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Donald Trump

Donald Trump pardons Steve Bannon amid last acts of presidency

Former senior adviser had previously been considered an unlikely name among the 143 people who received clemency

- [Trump pardons and commutations – the full list](#)



Former Trump strategist Steve Bannon was arrested last year over allegations he improperly used funds from a Build The Wall fundraiser. Donald Trump has reportedly pardoned the former Breitbart editor. Photograph: Stephanie Keith/Getty Images

Former Trump strategist Steve Bannon was arrested last year over allegations he improperly used funds from a Build The Wall fundraiser. Donald Trump has reportedly pardoned the former Breitbart editor. Photograph: Stephanie Keith/Getty Images

[Martin Pengelly](#) in New York and [Julian Borger](#) in Washington DC

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.15 EST

Donald Trump has pardoned former senior adviser [Steve Bannon](#), among scores of others including rappers, financiers and former members of Congress in the final hours of his presidency.

Among the 73 people pardoned was Elliott Broidy, a leading former fundraiser for Trump who has admitted illegally lobbying the US government to drop its inquiry into the Malaysia 1MDB corruption scandal and to deport an exiled Chinese billionaire. Also on the list was Ken Kurson, a friend of Jared Kushner who was charged in October last year with cyberstalking during a heated divorce.

Rappers Lil Wayne and Kodak Black – who were prosecuted on federal weapons offences – and former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who is serving a 28-year prison term on corruption charges, were also pardoned. A further 70 people had their sentences commuted.

Trump did not attempt to give himself a pre-emptive pardon, and has not pardoned members of his family or Rudy Giuliani, his former personal lawyer [with whom he has fallen out](#). Julian Assange was another figure subject to speculation who was not on the list. Prosecutors and scholars [have](#), however, [said](#) a grey area in the constitution means a president may be able to issue “secret” pardons, without notifying Congress or the public.

The [New York Times](#) and [CNN](#) described the pardoning of Bannon, a former editor of Breitbart as a last-minute pre-emptive move to protect Bannon from his upcoming fraud trial. Bannon [faces trial](#) in May following his [arrest](#) in August last year on a luxury yacht off the Connecticut coast, accused of siphoning money from We Build the Wall, an online fundraiser for Trump’s contentious border wall with Mexico.

Federal prosecutors allege Bannon used a non-profit he controlled to divert “over \$1m from the … online campaign, at least some of which he used to cover hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal expenses”.

[US presidential pardons: a potted history of a shabby convention](#)

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Officials said We Build The Wall raised more than \$25m. Bannon has denied one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and another of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

The news on Bannon and Broidy brought swift outcry. Noah Bookbinder at legal watchdog Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington said: “Even Nixon didn’t pardon his cronies on the way out. Amazingly, in his final 24 hours in office, [Donald Trump](#) found one more way to fail to live up to the ethical standard of Richard Nixon.”

Democrat Adam Schiff tweeted: “Steve Bannon is getting a pardon from Trump after defrauding Trump’s own supporters into paying for a wall that Trump promised Mexico would pay for. And if that all sounds crazy, that’s because it is. Thank God we have only 12 more hours of this den of thieves.”

Bannon was recently banned from Twitter for calling for the beheading of [Dr Anthony Fauci](#) and the FBI director, Christopher Wray.

He and Trump have been estranged since the former adviser left the White House and made critical remarks about the president in a tell-all book about the president called Fire and Fury by journalist Michael Wolff. Trump said his former consigliere had “lost his mind”.

Despite Trump’s last-minute move on Bannon, reportedly delayed because the president was so torn on the issue, would not protect his former adviser from charges brought by state courts.

Trump has also been mulling future political ambitions, according to the Wall Street Journal, reportedly speaking to aides about the possibility of [forming a new political party](#). The president favoured the name Patriot Party, it reported.

Multiple Republican party figures defending Trump in his second impeachment, for inciting the Capitol attack on 6 January, counseled him not to offer pardons to any of the more than 100 people arrested as a result.

Presidential pardons and acts of clemency do not imply innocence. Presidents often [bestow them on allies and donors](#) but Trump has [taken the practice to extremes](#).

Previous recipients include aides and allies Michael Flynn, Roger Stone, George Papadopoulos and Paul Manafort, all convicted in the [investigation](#) of Russian election interference and links between Trump and Moscow, and Charles Kushner, the father of Trump's son-in-law and chief adviser, Jared Kushner.

Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump were reportedly closely involved in the process deciding Trump's final pardons.

Trump is due to leave Washington on Wednesday morning, ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as the 46th president. He will fly to Florida, stripped of the legal protection of office.

Trump faces state investigations of his business affairs and could face legal jeopardy over acts in office including his attempts to overturn election defeat and his incitement of the Capitol riot on 6 January, over which he was impeached a second time.

If Trump is convicted in his second Senate trial, he could be barred from running for office again.

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Donald Trump

Trump pardons and commutations – the full list

US president has pardoned 70 people and commuted the sentences of a further 73 people

- [Donald Trump pardons Steve Bannon amid last acts of presidency](#)



US President Donald Trump has pardoned or commuted the sentences of 143 people, hours before the end of his presidential term. Photograph: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

US President Donald Trump has pardoned or commuted the sentences of 143 people, hours before the end of his presidential term. Photograph: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

Reuters

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.05 EST

The people US president [Donald Trump](#) has granted clemency to range from rappers to financiers and lobbyists. Notable names on the list include:

Steve Bannon

Bannon, 67, was a key adviser in Trump's 2016 presidential run. He was charged last year with swindling Trump supporters over an effort to raise private funds to build the president's wall on the US-Mexico border. He has pleaded not guilty.

White House officials had advised Trump against pardoning Bannon, who left the Trump administration in late 2017. The two men have lately rekindled their relationship as Trump sought support for his unproven claims of voter fraud, an official familiar with the situation said.

Elliott Broidy

Broidy, a major Republican party fundraiser, pleaded guilty in October to acting as an unregistered foreign agent, admitting to accepting money to secretly lobby the Trump administration for Chinese and Malaysian interests. He has been pardoned. Broidy held finance posts in Trump's 2016 campaign and on his inaugural committee. Prosecutors alleged Broidy received millions of dollars in payments from an unnamed foreign national to try to arrange the end of a U.S. investigation into billions of dollars embezzled from 1MDB, a Malaysian government investment fund.

Kwame Kilpatrick

The former Detroit mayor was sentenced in 2013 to 28 years in prison following his conviction on two dozen charges including racketeering, bribery and extortion from a conspiracy, which prosecutors said had worsened the city's financial crisis. Kilpatrick, 50, once seen as a rising star in the Democratic party, received one of the longest corruption sentences ever handed to a major US politician. Kilpatrick, who was mayor from 2002 to 2008, extorted bribes from contractors who wanted to get or keep Detroit city contracts, prosecutors said. His sentence has been commuted.

Lil Wayne

Lil Wayne, 38, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter, pleaded guilty in federal court in December to illegally possessing a firearm and faced up to 10 years in prison. He was scheduled to be sentenced in March in Florida. A year earlier, the Grammy winner was found with a loaded, gold-plated .45-caliber handgun in his baggage aboard a private plane that had landed at an executive airport near Miami. A previous felony conviction made it illegal for the rapper to have the weapon or ammunition. In October, Wayne tweeted a picture of himself with Trump following what he called a “great meeting” with the president. He has been pardoned.

Rapper Kodak Black

Black, 23, who was born Bill Kahan Kapri, is in federal prison for making a false statement to buy a firearm, and released the album called Bill Israel from behind bars.

Black pleaded guilty in August 2019, and three months later was sentenced to three years and 10 months in prison. He is seeking compassionate release. In a since-deleted tweet in November, Black promised to spend \$1m on charity if the president released him, the hip-hop magazine XXL reported. His sentence has been commuted.

Sholam Weiss

Weiss was convicted of bilking \$125m from National Heritage Life Insurance and its elderly policyholders. He fled the United States and was sentenced in absentia in 2000 to 845 years in prison, but he was eventually extradited from Austria. Weiss, 66, is at a US penitentiary in Pennsylvania, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Trump lawyers from his first impeachment, Alan Dershowitz and Jay Sekulow, sent letters to the White House in support of Weiss. His sentence has been commuted.

Anthony Levandowski

Levandowski, a former Google engineer, pleaded guilty to stealing secret technology related to self-driving cars from the company before becoming the head of Uber’s rival unit. In August, a judge in San Francisco sentenced

Levandowski to 18 months in prison but said he could enter custody once the Covid-19 pandemic has subsided.

The judge, William Alsup, who has been involved in Silicon Valley litigation for nearly five decades, described Levandowski's conviction as the "biggest trade secret crime I have ever seen". He has been pardoned.

Other pardons and commutations

Todd Boulanger

Abel Holtz

Rick Renzi

Kenneth Kurson

Casey Urlacher

Carl Andrews Boggs

Dr. Scott Harkonen

Johnny D. Phillips, Jr

Dr. Mahmoud Reza Banki

James E. Johnson, Jr

Tommaso Buti

Glen Moss

Aviem Sella

John Nystrom

Scott Conor Crosby

Lynn Barney

Joshua J. Smith

Amy Povah

Dr. Frederick Nahas

David Tamman

Dr. Faustino Bernadett

Paul Erickson

**Gregory Jorgensen, Deborah Jorgensen, Martin Jorgensen
(posthumous)**

Todd Farha, Thaddeus Bereday, William Kale, Paul Behrens, Peter Clay

Patrick Lee Swisher

Robert Sherrill

Dr. Robert S. Corkern

David Lamar Clanton

George Gilmore

Desiree Perez

Robert “Bob” Zangrillo

Hillel Nahmad

Brian McSwain

John Duncan Fordham

William “Ed” Henry

Randall “Duke” Cunningham – conditional pardon

Stephen Odzer

Steven Benjamin Floyd

Joey Hancock

David E. Miller

James Austin Hayes

Drew Brownstein

Robert Bowker

Amir Khan

David Rowland

Jessica Frease

Robert Cannon “Robin” Hayes

Thomas Kenton “Ken” Ford

Michael Liberty

Greg Reyes

Ferrell Damon Scott

Jerry Donnell Walden

Jeffrey Alan Conway

Benedict Olberding

Syrita Steib-Martin

Michael Ashley

Lou Hobbs

Matthew Antoine Canady

Mario Claiborne

Rodney Nakia Gibson

Tom Leroy Whitehurst

Monstsho Eugene Vernon

Luis Fernando Sicard

DeWayne Phelps

Isaac Nelson

Traie Tavares Kelly

Javier Gonzales

Douglas Jemal

Eric Wesley Patton

Robert William Cawthon

Hal Knudson Mergler

Gary Evan Handler

John Harold Wall

Steven Samuel Grantham

Clarence Olin Freeman

Fred Keith Alford

John Knock

Kenneth Charles Fragoso

Luis Gonzalez

Anthony DeJohn

Corvain Cooper

Way Quoe Long

Michael Pelletier

Craig Cesal

Darrell Frazier

Lavonne Roach

Blanca Virgen –

Robert Francis

Brian Simmons

Derrick Smith

Jaime A. Davidson

Raymond Hersman

David Barren

James Romans

Jonathon Braun

Michael Harris

Kyle Kimoto

Chalana McFarland

Eliyahu Weinstein

John Estin Davis

Alex Adjmi

Noah Kleinman

Tena Logan

MaryAnne Locke

Jawad A. Musa

Adriana Shayota

April Coots

Caroline Yeats

Jodi Lynn Richter

Kristina Bohnenkamp

Mary Roberts

Cassandra Ann Kasowski

Lerna Lea Paulson

Ann Butler

Sydney Navarro

Tara Perry

Jon Harder

Chris Young

Adrianne Miller

Fred “Dave” Clark

William Walters

James Brian Cruz

Salomon Melgen

In addition, President Trump commuted the sentences to time served for the following individuals: Jeff Cheney, Marquis Dargon, Jennings Gilbert, Dwayne L. Harrison, Reginald Dinez Johnson, Sharon King, and Hector Madrigal, Sr.

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Joe Biden

Joe Biden to be sworn in as 46th president amid turmoil and loss in US



Joe Biden will be sworn in shortly before noon a Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Joe Biden will be sworn in shortly before noon a Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Biden will take oath on steps of US Capitol where two weeks ago a pro-Trump mob stormed the building in effort to overturn election

Lauren Gambino in Washington

@laurenegambino

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Donald Trump on Wednesday is preparing to leave the White House, hours before **Joe Biden** is to be sworn in as the 46th president of the United States at a moment of profound turmoil and loss for America.

Biden will take the oath of office on the steps of the US Capitol where exactly two weeks prior a mob of Trump supporters breached security barriers and stormed the building in an effort to overturn the results of the presidential election.

In the aftermath of the deadly assault on the Capitol and as the death toll from the coronavirus surpasses 400,000, Biden will assume the presidency in a city resembling a war zone and devoid of the celebratory pomp and pageantry that comes with a presidential inauguration.

Even before the attack on the Capitol, the inaugural planning committee urged Americans to stay home in an effort to minimize the risk of further spreading the disease.

After refusing to concede and only begrudgingly acknowledging his successor, Trump will hold a farewell event at Joint Base Andrews outside Washington on Wednesday morning. When Biden takes office, Trump will be nearly 1,000 miles away, at his south Florida resort, Mar-a-Lago.

Diminished and furious, Trump, who was impeached for a second time on a charge of “incitement of insurrection” after the deadly siege of the Capitol, leaves Washington for an uncertain future. His grasp on the Republican party, once iron-clad, has waned, even as supporters remain loyal. Suspended indefinitely from Twitter, he lost his most powerful megaphone.

Whether he mounts a political comeback in 2024 probably depends on the outcome of his Senate impeachment trial, which will forge ahead in the first days of his post-presidency. If convicted, the Senate can vote to disqualify him from ever again holding future office.



The US Capitol Building is prepared for the inauguration ceremonies for President-elect Joe Biden as the “Field of Flags” are placed on the ground on the National Mall on January 18, 2021 in Washington, DC. Photograph: Joe Raedle/AFP/Getty Images

Biden will be sworn in shortly before noon on Wednesday by Chief Justice John Roberts on the Capitol’s West Front, with a vista of iconic national monuments stretching across the National Mall. Instead of a vast throng of supporters, Biden will look out upon a field of flags from each of the 50 US states and territories representing those who could not attend because of the pandemic.

Trump’s absence at the ceremony will be a final show of disregard for democratic norms and traditions that Trump gleefully shattered over the course of his stormy, 1,460-day presidency. Only four US presidents have skipped their predecessor’s inauguration – most recently Andrew Johnson in 1869. Mike Pence, the outgoing vice-president, will attend the ceremony to demonstrate support for a peaceful transition of power.

The Clintons, Bushes and Obamas are all expected to attend the ceremony.

Biden will take the oath alongside Kamala Harris, who will make history as the nation’s first female, first Black and first Asian American vice-president.

She will be sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic and Latina member of the supreme court.

Some elements will remain unchanged. Biden is expected to deliver an inaugural address, in which he will appeal for national unity, drawing a sharp contrast with the dark vision of “American carnage” conjured by Trump four years prior. After his remarks, Biden will continue the tradition of reviewing the troops.

But Biden will forgo the traditional parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. Instead, the inaugural committee has planned a virtual “Parade Across America” that will begin after his swearing-in.

Confronted by remarkable political and cultural upheaval, and the worst public health and economic crises in generations, the committee sought to prepare a mix of celebratory events to mark the occasion – including a star-studded lineup and a number of musical performances – with somber memorials that reflect the pain and loss felt by millions of American families.

On the eve of his inauguration, Biden led a remembrance ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool honoring the 400,000 people who died from the coronavirus pandemic. Confronting the virus will be Biden’s most urgent priority after he is sworn in.

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Donald Trump

'We did what we came here to do': Trump fails to mention Biden in farewell address

Video message touts Trump's accomplishments but does not acknowledge successor's legitimate election win

01:16

*[David Smith](#) in Washington
[@smithinamerica](#)*

Tue 19 Jan 2021 18.43 EST

Donald Trump has delivered a “mission accomplished” valedictory address that failed to name Joe Biden or acknowledge the legitimacy of his election victory.

On his last full day at the White House, the outgoing US president released a [nearly 20-minute video message](#) in which he spoke from a lectern against a backdrop of four national flags, two busts and two framed paintings.

“We did what we came here to do – and so much more,” said Trump, wearing a dark suit, white shirt and blue tie, as he reeled off a list of achievements and linked them to his signature phrases, “America first” and “make America great again”.

The president appeared to tacitly acknowledge the divisiveness and anger that marked his four years in office, but offered no hint of regret. “I did not seek the easiest course,” he said. “I did not seek the path that would get the least criticism.

[Joe Biden heads to inauguration in city scarred by last days of Trump](#)

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“I took on the tough battles, the hardest fights, the most difficult choices because that’s what you elected me to do. Your needs were my first and last unyielding focus. This, I hope, will be our greatest legacy: together, we put the American people back in charge of our country.”

Critics have said Trump is [more likely to be remembered](#) as the first American president in history to be twice impeached, first for pressuring Ukraine for political favours, second for inciting a violent mob to sack the US Capitol and stop Biden’s win being certified.

After four years of firestorms, Trump’s presidency has been fading away, especially after his [Twitter feed was abruptly terminated](#). The video broke a prolonged silence less than 24 hours before he is expected to leave the White House for the last time, early on Wednesday morning.

Before heading to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump will hold a send-off event at the Joint Base Andrews airfield near Washington. His vice-president, Mike Pence, will not be present but will [attend Biden’s inauguration](#) instead in what may be interpreted as a pointed gesture.

Trump, who pushed baseless conspiracy theories that the election was stolen from him, has not held a farewell press conference nor welcomed Biden to the White House. He will become the first president in a century and a half to snub his successor’s inauguration. It is not known whether he will leave a handwritten note for Biden in the Oval Office [as past occupants have done](#).

In his remarks, Trump could not bring himself to utter Biden’s name, saying only: “This week, we inaugurate a new administration and pray for its success in keeping America safe and prosperous. We extend our best wishes, and we also want them to have luck – a very important word.”

The reference to “luck” may have been a backward look at the coronavirus, which dramatically ended a run of relative good fortune for the president and smashed his economic record in an election year.

His mishandling of the pandemic response has been widely condemned for making the death toll exponentially worse. It included deliberately minimising the threat, sidelining public health officials, refusing to embrace mask-wearing and suggesting unproven treatments, including the injection of disinfectant.

Even as the US death toll ticked past 400,000 people, the highest in the world, Trump noted that nation had produced two vaccines at record speed. “Another administration would have taken three, four, five, maybe even up to 10 years to develop a vaccine,” he claimed, without evidence. “We did in nine months.”

Long assailed for his lack of empathy, Trump offered: “We grieve for every life lost, and we pledge in their memory to wipe out this horrible pandemic once and for all.”

The president offered no contrition for his role in [the insurrection at the Capitol](#) this month, in which five people were killed and rioters paraded the Confederate flag and other symbols of the far right. Earlier on Tuesday, the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, said the mob was “provoked by the president and other powerful people”.

The president said: “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. Now, more than ever, we must unify around our shared values and rise above the partisan rancor, and forge our common destiny.”

Trump touted his tax cuts, deregulation, trade deals, rebuilding the military and withdrawal from the Paris climate accord, which Biden has pledged to rejoin immediately. He also highlighted the appointment of nearly 300 judges, including three supreme court justices, and construction of more than [450 miles of “powerful new wall”](#) on the US-Mexico border.

Internationally, he claimed: “We revitalised our alliances and rallied the nations of the world to stand up to China like never before.” He added: “I am especially proud to be the first president in decades who has started no new wars.”

Trump is still likely to issue a barrage of last-minute pardons and commutations before he exits. Facing an impeachment trial in the Senate and a possible ban on running for public office, he gave little hint about his future plans.

“I want you to know that the movement we started is only just beginning,” he said. “There’s never been anything like it. The belief that a nation must serve its citizens will not dwindle but instead only grow stronger by the day.”

The address was greeted with widespread scepticism. Ilhan Omar, a Democratic congresswoman from Minnesota, [tweeted](#): “Trump might not have started a war, but he did succeed in making our nation’s capital look like a war zone.”

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[US politics live](#)

[Joe Biden](#)

Biden inauguration: Trump to leave White House for Florida before ceremony - live updates

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[Joe Biden](#)

Inauguration day: a guide to what to expect as Joe Biden assumes office

With Washington under lockdown and Covid-19 raging, the inauguration will be different, but there will still be pomp and ceremony



Security measures are taken around the Capitol building on the day before the inauguration of Joe Biden. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Security measures are taken around the Capitol building on the day before the inauguration of Joe Biden. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

[Adam Gabbatt](#) in New York

[@adamgabbatt](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

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According to the constitution of the United States, a president's four-year term "shall end at noon on the 20th day of January". On Wednesday, the end

of Donald Trump's presidency will see Joe Biden assume the office in the enduring inauguration ceremony at the US Capitol.

This year, however, some things will be different. With the US still gripped by the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 400,000 people across the country, there will be none of the sprawling crowds that were seen at [Barack Obama's two inaugurations](#). And after the deadly riots at the Capitol earlier this month, much of the area will be locked down, with [up to 25,000 members](#) of the national guard prepared to deploy in Washington – dwarfing the number of US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq combined.

Despite those challenges, a good amount of pomp and ceremony – some of it virtual – is still planned. Some timings for the events have not been officially announced, but here's an idea of what to expect.

Trump leaves the White House

Trump is due to leave the White House just before 8am, headed for Joint Base Andrews, the military base in Maryland used by Air Force One.

The White House has issued invitations for a ceremony at the base, with attendees told to arrive at 7.15am and the event due to start 45 minutes later. Few details have been released about the event, but Trump is reportedly keen on a lavish affair, featuring a 21-gun salute, a color guard, a military band and reams of supporters, [CNN reported](#).

[One dozen national guard troops pulled from inauguration duties after vetting](#)

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In a sign that Trump's aides may be struggling to gather a large crowd, however, guests [have been told](#) they can bring up to five other people, and invitees [even included Anthony Scaramucci](#), the former White House communications director who has become a vocal Trump critic. A further blow to Trump's designs on an ostentatious farewell came when the Pentagon [reportedly](#) said it would not hold an armed forces farewell tribute for the outgoing president.

After the ceremony Trump will fly to the Mar-a-Lago compound that is set to become his home. Trump has broken with tradition by refusing to attend Biden's inauguration. The last outgoing president to do so was Andrew Johnson, [in 1868](#). Mike Pence, Trump's vice-president, will attend.

Inauguration program begins

Biden's inauguration program begins at some time after 11am, with Father Leo J O'Donovan, an American Jesuit Catholic priest who is a longtime friend of the Biden family, set to give an invocation. Andrea Hall, a Georgia firefighter in the South Fulton fire and rescue department, will then lead the pledge of allegiance. Hall is the first African American woman in the department's history to be promoted to the rank of fire captain.

Lady Gaga, who campaigned for Biden, will perform the national anthem, and Amanda Gorman, the first ever National youth poet laureate in the US, will read a poem.

The rev Dr Silvester Beaman, a friend to Biden and the president-elect's late son Beau, will lead a benediction. Beaman is the pastor of Bethel African methodist episcopal church in Wilmington, Delaware.

Jennifer Lopez will also give a musical performance.

Biden and Harris sworn in

Shortly before noon, Kamala Harris will be sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and will become the country's first female, first Black and first south Asian American vice-president. The vice-president-elect will use two bibles, one of which belonged to Thurgood Marshall, the first Black person to serve on the supreme court.

At midday, Biden will be sworn in by John Roberts, the chief justice of the supreme court. The president-elect plans to use his family's [very large](#) bible from 1893.

After officially taking office, Biden will give his inaugural speech. Biden has reportedly been working on the speech [since November](#), and according

to his [inaugural committee](#) Biden will lay out “his vision to defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation”.

The theme of the inauguration is “America United”, and Biden’s address is likely to offer a different tone to that of his predecessor. Donald Trump gave [a 16-minute speech, much of it incendiary](#), at his inauguration in 2017.



Joe Biden waves as he leaves St Joseph on the Brandywine Roman Catholic Church on 16 January 2021 in Wilmington, Delaware. Photograph: Angela Weiss/AFP/Getty Images

‘Pass in review’ and Arlington cemetery

Biden will take part in the traditional “Pass in review” after 2pm. He and Harris – and their spouses – will make the short walk to the east front of the Capitol, where they’ll observe a procession of each branch of the military. The pass in review signals the peaceful transfer of power to the new commander-in-chief.

The next event will take Biden about three miles south-west of the White House, to [Arlington national cemetery](#), where about 400,000 military veterans are interred. Biden will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Former presidents Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton

will join Biden at the cemetery, as will the former first ladies Michelle Obama, Laura Bush and Hillary Clinton.

Biden travels to the White House

Biden will then receive a **presidential escort to the White House**. Every branch of the military will be represented, according to the inaugural committee, including musical elements. Traditionally newly-sworn in presidents take part in an inaugural parade from the Capitol to the White House, being driven most of the route and occasionally walking to wave to supporters. There will be no such parade this year, but a virtual one will take its place.

‘Virtual parade across America’

At around 3.15pm, a “[Virtual parade across America](#)” will be livestreamed on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Biden’s inaugural committee said the virtual parade will feature “diverse, dynamic performances in communities in all 56 states and territories”. Jon Stewart and the Olympian Allyson Felix are among those taking part.

Celebrating America primetime TV special

The evening of the inauguration typically features at least one ball – Obama and Michelle Obama [somehow attended 10](#) – but there will be no lavish celebration on Wednesday night. There will, however, be a 90-minute primetime show, expected to be broadcast on most channels, to mark Biden’s presidency.

Tom Hanks will host the show, titled *Celebrating America*, which will feature remarks from Biden and Harris and, according to the inaugural committee, “performances that represent the rich diversity and extensive talent America offers”.

Ant Clemons, Jon Bon Jovi, John Legend, Eva Longoria, Demi Lovato, Bruce Springsteen and Kerry Washington will be among those appearing.

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Coronavirus

Talking can spread Covid as much as coughing, says research

Tiny aerosols of the virus emitted when speaking linger in air for longer than larger droplets from a cough

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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The Excel Vaccination Centre on 11 January. Extra care is needed indoors, as virus aerosols can travel for more than two metres in the air. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

The Excel Vaccination Centre on 11 January. Extra care is needed indoors, as virus aerosols can travel for more than two metres in the air. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images

Nicola Davis Science correspondent
[@NicolaKSDavis](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Speaking to a friend when infected with the coronavirus could be as dangerous as coughing near them thanks to lingering particles, research has suggested.

Covid can be spread through a number of routes, including virus-containing droplets emitted when an infected person breaths, speaks or coughs – a factor experts said could help to explain why [Covid seems to spread more easily in indoor settings](#).

While large droplets fall to the ground over short distances, tiny droplets known as aerosols can carry the virus over distances greater than two metres, and linger.

Now experts have developed models to explore the risk posed by large droplets and aerosols, and explore ways to mitigate it. Their results suggest it takes just a couple of seconds for expelled particles to travel beyond two metres.

“You need masks, you need distancing and you need good ventilation so these particles don’t build up in an indoor space and they are safely removed,” said Prof Pedro Magalhães de Oliveira, an expert in fluid mechanics at the [University of Cambridge](#) and co-author of the study.

Writing in the journal [Proceedings of the Royal Society A](#), de Oliveira and colleagues reported how they built models that take into account the size of droplets emitted from infected individuals when they speak or cough, as well as factors including the makeup of the droplets and the time it takes for them to settle.

The team also looked at infection risk, taking into account the viral load of individuals with Covid, and the estimated dose required to cause an infection – the latter was based on studies of a different coronavirus.

The team concluded it was unsafe to stand without a mask two metres away from an infected person who is talking or coughing, with both situations posing an infection risk.

The team add that an hour after an infected person has spoken for 30 seconds the total aerosol left contains much more viral mass than after one cough – adding that in small spaces and without ventilation this might be enough to cause Covid.

“Speaking is a very important issue that has to be considered because it produces much finer particles [than coughing] and these particles, or aerosol, can be suspended for over an hour in amounts that are sufficient to cause the disease,” said de Oliveira.

But whether people would catch Covid, he said, depends upon how much of the aerosol they breath in – which is influenced by factors including whether masks are worn, whether the situation is indoors, levels of ventilation and the distance between the people involved.

The team have used their work to develop [an online calculator](#), called Airborne.cam, for users to explore their risk of becoming infected indoors via airborne particles alone.

According to the tool, spending one hour in a 250m² store – assumed to have a maximum capacity of 50 people and ventilation on a par with offices – results in an individual having around an 8% estimated chance of becoming infected with coronavirus, assuming there are five infected people in the store and no one is wearing a mask.

If ventilation is improved so the air is renewed five times an hour rather than three times, this risk can be cut to under 2%; a similar drop can be gained if everyone wears three-ply face masks.

While the infection risks are only theoretical estimates, and are not specific to the new UK coronavirus variant, the team said the tool can help users to explore ways to stay safe in different scenarios.

“The idea is not to obtain absolute risk figures from the tool, but to use it to see how mitigation strategies impact risk of infection. It can be used to rank these strategies, for example,” said de Oliveira.

Prof Catherine Noakes, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and an expert in airborne infections at the University of Leeds, welcomed the study, but cautioned that the results are based on a number of assumptions.

“It is likely that the results represent realistic worst-case scenarios as the model uses quite a high viral load as one of the assumptions, and this has a significant influence on the risk that is predicted,” she said, adding viral load varies between people and through the course of the disease.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/talking-can-spread-covid-as-much-as-coughing-says-research>

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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’

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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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Economic policy

MPs demand answers over lack of Covid support for self-employed

Too many excluded from government's furlough and other support schemes, committee says

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Artists and theatre workers protest about the lack of government support, London, September 2020. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/Rex

Artists and theatre workers protest about the lack of government support, London, September 2020. Photograph: Amer Ghazzal/Rex

Richard Partington Economics correspondent
{@RJPartington}

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Parliament's spending watchdog has called on the government to explain and fix issues with the tax system that have denied whole groups of freelancers and self-employed workers financial support during the coronavirus pandemic.

The powerful cross-party public accounts committee (PAC) said [some of the workforce](#) had "not had a penny" from the government's multibillion-pound support schemes despite repeat lockdowns blocking many from work, while [some large companies](#) had received taxpayer support and paid dividends to shareholders and high salaries to executives.

It said "quirks in the tax system" and problems with HM Revenue and Customs' computer systems had allowed people to [fall through the cracks](#) in the support schemes and made it more difficult for the tax authority to identify fraud.

Campaigners have warned that about 3 million taxpayers – 10% of the UK workforce – have fallen through gaps in the support system and have received no help since the start of the pandemic almost a year ago, with self-employed workers and freelancers among the most likely to be excluded.

Demanding answers from officials, the group of MPs said [HMRC](#) should, within six weeks, publish an explanation of why it cannot help those freelancers and other groups that have been excluded from receiving any support, and set out steps it can take to overcome those obstacles.

The report comes amid growing pressure on the chancellor, [Rishi Sunak](#), to refresh the government's emergency support schemes as the UK economy edges closer to a double-dip recession during the second wave of the pandemic.

[Covid help extended for self-employed people, but some miss out](#)
[Read more](#)

The PAC said it was concerned that some self-employed taxpayers may have moved on to company payrolls because of the government's [IR 35 tax rules](#) – aimed at stopping [tax dodging by disguising employment](#) through so-

called personal service companies – but had not been classed as employed at the right time to be eligible for emergency support.

It also said it was common in some sectors – such as TV, film and the wider creative industries – for freelancers to work on a series of short-term employment contracts with gaps in between, which could mean they miss-out on financial support.

The government has spent more than £46bn subsidising the wages of almost 10m jobs since the pandemic began through the [furlough scheme](#), which has been extended until the end of April. More than 2m claims worth more than £18bn have been paid out through the similar self-employed income support scheme.

Warning that people were still falling through the cracks, the PAC report said that HMRC was coming under strain as it attempted to upgrade its IT systems, handle increased demand during the pandemic, and adapt to the UK's post-Brexit customs regime.

The report warned the tax authority it was spending too much time patching-up out-of-date and potentially risky computer systems rather than modernising them, with these old systems making it tougher for HMRC to provide reliable and timely data.

Meg Hillier, the chair of the PAC, said: “As public spending balloons to unprecedented levels in response to the pandemic, out-of-date tax systems are one of the barriers to getting help to a significant number of struggling taxpayers who should be entitled to support. And the system is going to struggle, and in many cases fail, to capture or deal with those wrongly claiming it.”

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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.

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Wednesday briefing: Over to you, President Biden

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/wednesday-briefing-over-to-you-president-biden>

Theresa May

Theresa May accuses Boris Johnson of 'abandoning global moral leadership'

The former prime minister also criticised outgoing US president Donald Trump



May and Johnson have clashed repeatedly in the Commons over the past year and a half, particularly over Brexit talks. Photograph: Reuters

May and Johnson have clashed repeatedly in the Commons over the past year and a half, particularly over Brexit talks. Photograph: Reuters

Jedidjah Otte

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.32 EST

Theresa May has accused [Boris Johnson](#) of abandoning Britain's "position of global moral leadership", in her most unrestrained attack on her successor yet.

Writing in the Daily Mail ahead of [President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration](#), the former prime minister had stern words about both the outgoing US president, Donald Trump, and her successor.

May said that, in her view, Johnson has failed to honour British values by threatening to break international law during Brexit trade negotiations and backing out of the [foreign aid target](#), writing that these two manoeuvres had not “raised our credibility in the eyes of the world”.

“Threatening to break international law by going back on a treaty we had just signed and abandoning our position of global moral leadership as the only major economy to meet both the 2% defence spending target and the 0.7% international aid target were not actions which raised our credibility in the eyes of the world,” she wrote.

In her article, May appeared to remind Johnson that he needed to live up to “our values” to have any aspirations for a truly “Global Britain” to play a key role on the international political stage, and urged him to adopt compromise.

“We have been sliding towards absolutism in international affairs: if you are not 100% for me, you must be 100% against me,” she said. “Compromise is seen as a dirty word.”

“We must reject a scene in which a few strongmen face off against each other and instead bring people together in a common cause. But to lead we must live up to our values.”

May and Johnson have clashed repeatedly in the Commons over the past year and a half, particularly over [Brexit](#) talks involving Northern Ireland and the Good Friday agreement.

Likening the storming of the US Capitol to “attacks on our own democratic institutions” such as the murder of PC Keith Palmer, who died during the 2017 Westminster terror attack, May condemned Trump for having “whipped up” a violent mob and described the election of a “decent” Biden as the next US president as a “golden opportunity” for Britain to become a force for good in the world again.

“What happened in Washington was not the act of a lone extremist or a secretive cell, but an assault by a partisan mob whipped up by an elected president. I know from experience that leaving power is not easy – especially when you feel that there is more you want to do.”

May was the [first foreign head of state to meet Trump](#) in the White House in 2016.

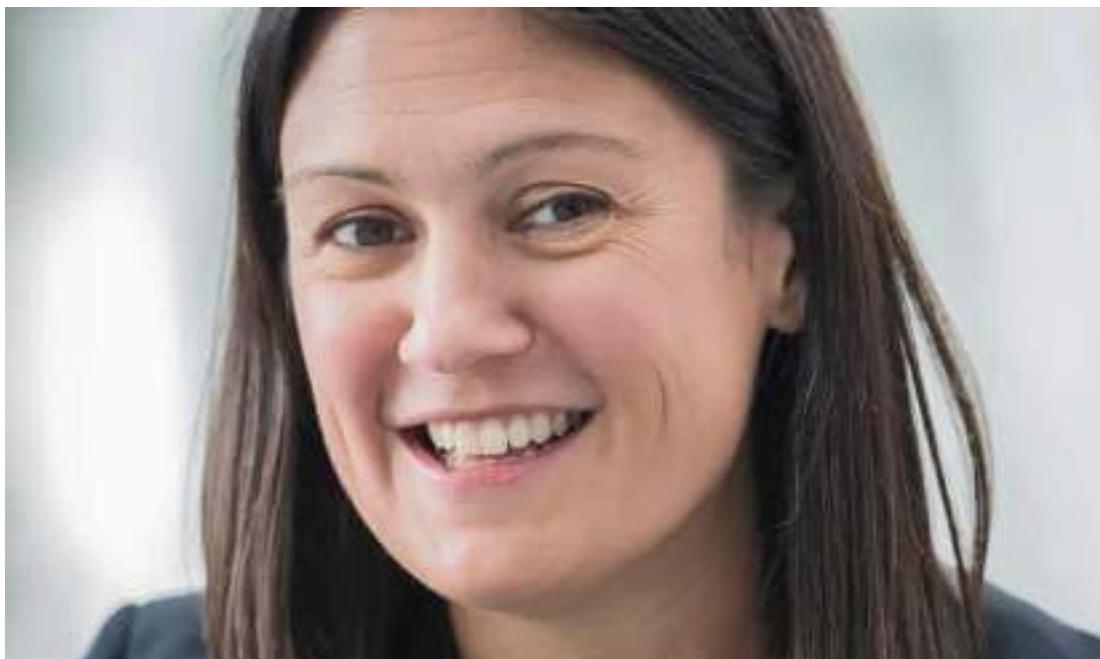
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Politics

'Woke guy' Joe Biden is an inspiration for Labour, says Lisa Nandy

Shadow foreign secretary says party will seek to improve standing of UK damaged by Boris Johnson



Lisa Nandy: Biden victory ‘a source of hope for progressive parties around the world’. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

Lisa Nandy: Biden victory ‘a source of hope for progressive parties around the world’. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA



Jessica Elgot Deputy political editor

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Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Joe Biden won the US presidency as a “woke guy” who proudly defended trans rights and Black Lives Matter but also set the agenda on economic recovery, the shadow foreign secretary, Lisa Nandy, has said as Labour seeks to build new alliances with the Democrats.

In a Guardian interview ahead of the 78-year-old president's inauguration, Nandy said the Democrats were looking to her party as a dependable partner and that Labour would seek to use the relationship to improve UK interests damaged by Boris Johnson. “On every occasion he’s managed to trash our reputation as a country that is reliable, dependable and values-driven,” she said.

Nandy had been due to attend Biden’s inauguration on Wednesday but pulled out once England entered its third Covid lockdown. She hinted that Biden was an inspiration for how a Labour leader could win without compromising on progressive values and being drawn into culture wars.

“Joe Biden – he’s a woke guy, he appointed an [amazingly strong](#) woman of colour who is also pro-choice as his running mate, he mentioned the trans community in his victory speech, he stood up for the Black Lives Matter protesters, he spoke out about the policing of that movement, and he’s never shied away from standing up for his values,” Nandy said.

“People know exactly who he is. And he equally won’t be diverted off course when he wants to talk about the economy, when he wants to talk about Covid.”

Nandy said it was clear Biden had not healed US divisions but his victory was “a source of hope for a lot of progressive parties around the world”.

She said she believed UK voters would not be drawn easily into febrile conspiracy-fuelled politics and that the US election showed there was a “ceiling” for the amount of disruptive politics that voters would tolerate in a pandemic.

“They want a government that they can trust to actually get a grip, not just on the health crisis but on the economic fallout which is already affecting people across this country and across America.”

However, she drew parallels between the US and the UK Conservative party’s efforts to stoke tensions, referencing the Charlottesville protests where white supremacists were given some endorsement by the president.

“Two years later we had the prime minister here trying to start a [culture war over a statue of Churchill](#) and also exactly the same pattern of behaviour in relation to trans rights … In 2019, No 10 was polling the red walls to see if it could start a culture war in northern towns over LGBT rights.”

Nandy said she was aware the launch of two explicitly rightwing TV channels, one under [Rupert Murdoch](#) and another fronted by [Andrew Neil](#), were targeted at constituencies like hers in Wigan, with a strapline of “being for the underserved and unheard … which is a deliberate targeting of voters in constituencies like mine where you’ve had 40 years of economic decline and repeated attempts by the far right to get a foothold”.

While Labour wants to explore the Democrats' electoral strategy, she said the party could more importantly act as a channel for improving UK relations with the Biden administration.

"I wouldn't underestimate how deep the strength of feeling about [Boris Johnson](#) goes, particularly with members of the administration who previously served under President Obama," she said.

Nandy said the UK public should not underestimate senior Democrats' private disdain for Johnson, which has been heightened by concerns over Brexit and Northern Ireland.

She said the Biden administration had communicated ways to repair relations, including a major push from the UK ahead of the G7 and Cop26 climate summit to persuade Australia and India to make binding climate targets, as well as taking a firmer stance on Russia and disinformation.

Nandy said it was her understanding from conversations with Democrats that Alok Sharma's appointment as [full-time president of Cop26](#) was a "direct request from the US" as a demonstration of seriousness.

She said it was not just Johnson's [perceived closeness to Trump](#), who dubbed his UK counterpart "Britain Trump", but actions taken by the UK in recent months. "I think the Democrats feel, in the conversations we've had with them, that it's not clear what Britain wants out of the special relationship any more," she said.

"They are genuinely quite baffled about why the British government took cooperation on military, security, defence and foreign policy off the table in negotiations with the EU," she said. "The great strategic value of Britain to the United States is that we have a close relationship with both the US and the EU on those matters."

Russia and the spread of disinformation are another key target for Nandy where there is a wedge between the UK and the Biden administration. The intelligence and security committee report, [published six months ago](#), has seen none of its 15 recommendations implemented by government.

“We’ve got great big gaping holes in our defences,” Nandy said. “The City of London still operates as a [haven for dark money](#) that sustains the regime that Dominic Raab is railing against. Yet nothing has been done – that’s heard both in Russia and in the US.”

Nandy said she would back sanctions against key Russian figures named by dissident leader [Alexei Navalny](#), imprisoned this week in Moscow following a poisoning attempt blamed on the Kremlin.

“In the end, if you don’t clean up the corrupt networks and dirty money, then you continue to sustain the regime that Alexei Navalny has spent his entire life fighting against,” Nandy said.

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[Brexit](#)

Furious Kent residents step up fight over Brexit lorry park

Locals condemn lack of consultation over customs clearance site for 1,200 lorries



Diggers start work in fields in the village of Guston near Dover, Kent, at a site destined to become the White Cliffs inland border facility. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Diggers start work in fields in the village of Guston near Dover, Kent, at a site destined to become the White Cliffs inland border facility. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Lisa O'Carroll Brexit correspondent
[@lisaocarroll](https://twitter.com/lisaocarroll)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

Residents of a village near Dover have mounted what they describe as a “David and Goliath” battle to try to reverse government plans to turn fields at the ends of their gardens into a giant [Brexit](#) customs clearance site for 1,200 lorries.

The local Anglican priest and former chairman of the chamber of commerce accused the transport secretary, Grant Shapps, and the transport minister, Rachel Maclean, of a “clear abuse of power” over the lack of notice and consultation over the consequences of their plans.

With less than two weeks to go before the end of an official 21-day engagement process, they staged a socially-distanced protest at the fields destined to become the [White Cliffs inland border facility](#). They are demanding the government to “relocate to a safer site”.

One pensioner was almost in tears over the prospect of hundreds of HGVs driving beyond his fence in a 37-hectare plot of agricultural land.



Anglican priest Peter Sherred says the way the government has planned the site is immoral, unethical and unprincipled. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

He complained the plans were hatched “behind closed doors” and only conveyed to residents on New Year’s Eve despite the devastation they will

bring to their lives.

“I think they way they have handled it is unethical, immoral and unprincipled,” said Peter Sherred, a self-supporting Anglican priest who has lived in the village for the past 25 years officiating at numerous local churches.

['Betrayed': Dover residents furious over building of Brexit lorry park](#)
[Read more](#)

“The disgraceful thing about all of this was there was absolutely no consultation whatsoever with people in the local area or the residents who are going to be most affected, to whom these plans came as a complete shock.

“We were told that at some stage in January we would be involved in an engagement process, where we would have been able to express our views, but I have to say I find that somewhat meaningless because as you can see they are already have machines in the land, they have created an access route to the land and yet they say it will not be approved until after the engagement.

“I can’t see them backtracking on this project. This is a fait accompli,” he said.

In an official submission to the Department for Transport he and his wife say: “The manner of proceeding has involved a clear abuse of power by departments involved [DfT and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government] including the secretaries of state, under secretaries of state and officials”.

The [DfT says in its notice about the site](#), published last week, that the site will only be used for five years and says it will take feedback submitted by 3 February into account.

“The White Cliffs inland border facility proposals are planned for temporary use and are designed to ensure that there are no significant or long-term environmental effects,” it said.

But none of the locals can see the site being restored to something suitable in 2025.



Green party local leader, Sarah Gleave, and Guston residents protest against the site. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

Sarah Gleave, the coordinator for the Green party for Dover and Deal, has been leading the campaign to get the plans reversed along with Guston parish council members. She said the site was a result of “lazy, ignorant planning by London”. “Obviously we must have inland clearance sites but this is the wrong location,” she added.

The site is one of 10 inland border facilities the government has either opened, is building, or is planning to deal with the full suite of customs, tariffs and duties checks that will be operation from July this year.

Maclean wrote to locals on New Year’s Eve to notify them of the purchase of the land and the site.

But Sherred and residents say they got a second shock last week when the department wrote to them with a more detailed outline for the site, which showed an exit route for lorries sited along a cycle and bus route proposed by the local council as part of a pre-existing regeneration programme.



Kieron Jaynes, 70, at the end of his garden, where lorries will exit the inland border facility under government plans. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

“Mentally it is getting to me with Covid and everything else and now this,” he said. “I just wanted to retire peacefully,” said a visibly distraught Kieron Jaynes, 70, as he explained how hundreds of HGVs were now going to skirt the garden in the rural home he bought more than 20 years ago.

Dover born and bred, he has lived in his house for 22 years, and invested in the community through a business employing 35 people.

Jaynes doesn’t want conflict or headlines and suggests one solution is the government, which purchased the site at the end of last year under emergency legislation, instead use the land for a visitor attraction for the coachloads that visit nearby Dover Castle and the cyclists and runners who use this town hinterland for its green credentials.

The town has “such enormous history” over the centuries and yet has nothing for tourists, not even toilets at the castle, just a walk away from his house.



Mick Palmer, 78 and Kieron Jaynes, 70, who own houses metres away from the proposed site. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

Neighbour Mick Palmer, 78, and his family are also suffering and his wife has become ill with anxiety and depression since the plans were revealed three weeks ago.

“It is a travesty to say it’s a consultation. They’ve already got the bulldozers in,” he said. He and fellow protester Sharon McCartney suggest nearby Bettleshanger Park, which is already paved over, is a more suitable site for hundreds of lorries a day. “It’s flat land and it’s already tarmacked,” she says.

A DfT spokesperson said it was engaging with the local community and had extended the time period for residents to submit views from two weeks, their legal requirement, to three.

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[Hong Kong](#)

David Perry QC quits prosecution of Hong Kong activists

British barrister was called ‘mercenary’ by UK foreign secretary for taking on case against pro-democracy figures



David Perry QC appears at the Hong Kong high court. Photograph: South China Morning Post/Getty Images

David Perry QC appears at the Hong Kong high court. Photograph: South China Morning Post/Getty Images

[Helen Davidson](#) in Taipei

[@heldavidson](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 00.09 EST

The British QC hired to run the prosecution of senior [Hong Kong](#) activists, including the media mogul Jimmy Lai, has pulled out of the case after widespread pressure, the territory’s government has said.

David Perry QC had been instructed by the Hong Kong justice department to prosecute 76-year-old Lai and eight others including the democracy figure Martin Lee and the veteran activist Lee Cheuk-yan. The group are charged with public order offences for organising and taking part in an unauthorised assembly. Lai, who is in jail on remand, is [facing multiple separate charges](#) including under the national security law.

[Dominic Raab calls QC acting for Hong Kong government 'mercenary'](#)
[Read more](#)

In a statement on Wednesday the Hong Kong government said there had been “growing pressure and criticism from the UK community directed at Mr Perry QC for his involvement in this case”.

“Mr Perry QC expressed concerns about such pressures and the exemption of quarantine, and indicated that the trial should proceed without him. In light of the public interest involved and the imminent trial date the DoJ has instructed another counsel to prosecute the trial as scheduled.”

Lai’s prosecution has been widely criticised as part of [a government campaign against dissent in Hong Kong](#), and Perry’s decision [to take the appointment](#) drew scathing criticism, including [from British legal circles](#) and the UK foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, who [described Perry’s decision as “mercenary”](#).

The Hong Kong government said criticism of Perry had been “ill-informed” and many had conflated the case with the national security law.

The nine defendants had police permission to hold the August 2019 demonstration but the police commissioner has accused them of breaching the order by allowing the rally to leave Victoria Park.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/david-perry-qc-quits-prosecution-of-hong-kong-activists>

Boris Johnson

Johnson's 'levelling up' council criticised as most members based in London

Of 30 Build Back Better Council members, 22 are in London, but none are from Wales or Northern Ireland



The geographic makeup of the council was criticised for drawing almost exclusively from firms based in London or its commuter belt. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

The geographic makeup of the council was criticised for drawing almost exclusively from firms based in London or its commuter belt. Photograph: James Veysey/Rex/Shutterstock

[Helen Pidd](#) North of England editor, and [Alex Mistlin](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

A business council set up by [Boris Johnson](#) to rebuild the UK after Covid has been criticised for being too London-centric and treating most of the country with “contempt” after it emerged that all but five council members are based in or near the English capital.

Just one of the 30 Build Back Better Council members is based in the north of England, two are in the Midlands, one in Cambridge and one in Scotland. None work for firms headquartered in Wales or Northern Ireland. Twenty-two are in [London](#) and three in commuter towns within 25 miles of the capital.

[Announcing the council on Monday](#), Johnson said it would “level up opportunity for people and businesses across the UK”. He promised it would “provide an important forum for frank feedback on our recovery plans”.

But the geographic makeup of the council was criticised for drawing almost exclusively from firms based in London or the commuter belt of the capital.

Nick Forbes, the leader of Newcastle city council, said: “So much for levelling up. We’re the only city with an A rating for our CDP assessment (demonstrating our ambition and plan for net zero by 2030), we’ve created thousands of jobs in the city over the last decade, we’ve won national praise for our work on tackling homelessness, we’ve broken all our housebuilding targets and we’re the first city to have all care home residents vaccinated against Covid. But the government doesn’t think they have anything to learn from us.”

Frank McKenna from [UnitedCity](#), a pressure group set up to help businesses in Greater Manchester recover from the pandemic, said: “The one thing the government should have learnt from the last nine months, surely, is that we can’t have a one-size-fits-all-approach to rebuilding our economy.”

McKenna, who also heads Downtown in Business, which brings together firms in the north of England and the West Midlands, said it wasn’t too late to broaden the council’s membership. “Even at this stage I would say to Boris Johnson and his colleagues: this just looks daft … At worst it looks like the north of England has been forgotten and is being treated with contempt again.”

Henri Murison, the director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership thinktank, said: “A large part of the British business community, including a number of its most significant firms, is here – not least most of its major supermarkets. It is vital that discussions about key business priorities reflect that.”

A government spokesperson defended the appointments, saying: “The Build Back Better Council members have significant operations across the UK, employing tens of thousands of people in factories, R&D campuses, shops and forecourts across the Midlands and the north of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

“Council members were selected because of their long-term commitment to the UK economy and their combined capability to increase business investment, get the economy moving and create jobs across the entire country.”

The council members include senior executives from companies including Google, Heathrow Airport, British Airways and Unilever. Outside London and the commuter belt there is the chief executive of Siemens, based in Manchester; the chief executives of Jaguar Land Rover and Severn Trent, both in Coventry; Sir Ian Wood of the engineering consultancy Wood in Aberdeen, and Poppy Gustafsson from the cyber-security firm Darktrace in Cambridge. The three companies within 25 miles of the capital are in Slough, Brentwood in Middlesex and Welwyn Garden City.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/20/johnsons-levelling-up-council-criticised-as-most-members-based-in-london>

Transgender

Gender identity development service for children rated inadequate

Tavistock and Portman [NHS](#) trust criticised for long delays, high caseloads, deficient record-keeping and poor leadership



The Tavistock Centre, Hampstead, London. Inspectors found there were more than 4,600 young people on the GIDS waiting list. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

The Tavistock Centre, Hampstead, London. Inspectors found there were more than 4,600 young people on the GIDS waiting list. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

[Libby Brooks](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The UK's main gender identity development service for children is leaving thousands of vulnerable young people at risk of self-harm as they wait years

for their first appointment, according to a highly critical report.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) took immediate enforcement action against the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation trust when it completed the inspection in November, which rated the service overall “inadequate” and highlighted overwhelming caseloads, deficient record-keeping and poor leadership.

The commission, which heard from young people using the service, parents, carers and staff in the course of its inspection, told the trust that services and waiting times in the Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS) in both their London and Leeds clinics “must improve significantly”, requiring a monthly report on improvements.

Last month, [transgender teenagers told the Guardian of their own frustrations at lengthy waiting times](#) for initial appointments.

The service has faced major scrutiny in recent years, with some former staff and campaigners raising concerns about the “overdiagnosing” of gender dysphoria, the consequences of early medical interventions and the significant increase in referrals of girls questioning their gender identity.

Inspectors found there were more than 4,600 young people on the GIDS waiting list, with some waiting over two years for their first appointment. GIDS has previously estimated an average of 18 months waiting time from referral. The report warned that the size of the waiting list meant staff were unable to proactively manage the risks to those on it, many of whom were vulnerable and reported self-harming behaviours.

Inspectors also found that staff were dealing with heavy caseloads, with a third of staff having caseloads working with over 60 individuals at once.

Concluding that the service was “not consistently well led”, the inspectors also reported staff did not always feel respected, supported and valued, while some said they felt unable to raise concerns without fear of retribution.

However, feedback from young people and families being seen at the service was overwhelmingly positive about the care and support provided, while the

report also noted that staff referred young people to other providers for medical treatments that were consistent with good practice.

How staff recorded their work was also scrutinised: the report found that the competency, capacity and consent of patients referred for medical treatment was not consistently recorded before January 2020. The change was a result of the high court ruling in the [Keira Bell case](#), which found that children considering gender reassignment were unlikely to be able to give informed consent.

The report also stated that staff did not develop holistic care plans for young people, nor did they fully record the reasons for their clinical decisions in case notes.

“There were significant variations in the clinical approach of professionals in the team and it was not possible to clearly understand from the records why these decisions had been made,” the report says.

Kevin Cleary, the commission’s deputy chief inspector of hospitals, said the GIDS would be subject to further inspection: “We were extremely clear that there were improvements needed in providing person-centred care, capacity and consent, safe care and treatment, and governance.

“In addition vulnerable, young people were not having their needs met as they were waiting too long for treatment. The action we took was one way of ensuring the trust was tackling these issues in a way which allowed other healthcare partners to support if necessary.”

The report comes the day after [the NHS trust was given leave to appeal](#) against the Keira Bell ruling by the high court, which barred it from referring under-16s for puberty-blocking treatment.

A spokesperson for the Tavistock apologised to patients for the length of time they are waiting to be seen, and said the GIDS was ready to agree a full action plan with the commission.

“Above all, we remain focused on providing a high quality service to children and young people in our care and supporting our staff who, despite

the challenging context they have been working in, have been praised by the CQC for their understanding, compassion and kindness. Patient feedback was reported as overwhelmingly positive and we will involve both patient and staff as we build on these strengths.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/20/gender-identity-development-service-for-children-rated-inadequate>

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Van Morrison

Van Morrison to start legal action over Northern Ireland Covid ban on live music

Music legend stirs further pandemic controversy, challenging Northern Ireland government's recent 'blanket ban on live music' in court



Singer-songwriter Van Morrison is challenging the Northern Ireland government in court over recent Covid restrictions on live music.
Photograph: Vincent West/Reuters

Singer-songwriter Van Morrison is challenging the Northern Ireland government in court over recent Covid restrictions on live music.
Photograph: Vincent West/Reuters

Agence France-Presse

Tue 19 Jan 2021 20.57 EST

Van Morrison will challenge the Northern Irish government in court over its “blanket ban” on live music in licensed venues arising from coronavirus restrictions, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

Solicitor Joe Rice said the Northern Irish singer-songwriter, who has released several protest songs against Covid-19 rules in recent months, will ask the high court in Belfast to review the policy.

“We will be seeking leave for judicial review to challenge the blanket ban on live music in licensed premises in [Northern Ireland](#),” Rice said. “We’re not aware of any credible scientific or medical evidence to justify this particular blanket ban … and we’re going to challenge this in the high court.”

[Medical experts v anti-vaxxers: the Covid-19 information battle](#)

[Read more](#)

The UK, the country worst-hit in Europe by the virus, is struggling with its third and deadliest wave, blamed on a new strain believed to be highly infectious.

Devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which have responsibility for health policy, have all imposed strict lockdown measures at various stages of the health crisis.

The Northern Irish executive in Belfast has introduced regulations that prohibit live music in indoor licensed venues in Northern Ireland.

All hospitality and entertainment venues are closed as part of a six-week lockdown, but Morrison is eager to challenge the rules for when they reopen.

Rice noted that the singer had been able to perform in England several times late last year before the British government tightened rules there.

He said he expected the case to be heard at the high court within “weeks”.

Morrison was taking the action “on behalf of the thousands of musicians, artists, venues and those involved in the live music industry”, Rice said.

The singer [has stirred controversy](#) during the pandemic, last August reportedly urging people to [“fight the pseudoscience”](#) around Covid-19.

A month later he released at two-week intervals [a trio of new tracks](#) – named Born To Be Free, As I Walked Out, and No More Lockdown – containing controversial lyrics.

They included: “No more government overreach / No more fascist bullies / Disturbing our peace” as well as “No more taking of our freedom / And our God-given rights / Pretending it’s for our safety / When it’s really to enslave.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2021/jan/20/van-morrison-to-start-legal-action-over-northern-ireland-covid-ban-on-live-music>

Facebook

Far-right extremists take over UK land sales Facebook page

A Facebook page with 40,000 members created for people buying plots of land has been taken over by rightwing conspiracy theorists



Facebook has said it is investigating the takeover of Land for Sale by far-right Trump supporters. Photograph: Johanna Geron/Reuters

Facebook has said it is investigating the takeover of Land for Sale by far-right Trump supporters. Photograph: Johanna Geron/Reuters

[Alex Hern](#)
[@alexhern](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

On 14 January, the 40,000 Britons who had joined the [Facebook](#) group Land for Sale UK awoke to find their newsfeed transformed.

Until then, the group had been a moderately sized message board for people looking to buy or sell small parcels of land. “We’d love a patch of land in the

Falmouth and Penryn area to let the kids roam, grow fruit trees,” read one typical post.

But on Thursday morning, Land for Sale UK ceased to exist. Its new administrators had changed its branding and name to better reflect the group they wanted to run: it is now called “Supporters of free speech against Big Tech Fascism.” The main image, once a bucolic pastoral landscape, is now a poorly cropped photo of a statue of Cicero with a quote falsely attributed to the Roman orator by gun rights advocates in which he defends “any and every method of protecting ourselves”.

And the group’s “about” page has been changed to explain the new position of the group: “Banning people for telling the truth or you don’t like their opinion or politics is wrong. If your a Libtard you dont belong here. Good bye.”

When I reported to Facebook I was told it did not go against their community standards

Saffy, Land for Sale UK user

The bizarre saga underscores the extent to which Facebook groups, once central to the social network’s desire to devolve the hard work of content moderation to its user base, are increasingly becoming a major source of problems for the company. The administrator of a large Facebook group holds one of the most influential positions on modern social media, but comes with few checks or balances, allowing just a single person to radically change the focus of thousands or millions of people’s Facebook feeds.



An example of the content that started appearing on the site that was once Land for Sale UK.

For the group formerly known as Land for Sale UK, that means the 40,000 members suddenly began seeing content accusing Joe Biden of stealing the US election, anti-fascist campaigners of dressing up as Trump supporters to stage a false-flag attack on Congress, and Twitter of trying to censor the views of hardworking Americans.

Normally, posts on Land for Sale UK received little engagement. The small group had no advertising budget behind it, leaving posts appearing on users' newsfeeds through "organic" sharing only, and requests to buy or sell agricultural land are not conventional viral material. But the takeover, ironically, was perfect for boosting user interactions: every confused comment was taken as a sign by Facebook's algorithms that the content was particularly engaging, which led to it being pushed into more feeds, and receiving more comments.

None of the three new administrators of the group, all of whom appear to live in Southampton, replied to requests for comment from the Guardian. Shortly after they were asked about their decision to rebrand the page, it was switched to a "private" group, and users who tried to co-ordinate a transfer to a new Land for Sale group were banned from posting.

“I was surprised when a post popped up on my timeline from a group I never joined,” said Saffy, one of those users. “The content seemed to be from rightwing extremists sharing lots of links and articles to political agendas and conspiracies in support of Trump. I would never willingly join a group that supports this type of propaganda, but when I reported to Facebook I was told it did not go against their community standards.

“By allowing groups like this to continue, Facebook is complicit in perpetuating the message of these extreme far right groups.”

Facebook said it was investigating the issue.

Land for Sale is by no means the largest Facebook group to be taken over in such a fashion, though its rebranding is more extreme than most. Earlier this month, Substack email newsletter author Ryan Broderick reported on Giggle Palooza, a meme page with 1.6 million followers, which transformed almost overnight from a page that posted mild Christian gags (“being a christian isn’t easy, but the retirement plan is amazing”) to “posting QAnon content and warning its followers that a military dictatorship is imminent”.

In 2017, just a month after the inauguration of Donald Trump, Mark Zuckerberg posted a 6,000-word manifesto on the future of Facebook in which he described a desire to focus on “meaningful” groups as an attempt to counter the “striking decline in the important social infrastructure of local communities”.

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2021.01.20 - Coronavirus

- [Sadiq Khan Mayor says London missed out on early share of vaccine](#)
- [Live Coronavirus: WHO says UK variant detected in 60 countries](#)
- ['To heal, we must remember' Biden holds memorial for 400,000 US Covid victims](#)
- [US Death toll passes 400,000 amid grim forecast over winter](#)
- [Tokyo Olympics unlikely to go ahead, says London 2012 organiser](#)
- ['Verify before you amplify' The BAME activists fighting Covid myths](#)
- [Syria White Helmets awarded £1.17m to make PPE](#)

London

Sadiq Khan: London missed out on early share of vaccine

NHS figures show London had lowest number of people – 388,437 – who have received at least one dose

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

[Dan Sabbagh](#) and [Peter Walker](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST



On Monday alone the number of people being immunised in London was the second lowest across all of England, at 21,228. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

A simplistic formula used to distribute coronavirus vaccines that did not take into account the size of GP practices has meant fewer people receiving one

in London, according to the mayor, [Sadiq Khan](#).

While areas such as Slough and Newcastle have successfully immunised 100% of their elderly care home residents, [London](#) is lagging behind in the vaccine race even as cases remain among the highest in the country.

[Cases](#)

GP practices there were supplied similar amounts of the Pfizer and Oxford/[AstraZeneca](#) vaccines as elsewhere without taking into account the number of registered patients, it is understood. City Hall sources said that GP networks in London tended to be larger, meaning there were fewer doses per patient. But ministers had acknowledged the error, and the mistake was being corrected, they added.

[Figures from NHS England](#) showed that London had the lowest number of people – 388,437 – who had received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine despite being one of the largest NHS regions in England with a population of nearly 9 million.

The leading English region, the Midlands, had administered 713,602 first doses to its population of 10.6 million. People in north-east England and Yorkshire, whose population is similar to London's at 8.6 million, had received 633,837 first doses.

On Monday alone the number of people being immunised in London was the second lowest in England, at 21,228, with only the south-west lower at 16,612. The Midlands achieved 32,560 and the north-east 23,153.

Khan told the Guardian that “the government’s original distribution formula meant that London missed out on its early fair share of the vaccine”. He said that he had been told the supply model would be swiftly revised after a crisis meeting with vaccines minister Nadhim Zahawi last week.

“Zahawi has assured me that supply and distribution will increase, and an amount of the vaccine that reflects our size, density and the level of need in our city is delivered,” the mayor said. “It’s absolutely vital that vulnerable

Londoners are given access to the life-saving vaccines as quickly as possible.”

Downing Street struggled to explain the regional differences in vaccination rates, insisting on Tuesday that all areas “have had full access to supply”. The prime minister’s spokesperson also confirmed that places lagging behind would be offered extra vaccine stocks.

“We will put more supplies into the areas that have more to do,” Boris Johnson’s spokesperson said, adding: “Some areas have had different logistical challenges than others.”

Other factors are constraining vaccination rates in London, including what City Hall said are “higher levels of hesitancy” about taking the jab, in particular among the capital’s black, Asian and minority ethnic population. Research has shown that up to 72% of black people said they were unlikely or very unlikely to have the jab.

Across the UK, 4.26m jabs have been administered, putting the country ahead of much of the rest of the world.

But GPs in England have said their ability to provide inoculations is dependent on central supply from the NHS. At times appointments have had to be cancelled at short notice when deliveries failed to materialise – and as recently as last week some areas had not received any doses of the vaccine, although NHS sources said this had now been corrected.

Ministers want to inoculate the first four priority groups by mid February, comprising care home residents, the over-70s, NHS and care workers, and those with serious underlying health conditions. This week the government said it had begun writing to those in their 70s inviting them to be vaccinated.

Later, however, the Department of Health and Social Care said Zahawi did not give any commitments to revise the distribution formula for the vaccine. “Vaccines are being distributed fairly across the UK – including London – to ensure the most vulnerable are immunised first, and all GPs will continue to receive deliveries as planned,” it said.

More GP practices would start immunising people in the next few days, the spokesperson added.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/20/sadiq-khan-london-missed-out-on-early-share-of-vaccine>

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Coronavirus live news: WHO says UK variant detected in 60 countries as Beijing steps up Covid measures

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[Coronavirus](#)

Joe Biden holds memorial for 400,000 Americans who have died of Covid-19

In first large-scale acknowledgment of pandemic's sweeping toll in the US, Kamala Harris says Americans can 'begin healing together'

02:10

[Victoria Bekiempis](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.14 EST

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[Joe Biden](#) memorialized the more than 400,000 Americans who have died from [Covid-19](#) during a vigil in Washington DC late Tuesday afternoon, as many Americans took to social media in collective mourning.

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.

"To heal, we must remember," Biden said at the memorial. "It's hard sometimes to remember, but that's how we heal. It's important to do that as a nation."

The memorial was hosted by Biden's inaugural committee, which [described](#) the event as "a chance to reflect and honor those no longer with us. The committee had called for a "national moment of unity", asking Americans to light candles in their windows. Organizers also asked for participants to ring bells for a "national moment of remembrance".

Organizers also illuminated 400 lights along the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, to remember those who died.

Many [posted](#) messages of remembrance and photos of candles to social media. “RIP to my family and friends who I lost to Covid. Prayers up for my dad and many others who are still suffering & All those who have lost loved ones. Thank you Biden for honoring 400k lives lost,” wrote Twitter user [@TamiekaChisolm](#).

“400k . Miss you everyday Nana,” [@iam_justemma](#) tweeted.

Actor Rosie Perez [remarked](#): “In tears right now. With the death toll at 400,000, It took way too long to honor those who lost their lives due to [#COVID19](#) but glad it’s finally happening. Thanks [@JoeBiden](#) [@KamalaHarris](#). [#COVIDMemorial](#).”

[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. President-elect Biden’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.

“We gather tonight, a nation in mourning, to pay tribute to lives we have lost, a grandmother or grandfather who is our whole world, a parent, partner, sibling or friend who we still cannot accept is no longer here, and for many months we have grieved by ourselves,” said Vice-president elect [Kamala Harris](#) at the memorial. “Tonight, we grieve and begin healing together.”

Officials across the US joined Biden and Harris in the memorial.

New York City mayor Bill de Blasio, speaking near the Statue of Liberty, [described](#) the vigil as a “powerful moment of unity for our city and for our country”.

“All over America at this moment, people are gathered [with] a common purpose: to remember those that we lost, to feel what their families are feeling,” he said.

Numerous landmarks and buildings across the US lit up for the occasion. The famed Empire State Building pulsed with its “red heartbeat lighting” in honor of those who died.

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.”

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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.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/us-coronavirus-400000-deaths>

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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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>

[Syria](#)

Syria's White Helmets awarded £1.17m to make PPE

Civil defence service has already made more than 2m masks, protective gowns and face shields

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



The White Helmets, created in 2014, grew out of local efforts at urban search and rescue in the aftermath of shelling and airstrikes. Photograph: Muhammad Haj Kadour/AFP/Getty Images

The White Helmets, created in 2014, grew out of local efforts at urban search and rescue in the aftermath of shelling and airstrikes. Photograph: Muhammad Haj Kadour/AFP/Getty Images

[Bethan McKernan](#) Middle East correspondent

Wed 20 Jan 2021 00.30 EST

Syria's White Helmets, who rescue victims from the rubble of airstrikes, have added making personal protective equipment to their efforts saving lives in areas of the country outside [Bashar al-Assad](#)'s control.

The civil defence service's uniform-making unit has recently pivoted to manufacturing PPE with the help of a £1.17m award from a nonprofit organisation funded by the UK, US, Canadian and Dutch governments.

The local facility has already produced more than 2m masks, as well as protective gowns and face shields, and is handling the safe disposal of used PPE for north-west Syria's [vulnerable population](#) of more than 3 million people.

“The Covid-19 pandemic was the most difficult challenge the White Helmets faced in 2020. We witnessed the spread of the virus in north-western [Syria](#) among humanitarian workers and medical personnel while the global pandemic made cross-borders logistics almost impossible,” said Munir Mustafa, the White Helmets’ deputy general manager for humanitarian affairs.

While doctors and humanitarian workers in Syria are still working at great personal risk to respond to and treat the disease, with the help of [Creating Hope in Conflict: a Humanitarian Grand Challenge](#), the White Helmets have been able to scale up community efforts to keep people safe from coronavirus.

“Our volunteers and fellow humanitarians, healthcare providers, and other essential workers are safer now [thanks to the project] and can together continue caring for Syrian civilians and responding to the pandemic,” Mustafa added.

The [White Helmets](#), created in 2014, grew out of local efforts at urban search and rescue and first aid in the aftermath of shelling and airstrikes. Since then the organisation has managed to save more than 120,000 lives despite sustained disinformation campaigns from Assad and his Russian allies to discredit their work.

After 10 years of war, the White Helmets, along with millions of civilians afraid to return to regime-held areas, the remains of the Syrian opposition, Turkish-backed rebel forces and dangerous Islamist groups, are now crammed into the north-west corner of the country.

Healthcare facilities have been decimated in bombings and millions of people who have fled violence elsewhere are living in tents and other inadequate shelter, leaving the area particularly exposed to the threat of coronavirus.

North-west Syria largely escaped the health crisis that engulfed the rest of the world until the winter months, when cases and deaths began to spike. Around 500 cases a day are now being recorded, although the true figure is likely to be much higher because of inadequate testing facilities.

While much of the international community prepares for the arrival of vaccines, fears are high in north-west Syria that another bitter winter will exacerbate the number of Covid-19 cases and compound the area's existing humanitarian crises: [severe flooding](#) killed a six-year-old boy and displaced 41,000 people from camps on Monday.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/syrias-white-helmets-awarded-117m-to-make-ppe>

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](#)
- [Scotland Sturgeon: lockdown will last until at least mid-February](#)
- [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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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.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/19/scotlands-lockdown-will-last-until-at-least-mid-february-says-sturgeon>

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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."

[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](#)
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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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The bed office**Work & careers**

Why you shouldn't work from bed (and a guide to doing it anyway)

It may not be recommended, but, from necessity or choice, many of us find ourselves working from them. Here's how to set up your perfect bed office



‘Far from being indulgent, it may spark creativity.’ (Pose by model)
Photograph: Jessie Casson/Getty Images

‘Far from being indulgent, it may spark creativity.’ (Pose by model)
Photograph: Jessie Casson/Getty Images



[Emine Saner](#)

[@eminesaner](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Everybody who knows what they're talking about will tell you not to do it, but the lure of bed is hard to resist for any home worker. Or it may have become a necessity. With children home schooling, or in a cramped flatshare, your bed may be the only place you can get any peace (although many people living and working with chronic illness will be rolling their eyes at the idea that working from bed has only just been invented).

During the first lockdown, [one survey](#), by Uswitch.com, found a quarter of home workers had worked from bed. Ten months into the on-off lockdown, more of us are doing it than ever. “We’ve found that up to 40% of people who have worked from home during lockdown have worked from their bed at some point,” says Catherine Quinn, president of the British Chiropractic Association.

Samuel Johnson, Edith Wharton, Marcel Proust, Florence Nightingale and William Wordsworth all worked from bed

Of course, you know you're not supposed to have devices in the bedroom, that your bed is only meant for sleep and sex, that good posture is easier at a desk (Quinn says bed-working can cause or exacerbate back pain), that you don't need to be encouraged into even more sedentary behaviour. But it's January, the world is grim, and many of us, even if forced back under the covers by circumstances, will have discovered the joys of working from bed.

Far from being indulgent and indolent, the practice may spark creativity and productivity – memorably, Samuel Johnson, Edith Wharton, Marcel Proust, Florence Nightingale and William Wordsworth all worked from bed. Contemporary writers, [including Monica Ali](#), do, too. View it also as a rebellion against the corporate ridiculousness of standing desks, or worse, [those with treadmills](#). They seem very 2019.

Still, it can be healthy to create some boundaries between work and rest. I delineate the two by getting washed, dressed and then climbing into my boyfriend's side of the bed (he has better pillows, which we'll come to, and I don't have to worry about spilling crumbs on my side). I have regularly worked from bed for about a decade, and this is what I've learned about what you need to get started.

Consider a tray table or laptop stand

It may change your working life or it may become a piece of useless clutter. “It’s important to keep your laptop in front of you at eye height to avoid any strain on your neck,” says Quinn. “There are some fairly cheap laptop stands you can purchase to use at home, which will help provide support when working in this position.” I know Quinn will disapprove, but they don’t work for me. I like to sit cross-legged, so the fold-out legs of a tray table get in the way. I swapped it for one that looks like a tray stuck to a beanbag, which was fine for a while, but became stained with drink-spillage.

Sometimes, I use a pillow with a coffee-table book on top as a makeshift version, but most of the time I do without. It’s probably not great for your laptop’s air vents (or your neck), but it feels much less restrictive – I want to feel free and comfortable, not trapped under furniture. A table that you roll over the bed is an option, but feels like an extreme investment for bed-

working, and a bit too “hospital room” for me. (Ikea does a metal and glass one that doesn’t whisper “convalescence”.)

Don’t use your tray table for drinks and snacks

See stains, above. Use your bedside table for cups of tea and snacks, or get a small side table (a folding one feels less permanent). You could use a high-sided tray to keep on the bed next to you for drinks, but you will still end up with spillages at least once a week. Don’t be tempted to get a mini fridge or kettle – you need to be regularly up and moving around, and getting out of bed is hard. Hunting for snacks is my main motivation.



Don’t use your tray table for drinks. Photograph: Prasit photo/Getty Images

Keep a basket by the bed

This is your “desk drawer” and where you keep chargers, pens, notepads and emergency biscuits. The point of using a basket, rather than keeping everything in a bedside drawer, is that it’s mobile (a carrier bag would do, but is less attractive). If you’re the sort of person who enjoys working from bed, you’re probably the sort of person who would also enjoy working from the sofa (or someone else’s bed) for an occasional change of scene. Some tasks are better done from a desk or table, so don’t label yourself only a “bed

worker". And it is helpful to remove your work basket from your room when it's time to go to sleep.

Get new pillows

You can buy ergonomic cushions and back supports that may work for you. For a while, I tried reclining against a V-shaped pregnancy pillow, but I kept sinking backwards into it until I was wearing it like a wimple. I like to be upright, with arms free, so in my view a few simple, firm pillows or cushions should be all you need. You probably have these in the house already – borrow from other people, or the sofa. "Beds don't have the same support as a desk chair," says Quinn. "Make sure your lower back is fully supported by using pillows and sitting up against your headboard."



Mix up the position you work in. Photograph: Cavan Images/Getty Images/Cavan Images RF

Change your position

"Our bodies love variation, so my top piece of advice is to try to mix up the position you work in," says Quinn. "If you work from your bedroom, consider using your chest of drawers as a standing desk, for example. It's also great to incorporate movement into your day, so try something as

simple as a 10-minute yoga routine in the morning, doing one work call a day standing up or popping out for a 20-minute walk over your lunch break.” I know the point is to get up and move around, but working in bed doesn’t have to mean being supine and stationary – I move around and stretch fairly constantly.

Think about your working environment

The danger with working from bed – apart from potential long-term back pain and accidentally falling asleep – is you can become too relaxed and start to fester. I get washed and dressed before going back to bed to work, and my bedroom is clean and relatively tidy. A towering unread book pile, and the sedimentary layers of clean-enough clothes on a chair is not going to be a pleasant workplace. You might be spending upwards of 16 hours a day in your bedroom – open the windows.

It’s worth having lovely – and plain – duvet covers. I find patterned linen distracting and busy. If you wouldn’t buy a desk covered in roses or imperial stormtroopers, get something neutral for your bed. A throw or rug will do, even if you only use it when you’re working. It will also create a boundary. “These visual cues will help you get in the mindset for either work or wind-down time,” says Quinn.

[Drawing, running or a podcast in the bath: our readers' tips for switching off after work](#)

[Read more](#)

Ensure you have a good power supply

An extension lead is handy so you can have a laptop, phone charger or lamp plugged in. Alternatively, you may need to invest in longer charging cables to reach a plug.

And good wifi

Does the wifi reach the bedroom? If not, there [are ways to boost it](#). I get a better signal in my bedroom than much of the rest of the house.

When I [interviewed Paloma Faith](#), we were both in bed. Interviewing the writer Kate Mosse from bed recently (me, not her), she said it was “very French, you’re kind of receiving people in your boudoir”. This is definitely the feel I’m going for – not slattern.

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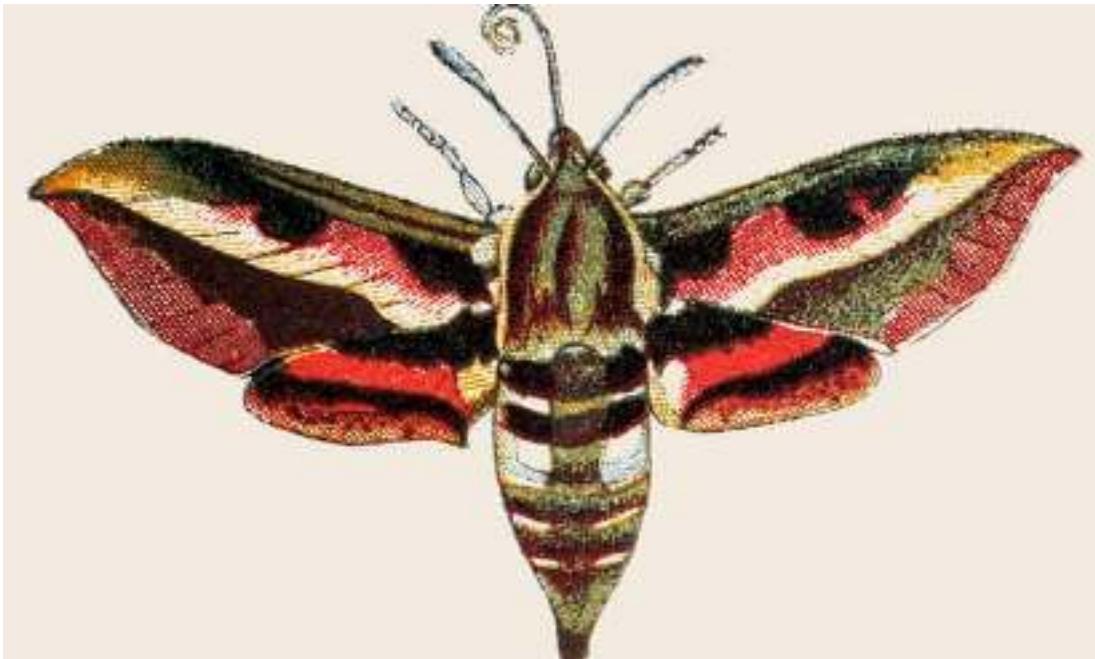
The nature of ...Insects

The nature of the sphinx moth: 'It uses its big-ass tongue to get this guy pollinated'

Helen Sullivan



Some species feed on nectar or honey. Others drink the tears of horses and people



‘The sphinx moth raced its engines for takeoff like a jet on a runway,’ writes Annie Dillard. ‘I could see its brown body vibrate and its red-and-black wings tremble.’ Photograph: Nastasic/Getty Images

‘The sphinx moth raced its engines for takeoff like a jet on a runway,’ writes Annie Dillard. ‘I could see its brown body vibrate and its red-and-black wings tremble.’ Photograph: Nastasic/Getty Images

Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.30 EST

In *The Writing Life*, Annie Dillard is watching a sphinx moth preparing to take off. She is on a ship. On its railing there is “a heavy-bodied moth panting”. Dillard is summoning the strength to continue writing her book. The moth is raising its temperature so that it can fly.

Sphinx moths (also called hawk moths) have small wings in proportion to their bodies. Some species are so big, and move their small wings so fast, and hover so effortlessly, that they are sometimes mistaken for hummingbirds.

“Beside me on the rail, the sphinx moth raced its engines for takeoff like a jet on a runway,” writes Dillard. “I could see its brown body vibrate and its red-and-black wings tremble.”

[The nature of the narwhal: 'The one that is good at curving itself to the sky'](#)

[Helen Sullivan](#)

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Dillard has a [thing about moths](#): she once watched one walking down a driveway after emerging from its cocoon. Its wings hadn't had the space to expand and dry out – it had been in a glass jar in her classroom – and it could not yet fly. (Virginia Woolf, in [The Waves](#), writes of days that were “like moths with shrivelled wings unable to fly” and of eyes “like moths’ wings moving so quickly that they do not seem to move at all.”).

I used to have a thing about them too. When I was young I fell prey to a crazed sleep murderer. The moment I switched off my bedroom light, the moth would have a fit, flinging itself along the ceiling. Tap. Tap tap. Tap tap tap. Nothing. TAP. I could not catch it, I could not keep it still. In its relentless, futile pursuit of my lightbulb, it showed no mercy.

Years later, I had a boyfriend who, before we could sleep, would leap about the bed killing mosquitoes. I thought of the moth.



Some species of sphinx moth are so big, and move their small wings so fast, and hover so effortlessly, that they are sometimes mistaken for hummingbirds. Photograph: Ferdinand Ostrop/AP

Moths, forever casting themselves into flame and on to lightbulbs, want to die. They are like the ferns in [Susan Orlean's](#) The Orchid Thief. “I collected ferns for a while,” the Orchid Thief tells Orlean. “They like to die. That’s what they like to do the most. ‘What should we do today? Hey, let’s die!’”

The sphinx moth flaps its way on to the scene in that book, too. It is one of the only species of moth with a proboscis long enough to [pollinate the ghost orchid](#). Or, as the Thief tells Orlean, “A moth uses its big-ass tongue to get this guy pollinated”.

‘A moth uses its big-ass tongue to get this guy pollinated’.

Like most insects, sphinx moths are beautiful and revolting. Some species feed on nectar or honey. Others drink the tears of horses and people.

The moth’s caterpillar, when frightened, lifts its head and tucks its face into its neck, so that its profile looks like that of the sphinx. It may regurgitate food on to its enemies. Some sphinx moth caterpillars resemble [pit vipers](#).

The writer Don Marquis started a newspaper column in the 1916: poems written by a cockroach named Archy, usually about a cat named Mehitabel. The cockroach, so the story went, wrote the poems by jumping on the keys of a typewriter, which meant there could be no capital letters or punctuation (Archy couldn’t hit two keys at once).

In “[the lesson of the moth](#)”, in which Archy recounts his conversation with a moth, he jump-types: “why do you fellows / pull this stunt i asked him”

“we get bored with the routine / and crave beauty / and excitement,” the moth replies. And “fire is beautiful”, he says.

Moths believe, the moth continues, that it is “better to be a part of beauty / for one instant and then cease to / exist than to exist forever”. Archy decides he’d rather have a moderately enjoyable but long life.

Dillard’s moth died, too. It took off, but “it gained height and lost, gained and lost, and always lost more than it gained”. The moth drowned. Dillard realises she is the moth. The one-room cabin where she is writing is the ship’s rail.

“The task was to change intellectual passion to physical energy and some sort of narrative mastery, from a standing start,” she writes.

Inertia and action. Stillness, momentum. Stopping. Starting. Charging ourselves up for the year ahead knowing we will inevitably, after a short flight or a long haul, come to a complete standstill. We will stare at the sea. Then we will begin to charge our blood again.

As Elizabeth Bishop [wrote](#), “what the Man-Moth fears most he must do, although / he fails, of course, and falls back scared but quite unhurt.”

“The Nature of ...” is a column by Helen Sullivan dedicated to interesting animals, insects, plants and natural phenomena. Is there an intriguing creature or particularly lively plant you think would delight our readers? Let us know on Twitter [@helenrsullivan](#) or via email: helen.sullivan@theguardian.com

Today @guardianaustralia's "The Nature of ..." column, which is dedicated to interesting [#animals](#), [#insects](#), [#plants](#) and [#natural](#) phenomena, focuses on the beautiful and revolting sphinx [#moth](#) <https://t.co/dSCel5fFys> pic.twitter.com/t4N07GVnAY

— Guardian Australia (@GuardianAus) [January 20, 2021](#)

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Global development

Food to go? Covid threatens Hyderabad's famous street food carts

Despite government loans and staff trickling back to work, the pandemic has made survival precarious for the city's vendors

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Food stalls provide a livelihood for millions of people in India, but have been badly hit by the pandemic. Photograph: BMD Images/Alamy

Food stalls provide a livelihood for millions of people in India, but have been badly hit by the pandemic. Photograph: BMD Images/Alamy

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Meenakshi J in Hyderabad

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

On a normal working day, Venkateshwara Rao would be ready by 4pm, stationed on the pavement waiting for office workers to emerge and order their favourite varieties of *idli* and *dosa* from his *bandi*, a food cart grandly named Kavyajyotika Tiffin Centre.

“When the lockdown was lifted, but with many restrictions still in place, the inflow of customers plummeted. However, the last few weeks have been good with a handful of workers back in offices and people lining up for takeaways at my *bandi*,” says Rao.

Carts such as Rao’s, called *bandi* in the local Telugu language, have long doled out affordable breakfasts and late-night dinners to thousands of IT professionals, students, and workers in the 450-year-old city of Hyderabad, India’s emerging IT hub.

Here, just a month before the pandemic hit, Amazon opened its largest campus outside the US. Microsoft and Google are already in the city, bringing in people from different regions of India.



Venkateshwara Rao, owner of Kavyajyotika Tiffin Centre. Photograph: Madhusudhan J

These workers rely on the *bandis*, close to 100,000 mobile food-carts and stalls dotting the alleys and pavements near the residential and commercial complexes, for their daily food and drinks. The *bandis* serve as hang-out spots during office breaks, where workers can catch up over their food or cup of tea.

Before Covid, *bandis* provided a livelihood to almost 12% of the city's population and contributed to Hyderabad being designated a Unesco [Creative City of Gastronomy](#) in 2019.

According to an [ILO report \(2018\)](#), the informal sector accounts for 88.2% of India's labour market. In urban areas, these informal workers are usually as street vendors, home workers, domestic staff and waste pickers; with street vendors making up 14% of the sector.

Running a business from the pavement brings its own share of uncertainties, and the pandemic is proving to be the biggest of them all.

Until [new laws were introduced](#) in 2014, “there was no scope for protecting the livelihood rights and social security of urban street vendors”, says Arbind Singh, national coordinator of the National Association of Street

Vendors in India, an advocacy organisation working with more than a million sellers.

The pandemic restrictions have hit the *bandi* traders hard, with many shutting up shop and migrating back to their villages. “Our family managed to sail through the lockdown with the meagre savings we had. Many of the other vendors aren’t so fortunate,” says Rao.

The Indian government launched a micro-credit scheme in June 2020, to provide affordable loans to street vendors. While the scheme has had a positive response, Rao hasn’t opted for it as he is confident of recouping his lockdown losses in the coming months.

['We are worried': Indians hopeful but anxious as vaccination drive begins](#)
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More than [3 million street vendors](#) have applied, over 50,000 of them from Hyderabad alone. “One of the major benefits of this scheme is that it’s speeding up the streamlining process of identifying and legitimising genuine street vendors who possess no valid identity cards until now,” says Singh.

However, with many people apprehensive about eating out and employees working from home, Hyderabad’s *bandis* face an uncertain future.

“It’s better to have fewer customers and earn a little, than keep the *bandi* shut and see our savings dwindle,” says Rao, as he goes to prepare an order for a consultant working from home. He can only hope the customers will come back, and soon.

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[Greece](#)

Olympic gold winner's sexual abuse case is a turning point for Greece

Action brought by sailor Sofia Bekatorou likely to end patriarchal country's taboo on discussing treatment of women



Sofia Bekatorou during the women's double-handed dinghy event at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Photograph: Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images

Sofia Bekatorou during the women's double-handed dinghy event at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Photograph: Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images

[Helena Smith](#) in Athens

Wed 20 Jan 2021 00.00 EST

When the Olympic gold medallist Sofia Bekatorou appears before a public prosecutor on Wednesday to reveal the sexual abuse she allegedly endured at

the hands of a senior sport official, all of [Greece](#) will be watching.

For the sailing champion who shot to fame in the 2004 Athens Olympics, the court proceedings will mark the official end of the fear she says has kept her silent for more than two decades. As she paves the way for more women to speak out, she will lift the veil on a subject considered so taboo in Greece it was never previously aired in public.

“In her person I’ve encountered all those women who have been abused either verbally or physically,” said the country’s first female head of state, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, after meeting the sailing champion at the presidential palace on Monday, shortly after she made the claims. “I hope her brave revelation will blow like a rushing wind and sweep any hypocrisy, any cover-up attempt, away.”

One by one fellow athletes have come forward with similar claims of abuse. Away from the world of sport, women have also emerged to report purported acts of sexual assault.

In Thessaloniki, more than 100 female students once enrolled in the northern metropolis’s main university reported being abused by a departmental professor at the institution, according to state-run TV.



Greek president Katerina Sakellaropoulou welcomes Sofia Bekatorou at the presidential palace in Athens. Photograph: Alkis Konstantinidis/AP

Politicians across the spectrum have acknowledged the significance of the moment.

In a rare display of unity, the prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and his leftist predecessor, Alexis Tsipras, both voiced support for victims whose determination to speak out has elicited echoes of the #MeToo movement.

Bekatorou, who was the Greek flag-bearer for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, claims she was abused by a senior member of the Hellenic [Sailing](#) Federation (HSF) in a hotel room before the 2000 Sydney Games. She was 21 at the time.

Addressing an online conference organised by Greek authorities to debate the issue last week, she recalled how she had decided against reporting the incident for fear her sport career would be forever ruined.

“Years later, having two children and thinking that other children would be in my place, I found the courage to speak up,” she told the conference, adding that she had also resisted telling her parents out of concern that they would prevent her from continuing sailing.

The sport star has never named her alleged abuser. But on Saturday the federation’s vice-president, Aristeidis Adamopoulos, stepped down, citing the “great negative publicity” the allegations would have on the Hellenic Olympic Committee.



Sofia Bekatorou leads her delegation during the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Photograph: Olivier Morin/AFP/Getty Images

He acknowledged that the accusation was aimed at him but, in a statement, vigorously denied any wrongdoing. “It is expected that complaints against me, made by a public figure, of great recognition and wide social impact, will gather public interest, create feelings of compassion for the complainant and disgust for the alleged ‘perpetrator’,” he said, calling for due process. He has stated the accusations are “false, defamatory and deceitful”.

The HSF had previously described the accusation as an “unpleasant incident”, saying it would look into the case if Bekatorou provided more details, but the backlash to its statement was such that it subsequently requested the vice-president’s resignation to facilitate further investigations and “preserve the prestige of the federation”. Adamopoulos’s affiliation with the governing centre-right New Democracy party has also been cut.

Although Greece’s statute of limitation means the case can no longer be tried in court, the ensuing inquiry unleashed by the allegations is being viewed as nothing short of groundbreaking.

Despite making great strides to align its laws and institutions with other EU member states, Greece remains one of Europe’s most socially conservative

societies and, outside of major urban centres, traditional mores still reign supreme.

“Institutionally, and at a state and political level, Greek society has changed immensely over the last 30 to 40 years,” said Aliki Mouriki, a sociologist at the National Centre of Social Research. “But in practice, on an every day level, it remains very patriarchal, traditional and conservative.”

Behind the scenes “stories of abuse of power” in the world of sport, arts, politics and the media were legion, Mouriki said. “That is why this is a breakthrough moment that a lot of us have wanted for a very long time.”

Maria Syrengela, the country’s deputy labour minister in charge of gender equality issues, called Bekatorou’s move more important than the 10 medals she had won as an Olympian.

“Sofia is one of the most popular athletes in our country, so symbolically her decision to speak out is very significant,” she told the Guardian. “More women now will talk and we want them to talk. This is not a women’s issue, it’s a gender equality issue. It’s hugely important that [male] politicians have also come out stating very clearly that there is no place, and can be no tolerance, for gender-driven violence of any kind.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/olympic-gold-winners-sexual-abuse-case-is-a-turning-point-for-greece>

Governance

‘People are hungry’: why Tunisia’s youth are taking to the streets

Unemployment – especially among the young – falling living standards and lockdowns have sparked riots across the country

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Protesters on the streets of Ettadhamen, north-west of Tunis, clash with security forces this week. Photograph: Fethi Belaid/AFP/Getty

Protesters on the streets of Ettadhamen, north-west of Tunis, clash with security forces this week. Photograph: Fethi Belaid/AFP/Getty

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[Simon Speakman Cordall](#) in Tunis

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.15 EST

Ettadhamen, a marginalised district on the outskirts of Tunis, wears unrest well. Over the weekend and into this week, violent protests have dominated life in this overlooked and restive place.

The district is not unique. Over the past few days, protests have erupted in working-class neighbourhoods in at least 15 locations across [Tunisia](#), in response to declining living conditions, poverty and endemic unemployment, especially among the country's young people.

More than [600 people have been arrested](#) so far, most between the ages of 15 and 25, and the [army has been deployed](#) to protect government buildings.



Tunisian president Kais Saied, right, calls for calm in Tunis, 18 January 2021. Photograph: EPA

On Tuesday, about 200 demonstrators marched in central Tunis, calling for the release of those detained and an end to police violence.

Amnesty International has already called for [restraint from the police](#) after video footage emerged of officers appearing to beat protesters during clashes. Other video clips have emerged with [shaky footage](#) showing young people battling teargas and a well organised police force with fireworks and stones. [One clip purports](#) to show a police officer shooting teargas into a man's home.

Touring a suburb in Ariana, Tunis, on Monday, President Kais Saied [called for calm](#) and asked young people to refrain from targeting people or property.

Everyone the Guardian spoke to in Ettadhamen this week voiced their frustration at how the government and the country's media has focused on the violence and looting, rather than the reasons behind the protests.

I won't lie about it, they want another revolution

*Yassine**

Yassine* works in his family's shop near the centre of Ettadhamen. He'd been on the streets with other young men over the weekend. "People are hungry. They want revenge against the state," he says through an interpreter. "I won't lie about it, they want another revolution."

His friend, Ahmed*, sitting in a plastic chair nearby, adds: "The police don't dare to come here. Even the Tunisian media doesn't come here. No one listens to what we have to say."



Heavily armoured Tunisian police face protesters in Tunis, 19 January 2021.
Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Before the coronavirus lockdown, Ahmed travelled the country buying fruit and vegetables to sell on to traders in Tunis. "Everyone I spoke to was angry," he says, recalling the conversations he'd had in several towns and villages. "It's all age groups. Even children aged 10 are angry. Thank God we have houses and food to eat. I see families of up to 10 members who can't afford that. They don't even have 200 millimes, (about 5p) for a baguette."

Yassine tells the story of a popcorn seller in Ettadhamen, a common sight in Tunisia, who was stopped by the police for not wearing a mask. "They fined him 60TD [Tunisian dinars, about £16]. He asked them why he would be

selling popcorn if he had 60TD,” Yassine says between customers. “He said he knew the price of a mask and, if he had it, he would spend it on his children.”

Others are less approving of the unrest. Salah, 40, complains of being tired. He has been up all night, protecting his white goods stall from potential looters. He points to the post office and the opticians further down the road, both of which he says were looted. “They weren’t protesting, they were stealing,” he says. “If you want to protest, do so during the day, not during the night.”



Avenue Habib Bourguiba in Tunis, deserted during a Covid-19 lockdown, 14 January 2021. The pandemic has had a crippling effect on Tunisia’s economy. Photograph: Fethi Belaid/AFP/Getty

Unemployment, especially among the young, has long been a driver of social unrest in Tunisia. For years, unemployment has stood at about [15%](#). However, among [15- to 24-year-olds](#) the figure rises to 36%, with many remaining out of work for significant periods.

The pandemic has made things worse. The country is reeling from the loss of its vital tourism sector, including the vast network of ancillary industries that provide produce and services to tourist resorts, and prospects are grim.

['Entire families are arriving at our shores': Covid drives Tunisian exodus](#)

[Read more](#)

The situation has led many to [migrate](#). In 2020, Italian authorities reported [12,883 irregular arrivals](#) from Tunisia. The previous year the number was 2,654.

In Ettadhamen, a passing young man gives his name as Hassan. He grins, barely able to disguise the pride he feels over his part in the protests. A light rain catches on the acrylic fur of his hoodie. He says the reasons for the protests are government neglect, poverty and the viciousness of the police.

A passerby waits for a break in the conversation before asking for 500 millimes (13p). “There you go,” Hassan says. “Write about that. That’s life here.”

* Names have been changed

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All the president's merch: the best Biden-Harris clothing – in pictures

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TV reviewTelevision

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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PlantwatchScience

Plantwatch: weeds – appreciating the wild things on our streets

Lockdown may have given us more respect for the wild plants, and the work they do, in our urban areas



A red admiral butterfly feeding on a buddleia plant. Photograph: Ian Hubball/Alamy Stock Photo/Alamy

A red admiral butterfly feeding on a buddleia plant. Photograph: Ian Hubball/Alamy Stock Photo/Alamy

[Paul Simons](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Weeds have a public image problem – unloved, trodden on, dug up and sprayed with herbicides. But during lockdown, the weeds in towns and cities have given a contact with nature, no matter how humble their roots. These are, after all, wild plants growing under our feet and they deserve respect.

[A study of native British weeds](#) showed that many were highly valuable flowers for bees and butterflies, producing nectar and pollen and also providing them early in the year. Plants such as dandelion and daisy were good for bees and the weed [pellitory-of-the-wall](#), growing in cracks in pavements, is food for the red admiral butterfly. The buddleia bush, growing on walls and almost any waste ground, is a magnet for many butterflies.

['Not just weeds': how rebel botanists are using graffiti to name forgotten flora](#)

[Read more](#)

In France, herbicides were banned in public places in 2017 and the growth of weeds led to a new interest in them in urban areas – the hugely successful *Sauvages de ma rue* (Wild things of my street) movement helping city dwellers identify and record the wild plants that grow on their streets. A similar project, [More than Weeds](#), began last year in Britain, showing how to identify weeds growing in pavements, walls and other urban settings, and helping people learn to appreciate them.

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Joe Biden can't heal America without help from the rest of the world

[Gordon Brown](#)



The triple crises of Covid, the economy and the climate can only be solved globally. Thankfully, this plays to his strengths



‘Biden will not only be the most Atlanticist of recent presidents, but will make the most of his reputation as the great conciliator.’ Photograph: Chandan Khanna/AFP/Getty Images

‘Biden will not only be the most Atlanticist of recent presidents, but will make the most of his reputation as the great conciliator.’ Photograph: Chandan Khanna/AFP/Getty Images

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

On the campaign trail, [Joe Biden](#) quoted the following words of his favourite poet, Seamus Heaney: “Hope for a great sea change / on the far side of revenge.”

As the US president-elect finally takes the oath of office in Washington DC, the rest of the world desperately needs him to effect a sea change. If his first task is to reunite a divided America, his second is to end American isolationism: to show Americans that they need the world, and show the world that we still need America.

Given the intertwined triple threats of the pandemic, [economic collapse](#) and climate catastrophe, his presidency will be defined not by the previous benchmarks of 100 days, but rather by its first 10 or 20 days. The Trump impeachment trial notwithstanding, day one will see Biden delivering on his

plans to roll out [mass vaccination](#) and to reboot the ailing US economy by forcing the biggest fiscal stimulus in history through Congress. Given that body's new political makeup and Biden's own inclinations, his multi-trillion-dollar plan will be greener than anything ever contemplated by US lawmakers.

But Biden must then go global. His presidency will be forged or broken on the anvil of those existential crises, and the internationalist in him knows that not one of these three domestic objectives – a virus-free, an economically resilient and a pollution-free US – can be fully realised without multilateral cooperation. Yet this is something that economic nationalists in both the US's main political parties have not just rejected but scorned.

Once, in the unipolar world immediately after the cold war, the US acted multilaterally (think of the global coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait 30 years ago). Recently, in a multipolar world, it has been acting unilaterally. Breaking with the aggressive [populist nationalism](#) of the Trump years will not be easy.

So we should not expect a rerun of the lofty “go anywhere, pay any price” internationalism of the past. This thinking was once so dominant that John F Kennedy’s inaugural address in 1961 made scarcely any mention of domestic concerns. Nor should we expect any attempt by Biden to repeat Bill Clinton’s global Third Way of the 1990s – an over-triumphalist attempt, at a time of undisputed American hegemony, to lock every country into an updated “Washington consensus”.

Now, in a world where there are many competing centres of power, and two and a half centuries after its Declaration of Independence, the United States needs a more modest “declaration of interdependence”.

In language that will, on first hearing, seem protectionist, Biden will repeat his campaign statements that American foreign policy must now be determined by its domestic priorities. But because eliminating the virus, rebuilding commerce and trade and dealing with the climate crisis all depend on working more closely with other countries, the new president will abandon the walls, the tariffs and the xenophobia of the Trump years for a

policy more “alliances first” than “America first”. And the Biden I came to know from working with him during the global financial crisis will not only be the most Atlanticist of recent presidents, but will make the most of his reputation as [the great conciliator](#).

Biden should immediately telephone the Italian prime minister – the current chairman of the G20 group of nations – and propose he urgently convene a summit of world leaders to coordinate emergency [global action](#) on each of the health, economic and environmental crises.

The president-elect knows that immunising the US will not be enough to protect its citizens as long as poor countries cannot afford vaccinations and the virus continues to mutate and potentially reinfect those previously immunised. The US and Europe should lead a consortium of G20 countries to cover the estimated \$30bn (£22bn) shortfall in funds needed to vaccinate the entire world. This is a bargain compared with the [trillions in economic activity](#) that will be lost if the pandemic rages on or, once contained, returns.

Even before Covid, the US, like all advanced economies, was facing a high-unemployment low-growth decade, and no major economy – or developing-world nation – will fully recover the reduced output and lost jobs of 2020 unless and until there is a synchronised global plan that lifts growth.

In today’s low-inflation and low-interest-rate environment, there is a global surplus of savings waiting to be invested, and public investment that boosts productivity will pay for itself by creating a virtuous circle of consumer demand, growth and rising tax revenues.

I know from my experience during the global financial crisis that if the US, Europe and Asia agree to coordinate their fiscal stimuli, the multiplier effect – the spillover from increased trade and consumption – will be twice as effective in delivering growth as if each bloc acts on its own.

The dividend from heightened cooperation could be upwards of 20 million much-needed jobs – and that boost could be even bigger if President Biden overturned President Trump’s [objections to emergency aid](#) for Africa and the developing world. What could become a 21st-century Marshall plan could include debt relief; the creation of \$1.2tn of new international money

through what are called special drawing rights; and matching funds for health, education and poverty reduction from the IMF and World Bank.

Biden, who will [rejoin the Paris climate accords](#) this week, should also announce that he will attend this December's [Cop26 climate conference](#) in Glasgow. He has already said that the 2020s may be our last chance to avoid catastrophic global warming. His domestic energy initiatives will be welcome, but not enough. The transition to a net-zero carbon economy is the greatest international endeavour of our times, and the US and Europe must now lead, persuading all countries, rich and poor, to implement a global green new deal and agree carbon reduction targets for 2030.

Trump's abject failures and [his legacy](#), a more insecure world, present Biden with another historic opportunity. The Joe Biden I know will signal his determination to stand up to Chinese illiberalism and [Russian opportunism](#). He will act quickly to secure a revamped Iranian treaty that not only constrains Tehran's nuclear ambitions but also tackles its sponsorship of terrorism.

But underpinning these immediate imperatives is a profound generational challenge. Since the 1980s, when [Biden went to Moscow](#) to help Ronald Reagan secure his nuclear weapons reductions deal with President Gorbachev, he has been in the forefront of demands for nuclear disarmament.

I believe Biden could be the first president of the nuclear age to declare and deliver a "no first use" policy on nuclear weapons. By also negotiating global bans on both nuclear testing and the enrichment of uranium, his presidency could usher in a decade of disarmament. These historic steps would pave the way for the renunciation by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Turkey of any nuclear aspirations, the further isolation of North Korea, and the downgrading of the role of nuclear weapons on the road to their eventual elimination.

Not since Franklin Roosevelt, nearly 90 years ago, has a US president come to office amid so many pressing crises and so loud a clamour for change. FDR's words on his inaugural day, a powerful call to "action and action now", apply with equal force to these perilous days. And President Biden

knows it. His task is no less than, as Seamus Heaney put it, to “make hope and history rhyme”.

- Gordon Brown was UK prime minister from 2007 to 2010. His latest book, Seven Ways to Change the World, will be published by Simon & Schuster this summer
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Guardian Opinion cartoon

Donald Trump

Steve Bell on Donald Trump leaving office – cartoon

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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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[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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The politics sketchPolitics

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.

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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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OpinionConservatives

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

Tue 19 Jan 2021 07.21 EST

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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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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[Chelsea](#)

'I can handle the pressure,' says Lampard after Chelsea lose again at Leicester

- Fifth defeat in eight Premier League games for struggling side
- 'There are players not playing as well as they should be'



Frank Lampard cuts a frustrated figure on the touchline at the King Power Stadium as Chelsea slipped to a meek 2-0 defeat to Leicester. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/The Guardian

Frank Lampard cuts a frustrated figure on the touchline at the King Power Stadium as Chelsea slipped to a meek 2-0 defeat to Leicester. Photograph: Tom Jenkins/The Guardian

[Paul Doyle](#) at the King Power Stadium

[@Paul_Doyle](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

Frank Lampard shrugged off questions about his managerial future after Chelsea were beaten 2-0 at Leicester, their fifth defeat in eight league matches.

“I can’t get caught up in what the reaction will be because I’d be sitting here all day concerned about it,” said Lampard of suggestions that time is running out for him to show improvement at [Chelsea](#). “I’m not the only manager to be put under this pressure but the good thing for me is I’m good at handling pressure.”

Lampard seemed to cast doubts on the ability of some of his players to handle that pressure. He criticised his team’s defending for Leicester’s two goals and condemned the complacency that he believes led to Chelsea’s poor recent form and the “lack of desire” that is keeping them in a rut.

[Leicester go top of Premier League after Ndidi and Maddison cut down Chelsea](#)

[Read more](#)

“The general theme [against Leicester] was slower, more sluggish. It was lacking confidence but also lacking a bit of desire to run. When a team is confident, they look like Leicester. Or like we did a month ago. The very clear message to the players is when you’re playing well, if you relax a little bit, then this game kicks you right up the backside.

“There are players who are not playing as well as they should be,” he continued. “They are the only ones who can deal with that. How you handle setbacks is what defines you.”

Lampard also fended off criticism about the frequent changes to his team selections. “I see that mentioned a lot. We’re not the finished article. You can’t just conjure up the best team. Players have to make a spot their own. In an ideal world it would be very easy not to change the team. When you’re searching for performances and individual improvements, its normal that a team doesn’t pick itself. I took this job knowing there would be difficult times.”

Leicester were a perfect contrast to Chelsea, fully worthy of a win that took them to the top of the league

Brendan Rodgers said it is too early to start talking about his team winning the title. “It shows in the first part of the season consistency has been good and performance levels have been very high,” he said. “I don’t really think about [the title]. We’ve seen changes at the top all season.

“A few weeks ago Tottenham were up there, and then everyone was talking about Chelsea. Liverpool are amazing champions and Manchester United have been great. To look and see Leicester in around that is makes you really happy, but to stay there is going to be a huge challenge for us.”

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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](#)

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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.

Quick Guide

League One roundup

Show

Hull moved to the top of League One with a 3-0 win over 10-man **Accrington**. The result sees Hull edge clear of Lincoln on goal difference after the Imps' match at home to Gillingham fell victim to a waterlogged pitch. **Portsmouth** sit one point from the summit after a 4-0 win over AFC **Wimbledon** that saw John Marquis, Ryan Williams, Sean Raggett and Ben Close find the net. **Doncaster** stayed fourth as Jon Taylor's goal was enough

to see off **Rochdale** 1-0, keeping them level on points with fifth-placed **Peterborough** who came from behind to beat **Charlton** – who stay sixth but fall three points behind.

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

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.”

Quick Guide

League Two roundup

Show

Newport keeper Tom King scored directly from a goal kick before promotion rivals **Cheltenham** hit back to earn a 1-1 draw at the Jonny-Rocks Stadium. Matty Blair's equaliser for the home side in first-half stoppage time denied Newport the chance to move back to the top of League Two and kept Michael Duff's Robins in touch with the frontrunners. Newport had taken the lead in bizarre circumstances as King's wind-assisted kick bounced on the edge of the Cheltenham box before looping over a helpless Josh Griffiths in the Robins goal. **Cambridge** moved to the top of the table after coming from a goal behind to win 2-1

at **Southend**. **Tranmere** moved into the top half thanks to a 3-2 win against fourth-placed **Forest Green**. Ten-man **Harrogate** prevented **Exeter** from scoring for the first time in 15 League Two outings to hold out for a 0-0 draw. Elsewhere, Carlos Mendes Gomes' 80th-minute strike cancelled out Josh Gordon's opener as **Morecambe** came from behind to secure a 1-1 draw against **Walsall**.

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

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.

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Bundesliga

European roundup: Diaby terrorises Dortmund to end Leverkusen slump

- French winger dazzles as 2-1 win lifts Leverkusen to second
- Bono's injury-time penalty earns Sevilla victory in La Liga



Moussa Diaby celebrates scoring Bayer Leverkusen's first goal against Borussia Dortmund before later creating the winner for 17-year-old Florian Wirtz. Photograph: Lukas Schulze/Bundesliga Collection/Getty Images

Moussa Diaby celebrates scoring Bayer Leverkusen's first goal against Borussia Dortmund before later creating the winner for 17-year-old Florian Wirtz. Photograph: Lukas Schulze/Bundesliga Collection/Getty Images

[Guardian sport and agencies](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 18.05 EST

Moussa Diaby scored one goal and set up the winner for Florian Wirtz as **Bayer Leverkusen** beat **Borussia Dortmund** 2-1 to move into second place in the Bundesliga and end a four-game winless run this year.

The 21-year-old Frenchman terrorised the Dortmund defence throughout a one-sided first half in which he fired the hosts in front by finishing off a quick break in the 14th minute. He should have added at least one more goal, carving out several good scoring chances with Dortmund struggling to contain the speedy winger and keeper Roman Bürki denying him repeatedly.

[Frankfurt's Luka Jović back with a bang as David Abraham bows out | Andy Brassell](#)

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Dortmund's attack briefly sprung to life after the break and Julian Brandt curled in an equaliser in the 67th minute before Jadon Sancho fired narrowly wide a little later. Leverkusen rebounded, with Diaby launching another quick move and setting up 17-year-old Wirtz for the winner in the 80th to earn their first win in five league games which moved them into second place on 32 points.

“This win was very crucial for us,” said Leverkusen’s Lars Bender. “After the equaliser we had to overcome some difficult moments and had a bit of luck as well. But we had lots of counter attacks and luckily scored the winner with one of them.”

Dortmund’s title hopes suffered a serious blow and the Ruhr valley club have now won just three of their last nine games. Dortmund are fourth on 29 points and will be 10 behind leaders Bayern Munich if the champions beat Augsburg on Wednesday.

Goals from Sebastian Rudy and two from Andrej Kramaric gave **Hoffenheim** a 3-0 win at **Hertha Berlin** that will increase the pressure on coach Bruno Labbadia. Hertha had hopes this season of challenging for European qualification but they have dropped to 14th in the 18-team division with only one win in seven games. **Wolfsburg** moved fifth with a 2-0 win at **Mainz**, and **Borussia Mönchengladbach** rode their luck to beat **Werder Bremen** 1-0. Nico Elvedi’s header was enough for Gladbach.



Sevilla's players show their appreciation for Bono after his decisive penalty save. Photograph: Ander Gillenea/AFP/Getty Images

The **Sevilla** goalkeeper Bono rescued his side with a 91st-minute penalty save to earn a 2-1 win away to **Alavés**, taking his side up to fourth in La Liga.

The Moroccan guessed the right way and dived to the bottom corner to palm away and then gather a spot-kick from Joselu after Jules Koundé had been penalised for handling the ball. Sevilla had taken an early lead in the third minute through striker Youssef En-Nesyri but Édgar Méndez levelled for Alavés, who were playing their first league game since Abelardo Fernández returned as coach to succeed Pablo Machín. Julen Lopetegui's side restored their lead on the half-hour mark through a scorching strike from Suso while they looked to have added a third late in the second half when the ball went in off Alavés's Ximo Navarro for an own goal but the strike was ruled out for an earlier handball.

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[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](#)

[@mewanmurray](#)

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

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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.”

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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.

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"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](#).

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[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.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jan/19/plunder-down-under-india-revels-in-cricket-teams-shock-victory-at-gabba>

[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



Rishabh Pant (centre) and Navdeep Saini celebrate India's remarkable Test series win as they run past Australia's Josh Hazlewood. Photograph: Darren England/AAP

Rishabh Pant (centre) and Navdeep Saini celebrate India's remarkable Test series win as they run past Australia's Josh Hazlewood. Photograph: Darren England/AAP

[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.

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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](#)

[Read more](#)

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."

The Spin: sign up and get our weekly cricket email.

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>

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Premier League

West Ham sink West Brom but league investigates Snodgrass omission



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!](#)

[Read more](#)

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](#)
[Read more](#)

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.

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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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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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Tiger Woods

Tiger Woods to miss two events but vows to return after fifth back operation

- Woods felt discomfort in last month's PNC Championship
- 'I look forward to beginning training'



Tiger Woods will miss tournaments in San Diego and Los Angeles after his fifth back surgery. Photograph: Phelan M Ebenhack/AP

Tiger Woods will miss tournaments in San Diego and Los Angeles after his fifth back surgery. Photograph: Phelan M Ebenhack/AP

PA Media

Tue 19 Jan 2021 18.37 EST

Tiger Woods has undergone surgery on his back to remove a pressurised disc fragment and will miss the Farmers Insurance Open later this month and the Genesis Invitational in February.

[Annika Sörenstam defends accepting award from Donald Trump](#)

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The 15-times major winner's fifth back operation was brought on following discomfort he sustained during the [PNC Championship in December](#). He is expected to make a full recovery.

A statement published on the American's social media channels read: "Tiger has recently undergone a microdiscectomy procedure to remove a pressurised disc fragment that was pinching his nerve after experiencing discomfort following the PNC Championship. His doctors and their team have determined it to be successful and expect him to make a full recovery."

Woods said: "I look forward to beginning training and am focused on getting back out on tour."

Woods finished seventh at the PNC Championship, where he competed alongside his 11-year-old son Charlie. He [last underwent surgery](#) on his back – a spinal fusion operation – in 2017. Following the surgery, Woods went on to win three times on the PGA Tour, [including the 2019 Masters](#).

But his participation in this year's major at Augusta is in some doubt with the tournament taking place from 8 April.

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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>

Brexit

Brexit has driven 2,500 finance jobs and €170bn to France, says bank governor

Bank of France chief claims ‘50 British entities’ have moved over the Channel, while Dublin, Amsterdam and Frankfurt have also benefited



The La Defense business district in Paris. Hundreds of finance jobs have moved to France due to Brexit, according to the country's central bank governor. Photograph: Martin Bureau/AFP/Getty Images

The La Defense business district in Paris. Hundreds of finance jobs have moved to France due to Brexit, according to the country's central bank governor. Photograph: Martin Bureau/AFP/Getty Images

Agence France-Presse

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.48 EST

The Bank of France's governor has said that Britain's withdrawal from the [European Union](#) has driven almost 2,500 jobs and “at least €170bn in assets”

to France.

London remains the continent's foremost financial centre but Amsterdam, Dublin, Frankfurt and Paris have all scrambled to attract businesses that wanted to remain active in the 19-nation eurozone.

[Sector by sector: are British firms ready for post-Brexit trade?](#)

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The coronavirus pandemic made it even more important to boost business activity, given its severe economic effects.

“In spite of the pandemic, almost 2,500 jobs have already been transferred and around 50 British entities have authorised the relocation of at least €170bn (£150bn) in assets to [France](#) at the end of 2020,” bank governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau told a press briefing.

“Other relocations are expected and should increase over the course of this year,” he added.

In particular, [Brexit](#) has forced Europe to develop its financial autonomy, de Galhau said.

The EU will allow London clearinghouses to operate across the continent for 18 months, because the union does not have comparable institutions of its own.

[Is 'hysterical' market speculation pushing us towards another crash?](#)

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Once that deadline has expired, however, financial transactions in euros are in theory going to have to be settled within the EU.

In addition, “a true ‘financing union’ must allow us to better mobilise surplus savings de Galhau said.

He urged that the opportunity provided by Brexit be used to create a functional “union of capital markets” in the EU.

Boris Johnson admitted in December that the Brexit deal with the EU “[does not go as far as we would like](#)” in allowing access to EU markets for financial services, although UK chancellor, Rishi Sunak, later [offered the prospect of improved access](#).

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BBC

BBC faces financial 'uncertainty' due to reliance on licence fee – report

National Audit Office also highlights risks of falling audience share and broadcaster being 'slow to change'



BBC Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London. The National Audit Office says the BBC faces 'significant financial challenges'. Photograph: Nick Ansell/PA

BBC Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London. The National Audit Office says the BBC faces 'significant financial challenges'. Photograph: Nick Ansell/PA

[Rajeev Syal](#)

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The BBC faces an uncertain future because it relies heavily on the [licence fee](#) as its audience share plummets, Whitehall's spending watchdog has

concluded.

In a pointed warning, the National Audit Office said the corporation has postponed making difficult decisions about future income streams, and is dipping into its reserves to cover the cost of free licences for viewers over 75 years old.

[Richard Sharp's arrival at the BBC will entrench conservative influence | Tom Mills](#)

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The NAO's findings come amid criticism from senior Conservatives of the BBC and its reliance on the licence fee ahead of the BBC's charter renewal in December 2027. Richard Sharp, the corporation's incoming chair, [said last month](#) the fee "may be worth reassessing" as part of a review.

Reacting to the findings, Meg Hillier, the chair of the Commons' public accounts committee, said the [BBC](#) has "shied away from making tough decisions for too long and has underestimated the cost of major projects".

"It is much too complacent about risks that could materialise as soon as next year," she said.

The watchdog's report, released today, assesses the BBC's financial strategy. It said the BBC had been "slow to change" on issues such as the fall in viewing by younger audiences, and still had no central strategy for tackling the problem.

"Falling audience share poses a financial risk as people are less likely to pay the licence fee if they do not view licensable content," the NAO said.

Examining the corporation's finances, auditors found that the BBC's licence fee income fell by £310m between 2017-18 and 2019-20, to £3.52bn.

The number of under-75 households buying TV licences fell by 450,000, due to changes in audience viewing habits and more households qualifying for a free over-75 licence, the report said.

In 2019-20, the BBC generated income of £4.943bn, of which £3.52bn was public funding from the TV licence fee. The BBC began negotiations with the government in November about the future funding it will receive from the fee.

Auditors expressed concern at the corporation's failure to evaluate its financial future. They said that although the BBC "considers that it delivers significant wider value to British and global society ... it has not conducted an economic analysis of this in almost 10 years".

The corporation's financial health has also been unexpectedly weakened by the impact of Covid-19, such as a drop in advertising sales, the report said.

Today's report also examines a drop in viewing. The amount of time an adult spent watching broadcast BBC TV dropped by 30% from an average 80 minutes a day in 2010 to 56 minutes in 2019.

BBC radio audience time has also declined among adults, falling by 15% between 2013-14 and 2019-20, when national commercial radio stations have maintained or increased their audience time.

"Despite its purpose of being a universal broadcaster and still being the most-used media brand in the UK, the BBC has seen a notable drop in audience viewing times. [The BBC's] principal source of income, the licence fee, has also declined, and the BBC now faces considerable uncertainty about the income it will receive from the licence fee," the report said.

Gareth Davies, the head of the NAO, said: "The BBC faces significant financial challenges as it embarks upon licence fee negotiations and its midterm charter review.

"It has made significant cost savings and has identified the need for more with licence fee income under pressure.

"As decisions about the licence fee are made, the BBC needs to develop a clear financial plan for the future, setting out where it will invest and how it will continue to make savings.

“Without such a plan, it will be difficult for the BBC to effectively implement its new strategic priorities.”

BBC insiders point out that executives have been examining alternative funding models. In August, it was reported that [Tim Davie](#), the director-general, looked at whether the licence fee could ultimately be replaced with a new special income tax, based on the Swedish model for funding public service broadcasting.

A BBC spokesperson said: “As the NAO has set out, we have made significant savings and increased efficiencies, while maintaining our spending on content, and continuing to be the UK’s most-used media organisation.

“We have set out plans for urgent reforms focused on providing great value for all audiences and we will set out further detail on this in the coming months.

“The report also stresses the importance of stable funding for the future, which we welcome as we begin negotiations with government over the licence fee.”

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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](#)

[Read more](#)

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.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/jan/19/uk-government-accused-discriminating-maternity-leave>

Seascape: the state of our oceansPlastics

Plastic petition by UK nine-year-old gains over 70k signatures in under a week

After studying how microplastics damage the oceans, schoolgirl Lizzie wants the government to stop sending waste to developing countries



A container shipped from Britain is inspected in Brazil. The contents, improperly labeled as recyclable plastic, were household waste, and the container was among 41 returned to the UK. Photograph: Mauricio Lima/AFP/Getty

A container shipped from Britain is inspected in Brazil. The contents, improperly labeled as recyclable plastic, were household waste, and the container was among 41 returned to the UK. Photograph: Mauricio Lima/AFP/Getty

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[Karen McVeigh](#)

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Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.25 EST

A [petition by a nine-year-old schoolgirl](#) calling on Boris Johnson to stop shipments of plastic waste to developing countries has received more than 70,000 signatures in less than a week.

Lizzie A*, who is studying plastic pollution in year 4, said she began the petition because sending Britain's unsorted plastic waste to poorer nations is “unfair” and wrong. She took action last week after her mother, Esther, showed her a piece in the Guardian’s [Seascape series](#), revealing the UK will continue to ship plastic waste to developing countries despite an EU ban on the practice from this month.



Lizzie A's petition is calling on Boris Johnson to stop shipments of plastic waste to developing countries.

Lizzie, who wants to be a marine biologist or ecologist, said: "At school, we've learned about how plastic damages the environment and what happens to it over many years. It breaks down into microplastics and they harm marine life. I'm passionate about the ocean and I was upset at how plastic ends up in the ocean because of the exports."

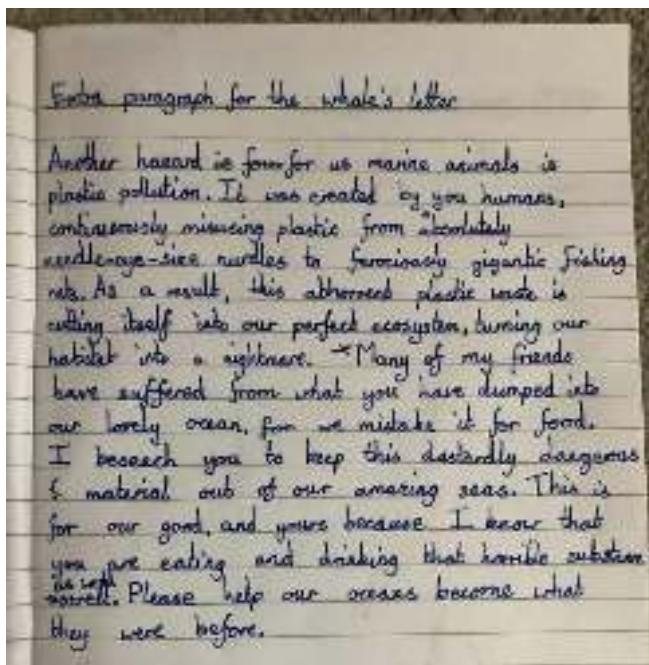
Waste that cannot be recycled usually ends up being illegally burned or dumped in landfills or waterways, from where it finds its way into the ocean.

She was particularly upset, she said, after learning that the practice will continue, albeit under new regulations, despite a Tory party manifesto promise to stop the shipment of unsorted plastic waste to non-OECD countries.

"I was very surprised about how Boris Johnson made a promise and he hasn't done what he said," she said. "We're really lazy in not dealing with our own plastic ourselves. It's a large amount of plastic. It's 300 tonnes of plastic every day. When we send it to communities that can't deal with it they burn it and lot of the smoke gets in the air and that can harm people."

Her mother, Esther, a former teacher from Devon, said Lizzie has been checking the petition's progress daily. She originally tried to register her petition on the UK parliament website, where the receipt of more than 100,000 signatories prompts a government response, but was rejected because of a similar petition already on the site. Lizzie is now writing a letter to her MP, the Conservative Simon Jupp, of East Devon, to ask if he can help persuade the government that it needs to act faster to honour its election promise.

"If parliament realises people are thinking passionately about plastic not being exported then Boris Johnson might ban it quicker," Lizzie said.



Lizzie A, who is studying plastic pollution in year 4, wrote a letter from the perspective of a whale.

A spokesperson for Change.org, the petition platform, said that the success of Lizzie's petition was an outlier during the coronavirus pandemic.

"To reach 72,000 signatures in under a week is pretty fast moving," the spokesperson said. "We have been seeing fast-moving petitions relating to coronavirus but to see a petition growing this fast on plastic pollution is a real clear signal people care about this issue."

Last March, a petition set up by Rebecca McCauley, a junior doctor, attracted a million signatures for its call on the government to provide coronavirus testing for NHS staff. Her story added to concerns expressed by others, and within days the government promised to prioritise testing for NHS staff.

**Full name withheld at family's request*

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/20/plastic-petition-by-uk-nine-year-old-gains-over-70k-signatures-in-under-a-week>

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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>

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](#)

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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>

Drugs

New funding to tackle drug misuse 'a drop in the ocean', say experts

Government announces £80m for treatment including rollout of overdose medicine naloxone



The funding comes after official figures revealed the number of drug-related deaths in England and Wales hit a record high – 4,393 in 2019, compared with 4,359 in 2018. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

The funding comes after official figures revealed the number of drug-related deaths in England and Wales hit a record high – 4,393 in 2019, compared with 4,359 in 2018. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

*Jamie Grierson
@JamieGrierson*

Tue 19 Jan 2021 19.01 EST

The government has announced a package of funding to tackle drug misuse including £80m for treatment services, although experts have said the investment is “a drop in the ocean” compared with cuts suffered by the sector in the last 10 years.

The funding will go to drug treatment services across England, increasing the number of places for prison leavers and offenders on community sentences, funding additional detox beds, and a rollout of the lifesaving overdose medicine naloxone, the government said.

Ministers have pledged to provide naloxone, which reverses breathing difficulties [brought about by opioid use](#), to “every heroin user in the country that needs it”.

The funding comes after official figures revealed the number of drug-related deaths in England and Wales [hit a record high](#) – 4,393 in 2019, compared with [4,359 in 2018](#).

The £80m forms part of a broader £148m package that will also provide extra resources to law enforcement to tackle organised criminal gangs and the supply of drugs.

However, experts have warned that the £80m for drug treatment services will not make up for the cuts experienced in the last 10 years. Between 2013-14 and 2018-19 drug treatment funding was reduced by £160m.

Niamh Eastwood, director of the charity Release, a national centre of expertise on drug policy, said: “While of course funding for treatment is welcomed, this is a drop in the ocean compared to the cuts that the sector has suffered after ten years of austerity … It is more than disappointing that the rhetoric from No 10 and the Home Office continues along the failed ‘tough on drugs’ criminal justice approach, when we know, from the evidence, that drug policy reform needs to be implemented to achieve the best outcomes.

“What we need is an end of the criminalisation of people who use drugs – reducing stigma, resulting in more people accessing treatment if they need it – and support for the safe supply of prescribed drugs to replace illicit use, as

well a scaling up of a range of harm reduction initiatives, like overdose prevention centres.”

George Charlton, an independent consultant with expertise in drug harm reduction, cautiously welcomed the funding but said the ongoing focus on criminalisation was not working and would have to end.

“I welcome the announcement by the government. It’s well overdue that we’re investing and putting funding back into drug and alcohol services but we have to be realistic about the bigger picture that we’re going to have to face in a year or two or five years from now.

“The current approach isn’t working. Criminalising doesn’t work. We have to offer a harm prevention approach. Access to drug testing, access to safe injecting facilities. There’s a really strong evidence base globally, the solutions are already there.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/20/new-funding-to-tackle-drug-misuse-a-drop-in-the-ocean-say-experts>

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."

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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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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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2021.01.20 - Around the world

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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”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/19/us-army-national-guard-members-biden-inauguration-right-groups>

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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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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](#)
[Read more](#)

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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[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/3TPyvCqN1T

— 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.”

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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

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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

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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."

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Bali

US woman who tweeted about dream gay lifestyle in Bali to be deported

Kristen Antoinette Gray accused of breaching Indonesia visa by promoting the island, selling her e-book and offering consulting



Kristen Antoinette Gray, left, in Bali. She claims she is being deported for being gay. Photograph: Firdia Lisnawati/AP

Kristen Antoinette Gray, left, in Bali. She claims she is being deported for being gay. Photograph: Firdia Lisnawati/AP

Associated Press

Tue 19 Jan 2021 23.52 EST

An American woman is being deported from Bali over suspected immigration violations after her tweets that celebrated the Indonesian resort island as a low-cost, queer-friendly place for foreigners to live went viral.

Kristen Antoinette Gray arrived in [Bali](#) in January last year and ended up staying through the coronavirus pandemic. Her posts on Twitter, including comparisons between [Bali](#) and Los Angeles, offers to advise on travel, and links to buy her e-book, began going viral in Indonesia on Sunday.

Many Indonesian social media users were furious, saying the graphic designer was showing off living and working in Bali without a proper visa, and encouraging travel during a pandemic.

Jamaruli Manihuruk, chief of the Bali regional office for the ministry of law and human rights, said Gray may have violated a number of immigration laws, including “spreading information that [could unsettle the public](#)”.

“She stated that she could provide easy access to Bali through the recommended agency and offered the low living costs in Bali, that is comfortable and LGBTQ+ friendly,” Manihuruk said at a news conference on Tuesday.

[Bali's thieving monkeys can spot high-value items to ransom](#)
[Read more](#)

Her tweets referenced her e-book costing \$30 and a follow-up consultation for \$50, indicating she was working without a business visa. “She is suspected of carrying out business activities by selling e-books and put a rate for consulting [about] Bali tourism,” Manihuruk said.

Gray, who is from Los Angeles, told reporters after immigration officials announced the deportation: “I am not guilty. I have not overstayed my visa. I am not making money in Indonesian rupiah. I put out a statement about LGBT and I am deported because I am LGBT.”

Gray and her partner, Saundra Michelle Alexander, are currently in immigration detention while waiting for a flight to the United States.

In her posts, Gray celebrated the difference between Bali and the US. “This island has been amazing because of our elevated lifestyle at much lower cost of living. I was paying \$1,300 for my LA studio. Now I have a treehouse for \$400,” one of her tweets said.

Indonesia has temporarily restricted foreign arrivals since 1 January to control the spread of Covid-19, and public activities have been restricted on Java and Bali.

“The Bali regional office of the ministry of law and human rights urges foreign nationals to comply with the current Covid-19 pandemic to comply with health protocols and to follow right procedures regarding visa processing and while in Indonesia,” Manihuruk said.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/20/us-woman-who-tweeted-about-dream-gay-lifestyle-in-bali-to-be-deported>

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US immigration

Haitian boy, 9, detained as Trump's family separation policy pursued to bitter end

Vladimir Fardin arrived in San Francisco with a valid visa but faces being deported by US immigration along with his brother



Vladimir Fardin from Haiti had a valid tourist visa but was detained on arrival in the US. He is now in detention in California. Photograph: @GuerlineMJozef/Twitter

Vladimir Fardin from Haiti had a valid tourist visa but was detained on arrival in the US. He is now in detention in California. Photograph: @GuerlineMJozef/Twitter

[Julian Borger](#) in Washington

Tue 19 Jan 2021 21.37 EST

In the final hours of the Trump presidency, immigration officials detained a nine year-old Haitian boy with a valid US visa, separated him from his elder brother and incarcerated him, according to lawyers and activists.

Vladimir Fardin arrived in San Francisco from Haiti on Sunday, on a tourist visa. He was travelling with his 19-year-old brother, Christian Laporte, who has been studying in Diablo Valley College outside San Francisco, and had a valid student's visa, according to lawyers acting for him.

['My neighbourhood is being destroyed to pacify his supporters': the race to complete Trump's wall](#)

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The two boys had been on a Christmas vacation with their mother in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, and Vladimir was flying back to California with Christian to spend some time with their elder brother and their godmother, who acts as their guardian in the US.

They were detained by border officials at San Francisco airport and held for two days without being allowed to contact family, lawyers or community organisations. On Tuesday morning, they were separated.

Nine-year old Vladimir was sent to a refugee resettlement facility in southern California as an unaccompanied minor, and Christian was deported to Mexico, apparently because that was where their connecting flight from Santo Domingo was from.

As of Tuesday evening, Vladimir had not been allowed to contact, or be contacted by, his family or any support groups.

“We are extremely worried because Vladimir has never spent time alone,” Guerline Jozef, the head of the Haitian Bridge Alliance community group, said. “He is nine years old, and his older brother has been extremely protective of him and taking care of him. So, this is beyond cruel.”

The Trump administration carried out a policy of separating migrant children from their families, and there are still [hundreds of children](#) whose parents have not been found. What makes Vladimir Fardin’s case distinctive

is that he was reportedly travelling on a valid visa, with a family member also with a valid visa. The outgoing administration also has a record of targeting black migrants and asylum seekers and deporting them to countries irrespective of the threat to their safety posed by deportation.

['We tortured families': The lingering damage of Trump's separation policy](#)

[Read more](#)

A deportation flight left Louisiana on Tuesday morning to Haiti carrying 25 people, including five children under the age of five. However, three would-be deportees were pulled off the flight at the last moment, including [Paul Pierrilus](#), a 40-year-old financial consultant who is not Haitian and has never been to Haiti.

He had been detained on 11 January, after 35 years in the US and would have been sent to a nation in the throes of intense political violence and lawlessness, if not for the eleventh-hour intervention of lawyers, activists and his congressman from Rockland County, New York, Mondaire Jones.

“My team laboured into the wee hours of the morning, not taking no for an answer,” Jones told the Guardian. “At about 2am, when we were demanding from DHS [Department of Homeland Security] to see an approved travel document, which DHS could not produce for Paul, right before finally the handcuffs were taken off and he was allowed to stay in the United States.”

The Democratic congressman said he had been trying to find out what would happen to Pierrilus now, but had been told officials from immigration and customs enforcement agency (Ice) were unavailable to talk to him, for reasons not specified.

“I certainly expect a report from them as to how it came to be that a man from my district, who has been an upstanding member of our community and who has never even been to Haiti, was going to be unconstitutionally deported to that place,” Jones said.

“This is crazy. It represents the absolute worst of an inhumane racist administration, in the context of immigration.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/20/haitian-boy-9-detained-as-trumps-family-separation-policy-pursued-to-bitter-end>

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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.”

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/19/global-sales-of-electric-cars-accelerate-fast-in-2020-despite-covid-pandemic>

[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>

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.

[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>

[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>

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

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/19/plotting-the-future-the-seed-guardians-bringing-variety-to-uk-gardens-aoe>

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](#)

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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.

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2021.01.20 - Culture

- [The Great British art tour Banishing crocodiles and hoping for peace](#)
- [TV tonight More Morecambe murders for Morven Christie in The Bay](#)
- [Stage Thornton Wilder's Our Town is America's answer to Shakespeare](#)
- [Netflix How France's Lupin became the surprise hit of the season](#)
- [Music review Sia's controversial film about autism lacks coherence and authenticity](#)
- [Raw, brave, wild and honest Why Germany is Europe's greatest artistic nation](#)

[The Great British art tour](#)[Art and design](#)

The Great British Art Tour: banishing crocodiles and hoping for peace

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: Guildford's De Morgan Collection's Lux in Tenebris



Lux in Tenebris, 1895, by Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919). Photograph: De Morgan Collection

Lux in Tenebris, 1895, by Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919). Photograph: De Morgan Collection

Sarah Hardy, curator-manager, De Morgan Foundation

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

Evelyn De Morgan (1855-1919) was a feminist and spiritual artist. Her spiritualism and her interest in the cosmos, in the competing forces of good and evil, influenced her allegorical and mythical artworks.

The Latin title of this 1895 painting translates as “light in darkness”, a phrase found in the Gospel of St John, in which Christ represents the light. Here, the woman, clad in a shining gown adorned with flames, embodies light and hope. If you look closely, you can see she originally held a torch that De Morgan then painted out so as to add instead the laurel branch and ensure that her message of hope for peace was explicit. At the base of the painting, monsters – represented by crocodiles – prowl the water, denoting evil. But the halo of light and hope banishes these creatures, and sets the dark water aglow.



Lux in Tenebris, 1895, by Evelyn De Morgan. Photograph: De Morgan Collection

Lux in Tenebris – along with around 60 other paintings – was bequeathed to the gallery by Wilhelmina Stirling, Evelyn’s younger sister. She established the De Morgan Foundation to safeguard Evelyn’s paintings and ceramics by Evelyn’s husband, [William](#). Both artists supported the suffrage movement, and both were signatories to the 1889 Declaration in Favour of Women’s Suffrage. In 1913, William became the vice-president for the Men’s League for Women’s Suffrage. It seems possible the female figure of Lux also represents hope for the emancipation of women in a brighter future.

The model was the family's maid [Jane Hales](#), who features in many of De Morgan's drawings and paintings.

The painting will be part of Pre-Raphaelite Artist of Hope, an exhibition due to open at [Towneley Hall in Burnley](#) in the spring. Curated by young carers in partnership with Child Action North West, young Syrian Refugees, nurses from Royal Blackburn Hospital, Blind Veterans UK, and pupils from Burnley High School, the show will centre on De Morgan's notion of light coming from darkness and how this has enduring relevance for those most affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

With kind assistance from Hannah Crichton, De Morgan Foundation volunteer.

- You can see more art from the De Morgan Collection on [Art UK](#), and find out more on the [collection'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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[TV tonight](#)[Television & radio](#)

TV tonight: more Morecambe murders for Morven Christie in *The Bay*



Morecambe Bay watch ... Morven Christie as DS Lisa Armstrong.
Photograph: Ben Blackall/Tall Story Pictures

Morecambe Bay watch ... Morven Christie as DS Lisa Armstrong.
Photograph: Ben Blackall/Tall Story Pictures

Christie's DS Armstrong gets the chance to redeem herself after last season. Plus: a look at what made President Biden. Here's what to watch this evening

[Hannah J Davies](#), [Ellen E Jones](#), [Ammar Kalia](#), [Jack Seale](#) and [Paul Howlett](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.20 EST

The Bay

9pm, ITV

Morven Christie reprises her role as the police family liaison officer DS Lisa Armstrong in series two of [this pulpy crime thriller](#), set in Morecambe. We open with Armstrong living through the repercussions of deleting CCTV footage last season and being forced to work under DC Med Kharim (Taheen Modak), until a new murder investigation comes up and she has the chance to redeem herself. Yet, with tensions running high among her team, Armstrong and her family begin being stalked by a shadowy figure from her past. **Ammar Kalia**

President Biden

8pm, PBS America

As a presidential candidate, Joe Biden's single most appealing quality was obvious: "not Trump". As the newly inaugurated president of the US, however, there is much more to say. This documentary explores the tragedies and triumphs that have shaped Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. **Ellen E Jones**

The Truth About Improving Your Mental Health

9pm, BBC One

The retired footballer Alex Scott and the clinical psychologist Prof Tanya Byron front this fascinating edition of the Truth About strand, investigating how an over-the-counter probiotic supplement might help to alleviate low mood, as well as maintain a healthy gut. **AK**

Targeted: The Truth About Disability Hate Crime

9pm, BBC Two

The film-maker Richard Butchins investigates a cruel bigotry that is not discussed enough: the mistreatment of disabled people, from verbal attacks

to physical violence. With help from survivors offering their varied testimonies, Butchins tries to map out the extent of the injustices. **Jack Seale**



Going south ... Thapelo Mokoena in Bulletproof. Photograph: Coco Van Oppens Photography

Bulletproof: South Africa 9pm, Sky One

Noel Clarke and Ashley Walters return as the London cops Bishop and Pike in a three-part special of their predictable yet entertaining police series. Taking some time off on the beach in South Africa, the pair are soon plunged into a kidnapping plot when the daughter of a new acquaintance goes missing. **AK**

Boys

10pm, Sky Arts

Top Boy's Ashley Walters directs this well-observed, if slight, one-off half-hour drama, following a pair of east London teenagers. Noah (Hector Abbott) needs to make money – and fast – for his brother in prison, roping in

his best friend, Lewis (Jude Chinchen), and potentially running into trouble during the scheming that follows. **Hannah J Davies**

Film choice



Faithfully nihilistic ... Viggo Mortensen and Kodi Smit-McPhee in *The Road*. Photograph: Dimension/Sportsphoto/Allstar

The Road (John Hillcoat, 2009), 1.10am, Sony Movies

This faithfully nihilistic adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's harrowing post-apocalyptic novel sees Viggo Mortensen's "Man" shepherd his son (a sensational Kodi Smit-McPhee) through the dying landscape in search of sanctuary. It is the starving remnants of humanity, however, that pose the gravest, most horrific, threat. **Paul Howlett**

Live sport

Premier League football: Leeds United v Southampton 5.30pm, Sky Sports Main Event. Action from Elland Road.

Scottish football: Livingston v Celtic 8.15pm, Sky Sports Main Event. Premiership match.

Premier League football: Fulham v Manchester United 7.45pm, BT Sport 1. Live from Craven Cottage.

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Theatre

Thornton Wilder's Our Town is America's answer to Shakespeare

The Pulitzer-winning drama, set in the small town of Grover's Corners, has a beating heart that will resonate through the years



Patrick Elue and Norah Lopez Holden in Our Town at Manchester's Royal Exchange in 2017. Photograph: Stephen King/Royal Exchange theatre

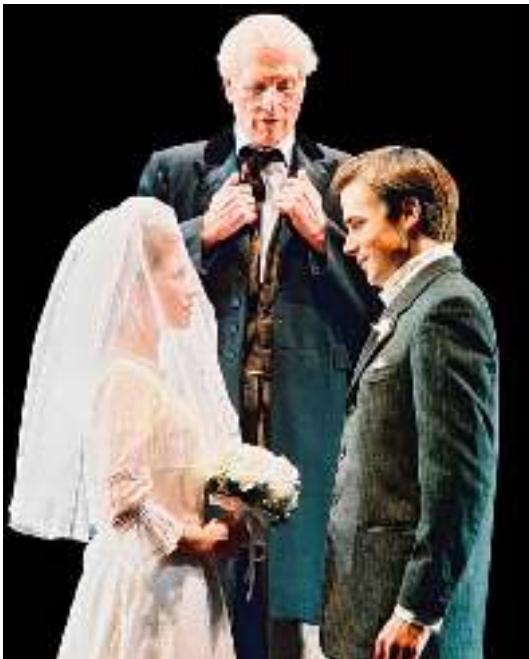
Patrick Elue and Norah Lopez Holden in Our Town at Manchester's Royal Exchange in 2017. Photograph: Stephen King/Royal Exchange theatre

[Howard Sherman](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.00 EST

It is frequently called the quintessential American play, but if productions of Thornton Wilder's 1938 Pulitzer prize winner Our Town focus on its "American-ness", they're missing the point.

Much as the Russian-set, Jewish-themed *Fiddler on the Roof* became an international hit in numerous languages, *Our Town* has lasted as one of the most produced US plays in the global modern repertoire. This is not for its statement on the American character or as a flag-waving paean to a simpler time, but because its true concerns transcend the specifics of turn-of-the-20th-century Grover's Corners, where the play is set. That's quite surprising for a play with a rather slim plot and no conventional conflict, which alternates between long narrated passages and select scenes of two families in small-town New Hampshire.



Paul Newman (the Stage Manager, centre) with Maggie Lacey and Ben Fox in the 2002 production of *Our Town* at the Booth theatre in New York.
Photograph: Getty Images

There are some things that place the play in a precise location and period but odds are that such references as the Philo System of raising chickens were pretty obscure even when the play was new. With its dictate of no scenery save for a couple of tables, a few chairs and two ladders, as well as segments with extended miming of activities, the play demands that audiences fill in the world portrayed, rather than show them any particular one.

That's because the play is about mortality, about the brevity of human life and Wilder's charge to the audience to appreciate what they have while they

have it. It's not about stoves and walls. For a play that many remember for its sweet romantic scene with two teenagers in Act II, or for the homespun charms that clung to it for so many years, this is a play that starts talking about death in its first few paragraphs, giving way in its third act to a scene of the aftermath of a tragedy from an atypical perspective.

I spent 18 months conducting more than 100 interviews with theatre artists for [a book about the play](#) and it felt like I'd been running an Our Town focus group. Given the conventional wisdom that the play is old hat, I was surprised to find how many of the people I interviewed, in the US and the UK, either had already fallen for its message – or, in roughly equal number, had never previously seen or read the play, yet had formed definite and typically dismissive opinions about it. However, after working on a production, everyone seemed ready to proselytise others into the fold of Our Town.

For a play as seemingly simple and plotless, there are depths to plumb in how to approach the play. Wilder may have written explicitly about what he wanted audiences to learn but he didn't provide a precise map of how to get there. The largest role in the play is a narrator called only the Stage Manager, who has no personal story or even identifying details of character. We see mostly minor events in the lives of a few primary people. And yet, if one looks closely, topics like the extermination of indigenous peoples and immigration from eastern Europe are fleetingly recognised in a very homogeneous town, and the march of technology is transforming people's lives.



Playwright Thornton Wilder, pictured in 1949. Photograph: Ray Fisher/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images

It's a testament to this seeming war horse from an earlier era that it still calls to theatre artists today. England has seen three major productions in the last decade: at the Almeida in 2014, at the Royal Exchange in 2017, and at the Open Air theatre in Regent's Park in 2019. A [new production](#) is opening the 2021 season at the Queensland theatre in Brisbane, Australia, this month.

It may sound fulsome but I'm prepared to take a leap and suggest that *Our Town* is very likely on its way to being America's first Shakespearean play. I'm not speaking of its language or scale, but rather the likelihood that it's going to remain in the international repertoire for more than a hundred years – and beyond.

Shakespeare's plays are filled with obscure references that may have been topical in their day. But the core themes were never about current events. Shakespeare's plays ask eternal questions about human character and purpose. Even when taken out of their original time, place and style of production, Shakespeare's plays' beating hearts resonate through the years.

That is the case with *Our Town* as well, as Grover's Corners and its people transform in each city, in each country where it plays, in each era, without a

word changed. Our Town has proved that instead of being only a play of the moment when it was first seen, it is a play of every moment. People just need to take the time, to paraphrase Wilder, to realise it.

- Another Day's Begun: Thornton Wilder's Our Town in the 21st Century by Howard Sherman will be [published by Methuen Drama](#) on 28 January.
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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/jan/20/thornton-wilder-our-town-is-americas-answer-to-shakespeare>

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[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).

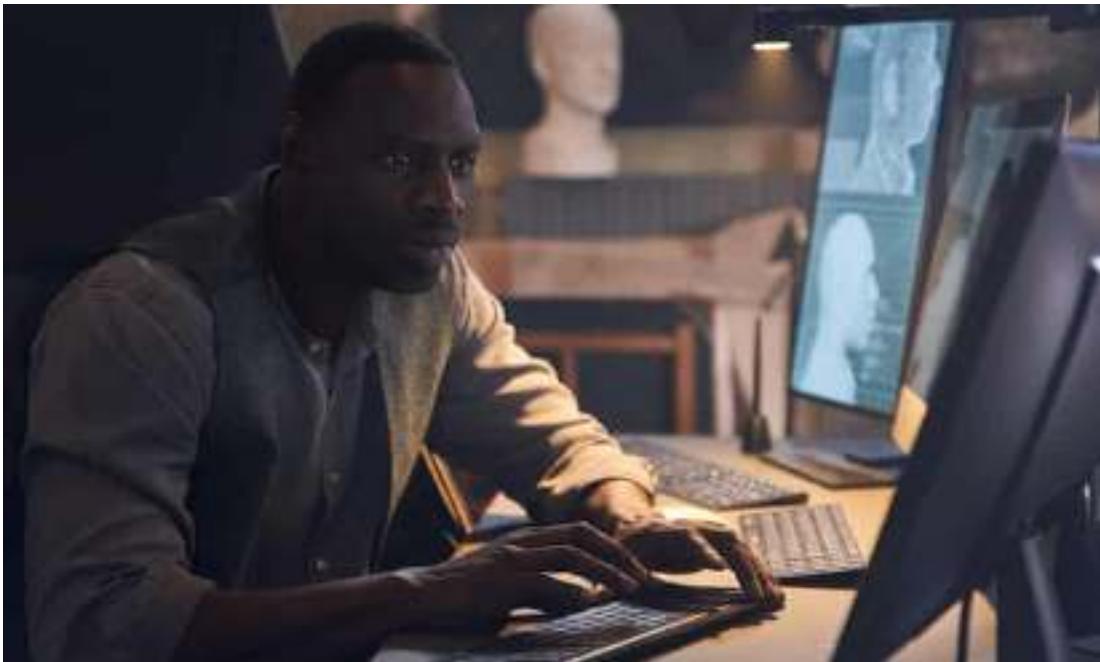
Between montages of his shockingly low-budget heist plan (which, ultimately, is a bit of a red herring; you're not watching to see if he gets the necklace) the show peels back the layers of Assane's motivation: 25 years earlier, his father Babakar (Fargass Assandé), an immigrant from Senegal hired as 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.

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Film

Music review – Sia's controversial film about autism lacks coherence and authenticity

The pop star's directorial debut is a hodge-podge of giddy numbers and narrative tropes, and its star, Maddie Ziegler, lacks credibility



Maddie Ziegler and Kate Hudson in *Music*, Australian songwriter Sia Furler's directorial debut. Photograph: Merrick Morton

Maddie Ziegler and Kate Hudson in *Music*, Australian songwriter Sia Furler's directorial debut. Photograph: Merrick Morton



Luke Buckmaster

@lukebuckmaster

Tue 19 Jan 2021 21.17 EST

Australian pop star and songwriter Sia Furler's feature directorial debut *Music* is in effect two very different films with wildly disparate tones, stuck together using a sludgy mixture of by-the-book drama and hipstery eclecticism.

One – a collection of music sequences presented in spanking bright colours, with sets and costumes that seem designed to replicate the experience of taking magic mushrooms during a fashion show or contemporary art exhibition – is nothing but self-conscious.

And the other – a hard-hitting drama about a non-verbal woman on the autism spectrum, *Music* (Maddie Ziegler) and her deviant drug-dealing sister Zu (Kate Hudson) – isn't self-conscious at all. Even when Sia indulges hackneyed tropes involving breaking bad and coming good, and on-the-nose dialogue a la, "I used to think I knew what love was; now I'm not so sure".

This thread of the film has a problem in the casting of Ziegler, a young dancer – now 18 years old, but filming began in 2017 – who has been

somewhat of a muse for Sia, starring in her film clips and tours. As the titular character, Ziegler simply does not have the gravitas and authenticity required to make a role like this work, and is not on the autism spectrum herself. When the trailer landed last November it went down like a lead balloon, drawing [ire from the disability community](#) for [not casting the real deal](#), and for appearing to have what some saw as an [ableist gaze](#).

[Singer-songwriter Sia reveals she has chronic pain disease](#)

[Read more](#)

When [Sia fired back](#) with since-deleted Tweets, the situation got messier: she insisted, for instance, that she had originally cast an autistic person in the lead role – never mind [that interview](#) in which she claimed to have written the movie specifically for Ziegler. It all felt a bit icky.

In light of these conversations all eyes become trained on Ziegler – even more so than they would have otherwise. Her distracting performance feels ill-judged at best, and lacks the support of a credible, nuanced drama to help it resonate. There is no question that an autistic actor would have given the film greater authenticity, which it really needs. Compare Music to Rolf de Heer's 1998 Australian drama [Dance Me to My Song](#), which was co-written by and starred Heather Rose, who had (and plays a character with) cerebral palsy, and there is in fact no comparison: Rose lends the role a legitimacy that informs and enhances everything.

The tone of the drama in Sia's film shoots for kitchen sink realism, but is hampered in part by familiar pages ripped from the playbook, such as the old “crime don't pay” chestnut and a Rain Man dynamic, involving a morally dubious person rejuvenated after spending time with an on-the-spectrum sibling. In Sia's film, as in Barry Levinson's 1988 road movie, the autistic characters feel more like dramatic tools to improve the circumstances of neurotypical people, rather than fully-fledged humans who think, feel and act on their own terms.



‘The autistic characters feel more like dramatic tools to improve the circumstances of neurotypical people’: Kate Hudson as Zu in *Music*.
Photograph: Merrick Morton

After *Music*’s mother dies, caring duties for her fall to Zu, who has a big “whatcha lookin’ at?” type personality and – borrowing the words of her kindly new potential love interest Ebo (Leslie Odom Jr) – a “dark girl vibe going on”. Early moments show quick visions of *Music*’s day-to-day life, before the director kickstarts the first of many outlandish musical numbers, whisking us to a surreal bright orange set for a message about how “in my dreams my body does not control me”. This dangerously tilts the film in the direction of a pity narrative – which it largely, thankfully, avoids.

The arty gambol and expressive flavour of the production exists most strikingly in these song-and-dance sequences, which are not particularly interesting in their camerawork and choreography but have bouncy tunes and unmissable sets and costumes; the kind that make you feel under-dressed and overwhelmed. Expect fluffy walls that look like giant slabs of fairy floss, pools of pink foam cubes, bathing suits resembling shrunken Teletubbies outfits, dresses apparently made of kitschy wallpaper – that sort of thing.

Unsurprisingly these spectacles are the most enjoyable moments. Injecting giddy flights of fancy to break up a film's mundanity will never get old, as we have been reminded of in countless other productions-including the daydream sequences in both versions of *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (from 1947 and 2013), and in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, when fantastic boar-like creatures arrive to stomp across the landscape.



Maddie Ziegler in the titular role. Photograph: Merrick Morton

In *Music*, it's all a bit of a hodgepodge; Sia hurling rainbow-coloured mud at the proverbial wall in the hope something will stick. She in turn creates spectacles not just divorced from the drama but from each other, with the loosest kind of tonal consistency. These numbers have a certain eclectic *je ne sais quoi* but before long their randomness feels like the equivalent of the director watching TV and regularly changing the channel, as if bored by her own movie.

I found myself caught between wanting the songs to end and the drama to return; then, when the drama returned, wanting the songs to start up again. By the time the closing credits roll, one gets the unfortunate sense that several people involved – ie Ziegler, Hudson, Odom, maybe even Sia – would like this film to be washed off their CVs with a high-powered hose.

- *Music* is in Australian cinemas now. It is released on 12 February in the UK and the US
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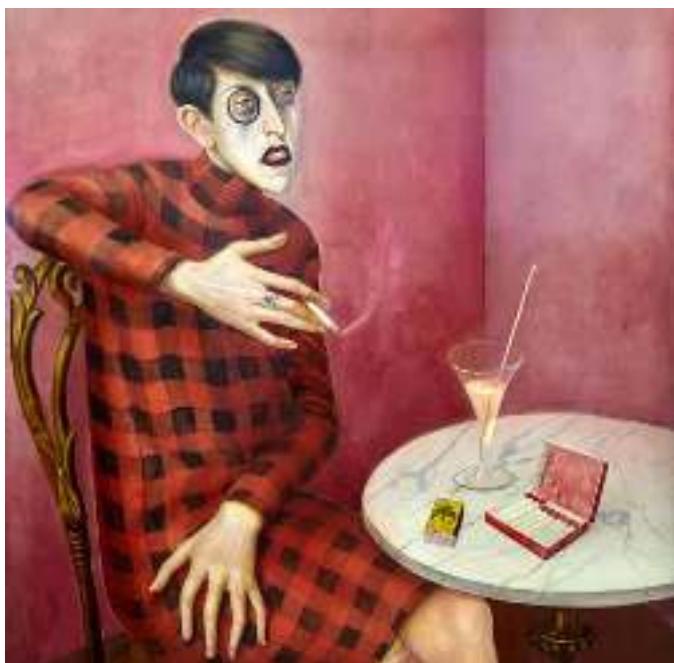
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Art

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](#)

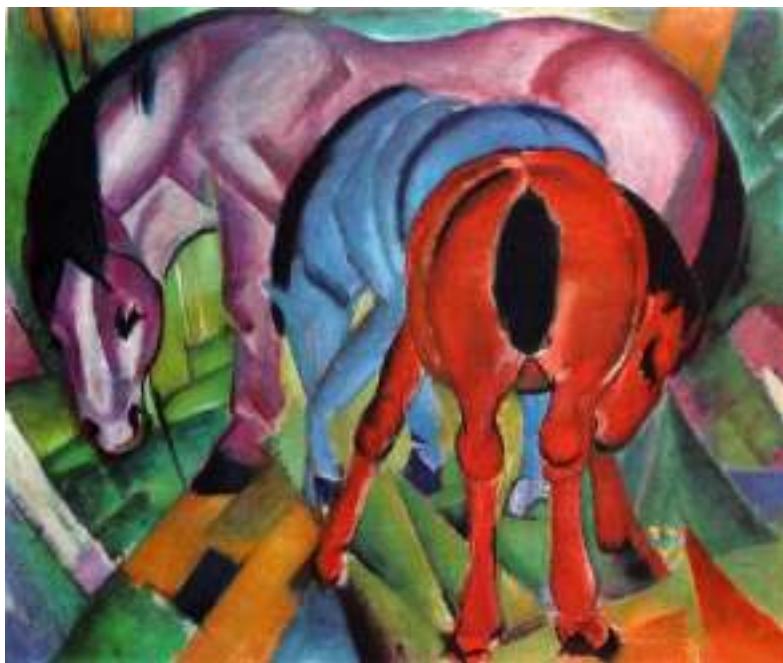
Tue 19 Jan 2021 11.38 EST

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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2021.01.20 - Lifestyle

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Food and drink

Noodle soup ties me to Japanese New Year, and my roots – plus the recipe



Marie Matsuki Mockett, right, and her mother in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture, Japan. Photograph: Marie Matsuki Mockett

Marie Matsuki Mockett, right, and her mother in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture, Japan. Photograph: Marie Matsuki Mockett

For this Asian-American novelist, soba noodles flecked with gold embody new year traditions

Marie Matsuki Mockett

Wed 20 Jan 2021 01.30 EST

Every year my mother would make a bowl of Japanese New Year's Eve noodles for my American father and me. "Just this one tradition," she would entreat; she didn't like American New Year, and longed for Japanese-style festivities. One year, I found one of my noodles tied in a knot, which she

assured me was a sign of good fortune. I wasn't so sure. I didn't even really like noodles.

[Subtle and soothing: my obsession with Thai massaman curry – plus the recipe](#)

[Read more](#)

It was not until I was in my 20s that I experienced a full winter holiday in Japan. On New Year's Eve, my family went to visit friends in Handa, my mother's home town about 350km west of Tokyo. We counted down the hours with sake and sushi and then, close to midnight, went to the local shrine.

In the film that makes up my memory of that night nearly 30 years ago, people laugh and shout and eat and slurp with unrestrained joy; it was dark and cold but we had entered a new year together and everything felt possible, as though we mountaineers were at the peak of a mountain we had once again scaled. I was handed a small mound of noodles flecked with gold. I balked. I had never been fed gold before. "It'll make you rich," someone urged. So I ate the noodles with the gold, ingesting in food form the cultural wish that I be fed, wealthy and hale as the year rolled on.

The very shape of the noodle was meant to ensure a long life and safely bind us from one year to the next. The chewy texture and hearty flavour captured the speed of assembly and the unrestrained, informal midnight joy of locals celebrating together. The glistening noodles were all practicality, optimism, sensuality and comfort – and I loved them.

I had no flakes of gold, so dotted the noodles with a little shaved hard-boiled egg yolk

Now, when I travel the Japanese countryside, I look for queues of people outside unassuming buildings with plumes of steam rising out of rooftop vents. I have seen this at Ugo during the Nishimonai Bon Odori festival (a kind of Day of the Dead), outside Kyoto's [Omen restaurant](#), and on the island of Shikoku while on the [88-temple pilgrimage](#). "Excuse me," I always

ask the person at the end of the queue. “Why are you lining up?” “For noodles,” they always say.

This year, noodles took on greater poignancy. My small family – husband and child – would not mind whether they ate noodles or not. But the tradition has been hammered into me, and I threw together a simple broth, cooked the buckwheat noodles and defrosted the traditional pink-and-white fishcake. I snipped green onions with a pair of small scissors my mother had in her kitchen just for this purpose. The more finely the green onions are cut, the Japanese say, the better the flavour. “Scissors will give you better control,” my mother had told me. I had no flakes of gold, so dotted the noodles with a little shaved hard-boiled egg yolk. It was New Year’s Day and I was a little late, but I still had time to feed us correctly.

Then, as my mother had done in the past, I gave the noodles to my family. “The reason we eat the noodles,” I said, “is because they are long, and they are meant to tie us from the previous year into the new one. That’s part of the good luck.” On social media, more assiduous friends posted beautiful pictures of their midnight noodles. I confessed to my slapdash job. “But I got us covered,” I wrote.



Photograph: Akihito Yokoyama/Alamy

Japanese new year noodles

Serves 4

250g soba (buckwheat) noodles

60ml tsuyu broth (available in most Asian grocery stores)

500ml water

1 bunch (65g) spring onions, finely chopped

160g kamaboko (cured fishcake, available in Japanese supermarkets)

2 eggs, hardboiled

Shichimi (Japanese seven-spice powder), to taste

Mix the tsuyu broth with the water and heat in a pan. Thinly slice the spring onions, or cut with scissors. (In my family, we cut up lots of spring onions then freeze the pieces in a plastic bag or box, removing only what we need for each meal.)

Slice the fishcake into even pieces, perhaps 10mm. Cut the eggs in half and remove some yolk from each. Boil and drain the soba noodles. Place a helping of the drained noodles and half an egg in each serving bowl.

Ladle the soup broth over the noodles, and garnish with crumbled egg yolk, shichimi if you have it, fishcake and spring onions.

- **Marie Mutsuki Mockett's latest book is American Harvest: God, Country, and Farming in the Heartland**
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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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Tips for studentsStudents

Studying under lockdown: how to look after your mental wellbeing

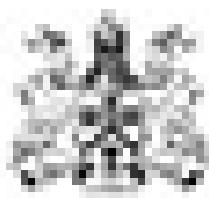
University counsellors offer their advice for navigating a winter of remote learning



‘Even without a pandemic, this time of year is usually challenging for students anyway.’ Photograph: MBI/Alamy

‘Even without a pandemic, this time of year is usually challenging for students anyway.’ Photograph: MBI/Alamy

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About this content

Ruth Bushi

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

With the pandemic disrupting our learning, jobs, money and health, it's no surprise many of us are feeling blue this January. Even without a pandemic, "this time of year is usually challenging for students anyway," says Gareth Hughes, clinical lead of the advice site [Student Space](#). The following tips won't make you immune to financial hardship or job worries, but there are ways to ease the pressure.

Acknowledge what's happening

Emily McIntosh, director of learning, teaching and student experience at Middlesex University, says acknowledging your situation is key. "Life doesn't always go straightforwardly, but there is a lot of learning in some of the setbacks," she says, emphasising that setbacks are temporary. And they're not a personal failing: they happen to everyone.

Staying resilient isn't about being an optimist, but rather acknowledging things are difficult. Give yourself credit when you keep going, and leeway when you need a break. Hughes underlines that there'll always be times

when you feel angry, sad or unmotivated and that's OK – it's normal. Find ways to release discomfort. Talk, sing, cry over sad movies, or whatever works for you.

Build support circles

Schedule time with people that make you feel good. That's likely to be friends and family, but could be fellow gamers or career networks. McIntosh recommends connecting with course mates, or getting involved in clubs and societies. These often come second to study and career goals, yet they expand your social circle and enhance self development. This is important when an end goal (such as grades or [work experience](#)) feels disrupted. The journey has value, too.

Your university will have more structured support, such as counselling or advice sessions. But don't let worrying about whether your struggles are severe enough hold you back. McIntosh says, they're "not just for those who are experiencing difficulties. They can often help prevent those difficulties in the first place."

Hughes, who is a psychotherapist, adds: "I'm perfectly happy that [students are] using the appointment to work out whether they need support."

Get to know yourself

Reflecting is a way of making sense of and processing difficulties. Many people do this quite naturally when checking in with support circles. Alternatively, try keeping a journal, or even just ask yourself: "What's happening right now? How do I feel? What can I do to help myself?"

Apps like [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#) introduce and help grow the habit, while you could get [Fika](#) free via your university. Even if these techniques aren't for you, many resources include sleep stories to help you switch off or fall asleep. Regular, restful sleep helps you to manage your mood.

Find new purpose

Goal-setting is good for wellbeing but if you're not feeling robust, take a break from life goals and challenges. McIntosh frames it as: "What can I do in the next few days, next few weeks and few months?" It could be a bit of admin that needs to get done, or some self care. Even getting dressed every day can be a positive goal when you feel low.

Daily habits are good for routine. Aim to start each day with a walk, for example, though any kind of physical activity is beneficial. Hughes recommends getting outdoors, as exposure to sunlight can boost mood. Learning new skills, sports or hobbies is another option, especially if they are unconnected with your course or career. Anything you can get absorbed in can help the mind feel refreshed or reinvigorated.

And if you're up to it, voluntary work or helping others can bring benefits back to you. It's a form of distraction, yet can help you find meaning or perspective when things feel bleak.

Ultimately, finding purpose and making plans are strategies that work because they acknowledge that life goes on. "It's important to remember that January will end, the spring will come. There will be an end of the pandemic." Hughes says. "We don't know when, but it will happen and it's important not to lose sight of that."

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Your problems, with Anna TimsProperty

Help to buy is only helping to push up the price of our flat

The developer keeps on asking for a new valuation after rejecting our first one



Help or hinderance? An advertisement for the government's help-to-buy scheme. Photograph: Alamy

Help or hinderance? An advertisement for the government's help-to-buy scheme. Photograph: Alamy

[Anna Tims](#)

Wed 20 Jan 2021 02.00 EST

I reserved a plot at Nu Living's 360 Barking development in London 10 months ago. It cost £400,000 for a 71 sq metre flat which is expensive for the area and I used the government's help to buy scheme to fund it. I also used Nu's recommended mortgage broker and solicitor.

However, my mortgage lender valued the property at only £330,000. Under help-to-buy rules, the developer can't charge more than the bank valuation.

Nu rejected this and asked me to get a valuation from another lender, which cost me an extra £400. This also valued it at £330,000. Nu took two months to reject this and insist I pay for yet another valuation.

I have spent around £2,000 with nothing to show for it.

RC, London

Help to buy grants loans of up to 20% (40% in London) of the property's value interest-free for five years. It was designed to help buyers on to the property ladder, but the unintended result has been to subsidise a housing bubble and inflate prices. One in seven homes bought under the scheme loses value despite booming local property markets, an investigation by consumer organisation Which? found last year.

When I challenged Nu about its rejection of two independent valuations, it told me obliquely that it has “never exchanged nor completed on properties using help-to-buy funding higher than the mortgage valuation”. Of course it hasn’t. The scheme won’t allow it.

What it evidently has done is required you to shop around for a valuation that reflects its asking price, so it can exchange and complete in accordance with the rules. It said it was “revisiting” your case “in light of our conversations with the firm that undertook these valuations and in light of the wider market position”.

The result? A third survey, paid for by the lender, valuing the flat at £375,000. Nu agreed to honour this. However, you could be left in negative equity if you pay more than a property is worth. “If the developer won’t negotiate, you should walk away,” said Paula Higgins, chief executive of HomeOwners Alliance.

“Developers must adhere to the consumer code for housebuilders which states buyers have the right to cancel and get their deposit, minus reasonable

administration charges.”

Next time it’s worth investigating homebuyers’ protection insurance, which covers survey fees if the valuation is less than the asking price.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government told me that it was “completely unacceptable” for developers to charge a premium for help-to-buy homes and that buyers should report suspected price inflation to the government housing body, Homes England.

From April there will be regional caps on the maximum amount properties can be sold for under a revised help-to-buy scheme. This has been fixed at one and a half times the average first-time-buyer new-build property price (as at autumn 2018).

If you need help email your.problems@observer.co.uk. Include an address and phone number. Submission and publication are subject to our [terms and conditions](#)

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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

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Nigel Slater's midweek dinnerVegetables

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](https://twitter.com/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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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

- [High noon How Trump will pass 'nuclear football' to Biden](#)
- [Trump's presidency A lesson in the meaning of carnage](#)
- ['Capitol riot was our Chernobyl' James Comey on Trump, the 'pee tape' and Clinton's emails](#)
- [Namibia Simple change to fishing gear saves thousands of birds](#)
- [The day my voice broke What an injury taught me about the power of speech](#)
- [Analysis Biden to target Covid and the economy in first 100 days](#)

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

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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](#)

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“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 Barría/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
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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](#)
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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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2021.01.20 - Most viewed

- [UK ministers gain power to allow lower-standard food imports](#)
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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.

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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

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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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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