That harm can be to their mental health or through cooping undergraduates up at university or through the loss of jobs. I was saying this should not be inflicted on the young to protect old people like me.

“If Miss James has misinterpreted that then I can only apologise to her as it was not my intention to suggest she was less valuable. Sometimes on videolinks it can be difficult to hear what the other person is saying.”

Sumption has been an outspoken critic of the government’s handling of the pandemic, frequently arguing that the measures taken to curb the virus have been an attack on personal liberties. Delivering the Cambridge Freshfields annual law lecture in October, he said the emergency measures taken by the government in the spring were “[the most significant interference with personal freedom in the history of our country](#)”.

- This article was amended on 18 January 2021. Sumption’s title comes from his former role as a supreme court justice, rather than from sitting in the House of Lords. This has been corrected.

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Monday briefing: Benefit cuts risk 'levelling up' plan

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- [Live UK coronavirus: minister plays down chart showing UK's death rate currently worst in world](#)
- [Matt Hancock Health secretary self-isolating after NHS Covid app message](#)
- [Covid vaccines Call to prioritise minority ethnic groups for jabs](#)
- [Electric cars Batteries with five-minute charging times produced](#)
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- [European Union Border force head faces calls to quit over allegations he 'misled' MEPs](#)
- [Shopping More than a third of customers blocked from paying with cash in crisis](#)
- [Jeremy Corbyn Lawyers accuse Starmer of 'disingenuous' attack](#)

- Universal credit Ministers consider climbdown over ending top-up
- Business Moonpig confirms stock market flotation for up to £1.2bn
- 'Nothing is impossible' Michelin awards star to vegan restaurant for first time in France

Young people

One in four UK young people have felt 'unable to cope' in pandemic

Prince's Trust happiness and confidence survey produces worst findings in its history

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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More than half of young people surveyed said they always or often felt anxious. Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/PA

[Young people](#) are in danger of giving up on their futures and on themselves, with a quarter saying they feel unable to cope with life, one of the UK's leading charities has said.

The [Prince's Trust](#) long-running annual survey of young people's happiness and confidence returned the worst findings in its 12-year history.

“The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on young people’s mental health and wellbeing,” said Jonathan Townsend, the trust’s UK chief executive. “Many believe they are missing out on being young, and sadly we know that the impact of the pandemic on their employment prospects and overall wellbeing could continue far into their futures.”

Half of the young people interviewed by YouGov for the trust’s 2020 Youth Index, carried out in partnership with Tesco, said current political and economic events had affected their mental health. More than half said they always or often felt anxious, rising to 64% among those not in work, education or training (Neet).

Graphic 1

More than one in four said they had felt unable to cope with life since the start of the pandemic, increasing to 40% of Neet young people. Half of 16-to 25-year-olds said their mental health had worsened since the start of the pandemic.

Graphic 2

“At this critical time we need businesses, government and individuals to work with us to help as many vulnerable young people as possible,” said Townsend. “It is only by working together that we can stop this generation of young people giving up on their futures – and themselves.”

Adam, 20, from Lancashire, lost his job in a factory last March because of the impact of coronavirus. He then found out he had to shield because of his immunosuppressant medication for eczema.

“The pandemic has been hard because I couldn’t see any friends, family or my partner. I couldn’t even go out to exercise at first, so I was just in bed all day feeling depressed,” he said.

“In June and July it got worse, I was withdrawing from the world. I felt alone and wasn’t doing anything. I don’t talk to my friends as much as I used to, we speak very rarely. I’m feeling isolated, as I still can’t really go out because I’m high risk, so I’m indoors most of the day.”

Emma Taylor, the UK people director at Tesco, said: “The findings of this year’s Youth Index highlight how vital it is to support young people to develop skills and build their confidence, to support their future. In these extraordinarily difficult times, supporting young people’s mental health is paramount.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/19/one-in-four-uk-young-people-have-felt-unable-to-cope-in-pandemic>

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[Politics live with Andrew Sparrow](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

UK coronavirus: 1,610 Covid-related deaths reported in new daily high - as it happened

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[Coronavirus](#)

Covid: UK health secretary Matt Hancock to self-isolate

Minister will quarantine until Sunday after being contacted by NHS app

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

00:50

Peter Walker Political correspondent
@peterwalker99

Tue 19 Jan 2021 06.54 EST

Matt Hancock has become the latest senior politician to self-isolate after contact with someone who has contracted coronavirus, with the UK health secretary saying he had been “pinged” by the NHS app.

Hancock said he would stay at home until Sunday. While the standard self-isolation period is 10 days, this dates from the time of the contact. This would indicate he was in contact with the relevant person on Wednesday or Thursday last week.

In a [video posted on Twitter](#), he said: “Last night I was pinged by the NHS coronavirus app, so that means I’ll be self-isolating at home, not leaving the house at all until Sunday.

“This self-isolation is perhaps the most important part of all the social distancing because I know from the app I’ve been in close contact with somebody who has tested positive and this is how we break the chains of transmission.

“So you must follow these rules, like I’m going to. I’ve got to work from home for the next six days, and together, by doing this, by following this,

and all the other panoply of rules that we've had to put in place, we can get through this and beat this virus."

Hancock, who was alerted after hosting Monday afternoon's Downing Street press conference on coronavirus, did not say with whom he had been in contact.

In November, Boris Johnson [had to self-isolate](#) after a 35-minute meeting with a group of Conservative MPs from the Midlands and north of England in Downing Street, one of whom subsequently tested positive for Covid-19.

A photograph of the event showed Johnson, who was [seriously ill with coronavirus in April](#), standing with the MP seemingly less than 2 metres apart with neither wearing a mask.

Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, has had to self-isolate twice, once because of a family member, and then [after a staff member](#) in his private office tested positive for coronavirus.

—
Last night I was alerted by the [@NHSCOVID19app](#) to self isolate so I'll be staying at home & not leaving at all until Sunday.

We all have a part to play in getting this virus under control.
pic.twitter.com/MaN1EI7UyY

— Matt Hancock (@MattHancock) [January 19, 2021](#)

Hancock [tested positive for Covid-19 in March](#), when he announced his diagnosis shortly after the prime minister revealed his own.

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[Coronavirus](#)

Call to prioritise minority ethnic groups for Covid vaccines

BAME communities should be better protected as they are more at risk, say public health experts and MPs

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Kemi Badenoch, the UK's minister for equalities, receiving her first vaccination as part of the Novavax phase 3 trial in October. Last week research showed that up to 72% of black people said they were unlikely or very unlikely to have an anti-Covid jab. Photograph: PA

Kemi Badenoch, the UK's minister for equalities, receiving her first vaccination as part of the Novavax phase 3 trial in October. Last week research showed that up to 72% of black people said they were unlikely or very unlikely to have an anti-Covid jab. Photograph: PA

[Nazia Parveen](#), [Aamna Mohdin](#) and [Niamh McIntyre](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 14.43 EST

People in high-risk minority ethnic groups must be prioritised for Covid immunisations, alongside a targeted publicity campaign, experts and politicians have said amid growing concerns over vaccine scepticism.

With figures on Monday recording more than 4m Covid vaccine doses now administered across the UK, and the rollout being expanded to all over-70s, public health experts and MPs called for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to be better protected.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) has also [raised concerns](#) after research showed up to 72% of black people said they were unlikely or very unlikely to have the jab.

Prof Martin Marshall, chair of the Royal College of GPs, urged Whitehall to begin a public health campaign. “We are concerned that recent reports show that people within BAME communities are not only more likely to be adversely affected by the virus but also less likely to accept the Covid vaccine, when offered it,” he said.

“As such, where appropriate, we’re calling for public health communications to be tailored to patients in BAME communities, to reassure them about the efficacy and safety of the vaccine and ultimately encourage them to come forward for their vaccination when they are invited for it.”

His remarks came as the vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, admitted he feared some BAME communities could remain exposed to coronavirus despite high expected uptake of the jabs.

“My big worry is if 85% of the adult population get vaccinated, if the 15% skews heavily to the BAME community, the virus will very quickly infect that community,” he said.

Bereaved relatives said some misinformation played on religious concerns, including that the vaccine might contain pork and is not halal or that it could result in modification of DNA.

Dr Habib Naqvi, director of the NHS Race and [Health Observatory](#), said language and cultural barriers played a role in fuelling vaccine scepticism, adding: “We need to be clear to our communities that there is no meat or meat products in the vaccine. There is no pork, there is no alcohol and it has been endorsed by religious leaders and religious councils. Officials were working with role models and community and faith leaders to debunk myths, he added.

Data from the first wave of the pandemic shows that ethnic minorities were up to [twice as likely](#) to die from Covid.

Coronavirus mortality rates for black African and Bangladeshi males aged nine to 64 were around five times the rate among white males of the same age during the first wave of the pandemic, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

With figures on Monday showing a record 37,475 patients in hospital, and another 599 people having died in the 28 days to Monday, the rollout of the vaccine is seen as key to bringing the pandemic under control.

Amer Awan, whose [father Nazir](#) was formerly a director at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and died of Covid in April, said he was getting daily reports of relatives and friends contracting the disease and others dying as vaccine scepticism and “brainwashing” was taking hold in pockets of Birmingham.

Awan asked for ethnicity to be included as a factor in vaccine prioritisation and urged the government to act now to quash conspiracy theories. “There are a few quite influential people who are using online platforms to say quite ridiculous things about this vaccine – about its side-effects, that it has pork in it and even that it will put a microchip in people’s bodies. It’s ridiculous but also scary because the people that need this vaccine the most might not get it,” he said.

Marshall highlighted that GPs could use discretion when offering vaccines, taking into account the need of local communities.

“Whilst those from BAME communities are not specifically on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) list, ethnicity is one of the criteria for prioritisation within each group according to guidance from NHS England. As such, GPs are able to use their clinical judgment within the priority list to ensure the programme meets the needs of local communities.”

He has [previously written](#) to Matt Hancock, asking the health department to provide more information on the decision to omit BAME communities from the JCVI priority list.

According to ONS figures up to late July in England and Wales, the Covid death rate for black African men was 62 per 100,000 compared with 12 per 100,000 for white men. The rate for Bangladeshi men was 61 per 100,000.

Black African women had the highest under-65 death rate of any ethnic group, with 27 deaths per 100,000, compared with seven per 100,000 white women. The rate for Pakistani women was also more than three times as high as the rate for white women, with 26 deaths per 100,000.

Research highlights how systemic racism is driving health inequalities, with experts from UK and US universities revealing that racism is a root cause and major driver of ill health in general and increased mortality rates from Covid-19.

The [report](#), published in the BMJ, explores the possible societal causes of these trends. Where risk of exposure to the virus is high, the authors recommend that ethnic minorities should be supported at work into non-public facing roles and away from Covid risk areas where possible, with those at high risk prioritised to receive a jab.

Co-author Prof Aneez Esmail, of the University of Manchester, said 10 months into the pandemic it had become clear that Covid-19 had exposed inequalities in society.

“We are not in this together as many politicians have tried to claim. Ethnic minorities, including ethnic minority healthcare staff, in the rich countries of Europe and North America have been disproportionately affected by the

impact of Covid-19, whether it is because of increased death rates or the significant morbidity that patients suffer as a result of the infection,” he said.

The authors, also from Harvard University and Imperial College London, say everyday discrimination, people’s implicit biases, and cultural and structural racism lead to worse health outcomes.

Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, has written to the health secretary and the JCVI calling for the prioritisation of vaccines for emergency service workers, TfL staff and other key workers.

“Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are over-represented in frontline occupations and have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. I have urged ministers to learn lessons from the first wave about how this virus exacerbates inequalities and affects particular communities. This should include monitoring and publishing detailed data on vaccine take-up,” he said.

The Labour MP Apsana Begum said the failure to prioritise at-risk BAME groups for vaccines was a dereliction of duty. “With the pandemic in its most dangerous phase, the government must change course and adopt a policy of prioritising vaccines for those in the BAME community who are most vulnerable to Covid,” she said. “Unless ministers agree to prioritise at-risk BAME groups without any further delay, the government will be to blame for many more lives being lost in these communities.”

In the US, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released guidance in October for state and local planners, urging them to identify “critical populations” that should get the vaccine early, which included “people from racial and ethnic minority groups”.

A spokeswoman for the Department for Health and Social Care said the list of conditions used to identify individuals who may be clinically extremely vulnerable to Covid is agreed by the four UK chief medical officers on the basis of the latest available evidence, adding: “Clinicians in the NHS are able to add any patient to the shielded patient list, based on clinical judgment and an assessment of their need.”

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Electric, hybrid and low-emission cars

Electric car batteries with five-minute charging times produced

Exclusive: first factory production means recharging could soon be as fast as filling up petrol or diesel vehicles



A woman holds a cable to charge an electric utility vehicle. Running out of charge on a journey is a worry for drivers. Photograph: Eric Gaillard/Reuters
A woman holds a cable to charge an electric utility vehicle. Running out of charge on a journey is a worry for drivers. Photograph: Eric Gaillard/Reuters

Damian Carrington Environment editor

@dpcarrington

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.30 EST

Batteries capable of fully charging in five minutes have been produced in a factory for the first time, marking a significant step towards electric cars becoming as fast to charge as filling up petrol or diesel vehicles.

Electric vehicles are a vital part of action to tackle the climate crisis but running out of charge during a journey is a worry for drivers. The new

lithium-ion batteries were developed by the Israeli company [StoreDot](#) and manufactured by Eve Energy in China on standard production lines.

StoreDot has already demonstrated its “extreme fast-charging” battery in phones, drones and scooters and the 1,000 batteries it has now produced are to showcase its technology to carmakers and other companies. Daimler, BP, Samsung and TDK have all invested in StoreDot, which has raised \$130m to date and was named a [Bloomberg New Energy Finance Pioneer](#) in 2020.

The batteries can be fully charged in five minutes but this would require much higher-powered chargers than used today. Using available charging infrastructure, StoreDot is aiming to deliver 100 miles of charge to a car battery in five minutes in 2025.

“The number one barrier to the adoption of electric vehicles is no longer cost, it is range anxiety,” said Doron Myersdorf, CEO of StoreDot. “You’re either afraid that you’re going to get stuck on the highway or you’re going to need to sit in a charging station for two hours. But if the experience of the driver is exactly like fuelling [a petrol car], this whole anxiety goes away.”

“A five-minute charging lithium-ion battery was considered to be impossible,” he said. “But we are not releasing a lab prototype, we are releasing engineering samples from a mass production line. This demonstrates it is feasible and it’s commercially ready.”

Existing Li-ion batteries use graphite as one electrode, into which the lithium ions are pushed to store charge. But when these are rapidly charged, the ions get congested and can turn into metal and short circuit the battery.

The StoreDot battery replaces graphite with semiconductor nanoparticles into which ions can pass more quickly and easily. These nanoparticles are currently based on germanium, which is water soluble and easier to handle in manufacturing. But StoreDot’s plan is to use silicon, which is much cheaper, and it expects these prototypes later this year. Myersdorf said the cost would be the same as existing Li-ion batteries.

“The bottleneck to extra-fast charging is no longer the battery,” he said. Now the charging stations and grids that supply them need to be upgraded, he

said, which is why they are working with BP. “BP has 18,200 forecourts and they understand that, 10 years from now, all these stations will be obsolete, if they don’t repurpose them for charging – batteries are the new oil.”

Dozens of companies around the world are developing fast-charging batteries, with [Tesla](#), [Enevate](#) and [Sila Nanotechnologies](#) all working on silicon electrodes. Others are looking at different compounds, such as Echion which uses niobium oxide nanoparticles.

Tesla boss [Elon Musk tweeted](#) on Monday: “Battery cell production is the fundamental rate-limiter slowing down a sustainable energy future. Very important problem.”

“I think such fast-charging batteries will be available to the mass market in three years,” said Prof Chao-Yang Wang, at the Battery and [Energy](#) Storage Technology Center at Pennsylvania State University in the US. “They will not be more expensive; in fact, they allow automakers to downsize the onboard battery while still eliminating range anxiety, thereby dramatically cutting down the vehicle battery cost.”

[Research by Wang's group](#) is being developed by the company [EC Power](#), which he founded. It carefully increases the temperature of the battery to 60C, which enables the lithium ions to move faster, but avoids the damage to the battery usually caused by heat. He said this allowed a full charge in 10 minutes.

[The curse of 'white oil': electric vehicles' dirty secret – podcast](#)
[Read more](#)

Wang said [new research published in Nature Energy](#) on Monday showed this battery could be both affordable and eliminate range anxiety. “Finally we are achieving parity with gasoline vehicles in both cost and convenience. We have the technology for \$25,000 electric cars that race like luxury sport cars, have 10-minute rechargeability and are safer than any currently on the market.”

Wang noted that fast charging must also be repeatable at least 500 times without degrading the battery to give it a reasonable life and that the EC

power battery can do so 2,500 times. Myersdorf said the StoreDot battery could be recharged 1,000 cycles while retaining 80% of original capacity.

Anna Tomaszewska, at Imperial College London, UK, who [reviewed the fast-charging batteries](#) in 2019, was more cautious about the speed of their rollout. “I think technologies [like StoreDot’s] could start entering the market in the next five years or so. However, since they will be more difficult and expensive to manufacture, we’re likely to initially only see them in niche markets that are highly performance-driven and not as price-sensitive as electric vehicles,” she said.

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Biden inauguration

FBI vets thousands of troops amid fears of insider attack on Biden inauguration

- Extra checks to prevent repeat of 6 January attack on Capitol
- National guard plays down fears of extremism within ranks
- [US politics – live coverage](#)



The scene in Washington on Sunday. At least two active-duty service members or national guard members have been arrested in connection with the Capitol assault. Photograph: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

The scene in Washington on Sunday. At least two active-duty service members or national guard members have been arrested in connection with the Capitol assault. Photograph: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

David Smith in Washington

@smithinamerica

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.01 EST

Thousands of military personnel guarding Joe Biden's inauguration as US president on Wednesday are being vetted by the FBI amid [fears of an insider attack](#).

[Texas woman who attacked Capitol says she was following Trump's orders](#)
[Read more](#)

The biggest ever security operation for a presidential transition has turned swaths of Washington into a fortress, barricades, razor wire and 7ft fences erected to prevent a repeat of the deadly 6 January attack on the US Capitol by [a mob incited by Donald Trump](#).

Christopher Miller, the acting defence secretary, said the Pentagon would vet National Guardsmen in Washington and thanked the FBI for its assistance: “This type of vetting often takes place by law enforcement for significant security events. However, in this case the scope of military participation is unique. The DC National Guard is also providing additional training to service members as they arrive in DC that if they see or hear something that is not appropriate, they should report it to their chain of command,” [he said in a statement](#).

“While we have no intelligence indicating an insider threat, we are leaving no stone unturned in securing the capital,” Miller said.

Hundreds of troops wearing combat fatigues, body armour and helmets [could be seen](#) outside the heavily fortified Capitol building, Library of Congress and supreme court on Monday afternoon. Workers were busy attaching coils of razor wire to the top of the surrounding fence.

Inside the Capitol’s visitor centre, typically humming with tourists, dozens more military personnel were visible as well as rows of cots where helmets and backpacks were resting.

National guard personnel train part-time while holding civilian jobs or attending college. Some 25,000 members – more than double the number at previous inaugurations – are pouring into Washington from across the country, at short notice.

There are concerns that some of the very people assigned to protect the city could present a threat to the incoming president and other dignitaries, [the Associated Press reported](#). Their names will be fed through an FBI database for any evidence of connections to investigations or terrorism or other red flags.

Ryan McCarthy, the army secretary, told the AP guard members were receiving training on how to identify potential insider threats, although no hard evidence had come to light.

01:07

'Knock knock, we're here': new Capitol attack footage shows intruders in Senate – video

"We're continually going through the process, and taking second, third looks at every one of the individuals assigned to this operation," he said, adding: "We need to be conscious of it and we need to put all of the mechanisms in place to thoroughly vet these men and women who would support any operations like this."

At least two active-duty service members or national guard members have been arrested in connection with [the Capitol assault](#). Video footage from inside the building suggests some rioters had military training and that there was a significant level of planning and coordination.

00:52

US Capitol on security lockdown ahead of Biden inauguration – video

The Pentagon received 143 notifications of extremism-related investigation last year from the [FBI](#), 68 of which were related to current and former service members, the Washington Post reported.

The national guard played down fears of extremism in its ranks. Maj Gen William Walker, commanding general of the DC national guard, told MSNBC: "I don't have any concerns because it's a layered scrub. The FBI is scrubbing, the Secret Service gives out the credentials and then we have other agencies helping with the scrub as well. We really are pretty sure we know who is out here supporting us."

But Washington remains on edge amid fears of attacks by far-right militants, white supremacists and other radical groups encouraged by Trump's claims that the election was rigged – claims repeatedly tossed out of court and rejected by the US Department of Justice and Republican election officials in battleground states.

Five people including a Capitol police officer died in [the mayhem](#) on 6 January, which included chants for the death of Vice-President Mike Pence as he presided over the certification of Biden's victory.

Pence will attend the inauguration, with former presidents Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama and their wives. Lady Gaga and Jennifer Lopez will be among the performers. Attendance will be scaled down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Secret Service is in charge of security but a wide variety of military and law enforcement personnel are also involved, from the national guard and FBI to three police departments.

The Capitol was temporarily closed on Monday after a fire broke out at a homeless encampment, Capitol police said. All participants in a rehearsal for the inauguration were evacuated into the building, Reuters reported, before the Secret Service said there was no threat to the public.

State capitols across the US stayed on alert. Weekend protests were calm and thinly attended but [some pro-Trump demonstrators carried weapons](#). On Monday Andrew Cuomo, the Democratic governor of New York, said he would skip the inauguration to guard against the possibility of violence in his state capital, Albany.

On Monday – a public holiday celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King – Trump remained behind closed doors at a mostly deserted White House. Biden, wearing black cap, dark glasses, black mask and blue and yellow gloves, stood at a conveyor belt [packing beans and rice](#) for a food bank in Philadelphia.

Trump was [reportedly](#) planning to issue more than 100 pardons as his last major act in office. The president met his son-in-law Jared Kushner,

daughter Ivanka Trump and senior advisers on Sunday to thrash out a lengthy list of requests, the Post reported.

Trump will be the first outgoing president to skip his successor's swearing-in since Andrew Johnson did not attend the inauguration of Ulysses S Grant in 1869. Johnson, like Clinton, was impeached. Trump is the only president to be impeached twice.

Trump has [requested](#) a departure ceremony at Joint Base Andrews with a military band and red carpet, ABC News reported.

[Trump to issue more than 100 pardons before Biden sworn in – reports](#)
[Read more](#)

He will then head to his luxury estate, Mar-a-Lago, in West Palm Beach, Florida, to begin an uncertain future. Impeached by the House of Representatives for inciting violence against the US government, he is awaiting a trial in the Senate and a potential ban from running for office.

By the time Biden takes the stage on Wednesday, the [death toll from coronavirus](#) in the US will in all likelihood have passed 400,000. The pandemic is among "four crises" identified by the new president – along with the economy, climate change and racial injustice.

Biden is set to hit the ground running by reversing many of Trump's most contentious policies with [a flurry of executive orders](#), returning the US to the Paris climate agreement and Iran nuclear deal, accelerating the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines and canceling an immigration ban on some Muslim-majority countries.

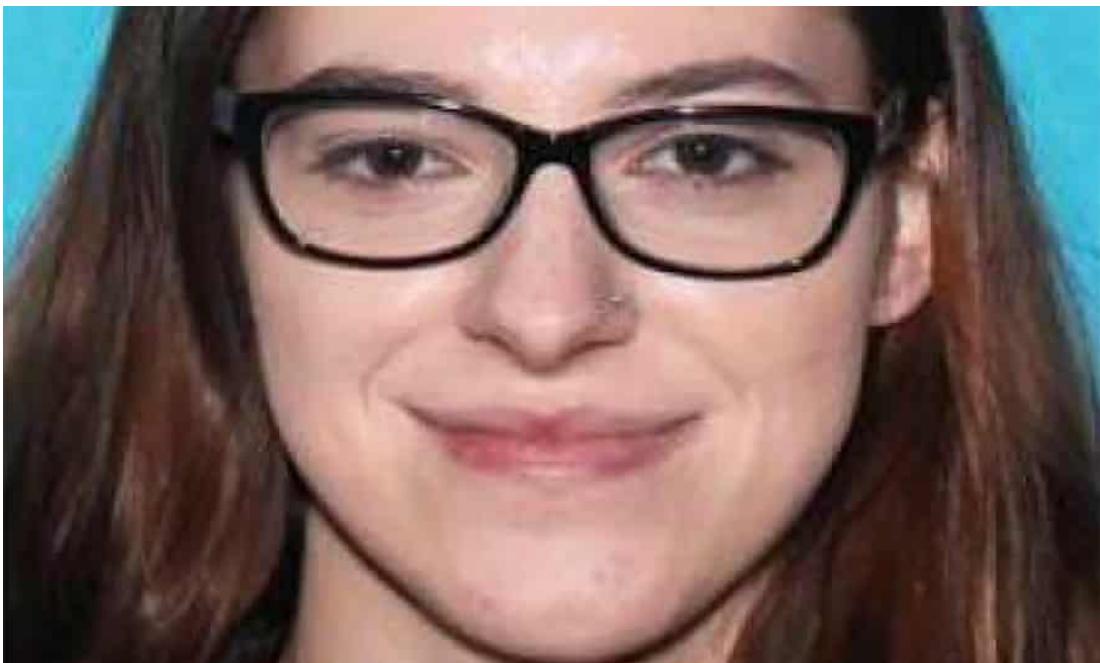
Kamala Harris, the vice-president-elect, resigned her Senate seat on Monday. She will be replaced by the California secretary of state, Alex Padilla.

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US Capitol breach

Police arrest woman FBI alleges stole Pelosi laptop to sell to Russia

Riley June Williams was arrested on Monday over Capitol breach after FBI received a tipoff from woman's former partner



Riley June Williams has been accused of unlawfully breaching the US Capitol building. Her former partner said he had seen footage of her taking Nancy Pelosi's laptop, the FBI alleged. Photograph: FBI/Reuters

Riley June Williams has been accused of unlawfully breaching the US Capitol building. Her former partner said he had seen footage of her taking Nancy Pelosi's laptop, the FBI alleged. Photograph: FBI/Reuters

Associated Press

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.24 EST

Federal authorities have arrested a woman whose former romantic partner says she took a laptop from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office during [the riot at the US Capitol](#).

Riley June Williams was arrested on Monday, according to a justice department official. It is not yet known when her initial court appearance will be.

The FBI said in an arrest warrant on Sunday that Williams hasn't been charged with theft but only with illegally entering the Capitol and with disorderly conduct.

FBI officials said a caller claiming to be an ex of Williams said friends of hers showed him a video of her taking a laptop computer or hard drive from Pelosi's office. The caller alleged she intended to send the device to a friend in Russia who planned to sell it to that country's foreign intelligence service, but that plan fell through and she either has the device or destroyed it. The FBI says the matter remains under investigation.

Pelosi's deputy chief of staff, Drew Hammill, confirmed on 8 January that a laptop was taken from a conference room but said "it was a laptop that was only used for presentations".

[Texas woman who stormed Capitol says she was following Trump's orders](#)
[Read more](#)

Williams' mother, who lives with her in Harrisburg, [Pennsylvania](#), told ITV reporters that her daughter had taken a sudden interest in President Donald Trump's politics and "far-right message boards". Her father, who lives in Camp Hill, told local law enforcement that he and his daughter went to Washington on the day of the protest but didn't stay together, meeting up later to return to Harrisburg, the FBI said.

Williams' mother told local law enforcement that her daughter packed a bag and left before she was arrested, saying she would be gone for a couple of weeks. She also changed her phone number and deleted a number of social media accounts, the FBI said. Court documents do not list an attorney for her.

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[This is Europe](#)
[Europe](#)

Majority of Europeans fear Biden unable to fix 'broken' US

Survey finds more Europeans than not say US cannot be trusted after four years of Trump



A mural of Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in Berlin last spring. Photograph: John MacDougall/AFP/Getty

A majority of Europeans believe America's political system is broken, that [China](#) will be the world's leading power within a decade, and that Joe Biden will be unable to halt his country's decline on the world stage, according to a report.

While many welcomed Biden's victory in November's US election, more Europeans than not feel that after four years of Donald Trump the US cannot be trusted, according to [the study by the European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

“Europeans like Biden, but they don’t think America will come back as a global leader,” said the thinktank’s director, Mark Leonard. “When George W Bush was president, they were divided about how America should use its power. With Biden entering the White House, they are divided about whether America has power at all.”

The survey of 15,000 people in 11 European countries, conducted at the end of last year, found that the shift in European sentiment towards the US in the wake of the Trump presidency had led to a corresponding unwillingness to support Washington in potential international disputes.

At least half of respondents in all 11 countries surveyed felt, for example, that their government should remain neutral in any conflict between the US and China, while no more than 40% in any country said they would back Washington against Russia.

“It’s clear that the tumultuous Trump presidency has left an indelible imprint on Europe’s attitude towards the US,” said Ivan Krastev, chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, an NGO in Sofia, and an ECFR board member. “The majority of Europeans are now sceptical about the capacity of the US to shape the world. It makes many, rightly or wrongly, want to opt for a more independent role for the EU in the world.”

In their report, Leonard and Krastev note that while more than 60% of those polled believed the US was “broken”, most evaluated the EU and their own countries’ systems much more positively – an opportunity, they argue, to harness the collective power of the bloc for the benefit and protection of its citizens.

The survey found that 51% of those polled did not agree with the statement that under Biden the US was likely to resolve its internal divisions and seek to address international issues such as climate change, peace in the Middle East, relations with China or European security.

Amid a widespread sense of growing Chinese superiority, 79% of those polled in Spain, 72% in Portugal, 72% in Italy and 63% in France said they thought China would overtake the US as the world’s leading superpower within the next decade.

Just over 32% of all respondents – and a startling 53% of respondents in Germany – felt that after voting for Trump, Americans could not be trusted. Only in Hungary and Poland did significantly more people disagree with that view than agree.

Just 10% of those polled saw the US as a “reliable” security partner that would always protect [Europe](#), while at least 60% in every country polled said they doubted their country could depend on US support in the event of a crisis.

The authors say the geopolitical consequences of this shift are significant: two-thirds of those surveyed said it was now important that Europe look after its own defence, including 72% in Portugal, 71% in Sweden, 70% in France and 69% in Poland.

At least half of respondents in every country surveyed said they would prefer their government to be neutral in a conflict between the US and China. Across the 11 states surveyed, only 23% of respondents thought their country should take Washington’s side against Russia, with 59% preferring to remain neutral.

Between 38% and 48% of respondents in seven countries thought the EU should adopt a tougher international stance on issues such as trade, taxation and regulation, while most countries considered Germany was now a more important country to “have a good relationship” with than the US.

The poll also revealed that in nine of the 11 countries – Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden – where the same question was asked in previous years, the average share of people saying the EU’s political system worked very or fairly well had risen from 46% to 48%.

It found that people who believed their own national political system was working, which was more often the case in northern than in southern Europe, were more likely to say the EU was a success.

The report identified four “tribes” that went a long way to grouping respondents’ positions, depending on whether they felt the EU, US or China

were rising or declining. The biggest tribe, “In Europe we trust”, comprised 35% of respondents, while only 9% belonged to “In America we trust”.

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Social media

Parler website partially returns with support from Russian-owned technology firm

Platform popular with Trump supporters is back online, but only carries a message from its CEO, using IP address owned by DDOS-Guard



Parler's website functionality started to return on Monday, with protection provided by DDOS-Guard. Photograph: Avishek Das/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

Parler's website functionality started to return on Monday, with protection provided by DDOS-Guard. Photograph: Avishek Das/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

Staff and agencies

Mon 18 Jan 2021 21.35 EST

Parler, the social network popular with [Donald Trump](#) supporters, has partially returned online with the help of a Russian-owned technology company.

The network vanished from the internet after it was [dropped by Amazon's hosting arm](#) and other partners over a lack of moderation after its users called for violence and posted videos glorifying the attack on the US Capitol on 6 January.

On Monday, Parler's website was reachable again, though only with a message from its chief executive, John Matze, saying he was working to restore functionality.

The internet protocol (IP) address it used is owned by DDos-Guard, which is controlled by two Russian men and provides services including protection from distributed denial of service attacks, infrastructure expert Ronald Guilmette told Reuters.

[Far-right website 8kun again loses internet service protection following Capitol attack](#)
[Read more](#)

DDoS-Guard's [other clients include the Russian ministry of defence](#), as well as media organisations in Moscow. Until recently, it offered 8kun – which was previously known as 8chan – protection from DDoS. Last week, DDoS-Guard became the latest company to [cut ties with 8kun's hosting company](#), VanwaTech, following inquiries from the Guardian.

If Parler's “free speech” website is fully restored, users would be able to see and post comments. Most users prefer the app, however, which remains banned from the official Apple and Google stores.

Matze and representatives of DDoS-Guard did not reply to requests for comment.

On Wednesday last week, Matze told Reuters the company was in talks with multiple service providers but declined to elaborate.

DDoS-Guard was registered in 2017 under a limited partnership, a financial structure in Scotland that allows nonresidents to create companies with little scrutiny. Aleksei Likhachev and [Evgeniy Marchenko](#), two Russian businessmen who registered it, remain owners of the company. The

partnership under which DDoS-Guard is registered is called Cognitive Cloud and is listed at an address in Edinburgh's Forth Street.

Speaking from the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don last week, Marchenko told the Guardian DDoS-Guard was a global information security service that hosted "thousands of websites".

Parler critics said it was a potential security risk for it to depend on a Russian company, as well as an odd choice for a site popular with self-described patriots.

Russian propaganda has stoked political divisions in the United States, supporting Trump and amplifying false narratives about election fraud but also protests against police brutality.

Parler, which disclosed it has more than 12 million users, sued Amazon last week after the cloud services provider cut off service, citing poor moderation of calls to violence.

In an update on Monday, Parler.com linked to a Fox News interview in which Matze said he was "confident" Parler would return at the end of January.

With Reuters

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/jan/19/parler-website-partially-returns-with-support-from-russian-owned-technology-firm>

Economics

Fighting climate crisis made harder by Covid-19 inequality, says WEF

Environmental issues are biggest danger in coming years, says international organisation

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Flooding in Hyderabad, India. The WEF said extreme weather events were one of top risks caused by the climate emergency. Photograph: Mahesh Kumar A/AP

Flooding in Hyderabad, India. The WEF said extreme weather events were one of top risks caused by the climate emergency. Photograph: Mahesh Kumar A/AP

[Larry Elliott](#) Economics editor

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.43 EST

Tackling the existential risk posed by the climate crisis will be made harder by the growing gap between rich and poor triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Economic Forum has said.

The body that organises the annual gathering of the global elite in the Swiss town of Davos said warning signs of the threat posed by infectious disease had been ignored for the past 15 years, with disastrous results.

Despite the loss of almost 2 million lives to Covid-19, the WEF's [global risks report](#) found that environmental issues were considered to pose the biggest danger in the coming years, both in terms of impact and likelihood.

Klaus Schwab, the executive chairman of the WEF, said: "In 2020, the risk of a global pandemic became reality. As governments, businesses and societies survey the damage inflicted over the last year, strengthening strategic foresight is now more important than ever."

Schwab added: "Growing societal fragmentation – manifested through persistent and emerging risks to human health, rising unemployment, widening digital divides, and youth disillusionment – can have severe consequences in an era of compounded economic, environmental, geopolitical and technological risks."

The WEF report said the Covid-19 pandemic had widened longstanding health, economic and digital disparities, making it harder to secure the international cooperation needed to combat challenges such as environmental degradation.

Extreme weather events were considered to be the top risk measured by the likelihood of them happening, followed by climate action failure, human environmental damage, infectious diseases and bio-diversity loss.

The top five risks in terms of impact were infectious diseases, climate action failure, weapons of mass destruction, biodiversity loss and natural resource crises.

For the first time, the report assessed risks according to when respondents thought they would pose a critical threat to the world. Short-term dangers –

which could happen at any time in the next two years – revealed concern about infectious diseases, employment crises, digital inequality and youth disillusionment.

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Over the medium term – three to five years – respondents believe the world will be threatened by knock-on economic and technological risks, which may take several years to materialise – such as asset bubble bursts, IT infrastructure breakdown, inflation and debt crises. Longer term concerns – five to 10 years – were dominated by existential threats, such as weapons of mass destruction, state collapse and biodiversity.

The WEF said it was hard for governments and businesses to address long-term risks but the pandemic had shown that ignoring the dangers did not make them less likely to happen.

The global risks survey is normally released a week before the annual meeting of the WEF but the pandemic has meant only a [virtual event](#) has been possible. A physical gathering is planned for Singapore in May.

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UK criminal justice

Case backlog threatens criminal justice system in England and Wales, say inspectors

Justice chief inspectors say delays have ‘severe implications’ for victims, witnesses and accused



While the recorded numbers of most types of crime fell in March last year, they returned to pre-pandemic levels during the summer. Photograph: Russell Boyce/Reuters

While the recorded numbers of most types of crime fell in March last year, they returned to pre-pandemic levels during the summer. Photograph: Russell Boyce/Reuters

[Ben Quinn](#)

[@BenQuinn75](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Urgent action is needed to tackle an “[unprecedented backlog](#)” of court cases built up in England and Wales during the pandemic that has “severe

implications” for victims, the four justice chief inspectors have warned.

The [plight of prisoners](#) locked up for most of the day because of Covid-19 and disruption to [services for young offenders](#) were also highlighted in a report by the inspectors of probation, police, prisons and the Crown Prosecution Service.

They expressed “grave concern” in particular about the situation in courts – already struggling with a “chronic backlog” of cases – which they said constituted the greatest threat to the proper operation of the criminal justice system.

“Delays mean victims must wait longer for cases to be heard; some will withdraw support for prosecutions because they have lost faith in the process,” said Justin Russell, the chief inspector of probation, speaking on behalf all four inspectors.

“Witnesses will find it difficult to recall events that took place many months ago, and prosecutors waste significant periods of time preparing for cases that do not go ahead.”

Those accused of crimes also faced delays in their opportunities to defend themselves while defendants were kept on remand for longer periods.

The number of ongoing cases in crown courts was 44% higher in December 2020 compared with February, while the latest figures show more than 53,000 cases are waiting to come before crown courts. Some of these cases have been scheduled for 2022.

While inspectors said they were heartened the criminal justice system (CJS) had coped “reasonably well” with the immediate challenges of the pandemic, court closures and social distancing had added to the pressures.

While the recorded numbers of most types of crime fell in March last year, they rose to pre-pandemic levels during the summer.

The four chief inspectors, who will give evidence to the House of Commons’ justice committee on Tuesday, have called on the government to provide additional funding and direction to agencies.

Pressure for more funding to help Covid-stricken courts also came from the Bar Council, which called separately for the creation of dozens of additional “Nightingale courts” to help with demand during the pandemic, investment of £55m to recruit and retain staff, and for non-means-tested legal aid to be made available for all domestic abuse cases.

A government spokesperson said the chief inspectors had recognised the swift and unprecedented work that had kept the justice system moving.

“These efforts have allowed us to rapidly increase the use of video technology, establish 36 ‘Nightingale’ courtrooms and prioritise urgent cases to protect the public from dangerous criminals, while we were one of the first countries in the world to resume jury trials,” the spokesperson said.

An investment of £450m to boost recovery in the courts was already yielding results as the backlog in magistrates courts continued to fall and crown court cases reached pre-pandemic levels last month, they added.

- This article was amended on 19 January 2021. It incorrectly referred to the criminal justice system in the UK, rather than England and Wales. This has been corrected.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/jan/19/case-backlog-threatens-uk-criminal-justice-system-say-inspectors>

Global development

EU border force head faces calls to quit over allegations he 'misled' MEPs

Frontex director Fabrice Leggeri accused over failure to appoint officers to protect people's rights, with home affairs commissioner calling for 'clarity'



A migrant is interrogated by members of Frontex in the port of Arguineguin on the island of Gran Canaria, Spain, 23 December 2020. Photograph: Borja Suarez/Reuters

A migrant is interrogated by members of Frontex in the port of Arguineguin on the island of Gran Canaria, Spain, 23 December 2020. Photograph: Borja Suarez/Reuters

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[Daniel Boffey](#) in Brussels and [Apostolis Fotiadis](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.13 EST

The head of the EU's border force is under growing pressure to stand down after being accused by the European commission of acting unlawfully and giving misleading evidence to MEPs.

The allegations against Fabrice Leggeri, the executive director of Frontex, relate to the agency's failure to recruit any of the 40 officers it is obliged to employ to protect the rights of people crossing into Europe.

The former French civil servant is accused of presenting his explanation for the lack of recruitment of "fundamental rights officers" in a "misleading manner" when giving evidence to the European parliament last month, according to a letter from the commission's director-general for migration and home affairs, Monique Pariat.

In her letter to Leggeri dated 18 December, Pariat further claimed that the head of the border agency had acted "unlawfully" in 2019 by publishing two vacancy notices for positions in Frontex without the approval of its management board.

The development will pile pressure on Leggeri, whose agency is already under [investigation](#) by the EU's anti-fraud watchdog, Olaf, over a range of claims including allegations that its guards had been involved in [forcing refugees and migrants out of EU waters at a Greek-Turkish maritime border](#).

The most incendiary claims about the involvement of Frontex border guards in “pushbacks” – denied by the agency – are also the subject of an internal investigation. A first draft of an internal report on the issue is due to be presented to the management board on Wednesday.

Frontex has [previously stated](#) it is fully cooperating with Olaf and its investigations “do not necessarily imply any malpractice”.



Fabrice Leggeri, Frontex executive director, is pictured (left) near the Greek-Turkish border in Orestiada, Greece on 12 March 2020. Photograph: Florion Goga/Reuters

Asked whether Leggeri should consider his position, the EU's home affairs commissioner, Ylva Johansson, told the Guardian: “I have no comment on that. Now that we have processes going on and they have not been finalised and I think they should be finalised.”

However, the former Swedish minister added that it was clear that “some of the things being said by the executive director in parliament [are] not true”.

Johansson said she had been “very upset” by claims first made in October over Frontex’s alleged [complicity](#) in illegal and often dangerous pushbacks aimed at preventing asylum seekers crossing the Aegean Sea, adding that systems for reporting abuse needed to be in place.

Evidence against Frontex includes testimonies and video footage showing one of the agency’s vessels manoeuvring dangerously near a crowded dinghy full of people and creating waves that drove them back.

A [joint investigation](#) from Lighthouse Reports, Bellingcat, Der Spiegel, ARD and TV Asahi documented six instances where the agency was either directly involved in a pushback or in close proximity to one.

In a statement in October, Frontex restated its commitment to preventing refoulement, or illegal pushbacks, of people seeking international protection.

Johansson said: “The first time I’ve heard that, I called immediately the executive director. I was very upset and he has to clarify what’s actually going on.

“I was not really satisfied with the explanation. So that’s why I called for an extraordinary meeting of the management board, and there have been several extraordinary meetings and also ordinary meetings of the management board, and they are taking their responsibility to find out what has been going on.

[Journeys of hope: what will migration routes into Europe look like in 2021?](#)
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“But also what kind of proper routines that should be in place in Frontex. We know that by the regulation they should have 40 fundamental rights monitors in place by 5 December – they have none. So this is also part of things that need to be clarified and need to be set up in a proper way,” she said.

“It’s for me, 100%, clear that our own agency has to be fully complying to EU [law] and fundamental rights.

“They also have to be able to prove that in an efficient way and to have proper routines for reporting in place to make sure that if officers on Frontex missions have seen or been aware of illegal things going on there have to be proper systems to report that.”

Last year Frontex, which has a €5.6bn (£4.7bn) budget for the next seven years, was given a mandate to create a 10,000-strong armed force to be deployed at the EU’s external borders as a response to the migration crisis. In recent days, the agency unveiled a new uniform for its guards.



Frontex police and Spanish civil guards on a patrol vessel at Malaga port after the interception of a dinghy carrying Algerian migrants. Photograph: Jesus Merida/SIPA/PA Images

Frontex’s executive director has strongly rejected allegations about the agency’s operational conduct during repeated EU parliamentary scrutiny hearings.

Leggeri has blamed delays in establishing a robust internal monitoring mechanism, including the recruitment of 40 rights experts, on ineffective bureaucracy from within the commission itself.

In Pariat’s letter, which has been shared with the parliament’s committee on civil liberties, justice and home affairs, she said there had been sufficient

time and resources available to Leggeri to fulfil his obligations. “The commission has consistently and swiftly provided all necessary guidance in order to allow the agency to reach that objective,” she wrote.

Sophie in’t Veld, an MEP from the liberal Renew Europe group, said there were clear flaws in the agency’s structure. “The system is a mess, you can’t handle a body like this when you have 10,000 armed people at your disposal,” she said.

Veld told the Guardian that “answers are expected” and if they are not provided then, “inevitably, the discussion will have to be about the director’s position itself”.

A Frontex spokesperson said: “Unfortunately, some misunderstandings in such demanding times and online discussions are unavoidable. We regret any that might have occurred and look forward to continued collaboration to together keep our borders safe with the essential participation of the standing corps, fully respecting fundamental rights.

“EU commission vice-president Margaritis Schinas and commissioner Ylva Johansson have expressed confidence in Mr Leggeri at many occasions in recent months. The Frontex Management Board, which represents the border authorities of member states, has not raised any objections to his leadership. Mr Leggeri has no plans to resign and remains determined to lead the agency in these challenging times.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jan/19/eu-border-force-head-fabrice-leggeri-faces-calls-to-quit-over-allegations-he-misled-mebs>

Banking

More than a third of UK shoppers blocked from paying with cash in Covid-19 crisis

Action needed to protect nearly 10 million consumers reliant on cash network, says Which?

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Which? said shoppers were most likely to be refused cash payments when they bought groceries. Photograph: John Keeble/Getty Images

Which? said shoppers were most likely to be refused cash payments when they bought groceries. Photograph: John Keeble/Getty Images

Kalyeena Makortoff Banking correspondent

[@kalyeena](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

More than a third of shoppers have been blocked from paying with cash since the start of the Covid crisis, prompting calls for urgent action to protect the millions who rely on the UK's "critically endangered" cash network.

The consumer group Which? said mixed messages about the safety of cash was partly to blame. The Bank of England has since clarified that "any risk from handling cash should be low", especially when compared with touching shopping baskets, self-checkout screens or products in stores.

About 34% of shoppers surveyed by Which? said they had been turned away on at least one occasion when they tried to pay with cash since the first Covid lockdown. Shoppers were most likely to be refused cash payments when they bought groceries, which accounted for 28% of incidents, though pubs and restaurants accounted for 24% of cases. About 21% of cases were linked to consumers trying to buy cleaning products, which have become even more essential since the outbreak.

Which? wants the government to track the number of businesses that have scrapped cash over the past year, warning that the trend could undermine the Treasury's efforts to [keep cash from disappearing](#).

Its survey suggests 10 million people across the UK – including elderly and vulnerable consumers – rely on cash and would struggle without it.

Natalie Ceeney, the chair of the Access to Cash Review, said: "This is cause for concern. The figures show that it's not simply the odd coffee shop going cashless, but this is creeping into the wider economy."

Last year, the Treasury said it was considering changing rules that would allow shops to [offer cashback without a purchase](#) and would put the Financial Conduct Authority in charge of overseeing the UK's cash system.

However, there are growing concerns that the government has failed to act quickly enough, and that its efforts could be undermined by the falling number of businesses accepting cash.

The Which? money editor, Jenny Ross, said the government "must urgently make the FCA responsible for tracking cash acceptance levels. Failure to do

so will see the cash network crumble and leave millions of people abandoned.”

In one case found by Which?, James Boswell, a diabetic, was urgently trying to find food when his blood sugar levels dropped after being stuck in traffic on the M25. However, Boswell was turned away at both Nando’s and El Mexicana restaurants when he was only able to offer cash, despite explaining his situation.

A Nando’s spokesperson said the chain was only accepting app-based payment because of Covid safety measures, but apologised and said an exception should have been made in Boswell’s case. El Mexicana said it would reintroduce cash “when we think it’s appropriate”.

The Age UK charity director, Caroline Abrahams, said cash was essential for millions of older people who may need to pay back carers who did their shopping, or use it as a backup if they were not online.

“During these uncertain and worrying times, these are the people who need continuing access to a convenient and affordable payment method they can trust,” she said.

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“We are now hurtling towards a cashless society without enough consideration for the many people who will be left behind.”

Ceeney said individual businesses were not solely to blame and many were going cashless because local bank branch closures made it harder to deposit cash.

“The government needs to urgently legislate to protect the viability of cash – as it promised to do so last year,” she said. “Time is running out.”

The Treasury said: “We are working closely with the financial regulators to monitor the risks around cash through the pandemic. The government is already looking at cash access issues – including cash acceptance – and we’ll set out the next steps in that process in due course.”

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[Labour](#)

Lawyers for Corbyn accuse Starmer of 'disingenuous' attack

High court hears claim of ‘procedural unfairness’ over former leader’s suspension from Labour party



Jeremy Corbyn is fighting a legal battle with Labour over his suspension from the parliamentary party. Photograph: Hollie Adams/PA

Jeremy Corbyn is fighting a legal battle with Labour over his suspension from the parliamentary party. Photograph: Hollie Adams/PA

[Matthew Weaver](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 15.30 EST

Lawyers for [Jeremy Corbyn](#) have accused the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, of making “inflammatory and disingenuous” attacks on his predecessor following a row over the party’s handling of antisemitism.

At a high court hearing on Monday, Corbyn’s lawyers said documents would help prove there was a deal with Starmer’s office to readmit him to the party,

and Corbyn's suspension "went behind an agreement to reinstate" him to [Labour](#) "at all levels".

Corbyn's barrister, Christopher Jacobs, told the hearing: "The disclosure will enable my client to plead that there was procedural unfairness, and breach of a duty to act in good faith."

He said Corbyn's treatment by the party had been "grossly unfair".

[Corbyn row illustrates flaws of Labour's current disciplinary process](#)
[Read more](#)

Corbyn was initially suspended from Labour in October, when he said the scale of antisemitism in the party [had been "dramatically overstated"](#), in the wake of a [damning report by the equalities watchdog](#).

In November Corbyn was readmitted by the national executive committee, but Starmer ordered the [Labour whip be withheld](#) until he apologised. Corbyn has not done so, but did [issue a clarifying statement](#) saying it was not his intention to "tolerate antisemitism or belittle concerns about it".

In court, Jacobs accused Starmer of "resiling from a settled agreement, and going behind a final decision of the NEC". He cited a speech Starmer gave to the Jewish Labour Movement conference on 29 November, in which he said Corbyn's reaction to the watchdog's report was "as bad as you could get".

Jacobs said: "We say that is an inflammatory statement and is disingenuous because of the NEC outcome."

[Antisemitism in the Labour party was real and it must never be allowed to return | Margaret Hodge](#)

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Jacobs also said there was an "inference" from media remarks made by the Labour MP [Margaret Hodge](#) that she agreed to stay a member of the party only if Corbyn was suspended. Only the party minutes and copies of any emails from Hodge to Starmer's office would prove whether such a deal had been made, Jacobs said. "We need the records."

The Labour party's barrister, Rachel Crasnow QC, dismissed the application, saying the matter was a "straightforward contractual dispute" that did not require pre-release of any documents. Crasnow also disputed there had been any agreement to readmit Corbyn to the party while suspending the whip.

Crasnow argued in written submissions that Corbyn's "purpose of obtaining early disclosure from the party is to advance a political, rather than a legal, position".

The judge, Lisa Sullivan, said she would give her ruling on Corbyn's application "as soon as I can".

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/18/lawyers-for-jeremy-corbyn-accuse-starmer-of-inflammatory-and-disingenuous-attacks>

Universal credit

Ministers consider climbdown over ending universal credit boost

Potential move comes amid pressure from a series of Tory MPs to extend the £20-a-week uplift

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Welfare minister Will Quince said a decision would be made closer to the 3 March budget because of the highly uncertain economic outlook.
Photograph: PA

Welfare minister Will Quince said a decision would be made closer to the 3 March budget because of the highly uncertain economic outlook.
Photograph: PA

[Jessica Elgot](#) and [Peter Walker](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 15.29 EST

The Treasury is considering a partial climbdown over plans to end the boost to universal credit amid pressure from the work and pensions secretary, [Thérèse Coffey](#), and after six Conservative MPs defied a call to abstain on a non-binding vote in the Commons.

Boris Johnson also hinted at a rethink over the £20-a-week uplift, which is due to end in April, saying the government wanted to ensure “people don’t suffer as a result of the economic consequences of the pandemic”.

The welfare minister, Will Quince, said a decision would be made closer to the 3 March budget because of the uncertain economic outlook. But the Institute for Fiscal Studies thinktank said the government must make the decision much sooner.

“They ought to resolve the uncertainty one way or another as soon as possible,” the IFS said, noting that £20 a week represents 13% of an average recipient’s UC entitlement, or as high as 21% for some. “A family currently deciding where they can afford to rent, for example, surely ought to know what their benefit entitlement will be in three months’ time,” its latest report said.

Labour’s non-binding motion pressing the government to maintain the increase was approved by 278 votes to zero, after Johnson earlier ordered his MPs to abstain on the “stunt”.

While much of the pre-debate coverage had centred on dissent among northern Tory MPs from the 2019 intake, none of these were among the six who did vote for the Labour measure.

They were Stephen Crabb, the former work and pensions secretary, Robert Halfon, who chairs the education select committee, Jason McCartney, Anne-Marie Morris, Matthew Offord and Peter Aldous. None represent northern or Midlands seats.

Rishi Sunak, the chancellor, is understood to be reticent to make the uplift permanent, which Treasury sources said would cost £6bn a year.

Coffey, who met Sunak last week, is understood to be keen to find a compromise to stop the cut, and the Treasury is considering a range of options as a potential sweetener for Conservative MPs which stop short of extending the uplift.

[Scrap benefits cut to stop millions falling into poverty, Boris Johnson told](#)
[Read more](#)

One Tory source said MPs had been badly burnt by the rows over free school meals, including cabinet ministers who blamed Sunak for holding back extra funding, and they did not want to see a repeat of public outcry.

Options being considered by the Treasury include a temporary extension of the £20-a-week uplift for six months, though there are concerns that any extension would prolong calls for the rise to be made permanent.

Another reported option under consideration is a one-off lump sum of £500 to all UC claimants, a significantly cheaper policy than extending the uplift – costing about £3bn, according to the IFS.

Quince hinted at the climbdown during a Labour opposition day debate on the uplift on Monday, saying the government needed to wait to see the state of the economy closer to the budget.

“The reality is we simply do not know what the landscape will look like and that is why it’s right that we wait for more clarity on the national economic and social picture before assessing the best way to support low-income families moving forward,” he said.

Johnson faced open dissent from a series of Tory MPs, including the Northern Research Group which represents 65 backbenchers, many from the 2019 intake in former Labour seats.

Simon Fell, MP for Barrow and Furness, said he stood with colleagues from the group “in saying that now is not the time to consider any reduction in the uplift in UC. This uplift was brought in to help people with the extreme challenges of the pandemic, and these challenges haven’t passed.”

Stephen Crabb, the former work and pensions secretary, said the jobs market was “a horrible place right now for many people”. “I have no qualms about going out and defending very difficult decisions when they’re based on a clear plan with clear justifications,” he told the Commons. “But the truth is I don’t believe we have such a plan.”

Opening the UC debate for Labour, Jonathan Reynolds, the shadow work and pensions secretary, said he was “not here today to claim that Conservative MPs are heartless, or lack compassion” but removing UC uplift “isn’t just morally unjustifiable, it’s economically incompetent”.

He said: “This £20 a week isn’t saved by families. It’s spent. No one can reasonably argue that the pandemic and the unemployment crisis will be over by April this year. And whatever protestations we hear, and however frankly people vote today, I know there are plenty on the benches opposite who agree with this case.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/ministers-consider-climbing-down-over-ending-universal-credit-boost>

IPOs

Moonpig confirms stock market flotation for up to £1.2bn

Demand has surged for retailer's personalised cards during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Trading in Moonpig's shares is expected to start in February. Photograph: M4OS Photos/Alamy

Trading in Moonpig's shares is expected to start in February. Photograph: M4OS Photos/Alamy

[Julia Kollewe](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 06.12 EST

The online greeting card and gifts retailer Moonpig has outlined plans for a £1.2bn float on the London Stock Exchange, after [demand surged for its personalised products](#) during the coronavirus pandemic.

Announcing new details of the planned initial public offering, Moonpig, which has been owned by the private equity firm Exponent since 2016, said it would float at least a quarter of the company.

The US firms BlackRock and Dragoneer Global Fund have agreed to buy £130m of the shares, which are expected to start trading next month.

The retailer is chaired by Kate Swann, the former chief executive of [WH Smith](#) who is expected to make £7m from the float. Nickyl Raithatha, the Moonpig chief executive, is in line for £11m and the finance director, Andy MacKinnon, will also benefit, with £2m.

Moonpig is expected to publish its prospectus next week with further details. Its 450 employees will also be given shares.

[The decision to float comes after a stellar year](#) for the company, which sells cards that can be personalised as well as a range of gifts including flowers, prosecco, gin, beer and chocolate. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a boom in sales, as Moonpig won 1 million new customers in the first eight weeks of the first national lockdown in the spring.

It is the UK's biggest online greeting card retailer with more than 12 million customers, as [multiple lockdowns](#) forced high street rivals such as Clintons to shut their doors. Moonpig also trades in the Netherlands, under the name Greetz, which means greetings in Dutch.

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The firm delivered 46m cards and 7m gifts and flowers in the 12 months to October, and it deals with up to 300,000 orders a day, one third of which come via its app. Moonpig made £156m in sales in the six months to the end of October, compared with £173m for the entire previous year.

Raithatha said: “As leaders of a market undergoing an accelerating shift online, we’re delighted to bring Moonpig Group to the public market. Our data-powered technology platform makes it incredibly easy for our customers to create more special moments for the people they care about.”

Moonpig was founded two decades ago by Nick Jenkins, a former commodities trader at Glencore and Dragon's Den star, who named the firm after his schoolboy nickname. He made £42m in 2011 from the sale of the business to the online photo printing company Photobox, which was subsequently bought by the private equity firms Electra and Exponent.

Photobox and Moonpig were split into separate businesses in 2019.

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[France](#)

Michelin awards star to vegan restaurant for the first time in France

Restaurant ONA in the city of Ares rewarded after initially struggling to get funding to open its doors



Claire Vallée of ONA vegan restaurant in Ares, which has been awarded a Michelin star. Photograph: Maxime Gautier

Claire Vallée of ONA vegan restaurant in Ares, which has been awarded a Michelin star. Photograph: Maxime Gautier

Agence France-Presse

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.43 EST

A vegan restaurant in south-west [France](#) has won a Michelin star, the first for an establishment serving only animal-free products in [France](#).

Claire Vallée runs the restaurant ONA – which stands for *Origine Non Animale* – in the city of Ares, near Bordeaux, which she launched in 2016 thanks to crowdfunding from supporters and a loan from a green bank.

“It felt like I got hit by a train,” Vallée told AFP about the moment she received a call from the Guide Michelin informing her of its decision.

In addition to Monday’s award of the classic star, Vallée also won a green star, which Michelin introduced last year to reward establishments with a strong record for ethical practices.

ONA is “the first vegan restaurant in France to win a star”, a Guide Michelin spokeswoman told AFP.

[The wurst is over: why Germany now loves to go vegetarian](#)
[Read more](#)

Vallée offered seven dishes on her gourmet menu before she had to close ONA because of Covid-19 restrictions. Her favourite combinations involve pine, boletus mushroom and sake, or celery, tonka and amber ale.

Traditional French banks gave the young chef short shrift when she came to them looking for a loan to get started. “They said the outlook for veganism and plant-based food was too uncertain,” she said. The chosen location for her restaurant in the Arcachon basin on the Atlantic coast was also not considered promising enough.

Vallée said she held no grudge: “Everybody does their job.”

Vallée went on to secure financing through crowdfunding, without the need for collateral, and through La Nef, a bank that specialises in lending to projects it considers ethical. “This goes to show that nothing is impossible,” she said.

Vallée admitted to having wondered along the way “whether we were good enough because vegetable-based cooking is difficult and innovative”.

But, she added: “The most important thing is to enjoy doing this.”

Although now considered a pioneer for vegan cuisine in France, Vallée said she simply followed in the footsteps of others, singling out the late Jean-Christian Jury, who ran the Mano Verde restaurant in Berlin.

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Coronavirus

Global Covid report: Biden camp rejects Trump changes to travel restrictions

Incoming US administration criticises move to remove entry bans as independent panel criticises WHO for not declaring emergency until 30 January

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A makeshift Intensive care unit in February 2020 at the Red Cross hospital in Wuhan where many patients were in critical condition. Photograph: Gerry Yin/The Guardian

A makeshift Intensive care unit in February 2020 at the Red Cross hospital in Wuhan where many patients were in critical condition. Photograph: Gerry Yin/The Guardian

[Helen Sullivan and agencies](#)

[@helenrsullivan](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 21.47 EST

The Trump and Biden camps have clashed over future Covid travel restrictions with less than two days to go before the handover of power in Washington. It comes as an [independent panel](#) said Chinese officials could have applied public health measures more forcefully a year ago, and criticised the World Health Organization (WHO) for delays in declaring an international emergency.

In the US, a political row is brewing after Donald Trump announced he would rescind Covid entry bans on most non-US citizens arriving from Brazil and much of Europe, including the UK, effective 26 January, two officials briefed on the matter told Reuters.

The restrictions are set to end on the same day that new Covid-19 test requirements take effect for all international visitors.

But a spokesperson for Joe Biden, who will be inaugurated as the new US president on Wednesday, said the new administration “does not intend to lift these restrictions on 1/26”. “In fact,” [wrote Jen Psaki](#) on Twitter, “we plan to strengthen public health measures around international travel in order to further mitigate the spread of Covid-19.”

Psaki added: “With the pandemic worsening, and more contagious variants emerging around the world, this is not the time to be lifting restrictions on international travel.”

The dispute followed the release of an interim report by experts reviewing the global handling of the pandemic, led by former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark and former Liberian president [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#),

Their report – which called for reforms to the Geneva-based UN agency – was published hours after the WHO’s top emergency expert, Mike Ryan, said global deaths from Covid were expected to top 100,000 per week “very soon”.

“What is clear to the panel is that public health measures could have been applied more forcefully by local and national health authorities in **China** in January,” the report said, referring to the initial outbreak of the disease in the central city of Wuhan, in Hubei province.

As evidence emerged of human-to-human transmission, “in far too many countries, this signal was ignored”, it added.

[WHO: just 25 Covid vaccine doses administered in low-income countries](#)
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Specifically, it questioned why the WHO’s emergency committee did not meet until the third week of January and did not declare an international emergency until its second meeting, on 30 January.

“Although the term pandemic is neither used nor defined in the international health regulations (2005), its use does serve to focus attention on the gravity of a health event. It was not until 11 March that WHO used the term,” the report said.

“The global pandemic alert system is not fit for purpose,” it said. “The [World Health Organization](#) has been underpowered to do the job.”

The United States also called on China on Monday to allow the WHO’s expert team of investigators, who are in China to study the origins of the pandemic, to interview “care givers, former patients and lab workers” in the central city of Wuhan.

The team of WHO-led independent experts is holding teleconferences with Chinese counterparts during a two-week quarantine before starting work on the ground.

Garrett Grigsby of the Department of [Health](#) and Human Services, who heads the US delegation, said China should share all scientific studies of animal, human and environmental samples taken from a market in Wuhan, where the SARS-CoV-2 virus is believed to have emerged in late 2019.

Comparative analysis of such genetic data would help to “look for overlap and potential sources” of the outbreak that sparked the pandemic, he told the WHO’s executive board. “We have a solemn duty to ensure that this critical investigation is credible and is conducted objectively and transparently,” said Grigsby, who also referred to virus variants found in Britain, South Africa and Brazil.

Sun Yang, the director general of the health emergency response office of China’s National Health Commission, told the board: “The virus origin studies are of a scientific nature. It needs coordination, cooperation. We must stop any political pressure.”

Australia’s delegation also called for the WHO team to have access to “relevant data, information and key locations”.

The WHO’s Ryan told reporters last Friday there would be “no guarantees of answers” regarding the pandemic’s origins. “It is a difficult task to fully establish the origins and sometimes it can take two or three or four attempts to be able to do that in different settings.”

Under Trump, the US has accused the WHO of being “China-centric”, which the agency denies. European countries led by France and Germany have pushed to address the WHO’s shortcomings on funding, governance and legal powers.

The panel called for a “global reset” and said it would make recommendations in a final report to health ministers from the WHO’s 194 member states in May.

The director general of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, announced in July that the UN body was setting up the Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response to review its conduct and that of governments.

At the time, Tedros hailed Clark and Johnson Sirleaf as “strong minded and independent leaders”.

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Hunger

Landlocked Lesotho faces food crisis amid Covid border closures

Food price increases and economic impact of lockdowns have left a quarter of the kingdom's population reliant on food aid, UN warns

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Reduced incomes have meant people are unable to buy fertiliser or hire workers, according to the FAO. Photograph: Kathleen McCarthy/WFP

Reduced incomes have meant people are unable to buy fertiliser or hire workers, according to the FAO. Photograph: Kathleen McCarthy/WFP

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Silence Charumbira in Maseru

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.15 EST

Almost a quarter of Lesotho's population will require food aid between January and March as a result of Covid-19 restrictions, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned.

More than 580,000 people out of a population of 2.2 million are estimated to be food insecure, despite predictions of normal to above average rains this year and the potential for above average cereal production.

The [FAO said](#) Covid-19 had reduced household incomes, harming people's ability to buy fertiliser or to hire workers, which was "likely to limit the potential increases in yields".

The situation in Lesotho has been exacerbated by extended lockdowns in neighbouring South [Africa](#) to curb the spread of the virus, which the agency said would prolong high levels of unemployment and loss of income.

['We can't cope': Lesotho faces Covid-19 disaster after quarantine failures](#)

[Read more](#)

The number of people requiring food assistance this year is about 35% higher than the number between October 2019 and March 2020, said the FAO.

In 2019, the UN appealed for \$34 million (£25 million) to provide food aid for half a million people until May last year, following poor rains over two consecutive seasons. It warned that thousands of people were close to famine.

Lesotho imports the bulk of its goods and services from South Africa and has been feeling the effects of tougher lockdown restrictions imposed by President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this month.

South Africa has now surpassed 1.3 million cases of Covid-19 and has consistently recorded more than 10,000 new daily cases since 1 January. Ramaphosa has closed all land borders until 15 February and imposed restrictions on public gatherings.

“The increase in the prevalence and severity of food insecurity has been predominantly driven by the effects of the lockdown measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic,” said the FAO.

“The restrictions on the movement of people and the closure of non-essential industries resulted in the loss of jobs and incomes, reducing people’s capacity to access adequate diets. The restrictions affected the workforce within the country, but also migrant workers in South Africa.”



Pontseng in South Africa, close to the Lesotho border. Higher yield expected from previously drought-stricken land in the region has been hampered by the pandemic. Photograph: Malehloa Letsie/WFP

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (Fews Net) had also noted that below average incomes were being recorded in Lesotho due to Covid-19 restrictions and poor 2020 harvests, compounded by above-average staple food prices.

In its December report, [Fews Net](#) said some areas of the country were at crisis hunger levels because of “low food access driven by depleted own-produced food stocks, below-average incomes, and slightly above average staple food prices”.

It said: “Households are trying to mitigate existing food consumption gaps through market food purchases from earned income. Agricultural labour opportunities are seasonally increasing; however, wages are below average, and market food purchases are not expected to fully cover food consumption gaps.”

According to Fews Net, an estimated 93,000 migrant workers returned home to Lesotho at the beginning of lockdowns in South Africa last March. This

resulted in a significant reduction in remittances, an essential source of income for a large proportion of people in Lesotho.

Although some people started returning to South Africa for work at the beginning of October, Fewsnet said labour migration was still below average as both countries' economies had not yet recovered from the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns. The requirement to produce a negative Covid-19 test at the border is also a limitation.

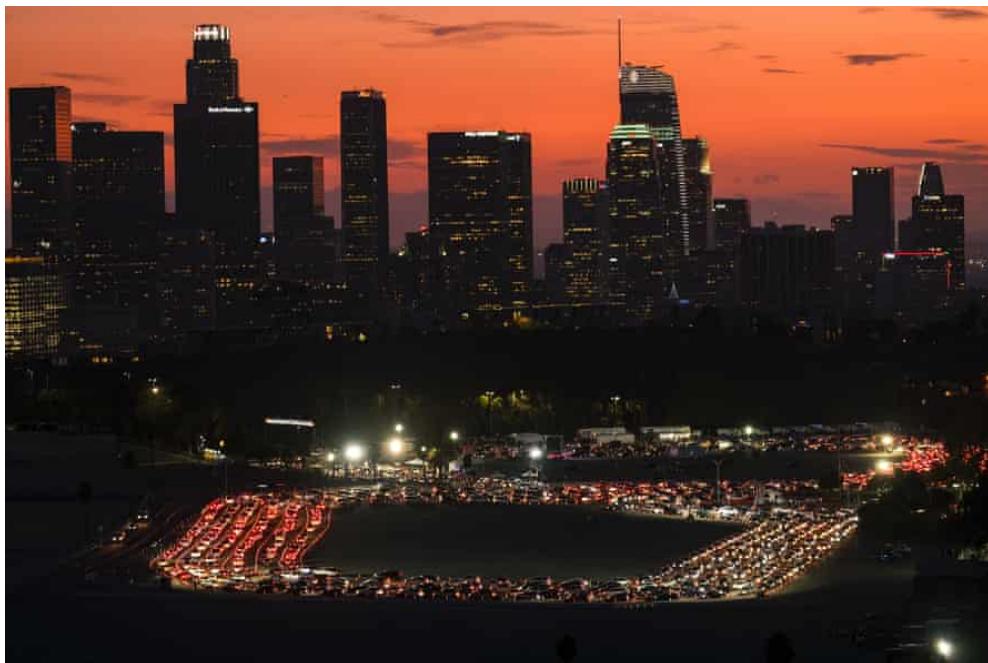
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California

California is first state to pass 3m Covid cases

Figure arrived with stunning speed as southern and central California grapple with brutal outbreaks



Motorists wait in lines to take a coronavirus test in a parking lot at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. Photograph: Ringo HW Chiu/AP

Motorists wait in lines to take a coronavirus test in a parking lot at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. Photograph: Ringo HW Chiu/AP

Guardian staff and agencies

Tue 19 Jan 2021 13.45 EST

California has become the first state to record more than 3m coronavirus infections, as it grapples with an unprecedented surge of cases that has left hospitals overwhelmed.

That remarkable figure, which comes from Johns Hopkins University, was not entirely unexpected for the nation's most populous state – but the speed at which it arrived has been stunning.

The first coronavirus case in California, home to 40 million people, was confirmed on 25 January 2020. It took 292 days to get to 1m infections, on 11 November, and then just 44 days to hit 2m, a milestone reached on 24 December. The state hit 3m just weeks later.

['The horror stories are countless': inside the LA hospital at the center of the Covid crisis](#)

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The count is also far ahead of other large states, such as Texas, with more than 2m, and Florida, which has topped 1.5m.

So far more than 33,600 Californians have died due to Covid-19.

Southern and central California have been the hardest hit. In Los Angeles county, the nation's most populous and the current center of the state's pandemic, scientists estimate that one in three residents [have been infected](#) with Covid-19 at some point since the beginning of the pandemic.

Air quality regulators have recently [lifted the limits](#) on the number of cremations that can be performed in Los Angeles county, citing a death rate that is more than double the pre-pandemic norm and an unmanageable backlog of dead bodies.

On average, California has seen about 500 deaths and 40,000 new cases daily for the past two weeks. Although hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions remained on a slight downward trend, officials have warned that could reverse when the full impact from transmissions during Christmas and New Year's Eve gatherings is felt.



Funeral workers load the casket of a person who died after contracting Covid-19 into a hearse at East County mortuary in El Cajon, California.
Photograph: Mario Tama/Getty Images

“As case numbers continue to rise in California, the total number of individuals who will have serious outcomes will also increase,” the state health department said in a statement on Monday.

Adding to concerns, California is experiencing new, possibly more transmissible forms of Covid-19.

The state health department announced on Sunday that a new variant of the virus, dubbed L452R, was increasingly showing up in genetic sequencing of Covid-19 test samples from several counties.

Health officials said it was linked to a Christmastime outbreak at Kaiser Permanente San Jose that infected at least 89 staff members and patients, killing a receptionist. The outbreak has been blamed on an employee who visited the hospital emergency room wearing an air-powered [inflatable Christmas tree costume](#).

The variant is different from another mutation, B117, that was first reported in the United Kingdom and appears to spread much more easily, although it

does not appear to make people sicker. The UK variant has also been detected in California.

Meanwhile, California officials are under pressure to expedite the state's vaccine distribution program, which got off to a worryingly slow start. So far the state has vaccinated fewer than 2,500 people per 100,000 residents, a rate that falls well below the national average, according to federal data.

The state has converted Disneyland, fairgrounds and sports stadiums into [mass vaccination sites](#) in an effort to speed things up, as well as opening the first round of vaccines to anyone over the age of 65.

Many of the state's residents remain under strict lockdown rules, which have closed schools, shut numerous businesses, and limited travel and gatherings. The latest restrictions are tied to hospital ICU capacity, which has rapidly dwindled.

In southern California and the San Joaquin Valley regions, ICU availability [is currently](#) 0%. Healthcare workers inside an overwhelmed Los Angeles hospital [recently told the Guardian](#) they had been forced to erect triage tents, put beds inside a gift shop, and treat patients in the waiting room in order to accommodate the surge.

“The horror stories are countless,” Dr Jason Prasso, an ICU doctor, told the *Guardian*.

Meanwhile in the north, more than 50 wine country-based restaurants and wineries have filed a lawsuit against Gavin Newsom, California's governor, arguing that the state's restrictions on outdoor dining violate the California constitution's equal protection clause and due process. They believe that even if they survive the pandemic, their communities will not be able to pull through economically.

“We're projected to have lost more than \$3.5m in gross revenue last year,” Anthony Cognetti, chef and founder of Tre Posti in St Helena, said in a statement. “The latest shutdowns have forced us to lay off 95 valuable staff members, and it's devastating to consider what this has meant for them and

their families. If we make it through the dining ban, we fear there won't be enough local industry workers left to rebuild our staff."

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Doctor's ordersCoronavirus

My GP practice vaccinated 900 patients in a day – but it's only the start

Zara Aziz

Vaccinating all adults against Covid by September will require unprecedented levels of coordination, staffing and round-the-clock clinics

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A woman gets the first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

A woman gets the first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images
Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.30 EST

We started our practice Covid-19 vaccination programme in Bristol last weekend. There had been weeks of heightened anticipation and build-up where we had all been abuzz and desperate to start. Many patients contacted

us, asking about their [cohort groups](#) and likely timelines for vaccination. We have no control over this and could only tell the patients to wait until contacted.

Our practice was ready to go for the week of 14 December when [wave one practices started vaccinations](#). But our deliveries were stood down that week and then again a few weeks later. We had put our case to NHS England, like other practices in the country that had opted to vaccinate, giving information on our readiness to go, and cohort numbers for the over-80s and care homes. Logistical factors for delivery of the vaccine were cited as the main hurdle but it has been incredibly frustrating.

Finally we received confirmation last week that we could start. We contacted all our 600 over-80s cohort to book them in for their first inoculation with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. At the start of the same week [Ashton Gate mass vaccination centre](#) had opened in Bristol and they were also contacting the over-80s, which could potentially create confusion. Most of our patients chose to book with the practice, citing geography and familiarity.

[When and how will I get a Covid vaccine in the UK?](#)
[Read more](#)

The night before the vaccinations I couldn't sleep and was running through the whole operation in my head. There had been huge amounts of behind the scenes preparation. We had also completed Covid-19 vaccination learning modules a few weeks earlier and I went through these again and our practice video simulation detailing patient flow and clinical room usage. I was going to be one of two [GPs](#) involved in coordinating, troubleshooting and overseeing how vaccines were made up and administered.

The Pfizer vaccine comes thawed, with a five-day window to use it in, enabling us to store it in standard fridges. We will be using this for all patients who can come to the surgery. We expect to receive the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine this week and initially plan to use it for our housebound patients until we have enough stock to be able to also use it in the surgery, alongside the Pfizer vaccine.



Bristol's Ashton Gate stadium has been turned into a Covid-19 mass vaccination centre Photograph: Matthew Horwood/Getty Images

We had excellent turnout with most of those who had been invited arriving for a steady stream of vaccinations. But there were no long queues and the weather was kind to us. We vaccinated more than 80 patients an hour and nearly 900 patients in one day. We were also able to make full use of each vaccine vial with no wastage. There has been a big drive to ensure each vial, which contains enough vaccine to make up six doses of 0.3ml each, is utilised to get the full number of doses from it. So some patients and healthcare staff are kept on standby to come in at short notice to be vaccinated. I was vaccinated by a neighbouring practice three weeks ago, when they had some doses left over, which they offered to frontline health staff.

And so it was that at the end of our first day of vaccinations we had five doses left in the last vaccine vial. Staff were exhausted – many had worked 11 hours – but there was a big push and determination to call in more patients to use up all the vaccine, down to the last 0.3ml. We ended up ringing a few local health and social care staff and a 79-year-old man who had been on a backup list. Just as it had been an emotional moment when the first vaccine of the day had been given, so it was that night when the last one

was administered to him with all of us watching, too moved to speak. It had been a good day. This week we will do it all over again.

[First fruits of vaccine rollout 'should be seen in weeks'](#)

[Read more](#)

The same day, nearly 200 miles away, my 78-year-old father was having his Covid-19 vaccination in a [hub in Ramsbottom](#), near Bury. He had been invited the day before and had rung me at work to tell me that his turn had come. He was so excited he could not speak. After his vaccination he sent me a text to say it had all gone smoothly and that he had worn a suit for the occasion. That brought tears to my eyes. My parents, who have always been independent, have been strictly shielding since March, as my father is on immunosuppressive medication. Being vaccinated means not just staying safe from Covid-19, but also a chance to be able to see their loved ones, especially the grandchildren, something that they have not been able to do for nearly a year.

So far we are on track to vaccinate the first four priority groups by mid-February, but this hinges on smooth delivery of vaccine stock. We hope to start working down each of the four groups from this week and administer the second doses over the next eight to 12 weeks.

The government's target to [vaccinate all adults](#) by September is ambitious. To succeed, it will require unprecedented levels of coordination, staffing and round-the-clock clinics. Our practice is up for the challenge, but there's a long way to go before we can return to any sort of normality. Until then, we cannot let down our guard until Covid-19 is truly under control.

- Zara Aziz is a GP partner in Bristol

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/19/my-gp-practice-vaccinated-900-patients-day-covid-adults-september>

Jonathan Sumption

Experts unconvinced by Lord Sumption's lockdown ethics

Critics of retired supreme court justice say QALYs measure not intended for public health debate



Lord Sumption's argument hinges on quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs), a measure often used in medical ethics to help with decision-making on treatment. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

Lord Sumption's argument hinges on quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs), a measure often used in medical ethics to help with decision-making on treatment. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer



Archie Bland

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Seven years before Lord Sumption found himself at the centre of a media storm over his apparent suggestion that the life of a woman with stage 4 cancer was “less valuable”, the former supreme court justice wrote a judgment that seemed to take a very different view.

In 2014, addressing the Tony Nicklinson case in [a decision](#) which [upheld a ban](#) on doctors helping patients to end their lives, he called the sanctity of life a “fundamental moral value”.

“A reverence for human life for its own sake is probably the most fundamental of all human social values,” he went on, before quoting another judgment approvingly: “In a case like this we should not try to analyse the rationality of such feelings. What matters is that, in one form or another, they form part of almost everyone’s intuitive values.”

Fast forward to 2021 and Sumption – a prominent critic of coronavirus lockdowns – was provoking outrage on Sunday by telling the BBC’s The Big Questions that he [did not accept that “all lives are of equal value”](#).

When Deborah James, presenter of the You, Me & the Big C podcast, said “I’m the person who you say their life is not valuable”, he interrupted with a

reply that he later said was the result of a misunderstanding: “I didn’t say it was not valuable, I said it was less valuable.”

To Sumption, the apparent difference in his stance is explained by the difference in context. He said on Monday: “I certainly didn’t say, and don’t think, that I regard the sanctity of life as an absolute value that prevails over absolutely everything else, always.”

Not everyone is convinced.

John Coggon, a professor in law at Bristol University’s Centre for [Health, Law, and Society](#) who has written on the ethics of public health responses to the pandemic, views the difference as evidence that Sumption’s thinking may be coloured by his opposition to lockdowns in general.

“He is articulating a view that seems to go against moral principles that he really sought to propagate quite forcefully as a judge, which I find slightly startling, and somewhat ironic,” he said. “[Sumption has been] inconsistent in his view about looking at inherent value in all human life. He seems to have gone a bit off-piste here, and I suspect that has something to do with his broader view of lockdowns in any form.”

Whether or not the two positions can be reconciled, the difference between them illustrates the complex moral calculus facing anyone weighing the benefit of a lockdown – and, perhaps, why the retired supreme court justice’s critics are so angry.

His views hinge on the idea that “quality-adjusted life-years” (QALYs), a measure often used in medical ethics to help with decision-making on treatment, are a helpful way to think about the effects of lockdown.

Before his remarks about James, Sumption said: “I don’t accept that all lives are of equal value. My children’s and my grandchildren’s life is worth much more than mine because they’ve got a lot more of it ahead. The whole concept of quality life years ahead is absolutely fundamental if one’s going to look at the value of these things.”

But while QALYs are used to guide difficult decisions on treatment for people at the end of their lives, experts rarely refer to them in the debate on universal public-health measures, which require the balancing of complicated factors like loneliness, education, poverty and health.

Sumption, a supporter of the Recovery campaign which argues that “the consequences of hysteria and rushed legislation can be worse than the virus itself”, told the Guardian: “My observation on QALYs is simply that there is a utilitarian calculus here. If we say to ourselves, are we prepared to tolerate a situation where some of the most basic instincts of humanity are repressed, you cannot simply answer that by saying human lives are sacrosanct.”

He reiterated that he had not intended to refer to James specifically when he said that one life would be “less valuable” than another.

Even discounting the exchange with her personally, though, James told ITV’s Lorraine programme that Sumption’s remarks “ask us to question, ‘Well hang on a moment, where do we come in the pecking order, if we are suddenly rating our life, where might I sit?’ I think, from every perspective, that’s immoral.”

Her friend Lauren Mahon, who co-presents the Big C podcast and was herself diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016, said she had been “really hurt and upset”.

“I’m part of a community [of cancer patients] that is really devastated by this argument,” she said. “It’s so callous to say it’s a matter of health economics. The last months of your life and how you live them, that is one of the most important parts of your life. Quality of life still matters, right to the end. Quality of life isn’t just about whether you can socialise.”

Dr Alexis Paton, chair of the Royal College of Physicians’ Committee on Ethical Issues in Medicine, said that QALYs are “an arbitrary measure we use to make difficult decisions about resource allocation … It is confused to think that if somebody is going to live for a short period of time then it’s not worth helping them.”

In practice, she added, QALYs were usually part of a nuanced discussion about what is best for an individual patient. “Whether they’re useful for public health decisions about lockdowns, I’m really unsure.”

To Coggon, suggesting this is something that could be settled by an objective view of the value of a life signalled a problem plaguing the wider debate. “‘Trust the science’ can tell you what the efficacy of a drug will be, who will benefit most from it … but when you ultimately reach a decision, your values will come into play,” he said.

“People don’t feel that it’s morally offensive to say that, as Lord Sumption said, my children’s lives are worth more than my life … But when you see that writ large, and don’t put yourself at the centre of it, you have a systematic effect, which says we will value these sort of lives less than those sorts of lives.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/jan/19/less-valuable-experts-unconvinced-by-lord-sumptions-lockdown-ethics>

[Science Weekly](#)

[Science](#)

Covid-19: how do you tweak a vaccine? – podcast

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2021.01.19 - Coronavirus uk

- Economy Firms cannot wait until budget for more Covid help, Sunak told
- Business PM: vaccine is UK's best way out of recession
- Travel Holiday bookings surge as Covid vaccinations increase vacation hopes
- Care homes Up to six in 10 residents awaiting jab
- UK Third of England's Covid patients readmitted to hospital

[**Confederation of British Industry \(CBI\)**](#)

Firms cannot wait until budget for more Covid help, Rishi Sunak told

CBI calls for immediate £7.6bn injection from Treasury to help economy through lockdown

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, is due to outline his budget plans on 3 March.
Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, is due to outline his budget plans on 3 March.
Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

[Larry Elliott](#) Economics editor

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The UK's leading employers' organisation has warned [Rishi Sunak](#) that businesses running short of cash and resilience cannot afford to wait six weeks for the budget to secure more financial help from the government.

Tony Danker, the [director-general of the CBI](#), called on the chancellor to extend the furlough scheme, defer VAT payments and resist the temptation to raise business taxes as a way of plugging the UK's record peacetime budget deficit.

[UK supermarkets face more inspections over Covid-19 compliance](#) [Read more](#)

In its budget submission to the chancellor, the CBI called for an immediate £7.6bn injection from the Treasury as part of a £17.9bn package designed to see the economy through lockdown, stimulate investment over the coming year and prepare the UK for the challenges of the coming decade.

“The budget comes at a crucial time for the UK. The government’s support from the very start of this crisis has protected many jobs and livelihoods, and progress on the vaccine rollout brings real cause for optimism,” Danker said.

“But almost a year of disrupted demand and extensive restrictions to company operations is taking its toll. Staff morale has taken a hit. And business resilience has hit a sobering new low.”

The newly appointed head of the CBI said he thought there was a strong chance that the chancellor would respond to the call for:

- A £6bn extension of the furlough scheme – which subsidises the wages of temporarily laid-off workers – beyond its planned end in April to the end of June and further targeted support to protect jobs subsequently.
- Lengthening repayment periods for existing VAT deferrals until June 2021 at the earliest and allow firms to defer VAT bills for the first quarter of 2021 for 12 months.
- An extension of the business rates holiday for at least another three months to those UK firms forced to close under current restrictions and expanding relief to their supply chains.

Danker said firms tended to make plans at the start of the calendar year and were making key calls about jobs, premises and investment now. He said he

thought Sunak would listen to the growing clamour from business. “If you want to have effective policy I don’t think you can wait until 3 March [budget day]. Firms are not going to wait until 3 March before making decisions.”

Sunak and Boris Johnson spoke to 30 business leaders – including Danker – on Monday at the first meeting of the government’s Build Back Better Council, which is part of the effort to speed up the recovery after the pandemic. The chancellor is also setting up a “better regulation committee” to review regulation in Britain now the country is outside the EU, to try to better stimulate growth and attract new investment.

Danker said the CBI was interested in smarter regulation that prompted higher investment but stressed that the immediate priority was to prevent an over-rapid withdrawal of government support that would result in businesses going under.

“Business support needs to go in parallel with the tiering of restrictions. We are not going to have an overnight opening up of the economy, so it would be wrong to end support for business overnight.”

Guardian business email sign-up

Asked to comment on reports that Sunak was planning to announce an increase in corporation tax – currently levied at a main rate of 19% – in the Budget, Danker said: “It would be wrong to raise business taxes when we don’t have a recovery. It’s as simple as that.”

The chancellor has insisted that the government must eventually take steps to reduce its budget deficit – the gap between tax income and government spending – which is on course to reach about £400bn in the current 2020-21 financial year.

Danker said the chancellor should be “hugely cautious”, adding: “The government can’t have enough certainty about the next six months to have a business tax increase in the next year.”

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Economic policy

PM tells business chiefs Covid jab is UK's best way out of recession

Executives from 30 major firms hear about plans for 'green industrial revolution'

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Richard Partington](#) and [Jillian Ambrose](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 16.25 EST Last modified on Mon 18 Jan 2021 16.34 EST



Boris Johnson paid a visit to Oxford Biomedica, where batches of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine are tested, on the day he told business leaders the vaccine was the best way out of the economic crisis. Photograph: Reuters

[Boris Johnson](#) has told business leaders that efficient delivery of the coronavirus vaccine is Britain's best economic recovery tool as he promised a sustainable fightback from the worst recession in 300 years.

The prime minister chaired the first meeting of a new business council designed to coordinate the government's economic response to Covid-19 with leaders from the country's biggest companies.

Aiming to reassure business leaders that the government remained committed to kickstarting the economy as soon as possible, Johnson told the executives from 30 major firms – including GlaxoSmithKline, British Airways and HSBC – that the government was looking ahead to the economic recovery and the business landscape after Brexit.

The prime minister said it was important for the government and businesses to work together to rebuild the virus-stricken economy, and that he would support job creation, upgrade Britain's infrastructure, and launch a “green industrial revolution” to help the country “build back better” from the pandemic.

Despite recent border disruption and intense frustration among business leaders over the government's handling of Brexit, Johnson told the first meeting of the “build back better council” that British industry had opportunities to seize from leaving the EU. Johnson had been [reported in 2018 to have said, “Fuck business”](#) when questioned about the sector's concerns over a potential no-deal departure.

Sources attending the meeting said the government was in “sales mode” in a bid to strengthen relations with company bosses that had become increasingly tattered in recent years. The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, who also attended the meeting, told the leaders that effectively distributing the vaccine was the most important economic policy. Although no “big bang” removal of lockdown restrictions was expected, the chancellor suggested that vaccination would help to build a platform for a strong economic recovery in the second half of the year.

The business secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, the trade secretary, Liz Truss, and the vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, also attended the meeting, which

included representatives from firms from sectors of the economy including finance, energy, technology and hospitality.

Johnson told those present that with the [Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow](#) this November and [G7 summit in Cornwall in June](#), Britain had the potential to develop an influential voice in shaping a green recovery from the pandemic.

However, green groups said there was a telling lack of environmental leadership at the event despite its high-profile billing. Attendees included the chief executives of oil and gas group BP and of Heathrow, Britain's largest airport.

“Boris Johnson’s ‘build back better council’ looks more like a polluters’ club,” said John Sauven, Greenpeace’s executive director. “It’s packed with some of Britain’s most polluting industries and investors, and green leadership is conspicuous by its absence.

“We can’t build back better by relying on the same old industries that are fuelling climate chaos and the destruction of nature. It’s high time the government stopped favouring the usual vested interests and gave its full support to the businesses building a cleaner, healthier, safer future.”

Connor Schwartz, climate lead at Friends of the Earth, said the government should be discussing green policies such as scrapping multi-billion-pound investment in road schemes and boosting investment in green technologies.

“This is a far cry from just two months ago, when the prime minister announced the need for a [green industrial revolution](#),” he said. “Instead of listening to fossil fuel companies and airports, the government should turn their ear to the majority of the public who want climate change prioritised in the economic recovery to coronavirus.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/18/pm-tells-business-chiefs-covid-jab-is-uks-best-way-out-of-recession>

Travel & leisure

Holiday bookings surge as Covid vaccinations increase travel hopes

People high on list for jabs in UK ready to make 2021 and 2022 plans

- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



Abta says it is hearing from members that the over-50s represent a much higher proportion of early bookers than normal. Photograph: Molchanovdmitry/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Abta says it is hearing from members that the over-50s represent a much higher proportion of early bookers than normal. Photograph: Molchanovdmitry/Getty Images/iStockphoto

[Miles Brignall](#) and [Gwyn Topham](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Holiday companies have reported an increase in bookings as the UK's coronavirus vaccine rollout gives people hope that they will soon be able to travel overseas again.

Despite a series of negative travel announcements in recent days, [including the closure of air corridors](#) and words of caution from ministers over foreign holidays, there are signs that those among the first in line for the vaccinations are starting to plan trips, and that consumers are hopeful about taking a break later this year.

The travel association Abta said it was hearing from members that the over-50s represented a much higher proportion of early bookers than normal.

[Matt Hancock cautions against booking holidays abroad](#)
[Read more](#)

Saga, which specialises in holidays for the over-50s, reported rising numbers of bookings for this year and next. Traffic to its bookings website was up by 16% in the first two weeks of this year, compared with the first two weeks of December, while sales made through Saga had doubled over the same period. The interest comes despite the foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, saying it was too early to plan for summer holidays this year because of travel restrictions and Matt Hancock, the health secretary, suggesting on Monday that holidays abroad [may not be a given](#).

Bookings for long-haul trips for 2022 have also surged, suggesting an appetite for “once-in-a-lifetime holidays”, Saga said, while people are booking for longer even for short-haul destinations.

Saga said 70% of short-haul-stay bookings between November 2021 and January 2022 were for 21 nights or longer.

Chris Simmonds, the chief executive of Saga Holidays, said: “Many of our guests are hopeful that they will be able to travel again soon, with the vaccine providing them the optimism they need to start planning ahead.

“Of course, given we cater exclusively for people aged over 50, many of our customers are near the top of the queue for a vaccine, which is giving them the confidence to start thinking about travelling again, as well as returning to other parts of normal life.”

The tour operator Tui said older travellers were making up more of its bookings than usual.

A spokesperson said: “We’re seeing more interest in holidays from an age group that wasn’t coming through before, with the over-50s starting to book, we assume, on the back of the positive vaccine news.

“Since the end of last year, bookings from this group have accounted for 50% of all our web bookings, as customers long for a sunshine break later in summer, in particular in Greece, Turkey or the Balearics.”

It also reported customers booking longer breaks than previously, with many opting for 10, 11 or 14 nights instead of seven. It suggested this was to make up for not having had a holiday in 2020.

The airline [easyJet](#) said its holiday bookings for the summer were 250% higher than they had been at this point last year.

Its chief executive, Johan Lundgren, said: “We have seen easyJet holidays bookings from our over-50s customers increase over the last few weeks in comparison to pre-Christmas, which suggests a further confidence boost from the vaccine rollout.”

Lundgren said there was “pent-up demand”, adding: ”We have seen that every time restrictions have been relaxed and so we know that people want to go on holiday as soon as they can.”

Guardian business email sign-up

Skyscanner, which offers flights and hotels via its website, said searches and bookings remained lower than normal for the time of year but there were signs that activity was picking up.

Searches were up by 12% over the week and bookings by 7%, with July 2021 the most searched for month.

Other firms reported bookings were higher for this September and October, suggesting consumers were hopeful that vaccines may have been delivered and travel restrictions lifted by the autumn.

On Monday, tough new testing rules came into effect that require all those arriving in the UK to show a negative Covid-19 test or face a potential £500 fine. The UK has also closed all its travel corridors, meaning people arriving will be required to quarantine.

Meanwhile, an official close to the Australian government has warned that tourists could face “substantial border restrictions” for most of 2021. Returning Australian travellers must pay about AU\$3,000 (£1,700) to quarantine inside a hotel room for 14 days.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/19/holiday-bookings-surge-as-covid-vaccinations-increase-travel-hopes>

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Coronavirus

As many as six in 10 care home residents in England still awaiting Covid jab

Care bosses struggle to protect vulnerable as first round vaccine completion target date looms

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Robert Booth](#) Social affairs correspondent

Mon 18 Jan 2021 14.07 EST Last modified on Tue 19 Jan 2021 05.15 EST



Care home resident David Price receives an injection of the coronavirus vaccine at Andrew Cohen House in Birmingham. Photograph: Jacob King/PA

Wide disparities have emerged in the campaign to protect care home residents from Covid-19, with 100% getting their first jab in Slough, while nearly six in 10 are still awaiting vaccinations in one of the UK's largest care home chains.

In what the vaccines minister described as a “race against deaths”, care bosses reported struggles to protect the oldest and most vulnerable members of society.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, told a Downing Street press conference that the government is “prioritising the supply of the vaccine into those parts of the country that need to complete [vaccination of] the over-80s”.

Care UK said on Monday that 43% of its 6,500 residents had received a coronavirus vaccine – . Barchester, which looks after 12,000 people, said 57% of its residents had been immunised – suggesting that without acceleration, it would take until the end of the month to cover everyone with at least one dose.

NHS England had given GPs until 24 January “at the latest” to complete the first round of vaccines, including care home staff. That ambitious target now looks likely to be missed. Seventy per cent of Care UK’s staff and 57% of Barchester’s workers have yet to be vaccinated, they said.

Hancock said on Monday that half of elderly care home residents across England had received a first dose including all those in Slough, Berkshire.

He stressed that, while vaccines will now be offered to the over-70s as well as those on the shielding list, over-80s, care home residents, their carers and frontline health and care workers remain the “priority”.

“I want to say to anybody who is aged over 80 but hasn’t yet had their jab, we will reach you,” Hancock told the Downing Street press conference. “The NHS will contact you and you will have your invitation to be vaccinated within the next four weeks.”

Nadhim Zahawi, the vaccines minister, said on Monday the vaccination programme was a “race against deaths”. The urgency of delivery to care homes was illustrated by the case of Northbrooke House in the Isle of Wight which was scheduled to receive jabs just before Christmas but faced delays. After one person tested positive on 28 December, 30 residents and 38 staff tested positive in the first week of January.

Maggie Bennett, the managing director of Island Healthcare, which runs Northbrooke, said recent weeks had been “horrendous”. The outbreak has resulted in the home’s manager, Kat Cotton, regularly working 18-hour days from 3am to as late as 10pm to make up for acute staff shortages. Cotton said it was unclear whether vaccination as originally planned would offer protection because of the time it took recipients to develop immunity.

“What was promised to us at the beginning was the Pfizer vaccine, which is difficult to store and distribute,” said Bennett. “It wasn’t the most ideal type of vaccine to bring into the care home and that was the difficulty the GP surgeries were having. It wasn’t a lack of motivation, rather ... the practicalities of getting it out. It is sad that the consequence of not having it could have been that a lot of our residents succumbed to it when they might not have done.”

Asked about patchy delivery of the vaccine, Hancock said: “We’re putting more supply into areas that have got more to do. Supply is the rate limiting factor.” He said the over-70s would now start to receive the vaccine as well as those with clinical vulnerabilities under 70.

Residents in care homes for older adults and their carers were named last month by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as the top priority followed by all over-80s and frontline health and social care workers.

GPs and care operators said the difficulty of delivering the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, which needs to be kept at low temperatures, was one problem, while patchy supplies of doses and limitations on the number of medical staff available to go into homes were other limiting factors.

The target of completing all jabs in elderly care homes by Sunday was set by the NHS medical director for primary care last week amid concern about rising Covid outbreaks in care homes. In the week to 10 January there were 692 Covid incidents in care homes in England – almost treble the 236 in the week to 20 December.

The Department of [Health](#) and Social Care said the government's target was to complete the programme by the end of this month. Stephen Powis, the national medical director for England, said the NHS was going as fast as it could across the country.

The Orders of St John Care Trust, which looks after about 3,000 people, said half its residents have received the jab while MHA, the UK's largest not-for-profit operator of care homes, said that while 11 of its homes had not heard from the NHS yet about vaccinations, about two-thirds of its homes had received vaccines.

Hancock urged those over 80 who had not been vaccinated to be patient. He said it took time to set up each approved vaccination site and said he wanted care home residents to be vaccinated quicker than the 15 February deadline for the four highest priority groups.

An NHS spokesperson said: “Vaccinating care home residents is a priority for local GP-led vaccinating teams, with the goal of doing so by the end of this month. Just a fortnight after the Oxford vaccine – which allows teams to more easily vaccinate in care homes – over half of all care home residents have already received their jab, up from a quarter the week before.”

- The headline of this article was amended on 19 January 2021 because an earlier version incorrectly referred to UK care home residents whereas the article referred to England.

Long Covid

Almost 30% of Covid patients in England readmitted to hospital after discharge – study

Readmission rate for Covid patients 3.5 times greater, and death rate seven times higher, than for other hospital patients

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

[Natalie Grover](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 12.05 EST Last modified on Mon 18 Jan 2021 23.36 EST



Of 47,780 people with Covid, 29.4% were readmitted within 140 days of discharge, and 12.3% died. Photograph: Guy Bell/Rex/Shutterstock

Nearly a third of people who were discharged from hospitals in [England](#) after being treated for Covid-19 were readmitted within five months – and almost one in eight died, a study suggests.

The [research](#), which is still to be peer-reviewed, also found a higher risk of problems developing in a range of organs after hospital discharge in those younger than 70 and ethnic minority individuals.

“There’s been so much talk about all these people dying from Covid … but death is not the only outcome that matters,” said Dr Charlotte Summers, a lecturer in intensive care medicine at the University of Cambridge who was not involved in this study.

“The idea that we have that level of increased risk in people – particularly young people – it means we’ve got a lot of work to do.”

There is no consensus on the scale and impact of “long Covid”, but scientists have described [emerging evidence as concerning](#). According to recent figures provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), a [fifth of people in England still have coronavirus symptoms five weeks](#) after being infected, half of whom continue to experience problems for at least 12 weeks.

[Graphic](#)

Thanks to a better understanding of the disease and new therapies, Covid-19 hospital death rates have fallen dramatically, said study researcher Kamlesh Khunti, a professor from the University of Leicester who sits on Sage and is also a member of the Independent Sage group of experts.

The findings are based on data from the ONS and general practitioners in England. A total of 47,780 individuals who had a hospital episode between 1 January 2020 and 31 August 2020 with a primary diagnosis of Covid-19 were compared with a control group who did not have Covid-19.

Of the 47,780, 29.4% were readmitted within 140 days of discharge and 12.3% died. The rate of readmission was 3.5 times greater, and the death rate seven times higher, than those in the control group, the researchers found.

The risk of post-discharge illness – such as respiratory conditions, diabetes and problems with the heart, liver and kidneys – in Covid-19 patients was higher compared with the control group. That risk was also greater in younger and ethnic minority individuals compared with those aged 70 and above and white people.

“This matters. Long Covid at this level of morbidity and new disease is absolutely as important as the number of people dying,” said Summers.

Respiratory disease was diagnosed in 14,140 of the Covid-19 cases (29.6%) following discharge, with 6,085 of the diagnoses in patients that had no history of respiratory conditions.

If this percentage of people who came to hospital end up with chronic respiratory disease, she said, “the NHS has just got an enormous burden that it didn’t have before”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/almost-30-of-covid-patients-in-england-re-admitted-to-hospital-after-discharge-study>

2021.01.19 - Spotlight

- 'Too negative!' Welsh seaside images that caused a controversy
- Russia The spectre that loomed over Trump's presidency
- 'The system is rigged' Seun Kuti on reviving Fela's political party
- Space out and cover up How to make travelling by car more Covid-safe

'Too negative!': The Welsh seaside images that caused a controversy – in pictures

Life's a beach ... shelter at night Photograph: Michael Bennett

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Trump administration

Russia: the spectre that loomed over Trump's presidency

Much of the Trump-Russia story is still unknown, but the relationship left the US estranged from its allies and facing deepening domestic strife



Russia has hung over much of Trump's presidency, in part because of his apparent relationship with President Putin. Photograph: Susan Walsh/AP
Russia has hung over much of Trump's presidency, in part because of his apparent relationship with President Putin. Photograph: Susan Walsh/AP



Luke Harding

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

When historians look back at [Donald Trump's presidency](#) they are likely to pick out two defining themes. One is the [coronavirus pandemic](#). It dominated his last year in office, and saw the president become the virus's most celebrated victim cum [White House super-spreader](#).

The other is Russia, a subject that consumed American public life for four long years. The question first came up when Trump was a long-shot candidate for president. In a Republican party that had once regarded [Vladimir Putin](#) as a cold-eyed KGB killer, why was Trump's behaviour towards Russia's leader so ingratiating?

There were Trump's flattering public statements about Putin on the campaign trail. And his [blatant appeal](#) in July 2016 for Moscow to locate emails that he claimed Hillary Clinton had deleted. "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," he told a press conference in Florida.

As it turned out [Russia](#) was indeed listening. That evening a group of hackers working for GRU military intelligence returned after-hours to their office in central Moscow. They tried to break into the accounts of senior

Clinton aides, unsuccessfully. A rival spy agency once headed by Putin, the FSB, launched its own electronic attacks.



On the campaign trail in 2016, Trump called on Russia to find 30,000 emails he claimed Hilary Clinton had deleted. Photograph: Carolyn Kaster/AP

Across 2016 the Russians ran an aggressive and multifaceted operation to help Donald Trump win. In spring the GRU stole [tens of thousands](#) of Democratic party emails, [including from Clinton's campaign chief John Podesta](#). These were fed to WikiLeaks and given to reporters via a GRU persona, Guccifer 2.0.

Meanwhile trolls working out of St Petersburg launched [an unprecedented anti-Clinton social media operation](#). The Russians – employed by Putin's ally [Yevgeny Prigozhin](#) – impersonated Americans, organised pro-Trump rallies, and [even hired an actor to dress up as Clinton](#) and sit in a cage.

Moscow rumours

During the 2016 campaign there were swirling rumours concerning Trump and Moscow. No media outlet could quite stand them up, but the topic burst into the public domain in January 2017 when BuzzFeed published [a dossier](#)

[by the former MI6 officer Christopher Steele](#), commissioned by the Democratic party. It would torment Trump for the rest of his presidency.

[Trump in Moscow: what happened at Miss Universe in 2013](#)

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The dossier alleged the Kremlin had been cultivating Trump for five years at least. It claimed Putin's spies had collected *kompromat*, [secretly filming](#) Trump and two sex workers inside the Ritz-Carlton hotel during his 2013 visit to Moscow for the Miss Universe beauty pageant.

Trump vehemently denied the seedy allegations. He and his Republican supporters on Capitol Hill and within the Justice Department sought to discredit its British author and to out his sources. Steele was a "failed spy" and "lowlife", and collusion allegations a "witch-hunt" and a "hoax", Trump insisted.

'Russia thing'

Hoax or not, Trump's efforts to make the "Russia thing" go away backfired. In May 2017 he sacked [James Comey](#) as FBI director. This resulted in the appointment of the [former FBI chief Robert Mueller as special prosecutor](#). Mueller's brief was to investigate whether Trump and his inner circle had conspired with Moscow during the election. To answer yes, a criminal standard of proof was necessary.

For almost two years the workings of Mueller's team stayed secret. The prosecutor was both Washington's most present personality – endlessly discussed – and a ghost. From time to time his office issued indictments. These were against 26 Russians including GRU hackers. And against Americans: Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, national security adviser Michael Flynn, attorney Michael Cohen, and others.

When it arrived in spring 2019, Mueller's report was [a disappointment](#) to liberal Americans who hoped it might sweep Trump from power. It identified numerous links between the Russian government and the Trump campaign but did not find a criminal-level conspiracy. Nor did it rule on

whether the president had obstructed justice. Mueller said he had not considered collusion, which was not a “legal term”.

Trump, we learned, had been secretly negotiating in 2015-16 to build a Trump Tower in Moscow while simultaneously praising Putin. Cohen had even written an email [asking Putin's press spokesman Dmitry Peskov for help](#) and spoke to Peskov's assistant. When asked about this by Congress, Cohen lied. The cover-up led to a feud with Trump – and, for Cohen, [to federal jail](#).

Back-channels

The most significant back-channel to Moscow involved Manafort and his one-time Russian aide [Konstantin Kilimnik](#). In a series of clandestine meetings Manafort gave Kilimnik internal polling data, including from the rustbelt states that proved crucial to Trump's 2016 victory. The two men used burner phones, encrypted chats, and a secret email account, with messages shared in drafts.



In December, Trump pardoned his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort (C), who was convicted of unregistered lobbying, tax fraud, bank fraud and money laundering. Photograph: Seth Wenig/AP

Mueller identified Kiliminik as a career Russian intelligence officer. His employer was the GRU. What Kilimink did with the information he got from Manafort is unknown. He refused to cooperate with the FBI and fled to Moscow.

Critics said the Mueller investigation was hobbled by an excess of legal caution and a failure to meet face to face with Trump. Its biggest shortcoming, arguably, was a lack of Russian witnesses.

Much of the Trump-Russia story is still unknown. For example, does the Trump Organization have financial ties with Moscow? After a series of bankruptcies in the 1990s Trump was only able to borrow cash from one lender: Germany's [Deutsche Bank](#), which gave him lavish credit. At the same time its Moscow division was facilitating [a \\$10bn money-laundering scam](#) for the benefit of Kremlin VIPs.

The US public never found out when Putin ordered the DNC hacking operation and why. Nor did it discover what the Russian and American presidents discussed in their private meetings, [including during a notorious 2018 encounter in Helsinki](#). A good guess is that Putin flattered rather than threatened Trump. He fed Trump's ego and stoked his resentment of the US "deep state" and other "enemies".



Trump and Putin held private meetings in Helsinki in 2018. Photograph: Anatoly Maltsev/EPA

‘Grave counter-intelligence threat’

In August 2020 the Senate intelligence committee [published its own Trump-Russia report](#). It said Manafort’s willingness to pass confidential material to Kilimnik was a “grave counter-intelligence threat”. And it gave some credence to Steele’s Moscow allegations, noting that an FSB officer was stationed inside the Ritz-Carlton hotel. Putin’s spy had a live video feed from guests’ bedrooms, the report said.

In the end Russia did not interfere in the 2020 election in the same sweeping and systematic way. But Moscow was busy in other ways. Beginning in spring it carried out a massive cyber-raid against US federal government institutions. Russian state hackers inserted malicious code into [a software update made by a Texas-based company, SolarWinds](#).

At least six US government departments were affected, as well as the Department of Defence’s sprawling communications network, and the body that manages the US nuclear weapons stockpile. The hackers [worked for Russian SVR foreign intelligence, and possibly the FSB](#). It was the same Cozy Bear outfit that previously hacked the DNC and the US state department.

Did Trump condemn Moscow? Nope. He blamed China, in one of his final tweets before Twitter kicked him off its platform after the 6 January Capitol attack. The cyber-raid was a reminder of Putin viewing the US as an eternal adversary in a never-ending quasi-war. The National Security Agency has spent billions on cyber-defence and yet on Trump’s watch it was unable to deter intruders from Moscow.

[How Joe Biden’s cold war experience will shape his approach to Russia](#)
[Read more](#)

Russia would have preferred it if Trump had won the election. Despite Joe Biden’s clearcut victory, though, the Russian leader has much to celebrate. Over four polarising years Trump accomplished many of the KGB’s

longstanding goals. These included estranging the US from its western allies and Nato; deepening domestic strife; and waging a Putin-style disinformation campaign against the 2020 result.

Manchurian candidate or not, Trump did more than any previous president to discredit US democracy and suck up to the Kremlin. Back in the 1980s the Soviet government invited Trump to Moscow. Seemingly it identified him early as a person without scruples, one perhaps capable given time and opportunity of bringing down the republic.

The [invasion of the Capitol](#) was the culmination of this cold war fantasy; a perfect series finale.

*Luke Harding's latest book *Shadow State: Murder, Mayhem and Russia's Remaking of the West* is [available from the Guardian Bookshop](#)*

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[Nigeria](#)

Interview

'The system is rigged': Seun Kuti on reviving Fela's political party

[Emmanuel Akinwotu](#) in Lagos



Seun Kuti: 'The military hierarchy has consistently made sure that they are the ones in power, we have to put an end to it.' Photograph: Manny Jefferson/The Guardian

Seun Kuti: 'The military hierarchy has consistently made sure that they are the ones in power, we have to put an end to it.' Photograph: Manny Jefferson/The Guardian

The musician and youngest son of the Afrobeat legend has been galvanised to act after police brutality in Nigeria

Tue 19 Jan 2021 00.00 EST

"For 60 years nothing has really been solved in this country," Seun Kuti says. "Healthcare, education, electricity, transportation, welfare – nothing has been accomplished."

Galvanised by the brutality meted out by Nigerian police [against protesters in October last year](#), the 37-year-old Grammy-nominated musician and youngest son of the Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti resurrected his father's socialist political party, the Movement of the People. Against a backdrop of widespread and mounting frustration over how Nigeria is run, he hopes the MOP can be a vehicle for change in 2021.

The “weird” past year was, he says, compounded by peculiarly Nigerian challenges. In October Kuti marched alongside thousands of others in the [#EndSars protests](#) against police brutality, nursing the wounds of shot demonstrators. The protests, some of the largest in Nigeria for decades, erupted after footage emerged of police brutality by the notorious Sars unit. But the underlying causes were broader, Kuti says. “The people made it known that EndSars was a slogan. How I interpreted it was they wanted an end to oppression, not just a manifestation of it that is Sars.”



Protesters stand in the street in Lagos as police officers fire teargas.
Photograph: Sunday Alamba/AP

More recently, he lost his band leader, Dave Obayendo. “We couldn’t even tell whether it was Covid or not, he wasn’t tested,” Kuti says. “The hospital turned him back. Before they took him to the next hospital, he died in the

car.” The rejection of patients by hospitals is rife, he says, sometimes for issues such as a lack of adequate equipment.

The MOP was founded in 1979 by Fela before his sole, failed presidential bid, one episode of [an extraordinary life](#) of music and resistance during which he faced near-endless violence and suppression by Nigerian authorities.

According to Kuti, the prospects for anti-establishment parties, though still remote, are better now. “Today it will be easier for such a message to reach the core of Nigerian people than it was in the 70s. The problems are so glaring,” he says. “Elites have imposed this sinister, anti-poor capitalist system, going on for years and years, but are people really in favour of it? How can you be a capitalist with no capital? You’ll begin to see that the system is rigged.”

We have to build a mass movement from the grassroots up, giving ordinary Nigerians a platform

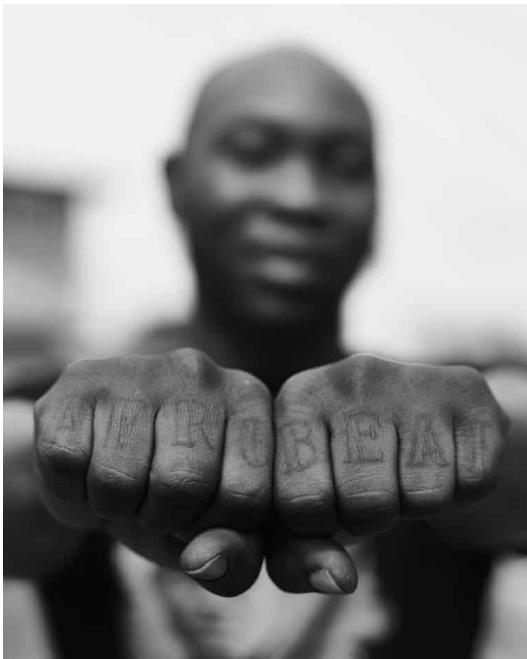
Kuti hopes the new version of the MOP, which brings together an array of small leftwing activist groups, will more effectively articulate these issues, “giving the masses a voice and building class consciousness”. But he scoffs at the prospect of a presidential run and says the group’s aims are long-term. “No, that’s not me. I’m an artist. But we will have candidates across the country for sure,” he says.

“The military hierarchy has consistently made sure that they are the ones in power, we have to put an end to it. We have to build a mass movement from the grassroots up, giving ordinary Nigerians a platform.”

A bleak sense of *deja vu* feels hard to ignore in Nigeria. In the 1980s [Muhammadu Buhari](#), who is now the president, was a military dictator and a prime target of Fela’s ceaselessly political songwriting. Then as now, economic suffering, a weakening currency and a flailing anti-corruption campaign were causing widespread dismay.

The killing of scores of protesters by army and police officials in October, including at the [Lekki tollgate area of Lagos](#), was one of several episodes

where protesters and critics were attacked, arrested or met with state aggression.



Seun Kuti says the absence of touring due to Covid has been hard.
Photograph: Manny Jefferson/The Guardian

“During one protest a guy came to my house who had a gunshot wound in his side like this,” Kuti says, gesturing to his torso. “People talk about the Lekki massacre but they shot people everywhere, people were shot to death all over Lagos.”

MOP’s first meeting was due to be held in December at Fela’s old club, Afrika Shrine, a bohemian enclave where he often performed. But scores of armed police surrounded the building and banned them from organising, so the meeting was held elsewhere.

“It just shows that they [the authorities] are spooked,” Kuti says. “They are trying to send a message, but they can’t stop what we’re doing.”

Rolling joints with his own self-branded rolling paper, Kuti describes how the absence of touring over the last year has been hard. “I miss my band, we had plans last year that were cancelled, but I’m hopeful we’ll start things up again this year,” he says. Playing his saxophone, he says, brings him joy.

Although music, family, and new business ventures to offset the lack of performing are time-consuming, political change is front of mind.

“Maybe it can be hard to be hopeful but I’m hopeful, Kuti says. “We want to set up different ways of reaching out to the masses because frankly they are ignored. We can’t bring change without the people, so giving them a voice is the most important thing.”

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Coronavirus

Space out and cover up: how to make travelling by car more Covid-safe

If sharing a car is unavoidable, there are a few ways to reduce the risk of transmission

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



It is important to regularly clean ‘high-touch’ surfaces such as steering wheels and buttons. Photograph: Meghan Nash/Getty Images

While the UK is under lockdown, travel for work and other exemptions is still allowed. We take a look at how to stay safer when cooped up together, whether in a taxi or a private car:

Avoid if possible

Avoiding close contact is a key way to prevent infection. As a result, there are rules in place around catching a ride.

“Car sharing is not permitted with someone from outside your household or your support bubble unless your journey is undertaken for an exempt reason,” government guidelines note. The same goes for sharing a taxi.

If you do have to share a ride, for example as part of your work, the guidelines recommend that you stick to the same travel companion each time and keep the group as small as possible. Remember that yourself or others in the car could be infectious without knowing it.

Cover up

It is a legal requirement to wear a face covering in taxis and private hire vehicles, but it is worth donning one whenever you share a ride.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Prof Catherine Noakes, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) and an expert in airborne infections, said wearing face coverings was an important measure.

“It reduces the amount of virus you shed into the air, and of course for the other person it provides some protection against what they might inhale,” she told the Guardian.

Space yourselves

“Travelling in cars particularly is a challenging one, because it is a very small space; it is one of the smallest spaces that we occupy,” said Noakes.

Spacing

But, she added, there are ways to reduce the risk of transmission: “If you sit in the back, diagonally opposite the driver, so you are at the further distance from them, that is probably going to reduce those risks to some extent.”

Ventilation

In a closed space, the concentration of carbon dioxide and other components of exhaled breath – including viral particles – build up over time. That means a good flow of fresh air is crucial.

Air conditioning is useful, said Noakes, but it must be put on the correct setting. “It is absolutely critical that you put it on fresh air mode,” she said, adding that a number of studies measuring levels of carbon dioxide showed that recirculation mode brought almost no fresh air into the vehicle.

While opening all four windows is likely to increase ventilation the most, even opening just two can bring benefits.

“It is better to have two windows slightly open than just one, because you get a better airflow through and it also stops that horrible banging noise on your ears,” said Noakes.

Ventilation

It might seem intuitive that the driver and passenger windows should be open, but a recent set of simulations published in [Science Advances](#) suggests it is better to open the other two – at least when it comes to protecting the passenger.

According to the research, the driver and passenger can reduce airflow when seated by open windows, and the recirculating air current can carry particles from the driver to the passenger. When the other two windows are open instead, air is channelled across the back seat and out of the front window, glancing across the passenger in the process – a flow the researchers say might also act as an “air curtain” between driver and passenger.

“I’m not sure that would really be present in reality, but having said that, opening those diagonal windows is probably going to give you the best ventilation through the car,” said Noakes.

Clean up

Washing or sanitising your hands before and after your journey is a must, with government guidelines adding that it is advisable to pay for your taxi

ride by contactless payment, or in advance.

The guidelines also recommend cleaning your car between journeys. However, it might be best to wait if the car is not needed straight away.

“If you can leave it a couple of days, then any infectious virus is very likely to die off, and then by the time you do clean it, you are at much lower risk,” said Noakes.

But, Noakes added, it is important to regularly clean “high-touch” surfaces. “The buttons you touch a lot, the steering wheel and things like that,” she said.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/19/space-out-and-cover-up-how-to-make-travelling-by-car-more-covid-safe>

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[**Opinion**](#)[**Coronavirus**](#)

For Britain's vaccination success, we must thank our universal healthcare system

[**Gaby Hinsliff**](#)



After months of government misjudgments on Covid, the NHS has come to the rescue and given us a new sense of pride



An NHS Covid-19 vaccination centre in St Albans, January 2021.

Photograph: Paul Childs/Reuters

An NHS Covid-19 vaccination centre in St Albans, January 2021.

Photograph: Paul Childs/Reuters

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

One by one, they come to be saved.

Last Saturday alone, while much of the country wondered how to fill another empty lockdown weekend, a quarter of a million people were vaccinated. Like latter-day pilgrims seeking the cure, they queued outside cathedrals, whose cavernously draughty (and easily ventilated) spaces make surprisingly good makeshift vaccination centres. They came with their sticks and Zimmer frames to cottage hospitals and hastily repurposed conference centres, met in some cases by doctors and nurses who'd finished a gruelling shift at work only to grab a syringe and join in.

Nobody who has seen the inside of a hospital lately needs telling that a jab today could mean one less patient in ICU to come. So, eminent consultants cheerfully muck in with a volunteer army tens of thousands strong, some of whom have spent their weekends training to wield the needle, while others help to keep records or gently steer people around the building. When my father got his jab, he came away amazed by the number of helpers, but also

by the kindness. It's a small thing, but the skills required to process a patient every four minutes (as the bigger hubs aim to do) without seeming brusque or rushed are extraordinary. For some older people living alone, it will be the first human touch they have felt in months of frightened isolation. Imagine what a reassuring word, or a gentle hand on the arm, might mean.

What's happening before our eyes is an astonishing national effort, another Dunkirk of sorts. Tens of thousands of tiny boats, helmed by everyone from out-of-work actors and office workers to students and retired nurses, have answered the call for volunteers. Some will be deploying skills learned by having to inject insulin, self-administer IVF drugs, or care for a very sick child. Many will see it as a way of giving back to an [NHS](#) for which they have themselves been grateful in the past, and without which we could never have got this far now.

Public, private and voluntary sector all had a part to play in this story, collaborating not just on the Oxford vaccine (a joint venture between the NHS, the university and the drug company AstraZeneca) but on the vaccine taskforce appointed by ministers to oversee the rollout. But, above all, this is a story about never taking the miraculous gift of free universal healthcare for granted; both the ready-made infrastructure that allows something like this to be rolled out at short notice, and the ethos that comes with it. Sharp elbows won't get you a vaccine in Britain, and nor will a fat chequebook. Instead we have a system allowing the medically vulnerable to be swiftly identified, sorted by clinical priority, and coaxed if necessary out of homes they're scared to leave by a family doctor they trust. We have got so used to a government lurching from one Covid misjudgment to the next that we barely remember what it's like to feel relief, let alone pride. But how else to feel about an NHS so bloodied and bowed by what has been demanded of it for nine months, yet somehow still delivering like this?

Of course, there are clouds still on the horizon. The decision to [delay second doses](#) of the jab for up to two months beyond the time stipulated in clinical trials, in order to give a first dose to as many vulnerable people as possible, was a calculated risk taken in the face of a frightening virulent second wave that the government had arguably moved too slowly to control. The last-minute change of plan has left some recipients confused and worried, despite assurances from the vaccines minister [Nadhim Zahawi](#) that everyone will get

a second dose in the time promised. Some of the good work being done now could be reversed if ministers lift restrictions too soon this spring, under pressure from those lockdown sceptics who have been so reliably wrong at every stage of this pandemic.

But the UK is no longer the only country considering [spacing out doses](#), with trials for the Pfizer vaccine showing [89% protection](#) within two weeks of a first dose against 96% after the second. For once Britain finds itself near the top not the bottom of the international pack, delivering more doses per head than anywhere bar the United Arab Emirates (which moves so fast because it's vaccinating all comers, not prioritising those in greatest danger) and Israel (which benefits from a small, densely packed population and a universal, not-for-profit healthcare system, but hasn't extended the programme to Palestinians living in the occupied territories). It takes a month or more for vaccinations to start translating into fewer hospital admissions, perhaps a bit longer before they start preventing deaths. But the light at the end of the tunnel is real.

Dr Nikki Kanani, the director of primary care at NHS England who is herself currently rolling up her sleeves to vaccinate care home residents, recently hung a framed Theodore Roosevelt quote on her wall. It argues that credit in life belongs not to critics arguing about how it could have gone better but to the person "who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is not effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds". Democracy needs critics to hold power to account, and God knows there has been much to criticise in this government's response to Covid. That reckoning must still come. But never forget the dust and sweat and blood that built this NHS, and which sustains it still.

- Gaby Hinsliff is a Guardian columnist

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OpinionBrexit

Brexeters are waking up to the damage they've done

Polly Toynbee



From horse racing to fishing to road haulage, British industry is in chaos. No wonder leavers are turning on each other



Fishing boats tied up at Tarbert harbour, south-west Scotland. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

Fishing boats tied up at Tarbert harbour, south-west Scotland. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.46 EST

Brexit has beached the fishing boats at Hastings. The two-man crew of Paul Joy's boat Kaya have left for shore jobs, after the price of the huss they land fell to just 2p a kilo. Exports to the European Union are Brexit-blighted, with fishers across Britain [poleaxed by new costs and regulations](#), their catches rotting before they reach EU markets. It's costing them millions already.

For the past two years Joy, a passionate Brexiter, has consistently told me he believes his industry would be shafted in any trade deal. "Betrayed, sacrificed," he says, outraged at the government's failure to secure British fishing rights for 12 miles around the coast, and now crippled by the export costs. So when foreign secretary [Dominic Raab](#) has the effrontery to tell the BBC's Andrew Marr that this is "a great deal for the fishing industry", he must know it's not true.

Other industries want to know if Boris Johnson's promised "compensation" for fishing losses means a huge subsidy in perpetuity for this less than 0.2%

sliver of the economy? Because the problems exploding in one industry after another, in less than three Brexit weeks, are not going away.

[Shock Brexit charges are hurting us, say small British businesses](#)

[Read more](#)

Friction is the new normal. As the chief EU negotiator, Michel Barnier said firmly last week, things have “[changed for good](#)”. UK choices mean “mechanical, obvious, inevitable consequences when you leave the single market and that’s what the British wished to do”. It’s not French revenge, or bloody-minded Brussels, but ordinary life as a third country.

The plight of the fishers is just a vivid emblem for the great blow that is falling on exporting parts of the economy. Michael Gove’s December warnings of “bumpy moments” [upped an octave](#) in the first week of this year, to Britain should prepare for “significant border disruption”.

That well-staged last-minute-deal melodrama was designed to end [Brexit](#) stories, relegating all boring details of the aftermath to the business pages. Not so. The stories are so strong even the ardent Brexit-creating press can’t resist them – though now those newspapers add a self-exculpatory slant that blames the government for a bad [Brexit](#). Here are some random discoveries since [Brexit](#) day.

The Sun warns of Brexit’s threat [to the Cheltenham Festival](#): last year 180 Irish horses ran, but this year, “Brexit leaves Irish racehorse trainers fearing ‘colossal’ tax bill”. Likewise, the cost of taking UK [showjump horses](#) across the Channel is prohibitive for their British owners. Motorsport [faces similar fees](#) for cars shipped to EU races.

The fashion industry – especially Asos-type, cheap end with small margins – is hitting a rules-of-origin crisis, paying new duties on its many products manufactured [outside the EU](#). Fun stories in the Sun include the lorry driver crossing the Gibraltar/Spain border whose bottle of Nando’s sauce is [confiscated](#), along with all those ham sandwiches [snatched by the Dutch](#). The Daily Telegraph [reports](#) the flight of Europeans from England, but not from “remain-voting Scotland and Northern Ireland”. Farmers Weekly sends up flares about [plunging meat prices](#), due to delayed exports.

All these losses to a host of smaller industries mount up fast. But look at the Sunday Times [report](#) on the crisis in a car industry that's worth £42bn in exports, employing 823,000 people, where car-part delays are [halting production](#) at some factories. Yet still, most economically deadly is the unseen slipping away of invisibles, where that 80% of the economy in services is already leaking tax revenues. Bloomberg keeps up its grim recording of no likely progress: "City of London's plight laid bare as Brexit deal hopes fade," [it reports](#).

And then there is the unfolding Northern Ireland disaster. Stena Line ferries has diverted its Great Britain-Northern Ireland sea crossings to the Rosslare-to-Cherbourg route instead. The Times headline [reads](#) "Doldrums ahead in shipping forecast as Brexit complicates customs".

Over the past year I have been following the impending haulage disaster through Manfreight, a 200-lorry company in Coleraine. Its owner Chris Slowey says no, the crisis in the GB/UK crossing is not down to "teething problems", as Raab put it, but is baked into the nature of Brexit. His lorries carrying exports to England return empty, doubling his costs, as English exporters find it too costly to sell to Northern Ireland – and that's permanent. The Telegraph [reports](#) that one in 10 lorries are being turned back at the EU border. Delays will continue: spot checks at EU borders are standard. So will queues, lorry parks and roadside squalor. The pandemic has worsened the Brexit effect, but that was a good reason to extend the transition period.

It's only human to confess to some remainder "I told you so" glee when ex-MP Kate Hoey [wails in the Telegraph](#), "The Tories have betrayed Northern Ireland with their Brexit deal". What on earth did she expect? That's why Northern Ireland wisely voted remain.

[Government rejects report it will lower workers' rights post-Brexit](#)
[Read more](#)

Expect a lot more shocked Brexiters to discover what they have done, the Brexit cabinet itself is on a steep learning curve. Here's [one Telegraph columnist](#): "We Brexiters are being blamed for the problems we warned about. In reality, the fault lies squarely with the government and poor planning." Oh the schadenfreude! That's a sharp U-turn from the

Telegraph's too-eager 1 January [report](#) from the Dover front: "Chaos? What chaos?"

As Brexiters turn on each other, Brexit politics move fast. Until now the Tories planned to move on, only reviving "Brexit done" triumphalism to re-rouse the captured red wall at the election: Labour just wanted to bury the whole issue.

But the scale of the eruptions bursting out in one sector after another requires the opposition to find its footing on this tricky terrain. Many like Paul Joy on Hastings beach are still as passionately pro-Brexit as ever. Fearlessly, Labour needs to regain its voice of outrage that Brexit leaders deliberately shut their ears to what leaving the single market and the customs union really meant. A better Brexit deal really was possible.

- Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist

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[**Opinion**](#)[**Ivanka Trump**](#)

What is Ivanka Trump's legacy? Enabling her father's odious actions

[**Arwa Mahdawi**](#)



The president's daughter did encourage her father to push through a bill on paid parental leave, but her successes are outweighed by the administration's damaging policies



Ivanka Trump earlier this month ... any good done by her Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative is outweighed by the Trump administration's war on abortion. Photograph: Brynn Anderson/AP

Ivanka Trump earlier this month ... any good done by her Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative is outweighed by the Trump administration's war on abortion. Photograph: Brynn Anderson/AP

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Ivanka Trump has wound up her time in the White House in the most fitting way possible: with a [scandal](#) about a \$3,000-a-month toilet. Members of the Secret Service, it was recently reported, were [banned from using any of the bathrooms](#) in Jared Kushner and Ivanka's Washington DC mansion and, instead, had to rent an apartment to relieve themselves in (although Jared and Ivanka have denied this). Talk about flushing taxpayers' money down the drain.

One imagines Ivanka did not plan to spend her final days in DC dealing with the fallout from a violent insurrection and battling embarrassing leaks about her loos. When she appointed herself special adviser to the president, Ivanka was a handbag and shoe saleswoman bursting with ambition. She was going to empower women everywhere! Little girls around the world would read about Saint Ivanka for decades to come. She would be a role mogul: her branded bags would fly off the shelves.

Four years later, Ivanka's [clothing line has shut down](#) and her personal brand has been damaged enough for a university [to cancel her as a speaker](#). It seems she is [persona non grata in New York](#) and her dad has been [banned from parts of the internet](#) for inciting violence. By rights, Ivanka should be sobbing into her sheets wondering how everything has gone so wrong.

But Ivanka is a Trump: narcissism and self-delusion are in her DNA. As DC [braces for pre-inauguration chaos](#) Ivanka has been [blithely tweeting](#) her "achievements" and retweeting praise in an attempt to convince us she has left an important legacy.

According to her Twitter feed, one thing Americans should all be thanking Ivanka for is paid family leave, which has been one of her marquee issues. And, to be fair, if Ivanka is to be praised for anything, [it's for pushing Donald Trump](#) to pass a bill giving federal employees 12 weeks of paid parental time off. Would that have happened without Ivanka? I don't know. But she facilitated it. Does it make up for the many odious things Ivanka also facilitated? No.

Another of Ivanka's big projects was the [Women's Global Development and Prosperity \(W-GDP\) initiative](#), which aims to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 and ... well, I'm not sure exactly what's supposed to happen then. [The initiative is so buzzword-laden](#) that it's somewhat hard to understand. You get the impression Ivanka launched it via vague instructions to "empower women in powerful ways via strategic pillars of empowerment".

Ivanka has been very keen to turn the Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative into part of her political legacy ... But she got greedy and insisted on using her version of the bill

Anyway, all that empowering has paid off, according to a report W-GDP released last week: almost 12.6 million women worldwide have been equipped with the skills they need for economic advancement, thanks to Ivanka. Let's be charitable and say W-GDP has done some good. The problem is, that good is massively outweighed by the Trump administration's worldwide war on abortion: the administration imposed an [harmful expansion](#) of "the global gag rule", which bans US federal funding

international NGOs that provide abortion services or advocacy. Trump also did his best to try to [destroy the budget for foreign aid](#).

[Sorry, try Obama's house: Secret Service barred from using Ivanka Trump's toilets](#)

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Still, Ivanka has been very keen to turn the W-GDP into part of her political legacy. Last year, she was behind the bipartisan launch of a bill formally authorising the programme so that it would live on after her dad left office. That could well have happened: Jeanne Shaheen, a Democratic senator, initially lent Ivanka her support. But Ivanka got greedy and insisted on using her version of the bill. [Shaheen abandoned her support](#), explaining that Ivanka's version of the legislation focused too narrowly on women's economic advancement, minimising issues such as education, healthcare and gender-based violence. Not so much "let them eat cake", as "let them start cake-making businesses". Last month, the bill was dropped and now the future of Ivanka's biggest project is unclear.

I don't want to be unfair to her. She may not have empowered women the way she promised she would, but she did empower herself. Ivanka and Kushner [have made a fortune while "serving" in the White House](#). And you know what they say about charity: it begins at home.

- *Arwa Mahdawi is a Guardian columnist*
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OpinionSpain

I last saw my Spanish dad when I was eight. A new passport won't change that

[Francisco Garcia](#)

The decision to apply for Spanish citizenship isn't just about paperwork, it's freighted with a lifetime's worth of confusion



‘Christobal had met my mum in La Línea, a little coastal city on the Spanish side of the Gibraltar border.’ A man fishing in La Línea, Spain, January 2021. Photograph: Jorge Guerrero/AFP/Getty Images

‘Christobal had met my mum in La Línea, a little coastal city on the Spanish side of the Gibraltar border.’ A man fishing in La Línea, Spain, January 2021. Photograph: Jorge Guerrero/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

On my birth certificate, Christobal Garcia-Ferreia is listed as a painter and decorator, though his occupation has never struck me as the most compelling thing about him. I've not seen my father since I was eight, and now – despite

my name – there's little about me that betrays the Spanish heritage I supposedly inherited from him.

Christobal moved to Britain from [Spain](#) in the early 1990s. He had it OK here, at first. He was lively, handsome and often enthusiastically in pursuit of a good time, as men in their early 20s often are. Never too far from song, or heroic all-night drinking sessions. He'd met my mum in La Línea, a little coastal city on the Spanish side of the Gibraltar border, though they were back in London before too long. Christobal's English wasn't great and work was hard to come by. Things started to slip. His drinking worsened and grew to long periods of absence. And then, in 1999, he made an abrupt return to [Spain](#) after my mother's death from breast cancer.

I find myself thinking about him often these days, in thoughts that range from the grand to the steadfastly mundane. What kind of life he's led since and how much of him is in me, aside from the obvious facial resemblance. Whether I'd have devoted myself to learning the language had it not been for the discomfort of his memory. And more solidly, how the years since the EU referendum have made the idea of reaching out to claim the Spanish citizenship "owed" to me by birthright more attractive than it ever seemed before.

Sure, I've reasoned, it would be nice to fashion the tangles of the past to my own advantage. Every so often in the past few years, I've come across stories of people gleefully mining their family trees for long-forgotten Irish grandparents who might be able to confer the [benefits of an EU passport](#). This is perfectly within their rights, even if some recipients are more unbearably smug about it than others. It's a choice that is often made to seem simple: an easy entitlement, right there for the taking. But for me, the decision isn't just about interminable paperwork or the prospect of an application fee, but a lifetime's worth of confusion.

I don't have the expertise to speak for anyone else, and I can only write assuredly about my own identity. It still feels strange to even consider my "Spanish heritage" as a series of forms to be filed and bureaucracies to be vanquished. The application process boils my and my parents' histories down to a series of useful coincidences, but it could never give dignity to all the chaos and inconsistency within them. And whatever else is wrapped up

with it, the idea of claiming Spanishness can still often feel like a farce. For one thing, my grasp of the language isn't just shaky, it's non-existent. In September last year, for the first time in two decades, I visited Andalucía on a work trip. Just being there made me realise how home would always be somewhere else, no matter how much I might occasionally wish otherwise.

Perhaps it's not quite that simple. To be able to turn back and rectify the mistakes of the past is a common enough fantasy: the chance to do right instead of wrong, or flip indecision into some obscure personal glory. If only the moment of his departure would come again, how clear and easy it all might be. But would learning Spanish or achieving the neat administrative victory of a new passport really solve the confusions about my own heritage, or correct the mistakes of Christobel's life? It would be useful, no doubt, to retain the privileges of free European movement and the enduring fantasy of perhaps one day spending a year in Madrid if money and circumstances ever aligned. But it couldn't change any of the things that have already occurred.

I've never taken much consolation or pride in the abstract idea of being "European" (just as "Englishness" has never appealed, with its often sour insularity). Since June 2016 it's been impossible to ignore how rapidly people's feelings on the subject have intensified. There have been the mass marches and mostly aborted campaigns for further referendums that would annul or overturn the results of the first. This isn't a treatise on the rights and wrongs of Brexit, a subject of equally epic importance and tedium. But there is something about the hardened core of the remainder cause that has put me even further off the idea of claiming my Spanish citizenship: its blind devotion to a palpably flawed institution, as well as a discomfort in how talk of loving immigration too often hinges on utility alone.

I've no idea whether Christobel felt like a "European", or whether he lived his years here as a sufficiently enthusiastic assimilator to British life. It doesn't really matter now, as it shouldn't have done then. I suspect he lived his life as what he was; a slightly overawed, lovesick boy who grew into a drunk, baffled by the chain of circumstances that had led to a new existence on a strange little island under an alien tongue. It's doubtful whether he was anyone's idea of a particularly indispensable, or even useful, immigrant. If one really believes in any kind of freedom of movement, then that shouldn't matter either.

One evening in mid-September, I sat feeling faintly sorry for myself outside a bar in Seville. I'd been in this unfamiliar city for a day or so, at the beginning of my visit to Andalucía. As the evening drew in, more people had arrived, young and old, families and singletons talking in a language I couldn't understand. It made explicit what I suppose I'd always really known. That it would take more than a new passport to feel as if my Spanish half made sense.

- Francisco Garcia is a London-based writer and journalist, and author of *If You Were There: Missing People and the Marks They Leave Behind*, to be published in May
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EU's Covid vaccination debacle is down to institutional inflexibility

[Hans-Werner Sinn](#)

Supply delays underline there was no legal or economic justification for central planning



Phials of the undiluted Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for Covid-19, stored in a super-freezer in France. Photograph: Jean-François Monier/AFP/Getty Images

Phials of the undiluted Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for Covid-19, stored in a super-freezer in France. Photograph: Jean-François Monier/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.58 EST

A storm is raging over the EU's failure to have ordered more of the approved Covid-19 vaccines ahead of time. Stéphane Bancel, the chief executive of the US pharmaceutical company Moderna, which gained

approval for its vaccine shortly after Pfizer/BioNTech, [claims](#) that the EU has relied too much on “vaccines from its own laboratories”.

Did the [European commission](#) prioritise supporting its own pharmaceutical industry over protecting human lives? In fact, matters are not as simple as that. Contrary to what Bancel wants us to believe, the EU has actually ordered too little of its own vaccine. After all, the vaccine that is being administered most widely across the west was developed by a German company, BioNTech, and thus comes from the EU (though it was tested and partly produced in partnership with Pfizer in the US and with Fosun Pharma in China).

Far from having ordered too little of the “American” vaccine, the EU sat back while the US and other countries stocked up on doses of a vaccine that was created and produced in a German lab. The EU is guilty not of protectionism but of institutional inflexibility. The slow vaccine rollout in many European countries is the result of the EU’s failure to coordinate the interests of the various member states. Whereas some countries balked at the price of BioNTech’s mRNA vaccine, others were sceptical about its new gene-based technological underpinnings, and still others simply did not recognise the urgency of the situation, having assumed that the worst of the pandemic had already passed.

[The \\$2,000 stimulus cheques alone won't work – the US needs better infrastructure](#)

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To be sure, an inter-European rivalry between national vaccine producers may have contributed to the EU’s unwillingness to preorder more of the German vaccine last summer, as the US and other countries did. As a small startup from Mainz, BioNTech had little chance of being heard above the din of lobbying at the European commission by established European pharmaceutical giants.

Whatever the reason, the severe delay in the supply of vaccines in Europe is now a fact. While the US, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada jostled last July and August to secure huge batches of the BioNTech vaccine, the EU initially placed its orders only with Sanofi and [AstraZeneca](#), both of

which subsequently admitted difficulties in clinical trials. Not until November – when journalists started asking pointed questions – did the EU strike its first deal for a batch of the BioNTech vaccine. This was followed in December and early January by further purchases, including from Moderna.

Because of the delay in ordering, the deliveries are coming late. After all, producers are operating on a first-come, first-served basis and need time to build up new production sites. As a result, European news media are filled with forlorn images of empty vaccination centres that have run out of supply, alongside footage of overstretched intensive care units. A sense of imminent horror has seized a frightened European public. At this rate, the EU will have no chance of catching up with the US, the UK, Israel and other leading vaccinators until this summer.

The EU contends that it diversified its orders early on because it couldn't know which vaccine candidates would succeed. But that is a cheap excuse, considering that it still didn't order nearly enough from any producer to be able to vaccinate its people in the event that only one vaccine candidate reached the approval stage – a distinct possibility at the time.

If the EU had taken the risk of purchasing enough doses to cover two-thirds of its population from each of the six producers it dealt with, it would have needed to spend only €29bn (\$35bn). For comparison, that is how much income the EU economy has been losing over the course of only 10 days of the coronavirus crisis. And given that not one but two vaccines have now turned out to be highly effective, the EU would have ended up with a surplus of high-quality doses, which it could have donated to some 300 million people across the developing world.

Guardian business email sign-up

No single decision-maker bears the blame for Europe's vaccination debacle. But this episode should make clear that EU member states were wrong to entrust the European commission with the purchase of vaccines last summer. Article 5 of the Treaty on [European Union](#) subjects the EU to the subsidiarity principle, which leaves political actions up to member states, except in cases where supranational action can be proven to be more

efficient. When it came to securing an ample supply of vaccines, this principle was wilfully ignored. There is neither the legal necessity nor a convincing economic justification for central planning in the procurement of vaccines. Had member-state governments been able to buy vaccines independently and in direct competition with other countries worldwide, they might have had to pay a slightly higher price but they would have placed their orders much earlier to avoid missing the boat. And if orders had been placed earlier, vaccine producers would have been able to invest more in expanding their production capacities.

In the end, central planning and lobbying by established producers created Europe's vaccine debacle. Europeans will now have to live with the consequences of an avoidable tragedy.

- *Hans-Werner Sinn, is professor of economics at the University of Munich. He was president of the Ifo Institute for Economic Research and serves on the German economy ministry's advisory council.*

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Nils Pratley on financeBusiness

Dr Martens flotation may create around 50 instant multi-millionaires

[Nils Pratley](#)



Investors will do well, but the ‘carried interest’ bonus for the private equity crew and managers is the real kicker



Various styles of Dr Martens footwear on show during The Great Skinhead Reunion on June 07, 2015 in Brighton, England. Photograph: Alan Crowhurst/Getty Images

Various styles of Dr Martens footwear on show during The Great Skinhead Reunion on June 07, 2015 in Brighton, England. Photograph: Alan Crowhurst/Getty Images

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The [Dr Martens flotation](#) is still at the warm-up stage, meaning the owners announce their intention to list the company, then formally confirm their plan, as happened on Monday, all the while using the spotlight to talk up the brand's "iconic" and "unique" status. Fair enough – that's how the float game is played.

Soon, though, the outside world will see a prospectus, at which point there'll be something new to talk about: the spectacular returns about to be enjoyed by the partners of Permira, [Dr Martens'](#) private equity owner since 2014, plus management.

Welcome to the miracle of "carried interest" – the portion of an investment profit that the private equity crew and managers retain as a bonus for success. It's normally worth 20%, so will spit out some very large numbers in the case of Dr Martens, a business bought for £300m from the founding

Griggs family (which wisely kept a minority stake) and now being brought to the stock market with a price-tag of £3bn-plus.

[Dr Martens repays UK furlough cash after strong lockdown sales](#)
[Read more](#)

How large will the “carried interest” pool at Dr Martens be? Peter Morris, associate scholar at Saïd business school in Oxford, has crunched the data filed at Companies House since the buyout and has an answer. At a valuation of £3bn, the carry pool would be worth £410m, at £3.5bn, it’ll be £485m; and £4bn would mean £560m.

Now consider that only 300 people work at Permira and that the “carry” spoils tend to be concentrated among senior staff. If 80% of the pool were to be shared equally among 50 individuals, at Permira and among Dr Martens’ management, each person would be looking at between £6.6m (at a £3bn valuation) and £9m (at a £4bn valuation). Those figures are averages, per head, for 50 people.

A few qualifications are needed. First, we don’t know precisely what investment hurdle Permira employs before “carried interest” kicks in (Morris has assumed 8%, typical for the industry). Nor do we know how Permira allocates its bonus pool; sums for individuals could be diluted by duff investments elsewhere by the same fund. And, of course, the numbers assume a complete disposal of Dr Martens, whereas the float is the only the first stage in the sell-down.

But the picture looks broadly correct. Dr Martens – “a canvas for rebellious self-expression across generations,” or so the corporate hype has it – is about to create a large cast of multi-millionaires. The investors in the relevant Permira fund will also do very well, obviously, but “carried interest” is the real kicker for the private equity crew.

Indeed, it gets better still for them. “Carried interest” payments are treated as capital gains, and thus taxed at only 28%, rather than at the top rate of income tax of 45%. That tax oddity has always looked indefensible since the beneficiaries aren’t putting any capital at risk and their winnings are bonuses in all but name.

The Treasury, it was reported last autumn, is mulling reform. Any change would arrive too late for the Dr Martens float, but Rishi Sunak shouldn't let that deter him. Use the latest example of a “carried interest” bonanza to inject some common sense. Financial engineers do not need personal tax breaks, especially not in the current climate.

Business needs certainty on support before the budget

Elsewhere the lobbying for budget reforms has started in earnest, but well done the CBI for reminding Sunak that the big event is still six weeks away, which is too long for some sectors to wait to learn whether fresh government support is on the way.

The Treasury must employ a few people who have worked in business, so you would have thought the penny would have dropped: companies are making post-March employment and investment decisions now.

In sectors affected by lockdown – such as non-food retail, hospitality, events and leisure – the timing of announcements matters. If Sunak intends to extend the furlough scheme, or grant more VAT and business rates holidays, he shouldn't wait until March to say so.

One assumes Sunak will have to approve at least some of the items on that list, if only until the end of June, to stay in step with the vaccination programme. But get on with it. The budget is a big set-piece event for the Treasury, but the business world just wants certainty as soon as possible.

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2021.01.19 - Sport

- [Cricket Pant leads record-breaking chase as India beat Australia to win fourth Test and series](#)
- [As it happened Read back over our OBO report](#)
- [Live scorecard Day five of the fourth Test at the Gabba](#)
- [Ali Martin Root's depleted England should be proud](#)
- [Neville's tenure as England Women coach: tepid and too much arrogance](#)
- [Football Neville named Inter Miami head coach](#)
- [Australian Open Calls to shorten matches rejected as player quarantine likened to 'prison'](#)
- [Australian Open Kyrgios hits out at Djokovic over Covid-19 controversy](#)
- [QPR's Manisha Tailor I am here to work in football and offer change](#)
- [Jamie Peacock Success would be if one person changed their mindset](#)
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- [Messi's red mist shows he really is only human after all](#)
- [Football Alaba agrees to join Real Madrid on four-year deal this summer](#)

Cricket

Rishabh Pant leads record-breaking chase as India beat Australia to fourth Test and series

- [Day five: Australia 369 and 294; India 336 and 329-7](#)
- Tourists chase down 328 with 19 balls remaining



Rishabh Pant and teammates celebrate India's dramatic win over Australia on day five of the fourth Test to claim the series at the Gabba in Brisbane.
Photograph: Bradley Kanaris/Getty Images

Rishabh Pant and teammates celebrate India's dramatic win over Australia on day five of the fourth Test to claim the series at the Gabba in Brisbane.
Photograph: Bradley Kanaris/Getty Images

Australian Associated Press

Tue 19 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

A freewheeling Rishabh Pant has stormed Australia's Gabba fortress in record-breaking fashion, helping India snatch a three-wicket win to cap one

of the greatest Test series of the modern era.

A stoic Cheteshwar Pujara refused to release India's four-year hold of the Border-Gavaskar trophy on a dramatic final day of the four-Test series, weathering 211 balls and 10 body blows while denting Australia's hopes of victory.

[India win fourth Test to claim series against Australia – live!](#)

[Read more](#)

Pujara's vigil set the platform for Pant to complete a venue-record chase of 328. The dashing keeper-batsman made remarkably light work of the pressure-laden situation, bringing up the winning runs with a driven boundary off Josh Hazlewood.

Pant finished 89 not out, securing victory at 5.37pm (local time) with three overs remaining. "This is one of the biggest things in life right now," man-of-the-match Pant said.

The once-in-a-generation defeat could have long-term ramifications – at a minimum it has clouded Australia's path to this year's world Test championship final at Lord's.

It was a fatiguing and frustrating Tuesday for Tim Paine and Australia's attack. The ignominy, for a range of reasons, may linger longer in their minds than the heartbreak at Headingley that Ben Stokes inflicted in 2019.

The highest successful chase in a Gabba Test was previously 236-7, which Australia completed in 1951, while this shock loss ended Australia's 32-year undefeated run at the venue.

Paine cursed his team's inability to close out a series win at multiple junctures after skittling India for a record-low total of 36 in Adelaide. "Absolutely disappointed," Paine said. "India have outplayed us for the majority of the series and fully deserve to win the series."

The wicketkeeper is also likely to bemoan a potential missed stumping when Pant was on 16, and a review that went within a whisker of removing Pujara

for two. There will be questions asked about Paine's captaincy, potential changes and Australia's lack of ruthlessness.

01:21

'Unreal': India's record-breaking victory over Australia seals series – video report

There should also be praise for an inexperienced Indian XI that threw the kitchen sink at the hosts, refusing to buckle when severely under the pump on countless occasions in the series-deciding fourth Test.

Pat Cummins worked overtime throughout day five of the series-deciding fourth Test, snaring four of the first five wickets to fall to give Australia a fighting chance. But Cummins, who was named man of the series, lacked support as Shubman Gill (91), Pujara and Pant shifted momentum yet again in the topsy-turvy series.

"Here and in Sydney, the game was there to win on day five but we just didn't take enough wickets," Cummins said.

The world's top-ranked bowler removed Pujara and Mayank Agarwal in a seven-over spell with the second new ball. Pant proceeded to steamroll his way to victory with some assistance from debutant Washington Sundar's quick-fire 22.

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[Cricket](#)

India pull off stunning win over Australia to seal series – as it happened

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Cricket

India second innings

India second innings

Batsman		Runs	Balls	4s	6s
Rohit Sharma	c Paine b Cummins	7	21	1	0
Shubman Gill	c Smith b Lyon	91	146	8	2
Cheteshwar Pujara	lbw b Cummins	56	211	7	0
Ajinkya Rahane	c Paine b Cummins	24	22	1	1
Rishabh Pant	Not Out	89	138	9	1
Mayank Agarwal	c Wade b Cummins	9	15	1	0
Washington Sundar	b Lyon	22	29	2	1
Shardul Thakur	c Lyon b Hazlewood	2	3	0	0
Navdeep Saini	Not Out	0	0	0	0
Mohammed Siraj	Yet to Bat	0	0	0	0
T Natarajan	Yet to Bat	0	0	0	0
Extras	18b 8lb 0 3nb	29			
Total	for 7	329	97.0 overs		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mitchell Starc	16	0	75	0
Josh Hazlewood	22	5	74	1
Pat Cummins	24	10	55	4
Cameron Green	3	1	10	0
Nathan Lyon	31	7	85	2
Marnus Labuschagne	1	0	4	0

Fall of wickets

Order	Name	Runs
1	Rohit Sharma	18
2	Shubman Gill	132

3	Ajinkya Rahane	167
4	Cheteshwar Pujara	228
5	Mayank Agarwal	265
6	Washington Sundar	318
7	Shardul Thakur	325

Australia second innings

Australia second innings

Batsman		Runs	Balls	4s	6s
Marcus Harris	c Pant b Thakur	38	82	8	0
David Warner	lbw b Sundar	48	75	6	0
Marnus Labuschagne	c Sharma b Siraj	25	22	5	0
Steven Smith	c Rahane b Siraj	55	74	7	0
Matthew Wade	c Pant b Siraj	0	3	0	0
Cameron Green	c Sharma b Thakur	37	90	3	0
Tim Paine	c Pant b Thakur	27	37	3	0
Pat Cummins	Not Out	28	51	2	1
Mitchell Starc	c Saini b Siraj	1	4	0	0
Nathan Lyon	c Agarwal b Thakur	13	10	0	1
Josh Hazlewood	c Thakur b Siraj	9	11	2	0
Extras	5b 2lb 0 2w 4nb	13			
Total	for 10	294	75.5 overs		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mohammed Siraj	19	5	73	5
T Natarajan	14	4	41	0
Washington Sundar	18	1	80	1
Shardul Thakur	19	2	61	4
Navdeep Saini	5	1	32	0

Fall of wickets

Order	Name	Runs
1	Marcus Harris	89

2	David Warner	91
3	Marnus Labuschagne	123
4	Matthew Wade	123
5	Steven Smith	196
6	Cameron Green	227
7	Tim Paine	242
8	Mitchell Starc	247
9	Nathan Lyon	274
10	Josh Hazlewood	294

India first innings

		India first innings				
Batsman		Runs	Balls	4s	6s	
Rohit Sharma	c Starc b Lyon	44	74	6	0	
Shubman Gill	c Smith b Cummins	7	15	1	0	
Cheteshwar Pujara	c Paine b Hazlewood	25	94	2	0	
Ajinkya Rahane	c Wade b Starc	37	93	3	0	
Mayank Agarwal	c Smith b Hazlewood	38	75	3	1	
Rishabh Pant	c Green b Hazlewood	23	29	2	0	
Washington Sundar	c Green b Starc	62	144	7	1	
Shardul Thakur	b Cummins	67	115	9	2	
Navdeep Saini	c Smith b Hazlewood	5	14	1	0	
Mohammed Siraj	b Hazlewood	13	10	2	0	
T Natarajan	Not Out	1	9	0	0	
Extras	5b 7lb 0 2nb		14			
Total	for 10			336	111.4 overs	
Bowler		O	M	R	W	
Mitchell Starc	23	3	88	2		
Josh Hazlewood	24	6	57	5		
Pat Cummins	27	5	94	2		
Cameron Green	8	1	20	0		

Nathan Lyon	28	9	65	1
Marnus Labuschagne	1	1	0	0

Fall of wickets

Order	Name	Runs
1	Shubman Gill	11
2	Rohit Sharma	60
3	Cheteshwar Pujara	105
4	Ajinkya Rahane	144
5	Mayank Agarwal	161
6	Rishabh Pant	186
7	Shardul Thakur	309
8	Navdeep Saini	320
9	Washington Sundar	328
10	Mohammed Siraj	336

Australia first innings

Australia first innings

Batsman		Runs	Balls	4s	6s
David Warner	c Sharma b Siraj	1	4	0	0
Marcus Harris	c Sundar b Thakur	5	23	0	0
Marnus Labuschagne	c Pant b Natarajan	108	204	9	0
Steven Smith	c Sharma b Sundar	36	77	5	0
Matthew Wade	c Thakur b Natarajan	45	87	6	0
Cameron Green	b Sundar	47	107	6	0
Tim Paine	c Sharma b Thakur	50	104	6	0
Pat Cummins	lbw b Thakur	2	8	0	0
Mitchell Starc	Not Out	20	35	0	1
Nathan Lyon	b Sundar	24	22	4	0
Josh Hazlewood	b Natarajan	11	27	2	0
Extras	4b 5lb 0 5w 6nb	20			
Total	for 10	369	115.2 overs		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mohammed Siraj	28	10	77	1
T Natarajan	24	3	78	3
Shardul Thakur	24	6	94	3
Navdeep Saini	7	2	21	0
Washington Sundar	31	6	89	3
Rohit Sharma	0	0	1	0

Fall of wickets

Order	Name	Runs
1	David Warner	4
2	Marcus Harris	17
3	Steven Smith	87
4	Matthew Wade	200
5	Marnus Labuschagne	213
6	Tim Paine	311
7	Cameron Green	313
8	Pat Cummins	315
9	Nathan Lyon	354
10	Josh Hazlewood	369

Umpires

B N J Oxenford, P Wilson, P R Reiffel, C A Polosak, D C Boon
 Australia

David Warner, Marcus Harris, Marnus Labuschagne, Steven Smith, Matthew Wade, Cameron Green, Tim Paine, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood

India

Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Mayank Agarwal, Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj, T Natarajan

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England in Sri Lanka 2020-21

Victory in first Test a personal and team triumph for Root's depleted England

The captain bore the fruits of having some time off and should be proud of how he and his undercooked team started the year



The England captain, Joe Root, celebrates reaching his double century on day three, the highlight of a compelling first Test in Sri Lanka. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

The England captain, Joe Root, celebrates reaching his double century on day three, the highlight of a compelling first Test in Sri Lanka. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket



[Ali Martin](#)
[@Cricket_Ali](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 09.49 EST

After the presentation and the press conferences were out of the way, and the dust on the well-worn pitch had settled, Joe Root stepped out on to the outfield in Galle to speak to the solitary England fan who, from the ramparts of the neighbouring Dutch fort, had witnessed in person [the team's seven-wicket victory](#).

Rob Lewis had spent 10 months in Sri Lanka waiting for the team to return after the original series was postponed in March and Root, whose match-defining 228 was forged with a bat that has a Barmy Army logo on the back of it, wanted to thank him personally for his support across the five days.

[England wrap up seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka in first Test](#)
[Read more](#)

The pair chatting at a distance over the phone, captured on video by England's media manager, Danny Reuben, was a thoughtful act from a jaded captain who had spent the bulk of the match out on the park, either sweeping Sri Lanka's spinners to distraction during his fourth Test double-century or directing traffic out in the field.

This was England's fifth successive away victory in Sri Lanka and Root was rightly handed the oversized cheque as player of the match. Wins on the road in Test cricket should never be sniffed at – not least those in the heat and humidity of the tropics – and this one, though imperfect, still had plenty going for it.

After all, while it was Root's 24th victory as captain it was also his first away from home without the talismanic Ben Stokes in the side. Jofra Archer has been similarly rested, Rory Burns is on paternity leave, Chris Woakes missed out because of an isolation period and Ollie Pope is not yet ready after shoulder surgery: five players who can lay claim to being first-teamers (even if that concept is being challenged by the fixture schedule).

It was encouraging therefore that Jonny Bairstow, playing his first Test for a year, and Dan Lawrence, on debut, were the batsmen who doused the flames of panic the previous evening before knocking off the remaining 36 runs of the target on the final morning. Root and head coach Chris Silverwood are trying to build a deep and competitive batting lineup and will welcome the headaches this pair have presented.

While Lawrence looked at ease during both this 21 not out and his 73 on day two, and Jos Buttler started a subcontinental winter behind the stumps without any major hiccups, Root's own return to form is perhaps the greatest takeaway from England placing one hand on the delightfully named Moose Cup.

The 30-year-old captain often eschews rest, such as at the end of last summer when he turned out for Yorkshire, but after experiencing his first calendar year without a Test century he admitted the three-month break since last September – briefly interrupted by a tour of South Africa in which he didn't feature – was helpful.



Stuart Broad was in fine form during the first Test but can still expect to be rested for the second Test which starts on Friday. Photograph: Sri Lanka Cricket

“I think the thing that’s really benefited me is having a period of time to work on my game,” Root said after the match. “Whether that’s technical or mental, [it’s been good] to have time to think about things and take stock and look where I can improve.

“For a long time now I’ve been quite used to playing huge amounts of cricket and still managed to have success. The current climate with bubbles and how things are alongside Covid have made things tougher, so that’s the thing that’s helped me coming into this game. The challenge is to make it count and build on a nice start personally.”

Root is fully aware there are tougher challenges to come. Sri Lanka had a stinker on the first day, perhaps a combination of coming straight from South Africa and thinking they needed to match England’s aggressive tactics from the 3-0 defeat they received in 2018. But the way they battled back, even inducing some jitters among the tourists, suggests the second and final Test, starting on Friday, may not be so straightforward.

Four more Tests in India follow for England, with an expected seven-day isolation period in hotel rooms wiping out the prospect of a tour match. It makes what Steve Waugh's great Australia team used to call "the final frontier" even more arduous, both for those who don't get a game in Sri Lanka and a spin attack that clearly needs plenty of overs.

Much has been written and said about Dom Bess and Jack Leach over the course of the first Test, not always positive but in the main accepting they are, for different reasons, being asked to deliver at the highest level in circumstances far more challenging than their more illustrious predecessors ever faced.

They still shared 14 wickets – no mean feat – and though Root's ability to cage Sri Lanka's batsmen with catchers was reduced at times by a lack of control, the pair did improve as the match wore on and they will only be stronger for it. Moeen Ali could in theory return after recovering from Covid, while Mason Crane, Matt Parkinson and Amar Virdi are also on tour, but it would be a backward step if either Leach or Bess were benched so soon.

[Joe Root admits England are 'not perfect' after win in first Sri Lanka Test](#)
[Read more](#)

Changes are still likely, though. Stuart Broad, not always at home in Asia, was immaculate with match figures of 26 overs, 14 maidens, three for 34 and can get back to wedding planning if, as has been the plan, Jimmy Anderson tags in for the next match. Woakes, viewed as the first-choice all-rounder before Covid protocols struck, may challenge Sam Curran, even if the left-armer typically delivered some telling interventions.

Mark Wood may also be due a rest, offering a chance for Olly Stone or one of the wrist-spinners, perhaps. Wood went wicketless but England, who should be playing the long game here, will be pleased his speeds stayed around 90mph throughout his 27 overs; a feather in the cap of a bowler who appears – ahem, touch wood – more robust these days.

As Root stressed, this was a performance to build upon rather than call for bunting. But given the lack of preparation, the challenges of the bubble, an

inexperienced spin attack and the absence of both key players and all but one of the supporters who usually lift spirits out in the middle, it would also be churlish to dismiss what was a promising start to the year.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/18/first-test-victory-a-personal-team-triumph-joe-root-england-sri-lanka>

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SportblogPhil Neville

Phil Neville's tenure as England Women coach: tepid and too much arrogance

[Suzanne Wrack](#)

Neville exits after one World Cup semi-final, several outbursts and an arrogance not befitting a coach with such limited experience



Phil Neville's tenure as England Women manager will be remembered for his outbursts as he failed to deliver significant progress on the pitch.

Photograph: Richard Heathcote/Getty Images

Phil Neville's tenure as England Women manager will be remembered for his outbursts as he failed to deliver significant progress on the pitch.

Photograph: Richard Heathcote/Getty Images

Tue 19 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

After the longest of goodbyes the [Phil Neville](#) experiment is finally over. He leaves the England job not on the crest of a wave following major tournament success, or tail between legs having fallen short on the biggest of

stages, but with a muted press release that sums up a muted and, dare we say it, tepid tenure.

As he leaves [to become Inter Miami manager](#), five days short of his three-year anniversary, what to make of it all? There has been praise for aspects of the 43-year-old's spell. His holistic approach and the big-game experience he had from his career as a player were perhaps his greatest strengths. His man-management was described as "world class" by his assistant Bev Priestman (who took charge of the Canada national team on 1 November last year) on the eve of England's 2019 World Cup opener. She was backed by the right-back Lucy Bronze, who said his relationship-building with players, fans and staff had helped England to "become a better team".

[Women's Super League: talking points from the weekend's action](#)

[Read more](#)

Neville undoubtedly has an ability to build a rapport with players and to charm employers. He is, overall, not an unlikeable person. However, we will mainly remember the outbursts, the narrative twisting and an arrogance not befitting a man with such limited coaching credentials.

"The performances over the last two games in my opinion have been outstanding," he had said after a scrappy goal from Beth Mead salvaged a sluggish 1-0 defeat of Portugal – now ranked 30th in the world – in October 2019. "I'm pleased with the direction that we're going."

It was a baffling assessment for anyone watching the game and would become a defining moment of his time in charge. Filled with a renewed confidence at having ended a five-game run without a win, Neville attacked a young journalist who had described the preceding performance in a 2-1 defeat against Brazil as "tepid". He raged petulantly: "You wanted me sacked, didn't you? Yes you did, I read it. I read it."

His record, say those searching for the positives, includes a [first SheBelieves Cup win](#), a World Cup semi-final and Olympic qualification and Baroness Sue Campbell, the Football Association's director of women's football, said on Monday that his status as a former Manchester United and England player "did much to raise the profile of our team".

But how much did he actually improve the team, if at all? England were a good team when Neville took the reins in January 2018, third in the world and the top ranked European nation. They now sit sixth and have registered seven defeats and a draw in their past 11 games.

Even the three wins left a lot to be desired. After the debacle in Portugal in October 2019 and a limp 2-1 defeat against Germany at Wembley in November, England twice fell behind to the Czech Republic (now ranked 27th in the world) and had to [rely on an 86th-minute goal from Leah Williamson to save face](#) – a goal which likely kept Neville in his job going into the new year.

Against Japan, at the She Believes Cup the following March, an 83rd-minute goal from Ellen White ensured the somewhat humiliated Lionesses did not depart the mini-tournament goalless.



Phil Neville leaves England Women with their ranking lower than when he took charge in 2018. Photograph: Richard Sellers/PA

The jewel in Neville's crown, [the World Cup semi-final](#), was the team's third consecutive major semi-final, a hurdle he was charged with helping them to clear, but failed. In France, six goals from an in-form White helped to paper over the cracks of an at times chaotic defence and frequent lapses in

concentration. In the end only a standout quarter-final defeat of Norway offered a complete England performance.

Campbell is not wrong, Neville's profile did bring attention. The biggest names in UK football journalism attended his unveiling at St George's Park. But it would be wrong to suggest the Lionesses and women's football owe a significant portion of an increased profile to the manager. Women's football was (and is) growing and major tournaments bring eyes in increasing numbers. Neville's decision to take on the job in the first place was not a charitable gesture on his part, a bid to use his profile to pull the women's game into the spotlight, it was self-serving, a job that would bolster his managerial career and, if anything, the decision of a high-profile player from the men's game taking on the job was much more of a reflection of just how far the women's game has come.

Ignoring the results, the outgoing manager has been credited with changing the way the side play, making them a more possession-dominating side that builds out from the back. Except it is likely that change would have taken place regardless. The top Women's Super League sides were increasingly playing with the ball at their feet and building through the thirds and any appointment by the FA, which has been cultivating that style of play across all age groups, would have likely been encouraged to do similar.

[Fran Kirby hits winner as Chelsea beat Manchester United to go top of WSL](#)
[Read more](#)

When the FA appointed Gareth Southgate on the men's side the governing body took a risk, one that has, on the whole, paid off. Perhaps that decision made the organisation overconfident when deciding to take a punt on Neville? Neville, like Southgate, was a squeaky-clean boy-scout-like former England international who could help the FA past [the Mark Sampson saga](#), in much the same way as Southgate became the go-to guy following [the Sam Allardyce debacle](#).

Except the FA got cocky and dropped the ball. Because where Southgate had managerial experience, including under its wing with the under-21s, Neville had almost none.

Three years later and the FA is in a spin again. Yes, the Netherlands head coach, Sarina Wiegman, is set to come in after the Olympics, but in keeping Neville (a man who has been actively searching for his next job) for as long as it has, the governing body has wasted precious time. With six months to go before the Olympics the FA has to hunt down an interim England manager and a Team GB manager.

It all feels very avoidable.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2021/jan/19/phil-neville-tenure-england-women-coach-inter-miami>

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Phil Neville

Phil Neville named Inter Miami head coach after leaving England role

- David Beckham: ‘I know his qualities, his decency and honesty’
- England Women to appoint interim manager until August



Phil Neville has joined Inter Miami after leaving his role as England Women head coach. Photograph: Marc Atkins/Getty Images

Phil Neville has joined Inter Miami after leaving his role as England Women head coach. Photograph: Marc Atkins/Getty Images

[Paul MacInnes](#)

[@PaulMac](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.47 EST

Phil Neville has been appointed head coach of Inter Miami, leaving his role as England Women manager early and throwing the Football Association’s plans for the summer Olympic Games up in the air.

[Phil Neville's Miami move would mark another door being held open for him | Jonathan Liew](#)

[Read more](#)

Neville had been expected to leave his position with the Lionesses this summer, and to coach the Team GB women's side at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympic Games. Instead he will now [join the MLS side](#), co-owned by his friend David Beckham, with immediate effect.

"I am incredibly delighted for this opportunity to coach [Inter Miami](#)," Neville said. "This is a very young club with a lot of promise and upside. This fantastic soccer-loving market deserves consistent performances and a winning mentality, and I look forward to getting to work."

Neville leaves the Lionesses after three years, a [fourth-place finish](#) at the 2019 World Cup and one trophy, the [She Believes Cup](#) of the same year. Over the course of his tenure, however, England's world ranking slipped from third to sixth.

This month the FA's head of women's football, Baroness Sue Campbell, told the BBC that Neville was expected to take charge of Team GB for the Tokyo Olympics. The FA must now find both a coach for the Games and a temporary replacement for the women's team, with the [new full-time manager, Sarina Wiegman](#), not taking over until after the Games, where she is to coach the Netherlands women's side.

Football Weekly

Liverpool misfire again, Özil and the genius of Ndombele

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Neville had previously said it was a "massive ambition" of his to manage a Great Britain team at the Olympics, but he was sounded out about the Inter Miami role this month.

Beckham said: "I have known Phil since we were both teenagers at the academy. We share a footballing DNA having been trained by some of the

best leaders in the game, and it's those values that I have always wanted running through our club.

"I know his qualities as a person, his decency, loyalty and honesty – and his incredible energy and work ethic. Anyone who has played or worked with Phil knows he is a natural leader, and I believe now is the right time for him to join."



David Beckham and Phil Neville were teammates at Manchester United for more than a decade. Photograph: Marcio José Sánchez/AP

Following the news of Neville's departure, Campbell thanked him for his work with the Lionesses. "After steadyng the ship at a challenging period, he helped us to win the SheBelieves Cup for the first time, reach the World Cup semi-finals and qualify for the Olympics," Campbell said.

[Women's Super League: talking points from the weekend's action](#)
[Read more](#)

"Given his status as a former Manchester United and England player, he did much to raise the profile of our team. He has used his platform to champion the women's game, worked tirelessly to support our effort to promote more female coaches and used his expertise to develop many of our younger players."

Speaking of his time with the national side, Neville said: “It has been an honour to manage England and I have enjoyed three of the best years of my career with the FA and the Lionesses. The players who wear the England shirt are some of the most talented and dedicated athletes I have ever had the privilege to work with.”

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[Australian Open](#)

Bautista Agut sorry for likening quarantine to prison 'but with wifi'

- World No 13 says remarks were ‘taken out of context’
- Men’s matches will remain best of five sets, says Craig Tiley



Some 72 players and staffers are in lockdown in Melbourne following six positive Covid-19 cases among the entourages arriving to Australia on 17 charter flights. Photograph: Mike Owen/Getty Images

Some 72 players and staffers are in lockdown in Melbourne following six positive Covid-19 cases among the entourages arriving to Australia on 17 charter flights. Photograph: Mike Owen/Getty Images

[Emma Kemp](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 23.46 EST

Roberto Bautista Agut has apologised after a video was released in which the tennis player likened [Australian Open](#) quarantine in Melbourne to being in prison and laid sole blame with the Victorian government.

Frustration and confusion continues unabated in the buildup to the season's first major, starting on 8 February, with some 72 players and staffers in lockdown in Melbourne.

Two more players tested positive on Tuesday, bringing the total number of Covid-19 cases associated with the tournament to seven. A third case on Tuesyesterday involved a "non-playing participant", according to Victoria's health authorities. While many players have transformed their hotel rooms into makeshift training centres, the overall sentiment has been one of disquiet and apprehension about potential injury and form ramifications of two weeks with no court practice.

In a broadcast on Israeli news channel Sport 5, Bautista Agut became the latest to voice concern, drawing parallels between hotel quarantine and being behind bars.

"It's the same, but with wifi," the world No 13, a semi-finalist and quarter-finalist at the 2019 Wimbledon and Australian Open tournaments respectively, said. "These people have no idea about tennis and about practice courts, and it's a complete disaster. The control of everything isn't Tennis Australia, it's with the government."

"You can work in the room but it's not the same. I feel very, very tight and I cannot imagine staying two weeks like this. It's really, really tough. I will have to work a lot mentally."

In a later statement, Bautista Agut said: "I want to apologise to everyone who has been offended by the video that was posted about me recently. It is a private conversation taken out of context that has unfortunately been released to the media without my knowledge or consent."

"Both my coach and I are following the protocols designed by the Australian government and Tennis Australia to avoid any risk and guarantee to compete again in a safe way. These are hard times for athletes and society in general."

"I thank all the people who are making playing tennis again possible. As well as all those who are fighting Covid-19 everyday. The management that has been made in Australia to prevent the spread of the virus is admirable."

Earlier the two-times Australia Open champion Victoria Azarenka had implored her fellow players to empathise with the ordeal endured by Victorians as a result of the pandemic.

“I would like to ask my colleagues for cooperation, understanding and empathy for the local community that has been going through a lot of very demanding restrictions that they did not choose, but were forced to follow,” Azarenka wrote in a lengthy open letter posted on Twitter.

□ □ pic.twitter.com/BWTqubGMR3

— victoria azarenka (@vika7) [January 19, 2021](#)

The situation has sparked suggestions organisers should consider shortening men’s matches to best of three sets, instead of the traditional five, to offset the disadvantage to players in hard quarantine.

Tournament director, Craig Tiley, rejected that notion out of hand, despite acknowledging the lockdown meant preparation was “not an even playing field”.

“We are a grand slam at the end of the day,” Tiley told the Nine Network. “Right now, three out of five sets for the men and two out of three sets for the women is the position we plan on sticking to.

“In order for us to pull this off, we’ve had to do it with great partnership with Quarantine Victoria, with the Victorian government and that is working really well. The two weeks with the players and 72 of them being in a hard lockdown, we are providing them with all sorts of exercise equipment in their rooms.

“They can be creative on how they use the dressers, the beds for exercise, and we have seen on social media some really interesting ideas. And then they are going to come out after 14 days in their room and we will give them some time to prepare and that is why we had that buffer week, in the event that this was going to happen.”

Tiley said tournament organisers were considering other avenues “to try to even it up as much as possible”.

Kevin Roberts, professor of exercise science at the University of South Australia, said that would be difficult, citing the “physiological and biochemical decay” induced by significant changes to training schedules and environments. This, he said, presents in the form of reduced cardiovascular capacity, decision-making speed and accuracy, and an underpreparedness to adjust to the extreme temperatures commonly seen in [Melbourne](#) grand slam.

“Perhaps most critical is the fact that players are now in controlled, air-conditioned rooms, 24 hours a day,” Roberts said. “Exposure to hot environments is essential for players to maintain enhanced capacity to regulate their bodies under very hot court conditions.”

Two positive Covid-19 cases that sparked a hard lockdown of some players in quarantine have been reclassified as cases of viral shedding. On Tuesday morning Victorian premier, Daniel Andrews, said that may be cause to grant some players a reprieve. However, [an afternoon update from the state's chief health officer](#), Brett Sutton, said no changes to the strictest quarantine conditions would be made just yet.

Nevertheless, Tiley said quarantine “is the contribution” affected players must make “to get the privilege of, when they do come out, to compete for \$80m in prize money”.

[Australian Open: how Covid is shaping the tennis tournament – explainer](#)
[Read more](#)

He labelled the six Covid cases as a low figure given 1,200 coronavirus tests have been carried out in Melbourne over the past five days.

“There was going to be an expectation to have several positive cases,” he said. “But now we’re in a position where they’re in lockdown, designed to protect the community.”

Tiley also defended Djokovic’s reported appeal, via a wishlist, for organisers to ease restrictions, a move that prompted [Nick Kyrgios to call the world No 1 “a tool” on Twitter](#).

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[Australian Open](#)

Nick Kyrgios calls Djokovic 'a tool' over Covid demands before Australian Open

- Djokovic has called for easing of quarantine restrictions
- 'No special treatment' for players, says Victorian Premier



Novak Djokovic gestures on Monday from his hotel balcony in Adelaide, where he is in quarantine before the Australian Open. Photograph: Brenton Edwards/AFP/Getty Images

Novak Djokovic gestures on Monday from his hotel balcony in Adelaide, where he is in quarantine before the Australian Open. Photograph: Brenton Edwards/AFP/Getty Images

Reuters

Mon 18 Jan 2021 17.00 EST

Nick Kyrgios has joined the former Davis Cup player Sam Groth in criticising Novak Djokovic after the world No 1 reportedly wrote to [Australian Open](#) organisers asking them to ease quarantine restrictions for players.

[Some Victorians in Sydney allowed to return home as Daniel Andrews rejects tennis players' demands](#)

[Read more](#)

Passengers who arrived on three charter flights [have been placed into quarantine](#), including more than 70 players who are unable to train outside their rooms for 14 days before the year's first grand slam tournament starts on 8 February.

A Spanish tennis website reported that Djokovic wrote to the [Tennis Australia](#) chief executive, Craig Tiley, with a list of "demands", asking for reduced isolation periods and having players moved to "private houses with tennis courts".

Djokovic's management team did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Kyrgios criticised Djokovic in 2020 for organising the [Adria Tour exhibition event in the Balkans](#), where multiple players including the top-ranked Serb contracted the virus.

"Djokovic is a tool," Kyrgios, ranked 47th in the world, said on Twitter after the latest reports.

Djokovic, who opted to rent a private house instead of staying at a hotel during the 2020 US Open, is among top players who are serving their mandatory quarantine in Adelaide before travelling to [Melbourne](#).

Many Australians have questioned the decision to host the tournament, with organisers flying in 1,200 players and their entourages when thousands of citizens are stranded overseas due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

01:23

Australian Open players forced to isolate in hotel rooms after multiple Covid-19 cases – video

The Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, said tennis players stuck in isolation in their Melbourne hotel rooms would not be given any special treatment, following questions on Djokovic's reported demands. Andrews

told local media at a press conference: “People are free to provide a list of demands. But the answer is no ... There’s no special treatment here.”

Djokovic, who set up the breakaway Professional Tennis Players’ Association last year after resigning as the head of ATP’s Players Council, was looking to gain popularity, said the Australian Groth.

“Is he serious ” he wrote [in his column](#) for the Herald Sun. “What did he think would happen? That (Victoria’s Premier) Dan Andrews would say ‘sure Novak anything you want’? Spare me.”

Groth also pointed to the criticism Djokovic received for organising the Adria Tour in June. “To suggest players should have shorter quarantine isn’t only ridiculous, it’s insulting to Australians that have had to endure it.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/18/nick-kyrgios-joins-critics-of-novak-djokovic-over-covid-19-controversy>.

[Football](#)

Interview

QPR's Manisha Tailor: 'I am here to work in football and offer change'

[Donald McRae](#)



Manisha Tailor, academy coach at QPR, hopes to see 'greater change within the staffing network' of football. Photograph: Lucille Flood for the FA

Manisha Tailor, academy coach at QPR, hopes to see 'greater change within the staffing network' of football. Photograph: Lucille Flood for the FA

The only South Asian Indian woman in the English professional game talks about her career and how it has helped her traumatised twin brother to speak again



[@donaldgmcrae](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

“There were many times where I would go to games and of course it would be perceived that I was the physio or any role where I couldn’t possibly be the lead coach,” Manisha Tailor says as she remembers arriving at opposition grounds with her Queens Park Rangers boys’ academy teams. Tailor is now the lead foundation phase coach at [QPR](#) and she says that “being a South Asian Indian woman, and the only person of South Asian heritage, male or female, in this kind of full-time coaching role at any of the 92 clubs in English professional football is a testament to QPR”.

Yet, when she first began working as the head coach of the under-nine boys, the opposition automatically assumed she was the QPR physio. “Myself and my colleague had conversations about it,” Tailor says with a smile and a shrug. “We’d say: ‘How many times has this happened? Is it three in a row? We laugh about it but you have to be in a position to influence change. You need to be in a position where you have the qualifications – but you also need an opportunity to coach on a level playing field. I was given that at QPR but I know that there are other South Asian people, male and female, who have the qualifications to do my role. So why are so few people of colour, who have pro licences, getting opportunities to become head coaches?’”

[Phil Neville steps down as England Women head coach with immediate effect](#)

[Read more](#)

Tailor has forged a brave and lonely path in male football over the past five years. QPR have been exemplary in backing her but she has still had to fight against prejudice. “There have been times where I would give out instructions and these would be dismissed. The same instruction would be given by a male counterpart and the response would be very different. That’s happened on several occasions. It’s happening less because I have a supportive head of coaching in Chris Ramsey and a supportive academy manager in Alex Carroll. That support comes from the very top where [Les Ferdinand is the director of football](#). They all appreciate there is an unconscious bias and underlying stereotyping that needs to be addressed. But you have to be bold and resilient to have these challenging conversations.

“It’s been a tough journey but I built lots of resilience and perseverance through my life experience. Maybe if I had not gone through some of those things I wouldn’t have been able to get back up when you get knocked down. Perhaps I wouldn’t have been as open to learning and having that mindset of wanting to get better.”

The 40-year-old Tailor’s resilience is obvious when she talks about her twin brother, Mayur, who has had a mental illness for the past 22 years. He has struggled to communicate verbally for most of the past two decades and the entire family has been scarred by a mysterious condition that has yet to be fully diagnosed. But Tailor found a new purpose in her life, which fuses her love of football and a desire to help Mayur, when she gave up teaching at a primary school to forge a new path in 2011.



Manisha Tailor at a session with under-13 boys at QPR. Photograph: Lucille Flood for the FA

“We were joined at the hip,” she says of her relationship with her twin growing up in London. “We did everything together. We both loved sport, especially football, and it was a huge part of our life. We’d play in the garden and we were both in the school team. It brought us together – although he was a Liverpool fan and I was an Arsenal fan.

“I was going into teaching and my brother was very clever at maths and science and he was going into computer science. We found it bizarre, and he was really upset, when his school results went from predicted A grades to Ds and Es. He still got into university through clearing so we thought: ‘OK, he didn’t get his first options but he did get into a course he will enjoy.

“We hadn’t noticed any behavioural changes but when we were 18 we went on a family holiday to America and all of a sudden it started. We were in Universal Studios and he just turned round and said: ‘I can see things. I can hear things. There are people with guns.’ That’s when we recognised that he was hallucinating. We came back to London and his condition deteriorated. So, because of the stigma around mental illness, particularly being South Asian, we thought as a family we would help my brother. However, it came to a point where he had to be sectioned.”

Tailor's face clouds as the memories tumble from her. "It was heartbreaking. Our 21st was spent in the psychiatric unit. You're standing there and everybody's trying to engage as much as possible and make it a happy occasion but I'm thinking: 'He doesn't even know who I am.' We'd learnt that he was bullied at school and he never told us. He kept it all inside because it was so traumatic. He spoke less and less and maybe that helped him feel, essentially being in trauma, that was a safe place within himself."

This whole journey with my brother has given me a moral purpose – reconnecting with football helped me connect with him

The family resolved to eventually care for him at home and, even though he remained unable to talk to them, Mayur's condition stabilised. Tailor's own life changed for ever 10 years ago. "I was on a lucrative salary, in a great job as a deputy head and trainee head, but I wanted to finish my master's in leadership and take care of my mum who'd had a triple heart bypass. So I changed career and the opportunity for football came. [Rachel Yankey](#) [the former England international] said: 'Now that you're not working full-time, why don't you work on my grassroots football programme part-time?'

"So I did and that involved me storing football equipment at home. Mayur kept staring at the equipment and he finally said: 'Manisha ... football.' Those words felt like a moral calling for me and it got me thinking. 'What am I here to actually do?' This whole journey with my brother has given me a moral purpose. Being able to reconnect with football has helped me connect with him but also connect with myself and what I believe I am here to do – which is to work in football and offer change. Adversity builds character and resilience and if you're in a position that you can influence change, and create pathways for other people, you have to do it. Otherwise things remain exactly how they are."

Tailor was tenacious and innovative as, to her own surprise, she found a way to break the glass ceiling that encased men's football. "I never thought about professional football as a career pathway. Being a South Asian Indian female, it seemed impossible. But I started volunteering at QPR's academy around April 2016 and it came about because I reconnected with Chris Ramsey at [Troy Townsend's Kick It Out](#) event. I had met Chris in 2014 at St George's Park when he, Chris Powell and I were on a panel. Chris [Ramsey]

asked me what I was up to and I told him how I had given up being a deputy head and I wanted to pursue football because of my love for the game and the way it helped me reconnect with my brother.



Manisha Tailor credits QPR's head of coaching Chris Ramsey with helping her progression. Photograph: Lucille Flood for the FA

“Chris said: ‘I haven’t got any jobs at QPR but I’m more than happy for you to come in and volunteer because you have your [Uefa] B licence’ which is the prerequisite for a part-time academy coach. I took that volunteer opportunity with both hands because somebody of his calibre was providing me with a rare opportunity in the professional game. That led to a part-time role with the academy and a paid role with the under-nines in September 2016. I worked with them for a couple of seasons. And then an opportunity came through the Premier League’s Elite Coach Apprenticeship Scheme which was put in place to redress the balance with gender and black, Asian and minority ethnic coaches in the professional game. Chris and Alex Carroll said: ‘Would you be keen for us to apply on your behalf? It’s an opportunity for you to be full-time.’

“Having been unsuccessful before, this time I got on to the course and it led to this position, of lead foundation-base coach, where I oversee the under-nines, 10s and 11s. I’ve also worked with the under-13s for the last two

seasons. My responsibilities have evolved and I now help oversee the coaching operations of the under-nines to under-16s and work very closely with Chris and Alex, assisting with the admin side of the head coaching role. It's great for me because I'm definitely improving – and learning how to manage an environment that's very male-heavy and has an imbalance of women and people of colour in full-time coaching roles.

"I'd like to develop longevity in the game, becoming more credible, while continuing to learn from Chris and Alex and other great people at the club. I'm studying for my A licence and one day I would love to become an assistant head of coaching or assistant academy manager and be a great number two."

Is she now recognised as a lead coach rather than the physio at away matches? "There is familiarity because they've seen me a number of times. I also think things are changing because I see more and more people of colour within part-time coaching roles. But the change needs to be more radical because it's not big enough. The more open the decision-makers are, and the more transparent recruitment processes are, the more we'll start seeing greater change within the staffing network. Ultimately, decision-makers have the power to employ people like me."

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Tailor smiles when I ask about Mayur. "There are little moments when we ask him: 'Are you hungry? Would you like this chocolate?' We sometimes get a 'yes' or a 'no'. A lot more work needs to be done on language development because Mayur has been that way for 20 years. It has been difficult to diagnose because it's a very unique case but sometimes we can give him a newspaper and point to each word. He can read the words out loud. So there is progress."

Does Mayur sound like he once did? "Yes," Tailor says as her face lights up. "Honestly, he does. It's the voice I remember when we were 18."

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Jamie Peacock

Interview

Jamie Peacock: 'Success would be if one person changed their mindset'

[Aaron Bower](#)

The former rugby league great has launched a mental health campaign aiming to help people cope with life in lockdown



Jamie Peacock: 'We need to keep driving this focus on wellbeing – not just now in lockdown, but for the months afterwards.'

Jamie Peacock: 'We need to keep driving this focus on wellbeing – not just now in lockdown, but for the months afterwards.'

Tue 19 Jan 2021 03.00 EST

"Finding your purpose after retiring can be difficult," says [Jamie Peacock](#). The transition out of playing at the highest level is often challenging, something Peacock is not afraid to admit he experienced when his rugby league career ended in 2015. But whereas many players find direction in coaching or punditry, he has taken a different course.

Peacock, a winner of multiple Super League titles with Leeds and Bradford, as well as a former captain of Great Britain, is regarded as one of the toughest, most uncompromising players of his generation. It may come as a surprise, therefore, to learn the 43-year-old is now pioneering change as a mentor in mental health and positive wellbeing.

[Leeds' Stevie Ward 'haunted' by future as concussion forces retirement at 27](#)
[Read more](#)

Working alongside blue-chip companies and sharing stories of his own success, Peacock felt he had found his niche. But as for so many, Covid-19 changed his life. “I’d done some wellbeing programmes with kids in schools, encouraging them to adopt some positive changes, but when the pandemic started I sensed there was a chance to do more,” he says.

Peacock had devised the Be A Champion wellbeing programme in 2018, piloting it in schools across the north of England and aiming to change the mindset of young people. And with many adults struggling to adjust to life in the pandemic, he felt the time to share his experiences with the wider community had arrived. He officially launched the concept on Monday, on the day known as Blue Monday, the most difficult day of the year.

“January and February are already challenging months for many people, but with lockdown those fears and worries are amplified,” Peacock says. “I wanted to create a programme that cut through all of the jargon, and the myriad of information that’s out there, and target positive wellbeing changes for all ages, and all people. If you make this an exclusive thing, nobody will want to do it. It’s accessible for all.”

[The 30-day wellness programme](#) draws on Peacock’s challenges from playing sport at the highest level, and translates them to everyday life. “I had some talent for rugby league, but I wasn’t the most talented player,” he says, perhaps underselling himself. “The choices I made enabled me to be a success, and that can be the case for anyone.

“You had to learn to deal with all kinds of negativity as a sportsman. Those lessons in sport served me well for retirement. But they’re universal lessons. If you focus on small actions in the programme, like exercising regularly,

switching your phone off an hour before bedtime or shutting out negative influences, you can start to make change whether you're a sportsman or not.”

The third national lockdown has, in Peacock's eyes, amplified the need to raise awareness of mental health issues and to roll out the programme. “We need to keep driving this focus on wellbeing – not just now in lockdown, but for the months afterwards, because it's going to have been a tough time for people. I can't emphasise enough how the motivation for doing this is to make sure everyone can see there's the chance to change.”

Peacock points to his own mental resilience as a major factor for his success in rugby league, a trait two of his former teammates have shown in abundance in their own life post-playing. [Stevie Ward retired this month at 27](#) due to long-lasting effects of concussion, while [Rob Burrow's well-publicised battle with motor neurone disease](#) has inspired so many people.



Jamie Peacock with Rob Burrows.

“Rugby league is a sport where you have to be tough and resilient to survive,” he says. “Rob is an absolute inspiration in these testing times when you think of traits like that. We think we have it bad, but he's shown dignity,

optimism and fight against the biggest battle of all. There will be legacy from what Rob is doing, and the awareness he's raising of MND.”

A portion of every sale from the Be A Champion programme will go to the MND Association, as well as Greenhouse, a charity which enables children in deprived communities access to opportunities to further their development. Peacock is certainly no stranger to winning, having won the Super League title more than any other player in history – but what would make this programme a success?

“Success would be getting just one person to change their mindset and wellbeing for the better during the toughest time many of us will face,” Peacock says. “If people can focus on small changes in areas like sleep and positive mindset you can strengthen your resilience and mental wellbeing. Now, more than ever, we need to look after ourselves in that way.”

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[Premier League](#)

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang double sends Arsenal soaring past Newcastle



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang takes off in celebration after scoring the first of his two goals against Newcastle. Photograph: Catherine Ivill/Reuters

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang takes off in celebration after scoring the first of his two goals against Newcastle. Photograph: Catherine Ivill/Reuters

Nick Ames at the Emirates Stadium

[@NickAmes82](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 17.01 EST

Baby steps but perhaps, in one sense, a significant stride. Arsenal's [return to the top half](#) is hardly a cause for unbridled joy but the manner in which they sailed home dangled the promise of better times. Their [struggles over the autumn](#) went hand in hand with a damaging drought on the part of their captain, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, but that seemed a distant memory by the time he had scored his second goal of a win with such ultimate ease it felt like something of a novelty.

It was the first that really blew away the cobwebs. Aubameyang had seen the ball in more threatening areas during the first half than in some entire games this season, even if end product was lacking and he had shot glaringly against the post from Arsenal's best chance. Newcastle had kept them at bay but were broken five minutes after the interval when, characteristically, a rare attempt to sustain some pressure of their own broke down and [Arsenal](#) took their invitation to cut loose.

[Lionel Messi's red mist shows player lauded as deity is only human after all | Jonathan Liew](#)
[Read more](#)

Thomas Partey, imperious throughout his return to the starting lineup after injury, had already sent Aubameyang away down the left with one quick, raking pass. On that occasion, early in the night, the striker had eventually run into traffic. This time he had a clear run at Emil Kraft, a scenario Arsenal had evidently sought to create at the outset, and saw his options increase as the defender backed off. Rather than cut inside he chose to shift the ball on to his left foot, uncorking a rasping drive that offered Karl Darlow little hope and jogged more than a few memories.

It felt like a trademark Aubameyang goal, combining high speed with elite execution, and he had not contrived one of such quality [since the season's opening day](#). A while after his 15th minute miss, which saw him jab against the far upright after Darlow's save from Bukayo Saka had given him an open goal, Aubameyang had jumped into Kraft in a vain attempt to win a penalty and a now-familiar frustration appeared at risk of cutting through. This time, he cast it to one side.

"That's what he's done throughout his career," Mikel Arteta said. "Mentally you have to be really strong to do that. He's come out of a difficult period. We've missed his goals a lot and I'm really pleased for him."

Aubameyang [last scored twice in a match when deciding the FA Cup final](#). His second goal, Arsenal's third, was tapped into an empty net after Cédric Soares had kept the ball in play by a millimetre and cut it back. After such a torrid run he now has four in his last six games; he cannot do it all on his

own but the evening's other defining moment showed that he may no longer need to.



Bukayo Saka continued his impressive form with a goal during Arsenal's comfortable win. Photograph: Catherine Ivill/EPA

Saka and [Emile Smith Rowe](#) are the academy darlings who, more than anyone else, have breathed life into Arsenal's winter and they combined thrillingly on the hour to double the lead. Smith Rowe glides and probes but does so with rare energy and speed; this time he made ground of his own in that left-wing area before teeing up Saka for a low first-time finish. Plenty of time has been spent fretting about the dull form of Nicolas Pépé and Willian, but the two youngsters are beginning to consistently lift Arsenal above the mean to a degree of which their more experienced colleagues seem incapable.

“Overall the team looked confident, solid, compact and very clear about what we had to do in defence and attack,” Arteta said. “I’m very pleased with the clean sheet, the goals, the run and the momentum we are on.”

[Neil Lennon furious at Dubai criticism: 'You're all wanting blood, it's scandalous'](#)
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Arsenal have now kept five straight clean sheets in all competitions for the first time since 2009. It must be noted that they will rarely face less of a threat to their goal. Steve Bruce made eight changes on the back of [Newcastle's derelict defeat to Sheffield United](#), promising “the gloves are off now” and setting up with a far more attacking system than the one that had [almost sneaked an FA Cup win](#) here nine days previously. For all his good intentions, perhaps a more dogged outlook would have yielded a similarly tight game against hosts who took time to get going. Newcastle were incoherent in attack and hardly looked resilient further back; caught betwixt and between, what followed was inevitable.

“We’ve been caught twice on the counterattack and it’s about getting that balance,” Bruce said, while scotching any idea that he cannot arrest an alarming slump in form. “I’ve been in it a long time and managed to do it before.”

The pressure Arteta was under a month ago appears, by contrast, to have lifted. Smiles are becoming more widespread, a case in point being his expression when he explained Aubameyang was substituted at 3-0 because of “a stomach issue”. This performance should not prove too hard to digest.

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[**Sportblog**](#)[**Lionel Messi**](#)

Lionel Messi's red mist shows player lauded as deity is only human after all

The first red card in his Barcelona career is the culmination of his club's decline and the kicking he has endured for years



Lionel Messi stands over Asier Villalibre after felling the Athletic Bilbao player. Messi's first red card in 753 games for Barcelona followed.
Photograph: Bagu Blanco/Shutterstock

Lionel Messi stands over Asier Villalibre after felling the Athletic Bilbao player. Messi's first red card in 753 games for Barcelona followed.
Photograph: Bagu Blanco/Shutterstock



[Jonathan Liew](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 15.00 EST

Exactly 90 seconds before the act of violence that will earn [Lionel Messi](#) his first red card for Barcelona, he's standing just inside the halfway line, waiting to receive a pass.

He's seen a gap. The sort of gap Messi has seen thousands of times before.

And most of the time we know what happens: a little burst of speed, and in an instant he's 15 yards further up the field, the ball still magically glued to his feet. But here, the gap closes around him. Iker Muniain wins the ball with a slide tackle. And as Athletic Bilbao move it unhurriedly up the field, Messi's arms drop sadly to his sides.

[Messi sent off as Athletic Bilbao sink Barcelona to win Spanish Super Cup](#)
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Moments later, Messi feels the crunching shoulder of Asier Villalibre smack the side of his head as he plays a pass. Messi sprints towards the area.

Villalibre impedes his path. And so Messi swings an arm at the back of his head: the act of a desperate man, a hopeless man. The sheer illogic of it seems to drain Messi entirely. He leans over to see if Villalibre is OK. He

accepts his red card without complaint. As he leaves the field, he hands the captain's armband to Jordi Alba.

The first thing to say about [Messi's first red card in 753 Barcelona first-team games](#) is that it probably shouldn't have been. After all, this is hardly the first time Messi has lost his temper on the pitch. Nor should this be entirely surprising. Messi has been getting kicked, clipped, blocked, barged, tugged, tripped and tag-teamed ever since he learned to dribble a football. Indeed, Messi has played a large part of his career against a backdrop of people specifically trying to make him angry.

Most of the time, Messi anger is quite amusing. There are the numerous tiffs with Sergio Ramos and Pepe from *clasicos* past, a duelling-stags clash with João Félix at last year's Supercopa, the time he chided a third-tier defender in a pre-season friendly with the words: "Do you want to stop kicking me, asshole?" The time he celebrated a last-minute penalty against Valencia by running over to their fans and screaming: "*La concha de sus madres! Hijos de puta!*" Such grace! Such elegance! And yet even in this context there was something singular and shocking about the haymaker Messi threw on Sunday night.

Confrontation, handbags, the heat of battle: these are the common and established tropes of footballing anger. But Messi isn't trying to win the ball. He isn't reacting to a studs-up tackle or challenging a refereeing decision or defending a teammate's honour. In a sense, this isn't a footballing act at all. It's pure human malice, a volcano of rage and vindictiveness that has probably been accumulating for years.



Jesús Gil Manzano shows Lionel Messi the red card in the Spanish Super Cup final. Photograph: Marcelo del Pozo/Reuters

Perhaps the closest parallel is Zinedine Zidane's headbutt in the 2006 World Cup final: an act triggered by Marco Materazzi's insult but fuelled by a toxic brew of circumstances: the state of the game, the size of the occasion, the gilt-edged chance that he had put straight at Gigi Buffon just a few minutes earlier. And above all, that sense of desolation and loss, of a curtain coming down, of a game that could no longer be bent to his will.

From a young age, Messi never encountered a problem that he couldn't solve with his feet. Control the ball and everything else – the defenders, the goalkeeper, the game, the power – simply falls into line. But now, although his skill with a ball remains peerless, it no longer holds the world in its orbit. [Barcelona](#), the club he loved, has fallen into decay. His friends have left or been sold. His transfer request was turned down in the summer.

[Boardroom turmoil, troubling finances and Messi's influence: why Barcelona are a mess](#)
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And so, as Muniain wins the ball, Messi surveys the scene. He sees Trincão to one side of him. Martin Braithwaite ahead of him. He can't win the

trophies he craves, he can't keep the players he likes or sign the players he wants. He can't control his own future. His hamstring hurts, he's been fouled all night, Atlético Madrid are seven points ahead in La Liga, and now another piece of silverware is slipping away. At this point, he feels a shoulder smack the side of his face. And he snaps.

"I can understand what Messi did," his manager, Ronald Koeman, said afterwards. "It's normal to react when they keep trying to foul you." But if Koeman was trying to stick up for his player, to uphold his impeccable aura, then in a strange way it had the opposite effect. For the power of Messi has always rested on the fact that you couldn't understand what he was doing. That he wasn't normal. That the usual rules of cause and effect didn't apply.

This is the flimsy basis upon which an entire sporting belief system has been built: Messi as deity, Messi as light, Messi as saviour and transcendence. All fun. All fine. All essentially fulfilling the fundamentally human need for sport to make us *feel* something, to build us a world, to show us power. Or as the Catalan writer Jordi Puntí puts it: "An alternative world lives in our imagination, and Messi nourishes it."

But the problem with creating human deities is how you deal with the waning of their power, the dimming of their light – how you process the cruelty and suffering that occur under their command. Perhaps you explain it away as the act of a vengeful and angry God, and carry on with your day. Or perhaps, by contrast, you conclude that he simply doesn't exist.

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[Bayern Munich](#)

David Alaba agrees to join Real Madrid on four-year contract this summer

- Defender turns down approaches from Liverpool and PSG
- Mario Mandzukic set to return to Europe with Milan



David Alaba is set to join Real Madrid on a free transfer from Bayern Munich this summer. Photograph: Alexander Hassenstein/Getty Images

David Alaba is set to join Real Madrid on a free transfer from Bayern Munich this summer. Photograph: Alexander Hassenstein/Getty Images

*[Fabrizio Romano](#)
[@FabrizioRomano](#)*

Mon 18 Jan 2021 18.51 EST

David Alaba has reached an agreement to join Real Madrid on a free transfer in the summer, bringing to an end an 13-year spell at [Bayern Munich](#). The defender will sign a four-year deal with the Spanish champions in the next few weeks.

[David Alaba rift creates ripple in relentless Bayern's sea of tranquility](#) |

[Andy Brassell](#)

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The Austrian's dream has always been to play for [Real Madrid](#) and he will go there having turned down approaches from, among others, Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain. Bayern have made three separate contract extension offers but the player had made up his mind and wanted a new challenge.

A pre-contract agreement has been drawn up and will be signed after the player has passed his medical. The 28-year-old will earn €230,000 (£204,000) after tax.

The deal is not directly linked to whether the Real Madrid captain, Sergio Ramos, will stay at the club. The defender is still negotiating with the La Liga champions over a contract extension.

Alaba has won nine league titles and two Champions League titles during his time at Bayern Munich, having joined their academy from Austria Vienna in 2008.

Mario Mandzukic, who played alongside Alaba and scored the winning goal in the 2013 Champions League final, is set to return to Europe with the Serie A leaders Milan. Their head coach, Stefano Pioli, confirmed the move after Milan's win at Cagliari on Monday.

Football Weekly

Liverpool misfire again, Özil and the genius of Ndombele

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“When the club proposed it to me, I immediately said yes,” Pioli said. “I spoke to him, he’s very motivated, he’s a winner. I’m happy, the club is ambitious, they want Milan back on top. Mandzukic’s arrival goes into this situation.”

The 34-year-old is playing in Qatar with Al-Duhail after leaving Juventus in 2019, and will offer competition to fellow veteran Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

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Rare inquests into UK Covid deaths raise concerns over care failings

Exclusive: only two inquests are known have led to ‘prevention of future deaths’ reports to agencies

- [Analysis: findings fuel inquiry calls](#)
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Anthony Slack, 85, contracted coronavirus at a care home in Greater Manchester and died in April. Photograph: Slack family/MEN Media

Anthony Slack, 85, contracted coronavirus at a care home in Greater Manchester and died in April. Photograph: Slack family/MEN Media

[David Conn](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.45 EST

A series of healthcare failures that could lead to more people dying from Covid-19 were highlighted by a coroner during rare inquests into deaths in the first wave of the pandemic.

The senior coroner for [Greater Manchester](#) South, Alison Mutch, sent reports to NHS England, Public Health England and other authorities as part of her duty to identify action required where there is “a risk that future deaths will occur”.

[More than 100,000 people](#) have now died from Covid-19 in Britain, but a Guardian analysis has found only two such “prevention of future deaths” reports from inquests into coronavirus fatalities.

In March the then chief coroner for England and Wales, Mark Lucraft QC, issued [guidance](#) stating that inquests would not normally be necessary after a death from Covid-19. Many bereaved families argue they should be held and are still seeking answers about the circumstances in which their relatives died.

Mutch’s reports concerned the cases of [Anthony Slack](#), 85, who died on 13 April after he became infected with coronavirus at his care home, and [Leslie Harris](#), who died on 21 May after appearing to have contracted the virus while in hospital.

Slack, a married father of three, grandfather and great-grandfather, died after he and other residents contracted Covid-19 at The Vicarage in Greater Manchester. At the time his daughter, Sharon Slack, [told the Manchester Evening News](#) she was angry with the government for failing to protect vulnerable people in care homes.

Mutch’s report stated that Slack died from Covid-19, and that after a fall at the care home he had waited four hours for an ambulance to arrive. Mutch highlighted as “matters of concern”:

- Residents in the care home had been infected with Covid-19, and the care home was unclear whether the virus had been brought in by staff or new residents.
- Care home staff were unclear about requirements for wearing personal protective equipment because the guidance was changing.

- There was a shortage of ambulances because ambulance staff were self-isolating awaiting Covid-19 tests, and because of the need for increased cleaning.
- There was limited documentation at the care home about Anthony Slack's state of health and how it was being observed.

[Almost 20,000 care home residents](#) died from Covid-19 in the first wave. The health secretary, Matt Hancock, claimed in May that the government had "[tried to throw a protective ring](#)" around care homes.

Mutch sent her report in December to Public [Health](#) England, NHS England, Greater Manchester [Health](#) and Social Care Partnership (GMHSC), the Care Quality Commission and the care home itself. They have until 26 January to respond officially.

A CQC spokesperson said inspectors had made "a targeted inspection" of the care home in July, "partly in response to concerns about infection prevention and control measures. Inspectors continue to monitor the service closely and are in the process of responding to the coroner's report."

A spokesperson for North West ambulance service said they were "very sorry that we were unable to get to Mr Slack more quickly" and offered condolences to his family. "We were experiencing an extremely high volume of calls in the early stages of the pandemic and while we do all we can to prioritise patients, this does on occasion sadly leave some waiting longer than we would like," they said.

"Since then we have made changes to increase the number of ambulances available to respond when demand spikes, including enhancing our procedures to support deep cleaning, recruiting more staff and continuing to work with other healthcare providers."

Public Health England said it would not comment publicly before responding formally to the coroner. GMHSC Partnership said it would provide a public response, but not before it had responded formally to the coroner. The Vicarage care home did not respond to a request for comment.

Mutch's second report said Harris was admitted to Stepping Hill hospital in Stockport for surgery on a fractured hip after a fall at home. He was recovering but was then put on a bay where a patient had tested positive for the virus. He died from Covid-19 pneumonia.

In her prevention of future deaths report, Mutch raised concern about PHE guidance regarding management of patients in hospitals, although she noted that the hospital trust had changed its policy.

PHE and [NHS](#) England have until 3 February to respond to that report. [NHS](#) England did not respond to the Guardian with a comment on either case.

Additional reporting: Sam Cutler

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/rare-inquests-into-uk-covid-deaths-raise-concerns-over-care-failings>

Coronavirus

Coroner's Covid findings stoke calls for inquiry into pandemic policy

Analysis: bereaved families concerned that lessons were not learned after first wave

- [Exclusive: rare inquests raise care concerns](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)

David Conn

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.46 EST Last modified on Mon 18 Jan 2021 14.16 EST



An aerial drone view of recent burial chambers at Handsworth cemetery, Birmingham, this month. A bereaved families group has called for a rapid public inquiry. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

The failures and concerns highlighted by a senior coroner, Alison Mutch, following the deaths of two men, Anthony Slack and Leslie Harris, from

Covid-19, have reinforced bereaved families' calls for a government inquiry into the handling of the pandemic, and for more inquests.

Very few inquests have been held into deaths of people from coronavirus, following the then chief coroner's [guidance](#) in March that Covid-19 is "a naturally occurring disease" and inquests are not normally necessary unless a person died due to additional factors, [for example](#) neglect.

Boris Johnson's refusal to hold a rapid public inquiry after the first wave, combined with the lack of inquests, has prompted many bereaved families to complain that lessons were not learned in time to prevent thousands more people dying in a second wave.

A Guardian analysis of all coroners' "[prevention of future deaths](#)" reports, which call on authorities to take action on concerns identified during inquests, found just two that followed deaths of people from Covid-19.

Four more reports mentioned the pandemic as a contributing circumstance, including the strain put on mental health services and other health provision. Another report produced by Mutch followed an inquest into the death of a baby caused by her sleeping position. The coroner raised the concern that nationwide, many health visitors who support parents and young children had been redeployed into other services.

Jo Goodman, co-founder of the [Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice](#) group, whose father [Stuart, 72](#), died from the virus on 2 April, said these isolated coroner's reports vindicated the group's argument that a rapid public inquiry and more regular inquests should have been held.

"All the families in our group, which now has 2,252 members, believe something went terribly wrong in the overall response to the pandemic or the particular circumstances of their own loved ones dying. We believe the broader lessons – about the delayed lockdown, PPE shortages, infections in care homes and hospitals, for example – should be learned in a rapid review public inquiry. Individual circumstances should be investigated at inquests.

"It is hugely traumatic for our families that lessons weren't learned, and now we are seeing so many more families suffer the same grief and heartbreak."

Johnson refused the group's [request in the summer to hold an inquiry](#). The government has told the families that if they challenge that decision legally, the government may hold them liable for its legal costs.

A Downing Street spokesperson said: "The prime minister is acutely aware of the grief, heartbreak and loss suffered by families across the country as a result of the virus and has fully committed to looking back and reflecting on all aspects of the pandemic.

"And as he has said, there will be an opportunity to reflect on all aspects of the pandemic in the fullness of time but for now we need to remain focused on reducing the spread of the virus, and to protect those most vulnerable in society."

The families' group argues that the government has a duty to hold an inquiry under [article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights](#), which protects the right to life. Since the summer they have raised money, and Goodman said they are still considering mounting a judicial review challenge.

Additional reporting: Sam Cutler

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/coroners-covid-findings-stoke-calls-for-inquiry-into-pandemic-policy>.

Brexit

Seafood lorries travel to Westminster for protest against Brexit red tape

Fishers ‘losing their livelihoods’ as delays hamper exports to the EU and trucks return empty



Scottish Seafood producers and distributors protest outside Westminster in London about BREXIT deal and loss of access to markets. Photograph: Sean Smith/The Guardian

Scottish Seafood producers and distributors protest outside Westminster in London about BREXIT deal and loss of access to markets. Photograph: Sean Smith/The Guardian

Lisa O'Carroll Brexit correspondent
[@lisaocarroll](https://twitter.com/lisaocarroll)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 12.36 EST

Fishing lorries from [Scotland](#) and Devon have descended on Westminster to stage a protest against the Brexit red tape they say is either delaying or ruining exports of their fresh shellfish to the EU.

Trucks with slogans including “Brexit carnage” and “Incompetent government destroying shellfish industry” parked metres from Downing Street on Monday, but they stopped short of carrying out their threat last week to dump fresh fish close to No 10.

“We strongly feel the system could potentially collapse,” said Gary Hodgson, a director of Venture Seafoods, which exports live and processed crabs and lobsters to the EU.

“Boris Johnson needs to be honest with us, with himself and with the British public about the problems for the industry,” he told Reuters.



A slogan on one of the trucks pulls no punches. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/Rex/Shutterstock

One operator, he said, needed 400 pages of export documentation last week to enter [Europe](#).

David Rosie at DR Collin & Son, which employs 200 people, used to send one or two lorries a night to France carrying live crab, lobster and langoustine worth about £150,000.

He said he had not exported a single box this year. Fishers, he said, “lost their livelihoods in the turn of a clock” when Britain left the EU’s orbit on

New Year's Eve.

Johnson has said he “understands the frustrations” of businesses exporting to Europe and pledged that any business experiencing difficulty exporting to the EU “through no fault of their own” would be compensated from a £23m fund that was being set up.

He claimed that one of the current problems impacting exports of fish was Covid curbs.

“Unfortunately, the demand in restaurants on the continent for UK fish has not been what it was before the pandemic,” Johnson told Sky News.

[Brexiteers are waking up to the damage they've done | Polly Toynbee](#)
[Read more](#)

Exports of fresh fish and seafood have been severely disrupted by delays since the UK’s transition period ended on 31 December with full customs declarations, guarantees over rules of origin and health certificates required for every consignment.

Food exporters have been hit badly as they also require a health certificate.

In addition, any haulier with a mixed load, or “groupage”, can be held up if just one box on the trailer does not have the right paperwork.

The resulting red tape from Brexit has prompted some importers to pay extra for empty trucks to cross the Channel in order to guarantee supplies can get into the country, one EU logistics company said.

The company, which did not want to be named, said it had about 50 trucks delivering cargo every week from the EU to the UK, but they were returning empty as importers in key industries such as the motor sector were willing to cough up to ensure smooth passage.

“Companies are willing to pay the price for the trucks to go back empty because it’s cheaper than being stuck in a lorry park for four or five days,” said the source.

“We charge €400 to €600 a day, so it’s cheaper for companies to pay for the trailer to go back empty and then get another delivery back into the truck. It’s stupid at the end of the day but that is Brexit.

“If they have a delivery coming from Belgium or Germany they would prefer the truck to go back and get a second or third delivery,” they added.

“The UK is already the laughing stock of Europe with Brexit, but I have to say, and I don’t enjoy saying this, we are making a lot of money out of it,” said the source.

The Haulage Association has said “something has to give” over the behind-the-scenes chaos.

“The government is dodging bullet after bullet. If it were not for Covid this is a disaster that would be on the front page every day,” said Rod McKenzie, policy director.

Polish trucking magazine <https://t.co/xcD1A22Sbb> reports: A Polish truck driver entered Kent on Monday with valid Kent permit. He turned up at Ashford when they told him that his documents need to be double-checked, so he was sent to a different truck park to wait. 1/4

— Tomasz Oryński (@TOrynski) [January 14, 2021](#)

Even with the correct paperwork one driver claimed he was issued with an on-the-spot £300 fine because it had taken so long for customs paperwork to be checked as his 24-hour “Kent access permit”, required for all international truck drivers crossing the Channel, had expired.

The Department for Transport said that if a driver’s permit has expired, they should get a new one free of charge [on the government’s website](#).

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/18/fishing-trucks-protest-at-westminster-against-brexit-red-tape>

Brexit

'A multiple pile-up in the fog': wine agent's fury at Brexit red tape

Daniel Lambert blasts government and on Twitter castigates bureaucratic procedures



Wine importer Daniel Lambert: 'I literally cannot bring wine in from the EU.' Photograph: Daniel Lambert

Wine importer Daniel Lambert: 'I literally cannot bring wine in from the EU.' Photograph: Daniel Lambert

Lisa O'Carroll Brexit correspondent

[@lisaocarroll](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 12.27 EST

A major British wine agent has described how his business is facing its biggest threat in 30 years because the government did not think through [Brexit](#).

Daniel Lambert who imports up to 2m bottles of wine a year for 300 retailers including supermarkets, said he is unable to import wine from the

EU because of the complex and unworkable HM Revenue and Customs system, which requires companies to work out one of 10,000 different combinations to describe the product they want to import.

“We were a pretty good little business, we were doing quite well, until Brexit came along,” he said.

“While we knew Brexit would be a car crash we did not know it was going to be a multiple pile-up in the fog with fatalities,” he tweeted in a thread over the weekend that has resonated with thousands on Twitter.

Over the past 15 days I have not only been running my company as normal but I have been faced with largest threat to its future since it began in 1992. This is [#Brexit](#) & here is my thread on just how bad things are getting. 1/26

— Daniel Lambert (Wines).  (@DanielLambert29) [January 16, 2021](#)

“HM Revenue and Customs are being as helpful as they can be, but it’s not their fault they are civil servants. This is the government’s fault and they don’t give a shit about business. Boris Johnson said ‘fuck business’ and this is exactly what they are doing,” he said.

“We knew they would screw it up, so I’m not surprised. I’m just disappointed,” he told the Guardian.

Lambert, who is temporarily unable to import wine from the EU, said he would survive, but that ultimately consumers will lose out because there will still be a mountain of paperwork – even if the initial problems were sorted out.

“Wine per bottle on retail will increase by at least £1 per bottle for mass market products; for niche small batch wines you are looking at £1.50 or even £2.00 on the bottle prices. There’s another of those Brexit ‘dividends’,” he said.

Lambert started his business in Bridgend in 1992 and said this was the biggest threat he had faced, leading him to consider leaving the country

when his children complete their education.

His was one of the many businesses that thought they were fully prepared, taking detailed steps to mitigate against the worst possible scenario, a no-deal Brexit, five months ago.

He went as far as setting up a bonded warehouse system to enable all the customs and duties paperwork to be done in house rather than on the border where they would face impediments in a no-deal scenario.

“It was very complicated to get to that point and in fact HMRC told us they were surprised at how prepared we were.

“By 9 December we had, as far as we were concerned, done everything we needed to do.

“Now I literally cannot bring wine in from the EU,” he said.

At the heart of the issue is a complex piece of paperwork, called Chief, that was used for imports from non-EU countries before Brexit.

“Now you would think that government would want to make using Chief as easy as possible as now there are millions of businesses having to use it,” said Lambert.

“Wrong, this is the only HMRC system where there is no number to call. Just an email with a five-day turn around. Remember that when government say they are doing all they can to help,” said Lambert.

His company was familiar with the system as it had for years imported wines from places such as the US and Australia. The system worked for him “like clockwork” until Brexit hit.

It requires him to answer 64 questions just to import a bottle of wine and can easily go wrong when it comes to matching a commodity code and a customs procedure code (CPC) as that varies according to the type of wine and its alcohol strength.

“If I remember correctly, Chief has 10,000 different combinations depending on what type of import you’re doing, depending on the commodity code itself. So you have to get the combination between the commodity code and the CPC code exactly right, otherwise [it] won’t allow the declaration to happen, the system won’t give you the green light,” he said.

Lambert said the system is “antiquated” and so complex even companies like his that are used to using Chief have come a cropper with next to zero meaningful help from HMRC.

“I originally put a query into HMRC on 4 January to ask what’s the CPC code for this [a particular wine] and they said it depends on your declaration, after five days. That was the answer. Well that’s not really helping is it?”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/18/a-multiple-pile-up-in-the-fog-wine-agents-fury-at-brexit-red-tape>

UK weather

Storm Christoph: sandbags issued in South Yorkshire as lashing rains loom

People urged to brace for floods, gales and snow, with parts of England expecting 200mm downpours



Flood preparations for Storm Christoph, in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire.
Photograph: Phil Noble/Reuters

Flood preparations for Storm Christoph, in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire.
Photograph: Phil Noble/Reuters

Press Association

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.15 EST

A major incident has been declared in South Yorkshire as Storm Christoph is set to bring widespread flooding, gales and snow to parts of the UK.

People have been urged to prepare after an amber weather warning for rain was issued by the Met Office for Tuesday to Thursday for central northern [England](#), affecting an area around Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield and stretching down to Peterborough.

It has led to a major incident being declared in South Yorkshire in preparation for potential flooding, said Ros Jones, mayor of Doncaster.

Jones said emergency protocols were instigated with sandbags handed out in flood-risk areas. She said plans would run alongside the region's Covid-19 response, adding: "I do not want people to panic, but flooding is possible so please be prepared."

The Environment Agency described the combination of torrential rain and melting snow as a "volatile situation", with councils preparing for possible evacuations should a severe flood warning be issued.

Catherine Wright, acting executive director for flood and coastal risk management at the Environment Agency, said: "That rain is falling on very wet ground and so we are very concerned that it's a very volatile situation and we are expecting significant flooding to occur on the back of that weather."

She said the Environment Agency would be working with local authorities to help with evacuation efforts should a severe flood warning be issued, adding: "If you do need to evacuate then that is allowed within the Covid rules the government has."

The Met Office has warned homes and businesses are likely to be flooded, causing damage to some buildings, and issued a "danger to life" warning due to fast-flowing or deep flood water, while there is a "good chance" some communities may be cut off by flooded roads.

Up to 70mm is expected to fall but in isolated spots, particularly in the northern Peak District and parts of the southern Pennines, 200mm could be possible.

A yellow rain alert is also in place for most of northern England and Wales from Tuesday to Wednesday, while a yellow weather warning for snow and ice is in force in [Scotland](#) from Dundee to Elgin and across the east coast from Wednesday afternoon until midday on Thursday.

The Environment Agency issued 10 flood warnings covering parts of Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire as of Monday night, with a further 109 flood alerts, meaning flooding is possible, across northern England, the Midlands and the east.

Highways England advised drivers to take extra care on motorways and major A roads, while the RAC breakdown service said motorists should only drive if absolutely necessary.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/18/met-office-warns-of-danger-to-life-from-storm-christoph>

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Uighurs

Rebels aim to insert genocide amendment in UK-China trade bill

UK court would determine whether China is committing genocide against Uighurs if measure passed



Protesters in Mumbai hold placards during a protest against the Chinese government's policies on Uighur people. Photograph: Indranil Mukherjee/AFP/Getty

Protesters in Mumbai hold placards during a protest against the Chinese government's policies on Uighur people. Photograph: Indranil Mukherjee/AFP/Getty

[Patrick Wintour](#) Diplomatic editor

Mon 18 Jan 2021 13.39 EST

The government is struggling to contain a potential backbench rebellion over its [China](#) policy after the Conservative Muslim Forum, the International Bar Association (IBA), and the prime minister's former envoy on freedom of

religious belief backed a move to give the UK courts a say in determining whether countries are committing genocide.

The measure is due in the Commons on Tuesday when the trade bill returns from the Lords where a genocide amendment has been inserted. The amendment has been devised specifically in relation to [allegations that China is committing genocide against Uighur people](#) in Xinjiang province, a charge Beijing has repeatedly denied.

It is understood that the former foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt is planning not to back the government either by abstaining or voting against unless further concessions emerge.

Rehman Chishti, the prime minister's former envoy on freedom of religious belief, also said he would support the genocide amendment which won all-party support in the Lords.

[China in darkest period for human rights since Tiananmen, says rights group](#)
[Read more](#)

A second amendment passed by the Lords would give parliament rights to reject a free-trade bill if it breached human rights or other norms.

The main controversy turns on the amendment to the trade bill passed in the Lords that proposes giving the UK high courts a role in determining if a genocide is under way. A government would then be required to refer to the court determination in making any free-trade agreement with the country accused of genocide.

The vote is on Tuesday and at present neither side is confident of the outcome. The amendment also has the influential backing of the British Board of Jewish Deputies.

The Foreign Office has a host of practical objections, but is at present opposed to making any concessions on giving the domestic courts a role, saying it is a matter for the international courts. Ministers however recognise pressure is building for a tougher approach on China, and parliament is seeking a greater say over trade agreements.

The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, in rejecting the so-called genocide amendment, is also claiming the UK government would never enter a trade agreement with a country well before its behaviour had reached the egregious level of genocide. It also claims the issue is best determined in the international courts.

The backing of the IBA for the amendment is significant as the Foreign Office has been citing legal pitfalls in giving the high court a role in determining genocide.

In a letter to the foreign secretary, the IBA write: “There is *no* requirement under the Genocide Convention 1948, or any principle of international law, that requires a State to seek a determination of an international court, or other body acting under the auspices of the United Nations, that genocide has or is being committed before that State’s obligations under the Convention are engaged.

“There is a real concern that this position is used, or may be used, to justify inaction in the face of credible evidence that genocide is occurring.”

The letter signed by Schona Jolly, the chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, adds: “Waiting for a judicial determination by an international court or body that genocide has been committed or is being committed, where it is not apparent that there is any likely or realistic route to such a determination, undermines the object and purpose of the obligation to prevent: to ensure, in so far as is possible, that genocide is never again committed.”

Ministers have previously said the UK had no plans to secure a free-trade deal with China. The country is the UK’s fourth-largest trading partner, sixth-largest export market and third-largest import market.

[Cancer](#)

Hospitals in England told to keep performing urgent cancer surgery

NHS bosses say urgent cancer treatment should have same priority of care as Covid patients

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



More than 1,000 cancer patients in London are now waiting to have ‘priority two’ urgent surgery, HSJ reported last week. Photograph: Tim Wege/Alamy
More than 1,000 cancer patients in London are now waiting to have ‘priority two’ urgent surgery, HSJ reported last week. Photograph: Tim Wege/Alamy

[Denis Campbell](#) Health policy editor

Mon 18 Jan 2021 14.39 EST

NHS bosses have instructed hospitals to keep performing urgent cancer surgery despite Covid pressures, after a growing number cancelled

procedures because they did not have enough intensive care beds or available staff.

They have told England's regional directors of cancer to ensure treatment of people who need cancer surgery within four weeks gets the same priority as care of patients who have Covid.

The move was unveiled in a letter, obtained by the [Health](#) Service Journal, sent last Friday by Amanda Pritchard, the chief operating officer at NHS England and NHS Improvement. It was also signed by Cally Palmer, the NHS's national cancer director, and Prof Peter Johnson, a highly respected specialist who is the NHS's national clinical director for cancer.

They have acted after unease among cancer specialists that growing numbers of hospitals, including all those in London, had [cancelled urgent operations](#). Hospitals have felt obliged to do so either because they did not have enough intensive care beds for patients who might need one after their cancer procedure or because surgical staff had been repurposed to help care for Covid patients.

Doctors voiced alarm at the scale of recent postponements of what the NHS classes as “priority two” operations. That means they should be done within 28 days to ensure that someone with cancer does not see their disease spread or become inoperable because it was delayed.

More than 1,000 cancer patients in London are now waiting to have “priority two” or “P2” urgent surgery, but none have been given a new date for when it will happen, HSJ [reported last week](#).

A senior NHS figure told its website that Pritchard, Palmer and Johnson had issued the instruction because “NHS England wants to avoid what's happened in London and the south-east happening in the rest of the country”.

The letter tells regional directors that they must “ensure that, where local decisions are being taken to redeploy surgical and anaesthetic staff, provision for P1 and P2 cancer surgery is prioritised alongside that for patients with Covid.”

Dr Lisa Harrod-Rothwell, the deputy chief executive of Londonwide Local Medical Committees, which represents GPs in 27 of the capital's 32 boroughs, said: "It will come as a relief to Londoners and their GPs that hospitals are to prioritise all urgent cancer surgery. We now need to see the whole NHS in London supported to deliver this.

"GPs have obviously trusted our hospital colleagues' clinical judgment over recent difficult weeks, with all the immense pressures they are under."

Anyone with a possible symptom of cancer should still see their GP to have it checked out, she added.

Sir Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, told the BBC on Sunday that hospitals were "under extreme pressure" because they were treating 75% more Covid patients than in the spring.

King's College hospital in south London and the Royal London hospital in the east end are among those that have recently cancelled urgent cancer surgery.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/18/hospitals-in-england-told-to-keep-performing-urgent-cancer-surgery>.

Crossrail

Crossrail 2: more than £115m spent before project mothballed

Work on new London rail line paused last year as part of TfL's emergency deal with government



The division within TfL that was working on Crossrail 2 was seconded to other work after Covid-19 hit London last year. Photograph: Justin Tallis/AFP/Getty Images

The division within TfL that was working on Crossrail 2 was seconded to other work after Covid-19 hit London last year. Photograph: Justin Tallis/AFP/Getty Images

[Gwyn Topham](#)

[@GwynTopham](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 13.28 EST

More than £115m was spent on [Crossrail](#) 2 before work on the scheme for a new north-south rail line through London was suspended in November.

The costs for the development and design of the line, which was once hoped to be operational in the early 2030s, were shared between the Department for [Transport](#) and [Transport](#) for London.

However, [work was officially paused](#) as part of the emergency financial agreement between the government and TfL to fund the capital's transport network after passenger revenues dried up due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Around a quarter of the money spent went to Network Rail, the state-owned railway infrastructure manager, according to figures revealed by [New Civil Engineer](#).

The biggest private sector beneficiaries were Arup, whose design consultancy work on the tunnels and southern section totalled almost £12m, and Arcadis, which was paid £11.4m for engineering consultancy.

The line would have linked stations in the home counties to the north and south-west of the capital via new tunnels underneath central [London](#), roughly along the route of the Chelsea-Hackney underground line first discussed in the 1970s.

Central development funding was allotted from 2015-16 when construction of the original [Crossrail](#) line appeared to be on time and on budget, and when Crossrail 2 was [regarded as an essential part of the plan](#) for handling HS2 passengers arriving in London Euston – a prospect that is in doubt.

The division within [TfL](#) that was working on Crossrail 2 was seconded to other work after Covid-19 hit London last year. [TfL](#) said that while the project was mothballed, land would remain safeguarded and the design work would remain relevant.

A TfL spokesperson said: “The pandemic, and subsequent impact on our finances, has meant that we have to be realistic about what is currently affordable.”

A planned Bakerloo line extension for the underground is also on ice.

The spokesperson added: “Our immediate priority for these schemes is progressing safeguarding as they are still likely to be needed in the future to

support long-term growth and modal shift in London. The work developing proposals for these schemes will still be used when we are in a position to confirm funding in future.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/18/crossrail-2-more-than-115m-spent-before-project-mothballed>

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Road safety

Smart motorways present ongoing risk of death, says coroner

Coroner concludes lack of hard shoulder on M1 in South Yorkshire contributed to deaths of two men



Claire Mercer arrives at Sheffield town hall for the inquest into the death of her husband, Jason Mercer. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

Claire Mercer arrives at Sheffield town hall for the inquest into the death of her husband, Jason Mercer. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

[Maya Wolfe-Robinson](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 12.38 EST

A coroner has called for a review into smart motorways, concluding that the lack of a hard shoulder contributed to the deaths of two men.

Sheffield's coroner, David Urpeth, said [smart motorways](#), which allow motorists to drive on the hard shoulder, present an ongoing risk of future deaths. He said he will be writing to Highways England and the secretary of state for transport to request a review.

Urpeth said the primary cause of death of Jason Mercer, 44, and Alexandru Murgeanu, 22, on the M1 in South [Yorkshire](#) was the careless driving of lorry driver Prezemyslaw Szuba. But recording a conclusion of unlawful killing at Sheffield town hall, he said: “I find, as a finding of fact, it is clear a lack of hard shoulder contributed to this tragedy.

“I believe that smart motorways, as things currently stand, present an ongoing risk of future deaths.”

The men were killed when Szuba’s lorry ploughed into their two vehicles on a stretch of smart motorway, as they stood stationary in the left lane. Szuba, who was jailed for 10 months last October, told the inquest he believes he would have avoided them if there had been a hard shoulder, although he accepted he was driving without paying proper attention.

“If there had been a hard shoulder on this bit of motorway, the collision would have been avoidable,” he told the inquest. “I would have driven past these two cars as it would be safer and they would have been able to come home safely and I would be able to come back home.”

The hearing heard how the tragedy happened on 7 June 2019 after a slight collision between Mercer, from Rotherham, South Yorkshire, and Murgeanu, who was living in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. The two vehicles stopped in lane one of the four-lane motorway, and both men had got out of their vehicles. They had been stationary for about six minutes when they were hit by Szuba’s lorry, which was travelling at 56mph.

Max Brown, the head of road design for Highways England, told the inquest that data showed smart motorways had reduced casualty rates by 18% by one measure and 23% by another. Brown accepted that the removal of the hard shoulder was an added hazard but said this was “offset” by a range of other safety measures.

Brown accepted that, on this stretch of the M1, the casualty rate measure had increased since the smart motorway was introduced in March 2017 but stressed there was only one year of data available. An automatic system to detect stationary vehicles is due to be introduced to the M1 in South Yorkshire next month.

A government review to revamp smart motorways was [launched last March](#), after safety concerns were raised. At least 38 people have died on stretches of smart motorways in the last six years.

Mercer's wife, Claire, who has become a vocal campaigner against smart motorways, cried in court when the coroner said the lack of a hard shoulder had contributed to her husband's death.

Outside the town hall, she said: "It just reiterates what we've been saying for months, just how dangerous these roads are. It was not the result we were expecting but it's very welcome and it's going to help the campaign along."

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/smarter-motorways-present-ongoing-risk-of-death-says-coroner>

Economic policy

Treasury minister downplays need for immediate tax rises

Rapid economic recovery from Covid recession could help ministers avoid increasing taxes, says Jesse Norman



Customers at an unusually quiet Borough Market in London. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty

Customers at an unusually quiet Borough Market in London. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty

[Richard Partington](#) Economics correspondent

[@RJPartington](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 14.16 EST

A Treasury minister has downplayed the need for immediate tax rises to tackle record levels of government borrowing caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

[Jesse Norman](#) said a rapid economic recovery from the [worst recession](#) for more than three centuries could help ministers avoid increasing the tax take

in response to record borrowing levels.

Answering questions from the Commons Treasury committee amid mounting speculation that the March budget could be used to increase taxes, he told MPs: “It’s not absolutely obvious therefore that there may be any future need for consolidation, depending on the view you take of taxes.

“Of course we may end up with a somewhat delayed but nevertheless very pronounced bounce. There are features of the economy which would suggest that could be quite significant, if you look at the level of household savings, for example, and data like that.”

The comments follow weekend newspaper reports that the chancellor, [Rishi Sunak](#), is preparing to raise taxes in the 3 March budget in order to bring down record levels of government borrowing. Sunak has warned that “[hard choices](#)” must be made to fix the public finances, and used his spending review in November to freeze public-sector pay and cut the overseas aid budget.

The UK’s budget deficit – the gap between spending and tax income plus other receipts – is on track to reach at least [£394bn for the financial year ending in March](#), amid a rise in emergency spending during the crisis and collapse in tax receipts. The national debt – the sum total of every deficit – has risen to more than £2tn, equivalent to more than 100% of national output.

However, major tax increases might well provoke a swift Tory backlash. The chancellor has also been urged by leading economists to take advantage of record low borrowing costs and to steer clear of raising taxes or launching a renewed austerity drive to allow a sustainable economic recovery to take hold. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has said [£40bn in tax increases](#) may be necessary in future to put the public finances back on a sustainable footing.

Downplaying the need for immediate action, Norman said the Treasury was still focusing on stabilising Britain’s economy amid elevated levels of Covid infections and tough government restrictions.

“We [need to] stabilise the economy and try to keep things moving forward before we can start thinking about the wider framework of policy. Although, as I’ve said, the chancellor does expect to think in terms of strong and sustainable public finances,” he said.

Mel Stride, chair of the Treasury committee, said: “I take away from this that it’s not a done deal that there will be tax rises. There are possibilities out there in terms of our recovery that might see us avoid what probably a lot of people are expecting. That remains to be seen.”

- This article was amended on 19 January 2021 to clarify the definition of budget deficit to include other receipts.
-

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[Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#)

EHRC undermined by pressure to support No 10 agenda, says ex-chair

Exclusive: David Isaac's criticism follows series of controversies surrounding equality watchdog



David Isaac, former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

David Isaac, former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

[Haroon Siddique](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 07.00 EST

Britain's equality watchdog is being undermined by political pressure to support the government's misguided agenda, a former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has said.

The criticism from David Isaac, the chair of the organisation from 2016 until August last year, follows a spate of controversy surrounding the EHRC,

including the revelation of recent government appointees' past comments about [feminism](#), [ethnic minorities](#) and [Islamophobia](#).

Isaac said a speech by Liz Truss, the minister for women and equalities, last month announcing a [shift in government equality priorities](#) away from gender and race made no pretence of the EHRC being independent, with Truss saying the new commissioners [would “drive this agenda forward”](#).

[Politicising the EHRC? Five controversial appointments](#) [Read more](#)

He told the Guardian: “She says ‘I’ve appointed a new chair and these new commissioners’, and she doesn’t say ‘they’re going to do my bidding’, but it’s pretty implicit in what she’s saying that they are people who are supportive of her approach to equalities, which is a focus on white working-class people and the north of England and [the levelling up agenda](#).

“My view is that an independent regulator shouldn’t be in a position where the governments of the day can actually influence the appointments of that body to support a particular ideology.”

Isaac described Truss’s speech as a “call to arms” to equality campaigners such as himself, because it pitted advancement of ethnic minorities’ rights against those of the white working class.

“There are certain groups who are massively disadvantaged, and to say it’s only white working-class people who are disadvantaged is inaccurate,” he said. “Covid has demonstrated how important it is that you look at particular minorities, particularly [black and minority ethnic experiences](#) and outcomes during the pandemic. And just to conflate the situation between geographical inequality and white working class and other minorities and protected characteristics is just a massive oversimplification and very political.”

He would not be drawn on the individual merits of his successor, Kishwer Falkner, or the new commissioners, saying he welcomed a variety of views but adding: “They do need to understand the role and function of the commission and that is to be independent.”

His own ideas for the EHRC's future and the maintaining of its independence include increased funding, making the women and equalities select committee, rather than the secretary of state, responsible for appointing the EHRC board, and greater enforcement powers, including the ability to levy fines, for example relating to [gender pay gaps](#).

Isaac said these changes would help make the commission, which has had its budget reduced from £70m at its inception in 2007 [to £17m](#), "more than independent in name" and address issues raised during his tenure. These include the absence of black commissioners, which Isaac said was not for want of trying on his part, having encouraged black applicants but having had no power to appoint them.

Addressing the EHRC's decision to halt an investigation into [Conservative party Islamophobia](#), Isaac said it was only a pause, while the Tories carried out their own inquiry.

"It [the party inquiry] was due to report by the end of the year [2020] so I'm interested to know whether or not it has reported or whether it's slipped," he said.

"My view is that the commission needs to look at the recommendations of that review and if it is unhappy with the approach that it's taken and whether or not it is sufficiently independent and robust, if it's not satisfied about those things, then it should investigate Islamophobia in the Tory party in the way that it [investigated antisemitism in the Labour party](#)."

The government said it had nothing to add to Truss's speech.

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Sentencing

UK's youngest convicted terrorist can be freed, says Parole Board

Man who cannot be named was 15 when he was jailed in 2015 for plot to murder police officers in Australia



The man, known only as RXG, was 15 when he was sentenced at the Old Bailey in 2015. Photograph: Dave Rushen/Sopa Images/Rex/Shutterstock

The man, known only as RXG, was 15 when he was sentenced at the Old Bailey in 2015. Photograph: Dave Rushen/Sopa Images/Rex/Shutterstock

Vikram Dodd Police and crime correspondent

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.11 EST

A man whose conviction aged 15 made him Britain's youngest terrorist is safe to be freed, despite his key role in a plot to kill police officers, the Parole Board has decided.

The man who cannot be named [was jailed in 2015 for a transnational plot to murder police officers in Australia](#) on Anzac day, which commemorates Australians and New Zealanders killed in wars.

The man from Blackburn, Lancashire, sent a flood of encrypted messages to fellow jihadists in Australia, having been groomed online in his bedroom by a terrorist recruiter.

He is now 20 and a legal order prevents him being publicly identified. He is known only as RXG.

He was sentenced at the Old Bailey in 2015 to the equivalent of a life sentence in the youth justice system, with a minimum of five years to be served.

He admitted sending thousands of online messages to contacts in Australia and was arrested by British police when he was aged 14.

Sentencing him in 2015, Mr Justice Saunders said: “The victims were to be police officers who were to be killed either with a car or by being beheaded.”

In prison he was diagnosed as having autism spectrum disorder and received treatment for that as well as undergoing a deradicalisation scheme.

He is understood to have been tutored by imams on what Islam permits and forbids as well as having psychological support.

He was a quiet, shy child before his conviction, and was radicalised online via his smartphone. He became prominent in the online jihadist community, and was linked to 89 Twitter accounts with 24,000 followers.

RXG sent thousands of messages to 18-year-old Sevdet Besim, encouraging him to kill police officers at the Anzac remembrance parade in Melbourne.

Explaining its decision that release was safe, the Parole Board on Monday said: “After considering the circumstances of his offending, the progress made while in detention, and the evidence presented at the hearings, the panel was satisfied that RXG was suitable for release.”

The 20-year-old will have strict licence conditions, including having to live at a specified address, monitoring via an electronic tag, regular appointments

to check he is not relapsing, and restrictions on his movement, human contact and access to technology and the internet.

The Parole Board said that when RXG fell into terrorism the factors driving his offending included “not coping well with feelings of anger, being manipulative, not being open and honest with people, his lack of maturity, obsessional behaviour, the influence on him of associates, unhelpful beliefs and extremist views, his radicalisation and his affiliation with Isis”.

The Parole Board said: “No one at the hearing considered there to be a need for further time within the custodial estate.”

Public faith in the Parole Board was shaken when it decided to release serial rapist John Worboys early, which sparked an outcry and which triggered a police investigation that resulted in the former London taxi driver being jailed for other offences.

Faith in deradicalisation was shaken after a former convicted terrorist staged an attack at London Bridge in November 2019, killing two people who had tried to help his rehabilitation. That was followed a few months later, in February 2020, by an attack on Streatham High Street by another released terrorist, who was shot dead by police.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/jan/18/uks-youngest-convicted-terrorist-can-be-freed-says-parole-board>

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[France](#)

French ex-PM Édouard Balladur goes on trial over alleged kickbacks

Politician, 91, accused of financing failed 1995 presidential campaign with illegal kickbacks in ‘Karachi affair’



The former French prime minister Édouard Balladur arrives for his trial on Tuesday. Photograph: Yoan Valat/EPA

The former French prime minister Édouard Balladur arrives for his trial on Tuesday. Photograph: Yoan Valat/EPA

[Kim Willsher](#) in Paris

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.47 EST

Former French prime minister Édouard Balladur has gone on trial accused of financing his failed 1995 presidential campaign with illegal kickbacks from international arms deals.

The 91-year-old rightwing politician is the latest high-ranking French politician to find himself in the dock over the so-called [Karachi affair](#) that has poisoned the country’s political life for more than 25 years.

He made no statement to a throng of journalists as he arrived at the court of justice of the republic, which hears cases involving ministerial wrongdoing.

Balladur, who has been charged with complicity in the alleged misappropriation of public funds, has previously denied any wrongdoing, saying he did not know of any kickbacks and was not responsible for the details of the finances in the presidential campaign.

He reportedly told investigators he thought the massive cash injection to his campaign funds came from the sale of T-shirts at rallies and meetings.

The scandal centres on allegations of corruption in connection with two 1990s French arms contracts during the final years of François Mitterrand's presidency, when Balladur was prime minister.

Three former government officials were among six people found guilty in June of charges involving kickbacks from the sale of submarines to Pakistan and frigates to Saudi Arabia signed between 1993 and 1995. The kickbacks are estimated at around 13m francs, worth almost €2m today, 10m francs of which went as a cash donation to Balladur's campaign.

Those found guilty included Nicolas Bazire, Balladur's former campaign manager; Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, a former adviser to defence minister François Léotard; and Thierry Gaubert, a former adviser to the then budget minister and later president Nicolas Sarkozy. Bazire and Donnedieu de Vabres were sentenced to five years, with two years suspended. They, and Gaubert, have appealed against their convictions.

The court in that case said the defendants could not have ignored that more than 10m Francs – the equivalent of €1.6m – that found its way into Balladur's campaign accounts was of “dubious origin”.

A Lebanese go-between, Ziad Takieddine, was sentenced to five years in prison but is currently in Lebanon, which has no extradition treaty with [France](#).

Sarkozy, Balladur's election spokesperson and budget minister at the time of the election, was interviewed as a witness in the inquiry.

Paying bribes on arms deals was not unusual in the 1990s, but earning kickbacks on the deals was illegal.

The long-running affair is named after the Pakistani city where a bus carrying French defence engineers was blown up in May 2002 killing 15 people, including 11 employees of a French naval group.

Al-Qaida was first suspected of the terror attack, but it was later claimed the bombing was in retaliation for the non-payment of bribes promised by French officials. The 1995 election was won by Jacques Chirac, who immediately cancelled the payment of commissions on arms deals.

Last October, France's constitutional court newly opened archives revealed the 1995 presidential campaign was probably the most contentious in terms of election financing in modern French history.

The *cour des comptes* (court of audit) discovered Balladur, who was PM between 1993 and 1995, had exceeded the maximum campaign spending by an estimated 6m francs, while Chirac had overspent by an estimated 5m francs. The campaign accounts were signed off and no action was taken in respect of any of the parties' apparent overspend.

The trial is expected to continue until 11 February.

- This article was amended on 19 January 2021: to clarify, in relation to the June 2020 trial, that individuals have been found guilty, but not jailed: that Bazire and Donnedieu de Vabres received sentences of five years with two years suspended and have appealed their convictions and to refer to the *cour des comptes* (court of audit) rather than the state accountants.

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Vaccines and immunisation

WHO: just 25 Covid vaccine doses administered in low-income countries

Director-general warns of ‘catastrophic moral failure’ if richer countries hoard treatment

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02:12

Michael Safi
[@safimichael](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 11.04 EST

The world is on the edge of a “catastrophic moral failure” in the distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, with just 25 doses administered across all poor countries compared with 39m in wealthier ones, the head of the [World Health Organization](#) has said.

It was the sharpest warning so far from Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus about the dangers of vaccine hoarding since inoculations started being administered in 49 mostly high-income countries.

Guinea is the sole low-income country to have delivered any shots so far, last week providing doses of the Russian Sputnik vaccine to a mere 25 people, including its president.

Tedros told an annual meeting of the WHO’s executive board on Monday that it was wrong to see people at low risk in wealthy countries being vaccinated while most of the world still did not have access to the jabs.

“It’s not right that younger healthier adults in rich countries are vaccinated before health workers and older people in poorer countries,” he said.

A global vaccine-sharing fund, Covax, says it is preparing to deliver its first doses in February but is competing with nations striking their own, often more lucrative deals with manufacturers to secure limited supplies of vaccines.

There had been 44 such deals last year and 12 signed so far in January, Tedros said, accusing countries of “going around Covax, driving up prices and attempting to jump to the front of the queue”.

“This could delay Covax deliveries and create exactly the scenario Covax was designed to avoid, with hoarding, a chaotic market, an uncoordinated response and continued social and economic disruption,” he said.

“The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries.”

[Global immunisation: low-income countries rush to access Covid vaccine supply](#)

[Read more](#)

The WHO director-general also criticised some manufacturers for prioritising getting their vaccines approved in wealthy countries, where they could make greater profits, over submitting regulatory data to the WHO to speed up the process of having the vaccines approved for inclusion in the Covax portfolio.

“Ultimately these actions will only prolong the pandemic,” he added, urging countries to avoid making the same mistakes made during the HIV pandemic, in which wealthy countries were accused of hoarding treatments for years until the death toll rose to more than 8,000 people a day.

The identification of more infectious variants of the virus in the past month has intensified the scramble for vaccines among countries who can afford it. The Guardian understands that talks among European countries over building a [“humanitarian stockpile” of inoculations](#) for refugees and others who may not be vaccinated by governments have been temporarily shelved.

Israel, Bahrain and the UAE have delivered the most doses per capita, with more than one in four Israelis having received a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech formulation. Just over 6% of people in the UK have received a vaccine dose, along with more than 4% of US citizens.

Duke University's Global [Health](#) Innovation Centre estimates there will not be enough vaccines to cover the world's population until at least 2023.

India and South Africa have led a push at the WHO to [waive intellectual property rights](#) for Covid-19 vaccines and treatments, which activists say could significantly increase supplies of both by allowing any qualified manufacturer to produce them without fear of being sued or prosecuted.

Countries including the UK, US and Canada have opposed the IP waiver while at the same time buying up or reserving enough vaccine to inoculate their populations at least four times over, should all the candidates they have pre-purchased be approved.

Covax was established to avoid a repeat of the scramble for vaccines in the aftermath of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, “when richer countries purchased much of the available vaccine, and the African region got vaccines much later and when it was too late to be of any benefit”, said Prof Helen Rees, the chair of the programme and policy committee at Gavi, a vaccine alliance that cofounded Covax.

“[Covax] is inventing a new global health structure in months,” she said. “It’s essentially try to do something that has not ever been done before in the context of a pandemic.”

She said the scheme was being undermined by a rush of bilateral deals, attempts by countries who make vaccines to limit their export, and ambivalence on the part of vaccine manufacturers to “come to the party” by prioritising Covax over deals with governments.

Covax says it has secured at least 2bn vaccine doses for 2021, though it has not provided details on when it will receive them, amid fears manufacturers will seek to prioritise honouring contracts with governments.

The African Union announced last week it had secured 270m doses for the continent in another side deal, a sign that lower- and middle-income countries were seeking to find ways to compete with wealthier countries to bolster their own vaccine supplies.

The WHO also raised “concerns” about the unequal distribution of coronavirus vaccines in Israel and the occupied territories, where Palestinians have yet to receive any vaccine shots, an official said Monday.

Rights groups say Israel has the responsibility as an occupying power to provide vaccines to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel says it has no such obligation and that its own population — including Arab citizens — is the priority, but that at some point it might consider sharing its supplies.

Additional reporting by the Associated Press

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[Bobi Wine](#)

Uganda accuses US of subversion after envoy tries to visit Wine's house

US ambassador blocked from seeing opposition leader, who is under house arrest since voting in disputed poll



Graffiti calling for the release of Bobi Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, on a street in Kampala. Photograph: Baz Ratner/Reuters

Graffiti calling for the release of Bobi Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, on a street in Kampala. Photograph: Baz Ratner/Reuters

Reuters in Kampala

Tue 19 Jan 2021 09.13 EST

Uganda has accused the US of trying to subvert [last week's presidential elections](#) after the US ambassador attempted to visit the main opposition candidate at his home, which has been surrounded by security forces since the vote.

[The military surrounded the home](#) of pop star-turned-legislator Bobi Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, shortly after he cast his ballot in

Thursday's presidential elections.

The incumbent, [Yoweri Museveni](#), 76, who has been in power since 1986, was declared the winner of the poll with 59% of the vote against Wine's 35%.

On Tuesday Wine said he and his wife had run out of food, and milk for her 18-month-old niece.

The sharp, public rebuke to the US from the Ugandan government is relatively unusual as the two nations are allies.

The US supports Ugandan soldiers serving in an African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia and has donated about \$1.5bn to Uganda's health sector in the past three years.

The US ambassador, Natalie E Brown, was stopped from visiting Wine at his home in a suburb in the northern outskirts of the capital, Kampala, the embassy said in a statement late on Monday.

The mission said Brown wanted to check on his "health and safety". Wine became famous after years of singing about government corruption and nepotism, charges denied by the administration. Government spokesman Ofwono Opondo said Brown had no business visiting Wine.

"What she has been trying to do blatantly is to meddle in Uganda's internal politics, particularly elections, to subvert our elections and the will of the people," he said. "She shouldn't do anything outside the diplomatic norms."

Brown had a track record of causing trouble in countries where she has worked in the past, Opondo claimed, adding that the government was watching her.

There was no immediate comment from Brown or the embassy. The embassy has said last week's vote was tainted by harassment of opposition candidates, suppression of the media and rights advocates and a nationwide internet shutdown.

“These unlawful actions and the effective house arrest of a presidential candidate continue a worrying trend on the course of Uganda’s democracy,” it said.

The US and EU did not send observer missions for the polls because Ugandan authorities denied accreditation and had failed to implement recommendations by past missions.

Wine said on Twitter that even the father of his wife’s infant niece they were looking after had been refused entry to collect her. “We have run out of food and milk. No one is allowed to leave or come into our compound,” he wrote. A police spokesman was not immediately available to comment.

On Tuesday, Wine’s lawyers filed a petition in the high court challenging the legality of detaining Wine and his wife without charge. The court has not yet said when the petition will be heard, lawyer Benjamin Katana told Reuters.

During the campaign, security forces routinely broke up Wine’s rallies with teargas, bullets, beatings and detentions. They said the gatherings were violating laws meant to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

In November, 54 people were killed as security forces quelled a protest that erupted after Wine was detained for alleged violation of the anti-coronavirus measures.

Wine and his National Unity Platform (NUP) have rejected the election results and said they were planning a court challenge.

On Monday, security forces cordoned off the party’s offices in the capital. The move was aimed at complicating the NUP’s efforts to collect evidence of poll irregularities.

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[Maria Ressa](#)

Amal Clooney decries 'legal charade' after journalist Maria Ressa charged again with libel

High-profile barrister says 10th arrest warrant for Duterte critic showed the Philippines was trying to silence Ressa



International human rights lawyer Amal Clooney said the latest arrest of Rappler's Maria Ressa was part of the Philippines government's 'increasingly transparent campaign to silence her'. Photograph: David Vincent/AP

International human rights lawyer Amal Clooney said the latest arrest of Rappler's Maria Ressa was part of the Philippines government's 'increasingly transparent campaign to silence her'. Photograph: David Vincent/AP

[Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) South-east Asia correspondent

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.07 EST

Human rights lawyer [Amal Clooney](#) has accused the Philippine government of an “increasingly transparent campaign” to silence Maria Ressa after the journalist was charged with cyber libel for the third time.

Ressa, one of the Philippines’ most prominent journalists, already faces a series of legal charges that could lead to about 100 years in prison.

Last week, Ressa, the CEO of the news website Rappler, was arrested again for a story that alleged students had paid a university professor in exchange for a pass – a report that she did not write.

Ressa, currently on bail, was [convicted of cyber libel](#) in June in relation to a separate report that alleged corruption by a supreme court justice. She is appealing against the judgment, which could lead to up to six years in prison.

[Maria Ressa’s conviction matters to everyone who care about democracy](#) |
[Peter Greste](#)
[Read more](#)

In November, she was charged with cyber libel again in relation to a previous tweet that she had sent. The tweet referred to a published news story that described alleged ties between the judge and a businessman.

Clooney, the Lebanese-British barrister who is leading a team of international lawyers representing Ressa, said she hoped that Philippine judges would put an end to the “legal charade”, adding: “Here we go again: this is now the 10th arrest warrant issued against Ms Ressa and the third libel prosecution for a public interest story,” she said.

“It is the latest step in the Philippine government’s increasingly transparent campaign to silence her and shut down her news site, just as they shut down the leading broadcaster in the country.”



Maria Ressa, the award-winning head of a Philippine online news site Rappler. Photograph: Bullit Marquez/AP

The broadcaster ABS-CBN was forced off air by a cease-and-desist order in May after its franchise licence expired. The network, which had been repeatedly attacked by President Rodrigo Duterte, has not yet been able to renew its licence.

Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC, who also leads the international counsel team acting for Ressa, said the journalist was being penalised for Rappler's reporting. "The prosecutor should never have charged Ms Ressa with this 'crime'. The court should not have issued an arrest warrant, and must now dismiss this baseless prosecution," she said.

Rappler has scrutinised the administration of Duterte, exposing bot armies, corruption and documenting his brutal anti-drugs campaign, which has led, by some estimations, to [tens of thousands of extrajudicial killings](#).

The president has accused Rappler of publishing "fake news".

Ressa and Rappler reporter Rafael Talabong, who wrote the story alleging that a professor had accepted payment to pass students, each posted bail of 30,000 pesos (\$625) on Thursday. Ressa's lawyers say the article was in the public interest and supported by multiple sources of evidence.

Prior to publication, Rappler contacted the professor multiple times to ask for a response for the allegations, but he did not comment on the claims. In his subsequent complaint to police, he said the story contained “libellous, malicious and defamatory statements”.

In addition to the cyberlibel charges, Ressa also faces two criminal cases alleging illegal foreign ownership in her companies, and investigations into her old tax returns.

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Business live

Business

Goldman Sachs profits surge; EU car sales in record fall – as it happened

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[Guatemala](#)

Guatemalan troops forcibly clear migrant caravan from highway

- Army and police used teargas and riot shields on migrants
- Caravan of about 8,000 left Honduras for US last week

01:37

Reuters in Vado Hondo

Mon 18 Jan 2021 16.17 EST

Guatemalan troops with riot shields and truncheons have forcibly cleared a road of hundreds of mostly Honduran migrants who had camped out overnight when authorities barred their caravan from advancing toward the United States.

[Migrant caravan trekking north to US border clashes with Guatemalan troops](#)

[Read more](#)

The government said the road in eastern Guatemala had reopened to traffic on Monday after troops and police officers launched teargas and pushed the migrants with their riot shields back down the highway.

Security forces closed in on the migrants just beyond the village of Vado Hondo, some 55km (34 miles) from the borders of Honduras and El Salvador.

The removal of the large group was the latest effort by Guatemalan authorities to break up the caravan, which authorities said numbered close to 8,000 people within hours of its departure for the United States from Honduras last week.

“We’re scared,” said Rosa Álvarez, a Honduran mother who was at the roadblock just before troops began clearing the area. “We just want to pass

freely to the United States.”

About 2,000 of the migrants installed themselves on the road after [they clashed with Guatemalan security forces on Sunday](#) during a failed effort to make their way past.

After the clearance, groups of migrants went back into Vado Hondo looking for alternative routes, the government said. It was unclear how many were turning back altogether.

The migrants included families with young children. Many say they are fleeing poverty and lawlessness in a region rocked by the coronavirus pandemic and two hurricanes in November.

Late on Sunday, Guatemalan authorities said they had sent more than 1,500 migrants back home since Friday, the vast bulk to Honduras. Nearly 100 were returned to El Salvador.

The first migrant caravan of the year comes just before President-elect Joe Biden takes office in the US on Wednesday promising to adopt a more humane approach to migration than Donald Trump, who took a hard line.

President Andrés López Obrador of Mexico on Monday warned migrants not to try to enter countries by force, and said he was in touch with the outgoing and incoming US administrations over the migrant caravan.

[The unseen driver behind the migrant caravan: climate change](#)

[Read more](#)

López Obrador said he was hopeful that Biden would carry out an immigration reform and work with Mexico and Central America on a plan that could provide alternatives to migration.

The Guatemalan foreign minister, Pedro Brolo, said on Monday he was surprised that Honduras did not want to collaborate in stopping the caravan, citing earlier joint discussions.

The head of the Honduran border police, Julián Hernández, said more than 800 security officials had tried to stop the caravan at the Guatemalan border,

but migrants pushed through the barrier, some using children “as shields”.

“We weren’t there with our arms folded,” he told Reuters.

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Italy

Italian PM battles for coalition's survival over Covid recovery plan

Italia Viva party's departure deprives Conte of majority, with crunch vote on Tuesday



Italy's prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, speaking about the current political situation in the lower house, the chamber of deputies, on Monday.
Photograph: Stefano Caroфеi/REX/Shutterstock

Italy's prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, speaking about the current political situation in the lower house, the chamber of deputies, on Monday.
Photograph: Stefano Caroфеi/REX/Shutterstock

[Angela Giuffrida](#) in Rome

Mon 18 Jan 2021 09.42 EST

Italy deserves a “cohesive government”, its prime minister, [Giuseppe Conte](#), has said as he began the fight for his coalition’s survival.

Conte told the lower house of parliament on Monday that the political crisis triggered last week by the former prime minister Matteo Renzi was

“unfounded” and risked severely damaging the country at a time when Italians were struggling with health and financial worries.

“It comes at a crucial stage, in the middle of a pandemic, with citizens suffering from the loss of loved ones,” Conte added. “We risk everything, and losing contact with reality. Was there really a need to open a political crisis at this time?”

Conte is seeking to fill the void created by Renzi, [who yanked his small Italia Viva party from the ruling coalition](#) over disagreements about the handling of the pandemic and a post-Covid economic recovery plan.

Italia Viva’s departure deprived Conte of an absolute majority in both houses, and votes taking place later on Monday in the lower house and on Tuesday in the upper house will determine whether his fragile coalition can stay in power.

The vote in the upper house, where Conte could fall short of gaining the support of an absolute majority of senators, is the more crucial.

While Conte acknowledged errors made in managing the pandemic, he said he was speaking with his “head high” and not out of arrogance as he appealed for support from parliamentarians who had Italy’s “destiny at heart”.

Renzi told Corriere della Sera on Sunday that his 18 senators would probably abstain. However, his overtures about returning to the coalition if his party’s demands were met appeared to be rejected by Conte, who said: “What has happened cannot be cancelled.” The Five Star Movement (M5S), the biggest party in the coalition, and the Democratic party (PD) have refused to work with Renzi again.

Renzi has been widely criticised for a move that many have deemed irresponsible. With Italy poised to receive more than €200bn (£178bn) from the EU to reboot its economy, he argued his actions were needed in order to stop Conte amassing too much power. Renzi had criticised the spending plan as weak, arguing that the money risked being squandered. His other main grievance was over Italy not tapping the EU’s bailout fund – the European

stability mechanism (ESM) – to shore up the health service. M5S has always resisted this, fearing that it would leave Italy beholden to strict EU austerity rules.

Analysts say the outcome of the crisis is difficult to predict. If Conte fails to win a solid majority, he is expected to resign, paving the way for a possible government of national unity, or, failing that, new elections.

“Conte’s message was clear – either I get new senators or I resign,” said Franco Pavoncello, a politics professor and president of John Cabot University in Rome. “He needs a lot of people ... he can try to keep going but if he doesn’t get the majority it’s going to be difficult.”

Massimiliano Panarari, an associate professor at Mercatorum University in Rome, said: “There will be lots of negotiations going on and everything will depend on what happens after the vote in the senate.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/conte-battles-for-his-coalitions-survival-over-covid-recovery-plan>

Belarus

Belarus axed as host of ice hockey tournament over 'security concerns'

Sponsors of IIHF championships had begun to drop out after violent government crackdown on protests



The IIHF chief, René Fasel (right), had dismissed pressure to cancel the championships after meeting Alexander Lukashenko (left) on 11 January.
Photograph: Nikolai Petrov/BELTA/TASS

The IIHF chief, René Fasel (right), had dismissed pressure to cancel the championships after meeting Alexander Lukashenko (left) on 11 January.
Photograph: Nikolai Petrov/BELTA/TASS

[Shaun Walker](#) Central and eastern Europe correspondent

Mon 18 Jan 2021 12.44 EST

The international ice hockey federation (IIHF) has said it will not hold this summer's world championship in Belarus, amid concerns that it would be a propaganda coup for the country's hockey-mad dictator, [Alexander Lukashenko](#).

In a statement, the federation said it had made the decision “in the face of the growing safety and security concerns related to both the rising political unrest and Covid-19”. Minsk and the Latvian capital, Riga, were due to co-host the tournament in May and June.

The decision comes just a week after the IIHF president, René Fasel, dismissed pressure to cancel the tournament after [Lukashenko's ruthless crackdown on a huge protest movement](#) over recent months. Fasel warmly embraced Lukashenko on a visit to Minsk and said he wanted the tournament to go ahead as planned.

Fasel said he believed Lukashenko was committed to serious reform in the country, something most observers of the country over recent months think highly unlikely. “Personally, I think that lot of people are underestimating the capacity of the [Belarus](#) government to move forward, modernise, and build a new constitution in the country,” Fasel said, after meeting the Belarusian leader.

The IIHF’s sudden change of heart appears to have come about only after businesses sponsoring the tournament started to pull out, wary of negative publicity.

On Saturday, Škoda said it would withdraw as a sponsor of the tournament if it went ahead in Belarus. “We’ve been a proud partner to the IIHF world championship for 28 years. But we also respect and promote all human rights,” the Czech car manufacturer [said](#) in a statement posted on Twitter.

Tens of thousands of people have been arrested, beaten or forced to flee the country since unrest began in Belarus after [rigged elections in August](#). Hosting the tournament would have given Lukashenko a boost at a time when he has become an international pariah. He is passionate about ice hockey and is frequently pictured on state television playing the game.

“This is a very wise step – to support human rights & fair sport, not to cooperate with the regime in Belarus,” wrote [Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, the exiled opposition politician](#), on Twitter on Monday.

Until Monday, the IIHF had insisted the tournament should be kept separate from politics, but this was always unrealistic in the current climate. Latvia recently banned the head of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, Dmitry Baskov, from entering the country after he was alleged to have been present during an attack on the protester Roman Bondarenko in Minsk in November. Bondarenko later died of his injuries. The IIHF has said it is carrying out its own investigation into the incident.

The hockey federation said it would announce soon whether the tournament would be held only in Riga, or moved to a different location entirely.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/belarus-axed-as-host-of-ice-hockey-tournament-over-security-concerns>

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[US news](#)

Trump administration to deport man to Haiti who has never been there

Financial consultant Paul Pierrilus came to the US with his parents, who are both US citizens, when he was five



Paul Pierrilus, a man due to be deported from the US to Haiti – a country he has never lived in

Paul Pierrilus, a man due to be deported from the US to Haiti – a country he has never lived in

[Julian Borger](#) in Washington

Mon 18 Jan 2021 20.00 EST

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) is to carry out a final deportation flight of the Trump era on Tuesday, with a plane bound for Haiti whose passengers include a man who is not a Haitian citizen, and who has never been there.

Paul Pierrilus, a 40-year-old financial consultant from Rockland County, New York, was born in the French Caribbean territory of Saint Martin,

according to a birth certificate supplied by his family, who said he came to the US with his parents when he was five. His sister and parents are US citizens.

He was picked up on 11 January, as part of what human rights advocates say is a last sweep of black migrants in the final days of the Trump administration. He has told his family he was being transferred to an Ice holding facility in Alexandria, Louisiana, which is a typical precursor to deportation.

According to his sister, Neomie, he was seized when he went to an immigration office on Federal Plaza in Manhattan on 11 January, for what he thought would be a routine visit.

“He went there for the appointment and while he was there, he was detained, and he was informed that they have documents stating that he’s a Haitian citizen,” Neomie Pierrilus said.

She said their parents were Haitian but never applied for Paul’s Haitian citizenship. “We don’t really understand how documents were obtained to say that my brother was a citizen of Haiti.

“My brother has never even been to Haiti,” she said. “He has the bare minimum of the language, he doesn’t know the culture, he doesn’t know anyone there. So my brother cannot go there.”

Neomie Pierrilus supplied copies of emails last year from the then Haitian ambassador, Hervé Denis, confirming that her brother was not a Haitian citizen. Nor did Paul’s birth in Saint Martin confer French citizenship, making him stateless.

Guerline Jozef, head of the community group Haitian Bridge Alliance, said that the intense level of political violence in Haiti represented a serious threat to Pierrilus’s life.

“Sending him to Haiti, first of all, is not legal,” Jozef said. “And with what’s going on in Haiti right now, there is no way they should be deporting people

there period, especially him because he is not Haitian, has never been there and has no connections there. So they cannot just drop him at the airport.”

[Ice has been running removal flights to Haiti every second Tuesday](#), and appears ready to press ahead with this week’s scheduled flight on the eve of Joe Biden’s inauguration. Biden has promised a 100-day suspension of deportations on taking office, while immigration and Ice procedures are reviewed.

There have been calls for the agency to be dissolved for its role in enforcing Trump’s anti-immigration policies, including the [separation of migrant children](#) from their parents. Ice has also been accused of [torturing African asylum-seekers to make them sign waivers allowing for their deportation](#), as part of a sweep particularly targeting African and Caribbean migrants.

[US Ice officers 'used torture to make Africans sign own deportation orders'](#)
[Read more](#)

Another flight is due to leave Arizona on Tuesday, heading to Mauritania, carrying Black Mauritanian deportees, despite well-documented persecution and enslavement of their community there. Deportations of Black Mauritians were rare before the Trump administration, under which they have increased more than tenfold.

An Ice spokeswoman said that she could not confirm any deportation flight until it had landed, for reasons of operational security.

“That being said, it’s not uncommon for removal flights to stop in multiple locations,” the spokeswoman said.

The Ice [Twitter account](#) celebrated Martin Luther King day on Monday saying that it honoured his “message of hope, justice and equality”.

Jozef said that the agency’s relentless deportation of Haitians and Africans – despite the endemic violence there and the risks of spreading coronavirus – made a mockery of that claim.

“They have been targeting black communities. They have been targeting black immigrants. So this is the last attempt of destroying lives,” she said.

“As we celebrate the life of MLK who has been fighting for justice and on the eve of the inauguration, this cannot happen. This should not be happening.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/18/trump-administration-to-deport-man-to-haiti-who-has-never-been-there>

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[Norway](#)

Sámi reindeer herders file lawsuit against Norway windfarm

Indigenous communities say planned Øyfjellet turbines will interfere with migration paths

[Weronika Strzyżyska](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 07.34 EST Last modified on Mon 18 Jan 2021 09.52 EST



Reindeer belonging to Sámi people in Norway. Herding remains important to Sámi culture and is protected under Norwegian law. Photograph: John Vidal/The Observer

Indigenous reindeer herders are bringing a legal action against a proposed wind power project that would be one of the largest in [Norway](#).

The Sámi herders from Nordland county are accusing the Øyfjellet windfarm constructors of breaking licensing agreements which stipulated that construction would not interfere with reindeer migration paths.

This is not the first such lawsuit in Norway. In the past five years Sámi communities have begun legal actions against the country's largest onshore windfarms and have appealed to the UN, arguing that the farms violate their territorial and cultural rights.

Oyfjellen locator map

“The Sámi people are not the ones who have contributed the most to climate change, but we seem to be the ones who have to carry its greatest burden,” said Gunn-Britt Retter, the head of the Arctic and environmental unit at the Sámi Council, a non-governmental organisation that represents Sámi people. “That’s not climate justice, that’s climate injustice.”

The number of wind turbines in Norway has quadrupled in the past 10 years. Many of the onshore projects were built in the northern parts of the country that are home to the largest numbers of Sámi people.

The Sámi are recognised as an indigenous group from Fennoscandia. Their ancestral land, known as Sápmi, stretches across parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Historically, most Sámi people made their livelihoods from fishing and reindeer herding. Although only about 10% of Sámi in Norway are still involved in herding full-time, the practice remains important to Sámi culture and is protected under Norwegian law.

Many Sámi see windfarms as a threat to their ancient cultural practices, as turbines of up to 200 metres tall can stretch for kilometres, and are often built in areas used for reindeer herding.

“Studies and indigenous knowledge show that reindeer don’t go near wind turbines,” said Áslak Holmberg, the vice-chair of the Sámi Council. “These areas are lost from use to the herders.”

Windfarms also necessitate the building of roads and other infrastructure, often in areas that were previously undisturbed by humans. “All these bits and pieces are eating up the land that people in the wider society would call ‘wilderness’ but which is the foundation of our culture,” said Retter.

Pål Gude Gudesen, the lawyer representing the herding district, has said the proposed Øyfjellet windfarm violates the reindeer herding act, by disturbing migration routes.

“If the routes aren’t available or cannot be used, [the herders] will not be able to get the reindeer to or from winter pasture,” Gudesen said. “[This] can lead to necessary reduction of the herd, which will mean that one or several traditional Sámi reindeer herders will no longer have sufficient economic basis for their business.”

In September the court ruled against the reindeer herders and upheld the windfarm’s original licence. The herders have brought the case to the court of appeal, and Gudesen said he expected to hear a ruling in the first quarter of this year. However, he is not optimistic about the result.

“From our client’s point of view, it seems that the government will go far to protect the construction of a wind power plant that has been given concession, and that this trumps the rights of the indigenous people,” he said.

Holmberg is similarly downbeat. “If you compare the resources of the state to those of a reindeer herding community, they are battling against something much bigger than themselves,” he said. “But I would like to think that there is still some hope to get some good outcomes from the national courts.”

Previously, Tony Christian Tiller, the state secretary at Norway’s energy ministry, has expressed his hope that reindeer and wind turbines will be able to coexist. Speaking of the Øyfjellet case, he stressed the importance of cooperation and communication between the parties.

However, Retter said many Sámi herders were often left dissatisfied after consultations with companies seeking licences to build windfarms on their land. “They [are] not given the opportunity to say no,” Retter said. “They [are] forced into choosing between the lesser of two evils.”

Retter says this makes herders reluctant even to meet energy companies, as they are worried that their meetings will be weaponised against them.

“If you choose to have dialogue they might use that and say, ‘Oh, well we have spoken with the reindeer herders.’ And if you don’t, then you have no say. So it is a hopeless situation,” she said.

A spokesperson for Eolus, the energy company behind the planned windfarm, said: “It is our firm belief that coexistence between the reindeer district and the windfarm is possible … We have signed over 100 voluntary agreements with different stakeholders in connection with the windfarm and would like to find an agreement with the reindeer district as well.

The spokesperson said the company had not breached the license agreements: “We sent them a draft [of the plan] for review and the possibility to suggest changes prior to submitting it to the authorities for approval. Unfortunately, they did not give any opinions. We are willing to find solutions that ensure a safe move of the herd and other compensatory measures to secure the path during the years that winter grazing zone 5 is used. We have used a landscape architect when planning the infrastructure of the windfarm in order to find ways to impact the nature and the landscape as little as possible.”

Retter grew up in the Sámi community of Unjárpa-Nesseby in Norway’s far north. She says Norway’s move towards renewable energy has not taken Sámi interests into account, pointing out that the Arctic region – where most Sámi live – has been disproportionately affected by global heating and is now seen as a source of renewable energy, with windfarms, hydropower plants, and mineral mines built in the region.

“It’s a paradox, really,” she said, “you are squeezed between the impact of climate change and the impact of green energy, which is the answer to climate change.”

But with a general election approaching in September and [a growing public backlash against onshore wind](#) in Norway, Retter retains some hope that politicians may yet intervene.

“We can’t stop being optimistic, we have to believe that there is justice,” she said. “It’s hopeless for our culture if we’re not optimistic.”

- This article was amended on 18 January 2021 to remove an incorrect statement that the number of wind turbines in Norway has increased as part of plans to switch from fossil fuels.
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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/18/sami-reindeer-herders-file-lawsuit-against-oyfjellet-norway-windfarm-project>

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Feel the buzz: the rise and rise of the quizshow in lockdown

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Book of the dayAutobiography and memoir

Thin Places by Kerri ní Dochartaigh review – a survivor's story



Derry's Bogside neighbourhood, February 2013. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Observer

Derry's Bogside neighbourhood, February 2013. Photograph: Antonio Olmos/The Observer

A Derry writer's powerful, unflinching account of her war-torn childhood and her quest for peace is part hymn to nature, part Troubles memoir



[Sean O'Hagan](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

The “thin places” that give this book its title exist in Irish mythology as thresholds or portals to the other side; sites where the veil between this world and the next is most porous. Known to locals through oral stories passed down the generations, they are vestiges of an older, stranger Ireland, their resonance still palpable, Kerri ní Dochartaigh suggests, to those attuned to their otherness. “They are places that make us feel something larger than ourselves,” she writes, “as though we are held in a place between worlds, beyond experience.”

Her hybrid book attempts to hold the reader in place between two contrasting genres: nature writing and Troubles memoir. It is an often precarious balancing act, the two strands, one wondrous and elemental, the other violent and unsettling, sustained by the vividly descriptive prose. The journey begins in the windswept northerly reaches of Donegal, where she names the small wild things she sees around her in Irish – *leamhan* (moth); *dreoilín* (wren); *crotach* (curlew). That very act is, as it turns out, a way of grounding herself in history and place, of asserting her sense of belonging to an older culture, not just pre-colonial, but pre-Christian.

Ní Dochartaigh grew up just a few miles away in Derry – or Doire or Londonderry, depending on your political loyalties. When she began writing *Thin Places*, the invisibility of the border between the two counties of Donegal and Derry was threatened by the looming possibility of a hard Brexit. Her anxiety at that possibility and the violence it might reignite is the first ripple of unease in a narrative that grows darker and more unsettling the more it delves into the recent past. She describes the border as “the thread that has run though my life”, and more intriguingly as “a ghost vein on the map of my insides”. In many ways, her book is a kind of emotional history of the Troubles and their aftermath, laying bare the ways in which the violence she witnessed altered her nervous system and her psyche.

They found their belongings dumped in the garden by the strangers who now occupied their old home

Born and raised in Derry, the daughter of a Catholic mother and Protestant father, Kerri ní Dochartaigh grew up feeling neither here nor there in a city riven by decades of sectarianism and violence. Her search for belonging takes her far and wide, to Dublin, Cork, Edinburgh, the Isle of Mull, Bristol and beyond, but always draws her home, where her troubles began. Aged 11, she had her family home in the Protestant Waterside area petrol bombed in the night by local youths. She was alerted to the danger by the presence of a semi-feral stray cat that had turned up on their doorstep a few weeks before (“The claw marks (she) left on my face when she was wakening me in my smoke-filled bedroom left me embarrassed in school for months, but she made sure I woke up”).

The family fled to a Catholic neighbourhood, returning a few days later to gather up the remains of their belongings. They found them dumped in the garden by the strangers who now occupied their old home and who steadfastly refused to acknowledge their presence. On the other side of the River Foyle, their uneasy life ended just as abruptly when they were bullied by neighbours who had noticed the minibus that turned up one day to take the young Kerri to a youth club. On its side were the words Clooney Hall Methodist Church Londonderry, a litany of provocation to the locals. “We were intimidated out of Earhart Park,” she writes, stoically, “during the only spring we spent there.”

In Ballykelly, less than 20 miles away, she briefly finds a kind of Eden. “It was quiet there, and calm, a kind of place I had never known before,” she writes. “Friendships seemed to be above any idea of difference... the first question I was asked was what my favourite Nirvana song was.”



Kerri ní Dochartaigh: ‘vividly descriptive’. Photograph: Kenny Manus

Few places in [Northern Ireland](#), though, escaped the violence. When she was 16, a local boy that she had grown close to – “the first person to give me a Valentine’s card” – walked her home from the chip shop, before setting off to rejoin his friends in town. “He had curtains in his hair, held in place with thick, gunky gel,” she writes. “His waves were as sculpted as Binevenagh mountain, and as blond as a cherub. He was murdered, most likely less than an hour after I said goodbye to him.” His body, naked and bloodied, was found the next day in a shallow grave in a nearby wood.

It is these seismic, destabilising events that echo through Kerri ní Dochartaigh’s adult life and frame her narrative of belonging. “Fear held me tightly in the belly of its storm,” she writes, “and my identity, which had once seemed so fiercely outlined as a teenager, had faded at the edge; the lines of my map had blurred and I didn’t have a compass.”

In her memoir, she emerges, altered, as an individual who, having spent years withdrawing into herself for protection or numbing herself with alcohol, has found a rare kind of peace by immersing herself in ancient folklore and the natural world, surrendering to its beauty and its elemental power.

The story of how she got there, though, is a turbulent one and her writing of it unflinching in its intensity. I found myself by turns astonished and exhausted, enthralled by passages of sustained imaginative power, but often needing to put the book down so unrelenting is its heightened emotional pitch. And although her animist worldview bestows a sacred significance on every living thing, whether a dancing moth, a wind-bent reed or a passing urban fox scavenging for food, *Thin Places* is at heart a survivor's story located in the real and brutally Darwinian world of lived experience, a world more red in tooth and claw than nature itself.

- *Thin Places* by Kerri ní Dochartaigh is published by Canongate (£14.99). To order a copy go to [guardianbookshop.com](https://www.guardianbookshop.com). Delivery charges may apply
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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jan/19/thin-places-by-kerri-ni-dochartaigh-review-a-survivors-story>.

The Great British art tourArt and design

The Great British Art tour: half a Hepworth that became a whole



Much loved ... Oval Sculpture, 1943, by Barbara Hepworth. Photograph: Bowness/The Pier Arts Centre

Much loved ... Oval Sculpture, 1943, by Barbara Hepworth. Photograph: Bowness/The Pier Arts Centre

With public art collections closed we are bringing the art to you, exploring highlights and hidden gems from across the country in partnership with Art UK. Today's pick: Orkney's Oval Sculpture

Pier Arts Centre, Orkney

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Oval Sculpture was made by [Barbara Hepworth](#) in 1943. It is carved from plane wood with the interior painted white. It has been part of the Pier Arts Centre's permanent collection since the gallery first opened in Stromness in 1979.

Margaret Gardiner, the founder of the Arts Centre, was a great friend of Hepworth, Ben Nicholson (Hepworth's second husband) and many other artists working in Cornwall at the time. She saw this piece in a London art gallery in 1946 and tells the story (in a publication that marked the launch of the Pier Arts Centre) about how she came to purchase it.

At the Reid and Lefevre Gallery show in 1946 I stood for a long time looking at Barbara Hepworth's carving, Oval Form. Opposite me, and looking at it with seemingly equal delight, was a man, a stranger.

'If I could afford it, I'd buy that sculpture' I said.

'If I could afford it, I'd buy that sculpture' he said.

On a sudden impulse, 'Then why don't we share it?' I asked.

'Why not, indeed?' said he.

And so it was agreed. I discovered that his name was CS Reddihough, that he lived in Yorkshire and was a friend of Ben Nicholson's and a great admirer of both Ben's and Barbara's work.

We shared Oval Form for many years. Reddihough would drive down to London and collect it and then, about six months later, he would bring it back to me. It was always with especial delight that I would see it again.

In the end Reddihough asked me to buy him out as he wished to get a painting of Ben's that he couldn't otherwise afford. I agreed, and so I acquired my 'second half' of the work.

I still have the invoice from the gallery which runs like this:

'One carving by Barbara Hepworth in plane wood. "Oval Sculpture" 1944.

Your half-share ...'

Which must, surely, be something of a rarity?

Contemporary artist [Christine Borland](#) has a longstanding fascination with Oval Sculpture, and in 2012 created a work – Oval Interior – that explores the interior spaces of Hepworth’s carving. Using 3D digital scanning technology the hollowed-out spaces were recreated as solid forms, revealing the appearance of space “hidden” within the sculpture.



Long-standing fascination ... Oval Interior, 2012, by Christine Borland.
Photograph: © Christine Borland

Hepworth’s sculpture is much loved by gallery visitors and is often compared to natural forms including shells or caves – linking the sea-eroded landscape of Hepworth’s Cornish home to the shores that surround the Pier Arts Centre in Orkney.

- You can see more art from The Pier Arts Centre on [Art UK here](#), and find out more on the [Art Centre’s website](#).
- *This series is brought to you in collaboration with [Art UK](#), which brings the nation’s art together on one digital platform and tells the stories behind the art. The website shows works by 50,000 artists from more than 3,000 venues including museums, universities and hospitals as well as thousands of public sculptures. Discover the art you own [here](#).*

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Design

Pink seesaws across US-Mexico border named Design of the Year 2020

Creators say they hope the work encourages people to build bridges between communities



American and Mexican families enjoying the Teeter Totter Wall, which crosses the Mexican border with US, in 2019. Photograph: Luis Torres/AFP/Getty Images

American and Mexican families enjoying the Teeter Totter Wall, which crosses the Mexican border with US, in 2019. Photograph: Luis Torres/AFP/Getty Images

[Lanre Bakare](#)

[@lanre_bakare](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

A collection of bright pink seesaws that allowed people to interact over the US-Mexico border has won the prestigious [Design of the Year award](#), with

its creators saying they hoped the work encourages people to build bridges between communities.

The Teeter Totter Wall, which bridged across El Paso in Texas and Ciudad Juárez in [Mexico](#) during a 40-minute session, was described as not only feeling “symbolically important” but also highlighting “the possibility of things” by the judging panel.

The creators of the seesaws, Ronald Rael, a professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and Virginia San Fratello, an associate professor of design at San José State University, first came up with the idea a decade ago after the Secure Fence Act 2006, which started large-scale building on the border.

They said they hoped the design would help people reassess the effectiveness of borders and encourage dialogue rather than division. San Fratello said: “I think it’s become increasingly clear with the recent events in our country that we don’t need to build walls we need to build bridges.”



A mother and her baby play on a seesaw installed between the steel fence that divides Mexico from the United States in Ciudad de Juarez, Mexico in 2019. Photograph: Christian Chavez/AP

“Walls don’t stop people from entering our Capitol,” Rael added. “Walls don’t stop viruses from moving. We have to think about how we can be connected and be together without hurting each other.”

Videos of people interacting and playing across the border on the day-glo creations went viral in July 2019, with Rael saying they provided “a literal fulcrum” between the countries. The bright pink colouring was inspired by [the femicide memorials](#) in Ciudad Juarez, which pay homage to women murdered in the city.

The designers also took inspiration from political cartoonists and wanted to talk about the border issue in “a very frank way but using humour”.

The border wall has become a legacy issue for [Donald Trump](#), however the designers point out that both George W Bush and Barack Obama built large stretches of barriers and deported thousands of people.

Rael said: “[Trump] ran on a platform of saying that he was going to build a wall as if some Saviour had finally arrived to build a wall but in fact two thirds of the wall had already been constructed.”

In one of his last trips as President, Donald Trump visited part of the border wall in Texas’ [Rio Grande Valley](#) with his administration boasting about having kept the president’s promise to build a “big, beautiful wall”.

According to the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) more than 450 miles of wall had been erected during Trump’s tenure, however [much of the construction replaced barriers that were already in place](#). The CBP stated that there were only 80 miles of barrier in areas which had previously had none.



Stormzy's Stab Proof Vest, by Banksy. Photograph: Stuart C Wilson/Getty Images

The winning design saw off competition from more than 70 nominees, which included a 3D rendering of the virus causing Covid-19, Lee Ha Jun's set design from Parasite, the Oscar-winning South Korean film, and the union flag stab-proof vest worn by [Stormzy](#) at Glastonbury 2019.

Awards were also given to six category winners with prizes recognising innovation in product, architecture, digital, fashion, graphics and transport.

The product award went to the vegan Impossible Burger 2.0, which was described as being crucially “beefier” than its 2016 predecessor, while the 3D rendering of the Covid-19 virus by Alissa Eckert and Dan Higgins took the graphics prize.

The vegan leather, gender neutral Telfar bag, which was described as being “the accessory of the decade” by Dazed, won the fashion prize with judges saying it was redefining “what luxury means”. Social [Design](#) Collaborative’s portable school design won the architecture prize, with the easily assembled, sustainably made Indian structure impressing the judges.

The Chilean feminist group Colectivo LASTESIS won the digital category with its protest against the use of sexual violence in the recent uprisings in

the South American country. The artist Camille Walala said the work had been replicated by feminists in India, Kenya and Mexico.

The People's Choice award was given to the brick arches made by protesters in Hong Kong, which were used to slow down police vehicles during the protests in 2019.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/jan/19/pink-seesaws-across-us-mexico-border-named-design-of-the-year-2020>

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[The Observer Poetry](#)

The Late Sun by Christopher Reid review – masterly light and shade

Moments of passing beauty and monumental losses are handled with equal skill in a comforting book



‘He misses nothing’: Christopher Reid at his home in Camden, north London, 2015. Photograph: Eamonn McCabe/The Guardian

‘He misses nothing’: Christopher Reid at his home in Camden, north London, 2015. Photograph: Eamonn McCabe/The Guardian



[Kate Kellaway](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 04.00 EST

Christopher Reid's wonderful, calming new collection *The Late Sun* is a patchwork of sunlight and shade. The opening poem, Photography, set in a sunny restaurant before lunch, ends contemplatively:

What I can see and am smitten
by is a cool, square depth
of shadow and nuance,
fixed for an instant, an age.

Reid is a parental poet, bringing responsible, reserved yet often playful attention to what he sees. Running at the Sea describes a small boy and girl chasing waves. Charming and accurate, it ends with verbs that could belong to the children themselves. The sea alternates between “boom and shush” – suggestive of a noisy game, a lullaby. In a collection of exceptional observations, Reid misses nothing: a tree surgeon’s acrobatics in an ordinary London plane tree, a riderless horse taking a short canter “on the sly,/ like a loose thought”, mountains seen from a plane, their overflowing shapes brilliantly described as “slovenly”.

There is an amusing longer poem on the understandably neglected subject of Smells of London – not for the sniffily refined reader:

8 a.m., and a rich pong
thickens the air,
a mulch of stinks suggesting
the binmen have been here
with their cavernous, omnidigesting,
rear-end-fed truck

It is, again, the accuracy with which Reid is on the scent that amazes, his rhymes so unforced you barely notice them.

He is famous for his collection about his wife's death, *A Scattering*, which won the Costa prize, and for *The Song of Lunch*, which made unforgettable television, starring Alan Rickman and Emma Thompson. His later voice is, if possible, even more secure – unhurried and unstrained. With the heaviest subjects, he travels light. With lighter subjects, he knows how to hold them in place. He is, inevitably perhaps, least at home when venturing furthest afield (in Malala and A Cold Going, about departing refugees). His best poems are personal: The Frost-Fox – which is flawless – is about finding a young vixen dead on his mother's lawn after her death:

Nothing stirred.
The effect was both pretty and eerie,
like some enchantment suffered in a fairy tale.

By making his mother's death peripheral, losing her becomes central. And there is a Larkinesque quality to A Bungalow in West Byfleet, describing selecting family souvenirs from his mother's house. That home is so sad goes without saying.

Still, I'll take a few things home –
the albums, that ebony elephant,
your Ethiopian *Queen of Sheba* painting
in the hope of going some way towards making good.

The sonnet about his mother's last stroke, *Unheard Words*, is masterly. The lack of fuss the poem demonstrates was, one gathers, his mother's quality.

Further farewells include *Sophie Among the Elements*, a moving portrait of Suffolk potter Sophie Milburn. And *Death of a Barber* has a marvellously respectful delicacy and topicality. It ends baldly (if the word may be applied to an elegy about a barber) but this is perfectly judged in its understatement.

Elsewhere, Reid revisits Greek mythology with aplomb. *Argos* is a teasing poem about Odysseus's dog which, after recognising his disguised master after a long absence, drops dead: "but what I want is to pause here/ and ask what this episode is meant to mean". The ending keeps us guessing – and entertained. In several poems set in Greece and Spain, the holiday mood uplifts, offering a chance to bask in truant happiness. And even though the title poem, a contrived obituary to the sun, leans towards doom, it cannot extinguish a heartwarming collection in which older-and-wiser poet and child converge – in sun and shade.

- *The Late Sun* by Christopher Reid is published by Faber (£14.99). To order a copy go to guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply

Death of a Barber by Christopher Reid

Not Mustafa, but one of his colleagues
cut my hair today.

That's when I learned that Mustafa
had passed away,
a victim of the virus.

Intimate work, the barber's:
fingers, scissors and razor
titivating
with professional gentleness
crown, sides, back and neck.
Almost a caress.

I had been going for ages
to the little shop he used to have,

festooned with climbing plants
and budgerigars in cages,
before I learned Mustafa's name
and something of his life
but, as etymology tells us,
touch and tact are the same.

For months now, no one had touched me
except my wife,
and I was looking forward
to a needed trim.

I got one, as expert and luxurious
as any of Mustafa's,
But it was not from him.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jan/19/the-late-sun-by-christopher-reid-review-masterly-light-and-shade>

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Hear me outJennifer Lopez

Hear me out: why Maid in Manhattan isn't a bad movie

Continuing our series of writers defending unpopular films is a reappraisal of the absurd yet compelling Jennifer Lopez/Ralph Fiennes romantic comedy



Jennifer Lopez and Ralph Fiennes in Maid in Manhattan. Photograph: Barry Wetcher/AP

Jennifer Lopez and Ralph Fiennes in Maid in Manhattan. Photograph: Barry Wetcher/AP



[Ammar Kalia](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.33 EST

2002 was a bumper year for romcoms. Banking on the commercial safety of a saccharine love story, studios splashed out on everything from the Nick Hornby adaptation *About A Boy* to Gurinder Chadha's Hounslow tale *Bend It Like Beckham*, Sandra Bullock facing off against corporate shill Hugh Grant in *Two Weeks Notice*, matrimonial romp *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, and Reese Witherspoon's nostalgic *Sweet Home Alabama*, to name just a few titles.

This was a golden age for will-they-won't-they tales set to the backdrop of the new millennium, burgeoning digital literacy and predictable scripts that ensured that they, in fact, always did. Nestled amongst these releases was a critically derided, commercially dominating cultural relic: *Maid In Manhattan*.

[Hear me out: why *The Phantom Menace* isn't a bad movie](#)

[Read more](#)

The film stars [Jennifer Lopez](#) as a maid working in a luxury Manhattan hotel, who finds herself falling for a senatorial candidate (Ralph Fiennes) – who in turn has a soft spot for Richard Nixon – via a farcical case of

mistaken identity. Lopez keeps up with her adopted, socialite guise until her secret is revealed and much hand-wringing ensues. Fiennes ultimately decides that her lowly status as a maid is good enough for him; he can share his wealth anyway. Over the closing credits we see that Fiennes has won his seat and Lopez has now transitioned from maid to an employer of maids.

Lopez was at the height of her popularity and power when the film was released, having broken through with the title role in Selena in 1997, then played alongside George Clooney in Steven Soderbergh's Out of Sight, before starring in hit The Wedding Planner with Matthew McConaughey, as well as reaching number one in the US charts with her second album J.Lo – a nickname coined by director Oliver Stone on the set of his 1997 film U Turn. Lopez's money-making credentials were solid. Fiennes, meanwhile, brought an outsized theatrical gravitas to his role, following Oscar-nominated turns in Schindler's List and The English Patient.

From the lofty, hindsighted position of this century's increasing political turmoil and structural inequality, their pairing in the film now becomes an excellent satire on new millennium naivety – an attempt to shoehorn fairytale tropes into an unruly and unbalanced modern society.

In the film's moral universe, the only place for women of colour is in the bowels of the hotel, performing menial work, and the only way one of the more ambitious of their ranks, Lopez, can progress is by mistakenly posing as a white socialite and ultimately romancing her way out of her social class. Above all, Fiennes is implicitly praised for his willingness to elevate her into his ranks, to be seen with someone like a brown maid in public. And in the film's climactic scene, Lopez's son argues that his mother should be given a second chance, making a clumsy comparison to rehabilitating Nixon after his impeachment in the process. If nothing else, we know by now that impeachment should not be so easily glossed over ...

Even the film's poster is absurd. Lopez sits on a bench in front of the Manhattan skyline in her maid's uniform – a visual signifier of her servitude – while she daydreams in an infantilised pose an image floating in the sky of her in a diamond necklace flanked by Fiennes, him showing more than a glimpse of his future turn as Voldemort through an unnerving smirk.

With the hindsight, too, of Lopez's scene-stealing turn in 2019's *Hustlers*, here we see her acting chops in embryonic form, while the supporting cast props her up in impressive fashion. The late Bob Hoskins provides paternal authority as butler Lionel, Stanley Tucci is on reliably camp form as Fiennes' adviser Jerry and the late [Natasha Richardson](#) is the gleefully villainous socialite Caroline Lane. All the while Fiennes holds court as the smiling, yet ominously ambitious senatorial candidate.

In a year of popular romcoms that at least attempted to incorporate the nuances of reality – immigrant experiences in *Bend It Like Beckham* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, depression in *About A Boy*, southern anachronism in *Sweet Home Alabama* – *Maid in Manhattan* stands out as a curious, absurdist fairytale. It deserves another watch because of its fantastic ignorance to the context of its making. It is the unexpected death knell of the romanticised American dream onscreen; it is the last gasp of old-fashioned romcom idealism in a different world. It tells us, in the most glowing of terms, that you can't hope to work your way into a better life any more, that in fact the odds are so stacked against you if you are a single, working-class mother that all you can hope for is a chance, mistaken encounter to be swept off your feet. And then, you too can become a profiteering business owner, enacting the means of your own subjugation on those less fortunate. Happily ever after, indeed.

- *Maid in Manhattan* is available on Starz in the US and to rent in the UK

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jan/19/hear-me-out-why-maid-in-manhattan-isnt-a-bad-movie>

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- [A kitchen in Rome Rachel Roddy's recipe for spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and cream](#)
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[Green travel](#)

Sustainable tourism key to Cumbria's new carbon neutral plan

Ambition to become the UK's first carbon-neutral county, by 2037, looks to reduce the impact of visitors, especially in the Lakes



The Langdale Pikes in the Lake District. Photograph: James Ennis/Getty Images

The Langdale Pikes in the Lake District. Photograph: James Ennis/Getty Images

Lorna Parkes

Tue 19 Jan 2021 01.30 EST

Across [Cumbria](#) local communities, businesses and grassroots organisations are being mobilised to map out ways that they hope will help it become the UK's first carbon-neutral county. The county is aiming to decarbonise by 2037, an ambition initially supported by £2.5m of national lottery funding, awarded last August and to be drip-fed over five years starting this month.

Tourism will be an area of focus, alongside housing, transport and agriculture.

“The national lottery funding is an injection of adrenaline at the beginning of a long journey,” said Karen Mitchell, CEO of [Cumbria Action for Sustainability](#) (Cafs). The funding was secured by the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership, which was set up by Cafs in 2019 with the help of the county council. The partnership has 68 members tasked with leading the drive to cut emissions, including the Lake District national park authority.

The UK government has a [legal commitment to achieving net zero CO2 emissions by 2050](#), but last month announced an additional target of reducing carbon emissions by 68% by the end of this decade. Last November, UK water companies launched [a sector-wide commitment to achieving net zero by 2030](#), and a handful of cities, [including Bristol](#), Glasgow and Leeds, have also committed to becoming carbon neutral by that date.

“We’re not excluding being able to do it earlier,” said Cafs’ Mitchell. “This is a climate emergency and we should be throwing everything at it.”



Tarn Hows, Lake District national park

Achieving decarbonisation poses challenges for a county that in 2019 was visited by 48 million people. Visitors contribute £3.13bn to Cumbria's economy and support 65,500 jobs. Tourism's impact on its carbon footprint is largely linked to transport. In February 2020, the partnership commissioned [A Carbon Baseline for Cumbria](#), which was produced by Professor Mike Berners-Lee, an expert in carbon footprinting – who also happens to live in Kendal.

The report found that the driving emissions of visitors to Cumbria are three times the UK average; their emissions from eating out and recreational activities are also higher than residents'. They account for 49% of Cumbria's consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions, although 36% of those emissions come from travelling to and from Cumbria.

"Tourism does create significant challenges [to decarbonising], but it's a huge part of the local economy," said Chris Hodgson, owner of Haven Cottage B&B in Ambleside, which is now working towards gold certification with the [Green Tourism accreditation body](#). He believes becoming carbon neutral will offer new opportunities for local tourism, but also that it shouldn't have to mean reducing visitor numbers. "You just have to find ways for people to visit in a more sustainable fashion," he said.

This could mean increasing the public transport options, the number of bike hire locations and cycleways, and looking at pedestrianisation. Hodgson is a member of the Ambleside to Zero action group, which is working with Cafs on some of these challenges.



A walker near Watendlath, Borrowdale

The Lake District national park authority is about [to release a new management plan](#) that will tackle transport, one of the biggest causes of emissions in the world heritage site. As well as emphasising the public transport options available within the park, it will promote active travel days that can be undertaken without a car.

We will need every business and home in Cumbria to get on board with the net zero ambitions.

Jonathan Kaye, Cedar Manor hotel

“Three quarters of visitors already go for a walk while they’re here,” said Emma Moody, sustainable transport adviser for the national park authority. “It’s about getting them to do it more, and also to get them to think about walking from the door of where they’re staying rather than feeling they have to jump in the car every morning.” In essence, it’s about persuading visitors to experience Wordsworth country in the same way the poet would have.

Electric vehicle charging points and electric buses are also on the agenda. The national park has already installed charging points in many of its car parks, and is working with Cafs and other partners to map demand hotspots and the potential volume required to cater for visitors in the future. Electric

buses are a more complicated challenge, according to Moody, as the technology required to be able to do the types of journeys needed in the Lake District isn't in place. The region has many power-draining hills and relatively long distances between charging points.

A low-carbon food programme is another area where the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership hopes to get tourists on board. Restaurants will be encouraged to decarbonise their food menus by lowering food miles, while also showing the impact of food choices by highlighting the carbon footprint of each item listed on the menu. The concept has been road-tested by the [National Trust-run Sticklebarn pub](#) in Langdale, which in 2019 was one of the first in the UK to list carbon calculations against its dishes.



Cedar Manor hotel, in Windermere, which holds Green Tourism gold accreditation

Some of the £2.5m funding will go towards setting up a “grow local, eat local” scheme, by encouraging Cumbria’s livestock farmers to set aside land to grow fruit, vegetables and cereals. At the moment, local agriculture is geared towards lamb and dairy, according to Cafs, which leaves huge gaps for decarbonising restaurants.

“We will need every business and home in Cumbria to get on board with the net zero ambitions,” said Jonathan Kaye of Cedar Manor in Windermere, one of Cumbria’s leading eco-hotels, which already holds Green Tourism gold accreditation. “It’s taken us more than 12 years to get to where we are, and we are nowhere near carbon neutral,” he said.

“The plans are not too ambitious, they are essential, but it will take time and money to get there, and there is no point starting in 2035. Let’s be totally honest – we need to get on with this now.”

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[A kitchen in RomeFood](#)

Rachel Roddy's recipe for spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and cream

Lemons remind us of sunshine, and electrify both the senses and a simple, satisfying bowl of pasta



Rachel Roddy's creamy lemon pasta with parmesan. Photograph: Rachel Roddy/The Guardian

Rachel Roddy's creamy lemon pasta with parmesan. Photograph: Rachel Roddy/The Guardian



[Rachel Roddy](#)

[@racheleats](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 08.00 EST

Lemons are many things, and January is a good time to fill a bowl with half a dozen. Take one, dig your nail into its oily, open-pored skin, sniff and make a mental list. Lemons are also full of particles with a positive electric charge, which, when on the loose, are like teenage boys in a brand new electric car, cruising around looking for other molecules to attach to, and in doing so they change them. It is this concentrated proton activity that the nerves in the tongue and brain interpret and experience as the sensation of sourness when they encounter lemon.

We studied this at school, and also stuck copper wire in oval fruits with nipples in order to make a lemon battery. However, it was rereading Margaret Visser's tart and witty chapter on lemons in her book [Much Depends on Dinner](#) that reminded me of the science; how the movement and proton pumps result in the formation of citric acid, which explains much. Lemons are not just handy, long-lasting, perfectly packaged, sunny, essential, beautiful and so on, they are charged, they are jump leads, they are a sort of edible electricity. No wonder we get such a thrill from a wayward spritz of juice that hits an eye, a twist or a slice.

January, particularly *this* January, is a good time to make spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and cream; a smooth and sharp dish that is also useful in that the sauce takes almost exactly the same amount of time to prepare as the pasta takes to cook.

Don't worry about the lemon juice splitting the cream; by melting the butter with the lemon juice, grated zest and slivers over a low heat, you create a pretty stable emulsion to which the cream can be added, and the parmesan thickens further, but remember to keep the heat under the pan low and gentle. Another thing to remember is not simply to toss, but to really swish the pasta when you add it to the pan, so the starch is released and jolted into the butter and cream sauce, which helps it to thicken and, in turn, cling to the stands of spaghetti.

We don't need science to tell us that lemon juice is a great awakener; just a few drops can bring out other flavours and heighten our appreciation of them. It might sound like overkill, but spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and cream is even better when followed by a green salad in an olive oil, salt and lemon dressing (I shake them in a jam jar with a drop of water), and better still if you have a slice of chocolate cake for pudding.

Spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and cream

Serves 4

2 unwaxed lemons

Salt and black pepper

450g spaghetti

50g butter

120 ml single cream

1 small garlic clove, peeled and crushed but whole

4 heaped tbsp grated parmesan

Bring a large pan of water to a boil for the pasta. Using a vegetable peeler, pare the rind (and as little pith as possible) from one lemon, then cut the pared strips into very thin slivers. Grate the rind from the other lemon, then squeeze out the juice.

Once the water boils, add salt, stir and add the spaghetti, setting the timer for a minute less than the recommended cooking time.

While the pasta cooks, in a wide frying pan over a medium-low heat, warm the butter with the garlic (peeled and crushed for gentle flavour, sliced for stronger one) lemon slivers, zest and two tablespoons of lemon juice. Once the butter is foaming gently, stir in the cream and two tablespoons parmesan, and bring up to a bubble. Turn the heat to low and keep warm.

Once the timer for the pasta goes, drain, reserving some of the cooking water (or lift it directly into the frying pan with tongs), then toss in the creamy sauce and swish vigorously so the starch from the pasta combines with it. Add the rest of the parmesan and a few grinds of black pepper, and toss again so the sauce clings to the strands; if it seems stiff, add a little of the reserved water and stir again. Serve immediately.

- This article was amended on 18 January 2021. Due to an editing error, an earlier version neglected to explain what to do with the garlic.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2021/jan/18/rachel-rodry-recipe-for-spaghetti-with-lemon-parmesan-and-cream>

The simple fixFood

Thomasina Miers' recipe for hangover noodles and crispy eggs



Thomasina Miers' root veg 'hangover' noodles with a crisp fried egg.
Photograph: Yuki Sugiura/The Guardian. Food stylist: Aya Nishimura. Prop stylist: Louie Waller. Food assistant: SongSoo Kim.

Thomasina Miers' root veg 'hangover' noodles with a crisp fried egg.
Photograph: Yuki Sugiura/The Guardian. Food stylist: Aya Nishimura. Prop stylist: Louie Waller. Food assistant: SongSoo Kim.

A comfort dish you don't have to feel guilty about thanks to a crunchy fistful of shredded winter veg



[Thomasina Miers](#)

[@thomasinamiers](#)

Mon 18 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

I call these “hangover” noodles because what is better when one is feeling undone than a plate of noodles, a crispy egg and masses of chilli oil? Throw in a handful of root veg and you have a nutritious feast on your hands, rich with garlic and ginger. Even if the odds of my getting a hangover this month are about as high as my chances of dancing ’til dawn, these lip-smacking noodles should perk things up – perhaps set with a glass of manzanilla. After all, January is a particularly dreary month.

Hangover noodles with shredded roots and crispy eggs

The key to feeling great is all the veg – this is my current favourite way of eating a bundle of winter roots.

Prep 10 min

Cook 20 min

Serves 2

100g egg noodles
3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
1 small thumb ginger, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
2 carrots, peeled and shredded
6 spring onions, trimmed and thinly sliced
100g celeriac, peeled and julienned
100g beansprouts

For the sauce

1½ tbsp soy sauce
½ tbsp sesame oil
½ tbsp hoisin sauce
1 tbsp rice vinegar

To garnish

2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 eggs
2 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
Chilli oil, to serve

Cook the noodles according to packet instructions, then rinse and leave to air-dry in a colander.

In a large frying pan or wok, heat a tablespoon of the oil and stir-fry the garlic and ginger over a medium-high heat. The moment they start colouring, add the vegetables except for the beansprouts and cook, stirring constantly, for a few minutes until just wilted. Empty into a bowl and keep to one side. Stir together the sauce ingredients in a small bowl.

Wipe the pan clean, turn the heat up to medium-high and add the remaining two tablespoons oil. Once sizzling hot, add the noodles and spread them out across the pan. Fry for a few minutes a side, until they are looking delicious and golden. Now return the vegetables to the pan along with the beansprouts and pour in the sauce. Stir briefly to combine, then turn the heat to low to keep warm while you cook the eggs.

In a small frying pan, heat the vegetable oil over a medium heat and, once sizzling, crack in the eggs. Cook for one to two minutes, spooning the hot oil over the whites, until the edges are golden and crisp, then use a slotted spoon to scoop on to kitchen paper to drain.

Serve the eggs over the noodles sprinkled with sesame seeds and the chilli oil.

And for the rest of the week

Try swapping in parsnips for the celeriac for a sweeter, nuttier taste, or throw in shredded leftover cabbage to bulk up the veg. Eat the crispy egg with everything; I love it with chilli jam, watercress and toasted hazelnuts.

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2021.01.19 - Explore

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The story of the Zong slave ship: a mass murder masquerading as an insurance claim

A 1783 case exposed how the law facilitated the slave trade – and increased momentum for the abolitionist movement



The Zong, a replica of the 18th century slave ship. Photograph: Nic Hamilton Photographic/Alamy

The Zong, a replica of the 18th century slave ship. Photograph: Nic Hamilton Photographic/Alamy

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[Catherine Baksi](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

In August 1781, a British slave ship, the Zong, left Ghana with 442 slaves aboard – twice the number it was designed to carry – bound for Jamaica. The ship's owners claimed that due to navigational errors, it took longer than anticipated to reach Jamaica, and as water was running low, the crew threw more than 130 live slaves overboard. The truth of what happened is disputed and evidence suggested that rain meant the ship had enough water.

As was common practice, the ship owners had taken out insurance for their “cargo” of enslaved people. When news of the massacre reached England, they made a claim for compensation. The insurers refused to pay and the ship owners took them to court.

The case demonstrates how the law facilitated the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but also strengthened the campaign for abolition. It was, says James Walvin, author of the book *The Zong*, and professor emeritus of history at the University of York, “mass murder masquerading as an insurance claim”.

A jury heard the dispute, *Gregson v Gilbert*, at London’s Guildhall in March 1783, and ruled in favour of the ship owners. The insurers appealed, as

solicitor Andrew Bicknell notes, not on the basis of common humanity, but because it occurred as a result of errors of navigation and mismanagement of the vessel, namely insufficient water onboard.

The case came before the lord chief justice, Lord Mansfield, who in a previous judgment had ruled that there was never a legal basis for slave ownership within England under English law. He decided there should be a retrial because of new evidence which suggested that the captain and crew had been at fault.

“It appears that no trial ever took place, so happily the owners didn’t receive their insurance payment, but perhaps a chance was lost by the court to put down a moral marker in relation to such a case,” says Bicknell.

While the facts of the Zong case were unusual, he says there would have been many claims under policies of cargo insurance for the loss of slaves during their transportation.

“It was standard practice for slavers to insure their cargo of slaves and had the Zong simply sunk in a storm with a similar loss of life, no such notoriety would have been attached to the case. Almost certainly, the insurance claim for the value of the lost slaves would have been paid,” he says. The only restriction was that deaths had to arise from “perils of the seas” and would not for example cover deaths through disease or insurrection.

Some academics have suggested that the West Indian trade in slaves plus slave-grown produce accounted for up to 40% of the cargo insurance premium in the London market of the late 18th century.

The “hugely important” case, says Walvin, exposed the brutality of the trade, reducing African lives to chattels and mere items of trade or cargo that could be insured and claims made for their loss.

After the first trial, anti-slavery campaigner Granville Sharpe attempted unsuccessfully to have the ship’s crew prosecuted for murder. Reports of the massacre increased momentum for the abolitionist movement.

“The Zong case lit the blue touch paper in England – it aroused abolitionist anger, and fed into the initial campaigns against the Atlantic slave trade,” says Walvin.

It wasn’t until 50 years later that the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 abolished slavery in most British colonies, and the League of Nations 1926 Slavery Convention sought global prohibition of slavery and the slave trade.

The UK introduced the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, which brought together previous law seeking to prevent and prosecute slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking, as well as making big businesses accountable for slavery and labour abuses in their supply chain.

While international law has shifted from permitting and regulating slavery to denying and outlawing it, Katarina Schwarz, professor of antislavery law at the University of Nottingham, stresses that there is still a long way to go.

“Everyone assumes that slavery is illegal around the world, but almost half of all countries have no criminal offence of slavery and there are huge gaps in the laws, including in the UK, to combat slavery and protect and support survivors,” she says.

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US foreign policy

How Biden era could kickstart coordinated approach to Russia

Analysis: the west has been hampered by the fatal ambiguity of Trump's US policy towards Moscow



Joe Biden with Angela Merkel in 2015. The new US president is expected to work closely with allies such as Germany and the UK on how to confront Putin's Russia. Photograph: Christof Stache/AFP/Getty Images

Joe Biden with Angela Merkel in 2015. The new US president is expected to work closely with allies such as Germany and the UK on how to confront Putin's Russia. Photograph: Christof Stache/AFP/Getty Images

[Patrick Wintour](#) Diplomatic editor

Mon 18 Jan 2021 09.33 EST

Joe Biden's accession to the US presidency has spawned a huge body of literature about his intentions towards China, but in his four years out of office Biden has in fact made Russia his primary focus in combatting authoritarianism.

Now, just days from coming into office, the [arrest of the Russian dissident Alexei Navalny](#) has suddenly presented him with a test case, which may also lead to friction with two of his closest allies: Germany and the UK.

Germany under Angela Merkel has always resisted a full confrontation with [Russia](#), and has fought hard to keep the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from [Russia](#) to Germany going, saying it is a commercial not a political issue.

But Merkel has met Navalny, who was nursed back to health in the German capital after his poisoning and has been described as “the Berlin patient” by Vladimir Putin, and her government may now feel a personal obligation, beyond rhetoric, to help him.

The Putin entourage is already heavily sanctioned by the EU as a result if their repression in Belarus as well as Navalny’s poisoning, so her options for showing disapproval through further individual sanctions is limited. And the Nord Stream 2 project will not be far from Merkel’s thoughts.

In the case of the UK, British prime ministers have been rhetorically strong about Russia, but are open to the charge that the rhetoric does not extend to clamping down on the lawyers, accountants and army of estate agents that enable the Russian kleptocracy to invest their corruptly-obtained wealth in London.

Chatham House, the sober minded thinktank, is, for instance, hosting an event on Tuesday promoted as follows: “The most startling findings of the ‘Russia’ report from parliament’s intelligence and security committee were not about the extent of Moscow’s malign influence in the UK, but about how unwilling the British government had been to take steps to detect and counter it.

“The report identified gaping holes in both awareness of the problem, and legislation to deal with it. A formulaic response from the government promised that at least some of these holes have been plugged”.

Six months on, how many holes in measures such as ”unexplained wealth orders”, have been filled?

But perhaps by coincidence matters are coming to a head. Since 2019, the threat of US sanctions has left the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline about 94% complete. If finished, the 764-mile (1,230km) pipeline will terminate in Lubmin, a coastal village in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and more than double Germany's imports of Russian natural gas.

On Friday, Germany's federal maritime authority approved extending the project's operational time frame because of "unforeseen delays outside German waters".

Since US sanctions would target private companies involved in the project, the state government of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has gone to the lengths of establishing a public foundation that could take over the potentially sanctionable activity. Germany believes the US would not have the nerve to sanction a public body, even though this foundation is largely Russian funded.

Nicholas Burns the former US assistant secretary of state suggested to the German business newspaper *Handelsblatt* this week that if Germany suspended construction of the pipeline the US could lift sanctions.

Equally, the UK as [host of the G7 summit in June](#) looks as if it is going to revive the anti-corruption drive David Cameron started the last time Britain held the event.

The west has been hampered in the past four years by the fatal ambiguity of US policy towards Russia. The State Department had been willing to confront Russia, but Donald Trump remained inexplicably averse to doing anything but indulge Putin.

Biden has appointed an experienced team with a deep knowledge of Russia including: William Burns, director of the CIA; Victoria Nuland, deputy secretary of state for political affairs; Andrea Kendall-Taylor, senior director for Russia and Central Asia in the future NSC; Kathleen Hicks, first female deputy head of the Pentagon; and Shanthi Kalathil, coordinator for human rights and democracy. Collectively they will try to give Germany clearer signals on US policy to Russia, and both how to combat democratic backsliding in [Europe](#) and Russian meddling. The huge cyber-attack on

Washington institutions, attributed to Russia's foreign intelligence, lies heavily on the minds of Congress.

Biden has promised that he will make the promotion of democracy his guiding foreign policy principle, including a summit to attack the weapons of the authoritarians. Many have questioned the wisdom of the US presenting itself as the standard bearer of liberal values given its state of crisis.

But the attack on the Capitol in Washington has only made his allies more convinced of this agenda, and its relevance to America.

So the frontline of the “battlefield” where the new US administration and Russia will confront each other is likely to be extended to the post-Soviet space and will include at least Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. For all the talk of the rise of China and the implications of the “Asian century” on America, it is the threat posed by the old cold war enemy that for now at least may most exercise the transatlantic alliance.

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[**The fight to vote**](#)[**US news**](#)

How the Republican voter fraud lie paved the way for Trump to undermine Biden's presidency

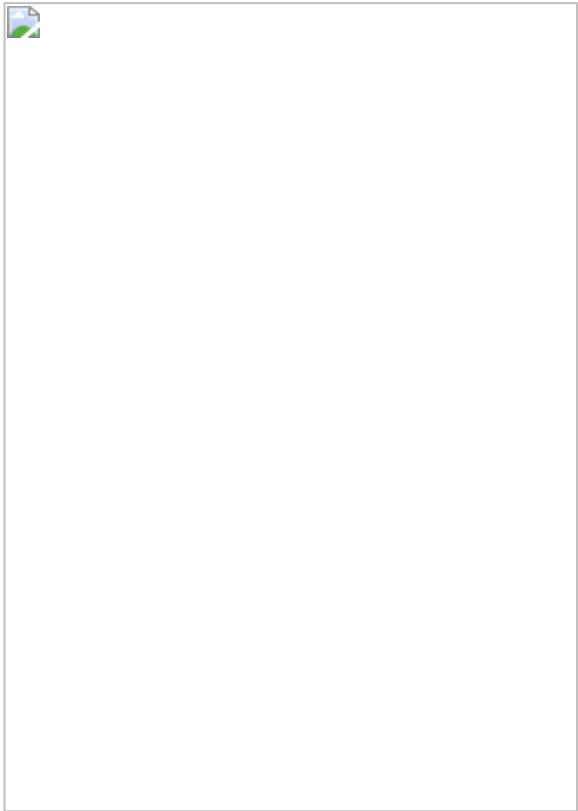
Trump has accelerated a deliberate strategy by Republicans to weaken faith in elections by making it harder to vote



Donald Trump at the Republican national convention in August. For years, Republicans have used misleading and faulty data to suggest that elections are at risk of fraud. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters

Donald Trump at the Republican national convention in August. For years, Republicans have used misleading and faulty data to suggest that elections are at risk of fraud. Photograph: Carlos Barria/Reuters

The fight to vote is supported by



About this content

Sam Levine in New York

Mon 18 Jan 2021 06.00 EST

When an American president is inaugurated, it's supposed to mark the height of American democracy and power. The elaborate ceremony is designed to convey the peaceful transfer of power and that no matter how bitter the election, the nation is moving on.

[Trump official admits family separation policy 'should never have been implemented'](#)

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But when Joe Biden is inaugurated as the 46th US president on Wednesday, the ceremony will seem anything but that. America is arriving at the inauguration at an incredibly perilous moment, just two weeks after a violent pro-Trump mob attacked the US Capitol and several Republican members of Congress voted against certifying the results of the election. For months, Donald Trump has refused to acknowledge Biden as the legitimate winner of the election – a belief shared by legions of his supporters. The ceremony will have a [heavy military presence](#) because of threats of violence. Trump [isn't bothering attending](#).

While Trump has accelerated this dangerous moment, it's been shaped by a deliberate Republican strategy to undermine faith in elections to make it harder to vote. The myth of voter fraud and repeated allusions to elections being stolen have [moved from fringe theories to the center](#) of Republican ideology over the last several decades. The refusal to accept the election, and the attack on the Capitol, are a consequence of that strategy.

“Donald Trump was definitely the spark and he had many enablers and facilitators, but the kindling had all been laid,” said Wendy Weiser, director of the Democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice. “The strategy has been to slowly, steadily, undermine Americans’ faith in the security of elections, increase their belief in the existence of widespread voter fraud so as to enable them to accept what would otherwise be perceived as a really illegitimate and anti-democratic agenda of restricting access to voting.”

For years, Republicans [have used misleading](#) and faulty data to suggest that elections are at risk of fraud. In Kansas, Kris Kobach, the former secretary of state, used the threat of non-citizen voting to justify a law requiring people to prove their citizenship when they registered to vote (the law has since been blocked by a federal court). Conservative lawyers in recent years have also used [misleading data analyses](#) to suggest that voter rolls are filled with ineligible voters.

By 2016, when Trump claimed that voter fraud cost him the popular vote, it fit neatly into the narrative the Republican party was beginning to embrace.

Two years later, there were signs that questioning election results were moving to Republican orthodoxy. Paul Ryan, then serving as speaker of the

House, said it was “[bizarre](#)” and “weird” that Republicans fell behind in California races as more mail-in ballots were counted after election night. When Trump started [making similar claims last spring](#) and summer that mail-in ballots would lead to fraud and cost him the election, few Republicans objected.

The party began to attack ballot drop boxes and mail-in voting, something Republicans long relied on. When Trump claimed there was something amiss as states continued to count ballots after election day, Republicans – with a few [exceptions](#) – supported him too. The rhetoric began to have real consequences, as supporters started protesting at vote counting sites and harassing workers trying to count ballots during November’s election.

And by the time of electoral college certification, the effort to undermine faith in the vote had gone so far that it made it possible for two-thirds of the House Republican caucus and a dozen senators to back the idea of throwing out the election results entirely.

“It’s gone from voter fraud in a particular election to ‘stolen election’,” said Lorraine Minnitte, a professor at Rutgers University-Camden, who has studied allegations of voter fraud. “I don’t think it would have been as successful if the fraud myth hadn’t been planted a long time ago.”

Kobach, a Trump ally who [briefly led](#) a White House panel to investigate voter fraud, said it was “entirely appropriate” for members of Congress to object to the certification of electoral college votes. He noted that since 2000, Democrats had objected repeatedly to the counting of electoral college votes for Republican presidential winners (in all of those cases, however, the effort [was not supported](#) by the Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, who had already conceded the race).

He dismissed the idea that there was any connection between raising concerns about election fraud and the attack on the Capitol.

“I’ve talked about voter fraud to small audiences and very, very large audiences over 100 times. Maybe multiple hundreds of times. Never has it inflamed passions so that people want to go march on something and break

windows,” he told the Guardian. “The idea that talking about the integrity of our elections is inflammatory is idiotic.”

Kobach, who built a national reputation by focusing on voter fraud, also downplayed the significance of a Biden presidency in which a significant number of people do not accept him as a legitimately elected figure.

“I would say it’s going to be very similar to the last four years where you had many on the left thinking Donald Trump wasn’t legitimately elected because they believed Russian interference caused him to be elected,” he said. “You will have many on the right harboring doubts as to whether the results in those five states were accurate accounts of legal votes in those five states, but I don’t think it’s going to be all that different.”

[Fight to vote: the Georgia organizers who helped mobilize voters](#)
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Hillary Clinton [conceded](#) the election to Trump the day after the polls closed in 2016.

Since last week’s electoral college vote, several businesses have announced they are pausing donations to the Republican members of Congress who voted against upholding election results. The pause comes after business interests for years have supported conservative groups that have [facilitated voter ID laws](#) and [extreme partisan gerrymandering that allowed](#) Republicans to take votes without fear of the consequences.

“People were willing to tolerate this anti-democratic conduct up to a point. And then when it boiled over, when it became so extreme that people couldn’t ignore it, then they became willing to repudiate it,” Weiser said. “Seeing it so vividly all at once has broken that complacency.”

Biden will be inaugurated on Wednesday on the Capitol’s west front amid a growing rejection of that complacency. But convincing Trump’s supporters that the election was legitimate and overcoming the doubt sowed in American elections may be an impossible task. We may have only begun to see the consequences of the damage.

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Mon 18 Jan 2021 13.52 EST

People should plan for a “great British summer”, the health secretary has said, suggesting that holidays abroad may not be a given as he revealed he has booked his own break in [Cornwall](#).

Matt Hancock’s comments come after the foreign secretary, [Dominic Raab](#), suggested it was “too early” for Britons to book summer breaks overseas.

Asked if people should book a trip abroad, Hancock said: “I’m going to Cornwall. And I have said before I think we’re going to have a great British summer. But we’ve got a lot of work to do between now and then.

“What we can do is see the line of sight to vaccinating everybody by September and anything before that would be a bonus. As the foreign secretary said yesterday, we’re driving this as fast as we possibly can.”

Speaking at the Downing Street press conference, Hancock said admissions to hospital on Monday were the highest they had been throughout the pandemic, with one Covid patient currently admitted to hospital in the UK every 30 seconds.

The latest government statistics show there are 37,475 people in UK hospitals and Hancock said the NHS “is under significant pressure in all parts of the country”.

He said it was more vital than ever that people continued to stay at home and respect the restrictions. “Don’t blow it now, we’re on the route out with protecting the most vulnerable,” he said.

“We’re getting the virus under control. Together, I know that we can do it. And we’ve got to stick at it, and especially with our plans for all adults in the UK to be offered a Covid vaccine by September.”

The health secretary also did not rule out changing the law to protect medics from charges of “unlawful killing” should the NHS be forced into situations where doctors had to choose which patients to save.

“I know that this is a very serious concern,” Hancock said. “I’m very glad to say that we are not in a position where doctors have to make those sorts of choices. And I very much hope that we don’t get in that situation and that everybody can get the treatment they deserve.”

He said he had been given clear advice that it was “not necessary at this point to change the law on this on this matter” but it would be kept under review. “I take very serious questions of this nature,” he said.

“That is not the situation now, and the data show that we are getting this under control. But that requires you to act by staying at home, unless you have one of the reasons set out very clearly as to why you can leave whether it’s for exercise, or if you can’t work from home.”

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Tuesday briefing: 'Missing out on being young'

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