



# The Guardian

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# One in three survivors of severe Covid diagnosed with mental health condition

Study finds 34% developed psychiatric or neurological conditions after six months

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The most common mental health condition was anxiety, with 17% people developing it. Photograph: MBI/Alamy

The most common mental health condition was anxiety, with 17% people developing it. Photograph: MBI/Alamy

[Sarah Marsh](#)

[@sloumarsh](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

One in three people who were severely ill with coronavirus were subsequently diagnosed with a neurological or psychiatric condition within six months of infection, a study has found.

The observational research, which is the largest of its kind, used electronic health records of 236,379 patients mostly from the US and found 34% experienced mental health and neurological conditions afterwards. The most common being anxiety, with 17% of people developing this.

Experts warned that healthcare systems need to be resourced to deal with patients affected by this, which could be “substantial” given the scale of the pandemic. They anticipate that the impact could be felt on health services for many years.

Neurological diagnoses such as stroke and dementia were rarer, but not uncommon in those who had been seriously ill during infection. Of those who had been admitted to intensive care, 7% had a stroke and almost 2% were diagnosed with dementia.

The study, which was published in the Lancet Psychiatry, found that these diagnoses were more common in Covid-19 patients than among those who had the flu or respiratory tract infections over the same time period.

After taking into account underlying health characteristics, such as age, sex, ethnicity and existing health conditions, there was a 44% greater risk of neurological and mental health diagnoses after Covid-19 than after flu.

Prof Paul Harrison, lead author of the study, from the University of Oxford, said: “These are real-world data from a large number of patients. They confirm the high rates of psychiatric diagnoses after Covid-19 and show that serious disorders affecting the nervous system (such as stroke and dementia) occur too. While the latter is much rarer, they are significant, especially in those who had severe Covid-19.

“Although the individual risks for most disorders are small, the effect across the whole population may be substantial for health and social care systems due to the scale of the pandemic and that many of these conditions are

chronic. As a result, health care systems need to be resourced to deal with the anticipated need, both within primary and secondary care services.”

There has been growing concern that coronavirus survivors might be at increased risk of neurological disorders. A previous observational study by the same research group reported that people are at increased risk of mood and anxiety disorders in the first three months after infection.

However, until now, there have been no large-scale data examining the risks of neurological as well as psychiatric diagnoses in the six months after infection.

The most common diagnoses after Covid were anxiety disorders (occurring in 17% of patients), mood disorders (14%), substance misuse disorders (7%), and insomnia (5%). The incidence of neurological outcomes was lower, including 0.6% for a brain haemorrhage and 0.7% for dementia.

Dr Max Taquet, a co-author of the study, said: “We now need to see what happens beyond six months. The study cannot reveal the mechanisms involved, but does point to the need for urgent research to identify these, with a view to preventing or treating them.”

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The authors note several limitations to their study including the fact many people with symptoms of the virus do not present for health care, so the people studied here are likely to have been more severely affected than most. It was noted that the severity of the neurological and psychiatric disorders is not known.

Dr Jonathan Rogers, who was not involved in the study, from University College London, said: “[This] study points us towards the future, both in its methods and implications ... Sadly, many of the disorders identified in this study tend to be chronic or recurrent, so we can anticipate that the impact of Covid-19 could be with us for many years.”

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## Coronavirus

# **Oxford/AstraZeneca jab could have causal link to rare blood clots, say UK experts**

Evidence ‘consistent with causality’ but vaccination programme must continue, says drug safety specialist

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Use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine should continue but with measures to mitigate risk to women under 55, experts said. Photograph: Ulises Ruiz/AFP/Getty Images

Use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine should continue but with measures to mitigate risk to women under 55, experts said. Photograph: Ulises Ruiz/AFP/Getty Images

[Sarah Boseley](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 12.53 EDT

Boris Johnson has sought to reassure people about the safety of the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid vaccine as a trial in children was paused while regulators investigate rare reports of blood clots, largely in younger women.

The prime minister urged the public to take the jab when it is offered, while scientists stressed the side-effects were extremely rare and the benefits of protection against coronavirus were great.

Some UK drug safety experts believe there could be a causal link between the AstraZeneca jab and rare blood clotting events including cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST).

But they said vaccination programmes must continue, with risk mitigation for women under 55. Doctors have already been alerted to CVST symptoms, which include headache, blurred vision and fainting.

Oxford University is running a trial in more than 200 children and young people aged six to 17 to see whether they could benefit from the AstraZeneca jabs. The trial was paused on Tuesday as a precautionary measure in response to investigations by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) in the UK and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), a university spokesperson said. The regulators are considering whether any action should be taken, with statements expected within days.

The Oxford spokesperson added: “While there are no safety concerns in the paediatric clinical trial, we await additional information from the MHRA on its review of rare cases of thrombosis/thrombocytopenia that have been reported in adults, before giving any further vaccinations in the trial.”

On a visit to the AstraZeneca manufacturing plant in Macclesfield, Cheshire, on Tuesday, Johnson said that getting the vaccine was “the key thing”. The jab has been given to more than 18 million UK adults with just [30 rare blood clotting cases reported](#), and seven deaths.

“The best thing people should do is look at what the MHRA say, our independent regulator – that’s why we have them, that’s why they are independent,” said Johnson, who has received a first dose of the vaccine himself. “Their advice to people is to keep going out there, get your jab, get your second jab.”

Prof Saad Shakir, the director of the [drug safety research unit \(DSRU\)](#) at Southampton University, said on Tuesday that the evidence accumulated in Europe and the UK of links between the vaccine and the rare blood clots “is consistent with causality”.

While the dangers of coronavirus were so great that vaccination must not stop, he said, measures should be put in place to reduce any extra risk to women under the age of 55, who seemed to be most affected. The DRSU has shared its analysis with the regulators.

Earlier on Tuesday, [the EMA denied it had already established a causal connection](#) between the vaccine and the clots, after a senior official from the agency said there was a link. Marco Cavaleri, the EMA’s head of vaccines, had earlier told Italy’s Il Messaggero newspaper that in his opinion “we can say it now, it is clear there is a link with the vaccine ... but we still do not know what causes this reaction”.

Across Europe, some countries have already decided to give the AstraZeneca jab only to older people – over-60 in Germany and over-55 in France – while in others, the use of the vaccine is still suspended.

The DSRU at Southampton University looked at cases of thrombosis (blood clotting inside the arteries) linked to thrombocytopenia (a reduction in blood platelets that usually causes bleeding but in rare cases results in clotting) and concluded that they were linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The events are very rare, however. In the UK, as of 24 March, 30 events had occurred resulting in seven deaths from 18.1m doses of vaccine, they said. In Germany, there was one event of cerebral venous thrombosis for every

46,512 women vaccinated and one female death associated with this condition for every 149,860 vaccine doses given to women of any age.

Even for younger people, the risk of death from Covid is higher. In the UK, according to the scientists, it has been calculated that 47,000 vaccines prevent one death from Covid among all people under 50.

Shakir says that all the cases now in the public domain occurred within four to 16 days of vaccination. “So, there is what we call a close temporal relationship, and they don’t seem to be events of Covid, which you get in the first two weeks after vaccination,” he said.

“The second thing is that there is a clear clinical description and similarities between the cases. The thromboses, lowering of the blood platelets, and various haematological changes. All of them are consistent with an event, which occurs very, very rarely, and certainly only with a drug called heparin.”

Heparin is a blood-thinning drug. Very occasionally, it causes a syndrome called HIT – heparin-induced thrombocytopenia. A group of German scientists led by the clotting specialist Andreas Greinacher of the University of Greifswald [has already pointed out](#) that the blood clotting events reported after the AstraZeneca jab look very similar to HIT.

Shakir said the AstraZeneca vaccine was safe and effective. “It has protected millions of people from Covid-19 and will continue to do so around the world,” he said.

Many vaccines in widespread use have side-effects, he said. A flu vaccine can in rare cases cause Guillain-Barré syndrome, for instance, in which the body’s own immune system attacks the nerves and can cause paralysis. The answer is not to stop using the vaccine, but to mitigate the risk by assessing which people are most likely to get the side-effect, looking at any previous illnesses, medication use and their family history, for instance.

Regulators are now looking at this and also at any symptoms which might enable people experiencing the rare blood clots to be identified early and

treated before their condition becomes too severe.

The MHRA said it was still considering the evidence. “People should continue to get their vaccine when invited to do so,” said Dr June Raine, its chief executive. “Our thorough and detailed review is ongoing into reports of very rare and specific types of blood clots with low platelets following the Covid-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca. No decision has yet been made on any regulatory action.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/oxfordastrazeneca-jab-could-have-causal-link-to-rare-blood-clots-say-uk-experts>

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## Wales

# Patients in Wales to be first in UK to receive Moderna Covid vaccine

Nation's mass rollout begins on Wednesday, while Scotland will administer first doses later this week

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A box of the Moderna Covid vaccine. Photograph: Michael Reynolds/EPA

A box of the Moderna Covid vaccine. Photograph: Michael Reynolds/EPA

[Harry Taylor](#)

[@harrytaylr](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 19.00 EDT

Patients in [Wales](#) will from Wednesday become the first in the UK to receive the Moderna vaccine as part of a mass vaccination programme, with the first doses in Scotland set to come later this week.

The initial jabs would be given at the West Wales general hospital in Carmarthen, the Welsh government said.

It added that 5,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine – the third to be approved for use in the UK – had been sent to centres in the Hywel Dda University [Health](#) Board area, covering Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, on Tuesday.

It comes as Scotland received its first delivery on Monday, and a spokesperson told the Guardian that the doses would start to be administered later this week.

Scotland is set to get more than a million of the 17m jabs ordered by Westminster, with vaccine procurement centralised rather than devolved.

England is yet to receive its first batch for general distribution, with vaccines minister Nadhim Zahawi saying on Tuesday it would be rolled out around “the third week of April”. A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Social Care on Tuesday said it would be rolled out “as soon as possible this month”.

The Guardian asked the UK, Welsh and Scottish governments for further details about how the vaccine supply had been divided between the four nations – but none were able to provide details.

It has not been confirmed when the jab will be received in Northern Ireland and start to be used to vaccinate people there.

[One million Covid vaccine doses administered in Wales](#)  
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The Moderna vaccine was approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on 8 January, with phase 3 trials showing it had 94.1% efficacy against Covid, and 100% against severe



illness. Like the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca jabs, it requires two doses for full protection, according to tests.

The Welsh health minister, Vaughan Gething, said it was a “significant” addition to the country’s vaccination programme.

“Every vaccine given to someone in Wales is a small victory against the virus and we would encourage everyone to go for their vaccine when invited.”

Ros Jervis, director of public health for Hywel Dda said: “We are incredibly lucky to have a third vaccine in Wales, with a long shelf-life and the ability to be easily transported, to help deliver the vaccination programme to small clinics across our rural communities.”

The health secretary, Matt Hancock, said he was “delighted we can start the UK rollout of the Moderna vaccine in west Wales”.

He added: “Three out of every five people across the whole UK have received at least one dose, and today we start with the third approved vaccine. Wherever you live, when you get the call, get the jab.”

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# AstraZeneca Covid vaccine: weighing up the risks and rewards

Despite scientific advice to continue getting the jab, answers about fatal blood clots are urgently needed

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Of the 18 million people in the UK who had the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, there have been 22 cases of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis. Photograph: Alberto Pezzali/AP

Of the 18 million people in the UK who had the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, there have been 22 cases of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis. Photograph: Alberto Pezzali/AP

[Sarah Boseley](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 14.41 EDT

Vaccines have side-effects, as do all medicines. Most often, jabs cause sore arms, a headache or a bit of nausea – none of which would be very significant when weighed against the toll of a serious virus such as Covid-19.

But sometimes the risk-benefit calculation may look less simple, as in the case of Oxford/AstraZeneca's Covid jab and cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), the blood clots in the brain that have led to fatalities in the UK and Europe.

Doctors, scientists and regulatory bodies all urge that people should continue to have the AstraZeneca vaccine, which has been shown to be safe and effective in millions of people. In the UK, more than 18 million have had it. Among those, there have now been 22 cases of CVST and eight others where – as in CVST – blood clots develop in association with low platelets in the blood. It's a very rare condition, which has also been seen occasionally with the blood-thinning drug heparin. [Seven people have died.](#)

There is no doubt that people at high risk for Covid should take any vaccine they can get. But it now seems that the reports of blood clots are mostly from a specific group who might not all be at high risk from Covid – younger women.

The first cases to come to light triggered a panic, leading to some European countries suspending the AstraZeneca jab for everyone, which may have proved to be [something of an own goal](#). France and Germany were soon lamenting their poor vaccine coverage, which left millions at risk of disease and death from Covid.

Meanwhile the UK took the opposite attitude. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) initially appeared to dismiss the concerns. On 16 March, its vaccines safety lead, Dr Phil Bryan, said: "We are closely reviewing reports, but the evidence available does not suggest the vaccine is the cause. Blood clots can occur naturally and are not uncommon ... the number of blood clots reported after having the vaccine is not greater than the number that would have occurred naturally in the vaccinated population."

Two days and a review later, that statement was replaced on the MHRA website with an acknowledgment that cases of rare blood clots (five at that time) had occurred in the UK. “Given the extremely rare rate of occurrence of these CVST events among the 11 million people vaccinated, and as a link to the vaccine is unproven, the benefits of the vaccine in preventing Covid-19, with its associated risk of hospitalisation and death, continue to outweigh the risks of potential side-effects,” said its chief executive, Dr June Raine. On Tuesday, a trial of the AstraZeneca vaccine on children [was paused](#) while MHRA investigations continue.

The World Health Organization and the European Medicines Agency agree that there is an overwhelming argument for using the AstraZeneca jab. But nobody is dismissing the reports now. They and the MHRA are now figuring out whether there are ways to identify and protect those more likely to suffer blood clots.

Urgent investigations will be taking place into any common factors among the cases: whether they had an underlying health condition, for example, or were on medication of some sort. And doctors have already been alerted to the symptoms of CVST – the main ones are headache, blurred vision and fainting – in the hope of picking them up early and treating them before people become severely ill. That way, it is hoped, the risk-benefit calculation can again become much easier.

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[National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#)

## Chronic pain sufferers should take exercise, not analgesics, says Nice

Medicines watchdog recommends physical and psychological therapies when treating pain with no known cause



Pain relief drug capsule and blister package. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

Pain relief drug capsule and blister package. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

[Denis Campbell](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

People suffering from chronic pain that has no known cause should not be prescribed painkillers, the medicines watchdog has announced, recommending such patients be offered exercise, talking therapies and acupuncture instead.

In a major change of pain treatment policy, the National Institute for health and Care Excellence (Nice) say that in future, doctors should advise sufferers to use physical and psychological therapies rather than analgesics to manage their pain.

[Painkillers such as aspirin 'do more harm than good' for chronic primary pain](#)

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Medical teams can also consider prescribing antidepressants, the government health advisers suggest.

Nice's new guidance potentially affects the way many hundreds of thousands of people in England and Wales tackle their condition because between 1% and 6% of the population of England is estimated to have chronic primary pain.

There is "little or no evidence" that treating the condition with painkillers makes any difference to the person's quality of life, or the pain they suffer or their psychological distress, according to its new guidelines on the assessment and management of chronic pain.

Pain caused by a known underlying health condition such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis or endometriosis is known as chronic secondary pain. However, pain with no identified cause that has persisted for at least three months is known as chronic primary pain.

Nice recommends that doctors draw up a care and support plan with patients about how to manage their pain based on how badly it is affecting their day-to-day life, what activities they feel they can undertake and honesty "about the uncertainty of the prognosis".

The plan should include "interventions that have been shown to be effective in managing chronic primary pain. These include exercise programmes and the psychological treatments cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

“Acupuncture is also recommended as an option, provided it is delivered within certain clearly defined parameters,” Nice says.

The antidepressants amitriptyline, citalopram, duloxetine, fluoxetine, paroxetine or sertraline can also be used, it adds.

Sufferers should not be started on commonly used medications such as paracetamol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, benzodiazepines or opioids, which poses risks including addiction, the watchdog says.

[Chronic pain: prescribe mental health support as well as drugs, say experts](#)  
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Dr Paul Chrisp, director of Nice’s centre for guidelines, said: “Based on the evidence, for most people it’s unlikely that any drug treatments for chronic primary pain, other than antidepressants, provide an adequate balance between any benefits they might provide and the risks associated with them.”

The Royal College of [GPs](#) backed the shift away from painkillers but cautioned that patients’ access to the new forms of treatment being recommended was variable.

Prof Martin Marshall, the college’s chair, said: “Pain can cause untold misery for patients and their families. Chronic primary pain... can be challenging to manage in general practice, and the college has been calling for guidelines to address this for some time.

“We understand the move away from a pharmacological option to treating chronic primary pain to a focus on physical and psychological therapies that we know can benefit people in pain.

“However, access to these therapies can be patchy at a community level across the country, so this needs to be addressed urgently, if these new guidelines are to make a genuine difference to the lives of our patients with primary chronic pain.”

Lucy Ryan, a patient representative who helped Nice draw up the new guidelines, welcomed its acknowledgement of the risks that a regime of tablets for chronic primary pain can involve because patients are sometimes not told about those.

“Everyone with chronic pain experiences pain differently, so I feel the more options available to help people effectively manage their pain, the better,” she added.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/07/chronic-pain-sufferers-should-take-exercise-not-analgesics-says-nice>

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## Gambling

# Tax gambling firms to fund addiction treatment, says NHS director

Intervention comes amid review of laws governing betting sector and plans for new gambling clinics as addiction cases spike

- [‘Every other ad will be for gambling’: Addicts’ lockdown struggle](#)
- [Why is a levy on UK’s gambling industry still a roll of the dice?](#)



Claire Murdoch, the national mental health director for NHS England, denounced the [voluntary system](#) that lets the gambling industry dictate how much it contributes to help addicts. Photograph: Martin Rickett/PA

Claire Murdoch, the national mental health director for NHS England, denounced the [voluntary system](#) that lets the gambling industry dictate how much it contributes to help addicts. Photograph: Martin Rickett/PA

[Rob Davies](#)  
[@ByRobDavies](#)



Tue 6 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

Gambling firms have profited during the pandemic but are leaving the NHS to “pick up the pieces” of addiction and should be hit with a compulsory levy to fund treatment, the head of mental health in England has said.

Claire Murdoch – national mental health director for NHS England – denounced the [voluntary system](#) that lets the industry dictate how much it contributes to helping addicts.

In an intervention that comes [amid a government review of laws](#) governing the £11bn-a-year sector, Murdoch said 750 people have been referred to specialist clinics for treatment of serious addiction since April 2020. The health service is planning to open more gambling clinics across the country because it believes it is currently only reaching “the tip of the iceberg.”

Successive lockdowns have triggered a [surge in spending on high-octane online casino games and slot machines](#), fuelling big increases in revenue at companies such as Paddy Power owner Flutter and Ladbrokes Coral owner Entain. Denise Coates, chief executive of online-only Bet365, paid herself £421m for 2020 last week, taking her rewards over the past four years above £1bn.

But Murdoch, who has [previously criticised betting and gaming firms](#) for luring punters in with incentives such as [“VIP” hospitality](#) and [“free” bets](#), said the industry’s contributions to treatment were still just a “drop in the ocean”.

“After seeing the destruction the gambling industry has caused to young people in this country, it is clear that firms are focused on profit at the expense of people’s health, while the [NHS](#) is increasingly left to pick up the pieces,” she said.

“In a year when the NHS has dealt with our biggest challenge yet in Covid-19, the health service’s psychologists and nurses having been treating hundreds of people with severe gambling addictions.

“The gambling industry must take more responsibility, as the nation has come together over the last year to support the NHS, whether it be volunteering as vaccinators or showing their gratitude to staff. The bookmakers must also step up and agree to a mandatory levy to pay for dealing with the harms of problem gambling.”

Studies have found that there are between 300,000 and 1.4m gambling addicts in Great Britain, but a report published last year found that [just 3% of them were receiving specialist help](#), often relying on industry-funded helplines instead.

MPs on both sides of the house, [addiction experts](#) and the industry’s regulator, the Gambling Commission, have all previously called for a mandatory levy to help close the gap, something the government has [so far resisted](#).

Labour’s Carolyn Harris, who chairs a cross-party group of MPs examining gambling harm, said: “The treatment and support services available for people with gambling addiction in this country are vastly underfunded. The industry should not get to decide when and how much they pay for the devastation they cause.”

GambleAware, the charity that receives and disburses much of the industry’s contribution under the voluntary levy, has also backed calls to make a levy compulsory.

The voluntary system has been criticised for raising too little – between £10m and £15m a year – with [some operators giving nominal sums](#) such as £1 to ensure inclusion on the public list of donors.

In 2019, a group of the largest gambling companies sought to head off mounting pressure for a mandatory levy by [offering to spend an extra £100m](#) by 2023, a plan that won the government’s blessing.

But sources at gambling charities say the money has been slow to arrive, while the industry has also been [criticised for trying to control](#) which organisations receive it.

Much of the funding goes through non-NHS services, such as the GamCare charity, but the government has recently sought to improve NHS resources via two new specialist gambling clinics, with 14 more to follow.

Conservative MP Richard Holden said making the levy compulsory to improve treatment options “makes sense”.

“Too often gambling addiction is yet another burden thrust on our NHS and other services when the damage has been done,” he said.

“I really hope that the gambling review highlights this as part of the full package of measures we need.”

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While the government has previously shied away from imposing a mandatory levy, it is among measures being considered within the review, which is being overseen by the department for digital, culture media and sport (DCMS).

The Guardian has approached the DCMS for comment.

The Betting & Gaming Council said: “For over 20 years our industry has been the sole funder of research, education and treatment and we welcome the recent decision by the NHS to work with the charity administering the funding, GambleAware, to create clinics to help treat problem gamblers.

“Alongside these contributions to GambleAware, our members also contribute significant funding to a broad range of charities and organisations to directly support research, education and treatment – this includes £10m for the Young People’s Gambling Harm Prevention Programme which targets all 11- to 19-year-olds across the country, delivered by [gambling and gaming charity] YGAM and GamCare.”



## Gambling

# ‘Every other advert will be for gambling’: addicts tell of lockdown struggle

Trying to resist online betting while stuck at home was impossible, say two UK gamblers seeking therapy

- [Tax gambling firms to fund addiction treatment – NHS director](#)
- [Why is a levy on UK’s gambling industry still a roll of the dice?](#)



Gambling firms agreed to stop advertising last spring, but not during subsequent lockdowns. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Gambling firms agreed to stop advertising last spring, but not during subsequent lockdowns. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

[Rob Davies](#)

[@ByRobDavies](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

The past year has been particularly tough for gambling addicts wrestling with their habit.

High street bookmakers have been closed for much of the year, but online sports betting and casinos have [done a roaring trade](#).

During the first lockdown, gambling firms [agreed to stop advertising](#), in recognition of the potential dangers to vulnerable people cooped up at home. That pledge hasn't been repeated in subsequent lockdowns.

**Alex, 41, a company director from Lancashire**, sought help from the NHS Northern [Gambling](#) Service – one of only three in the country – after struggling to find treatment in his area.

He has suffered from alcohol and drug addiction but said escaping gambling has been harder.

“Gambling is unique. There are ways of avoiding drinking and drugs. When I'm sat at home now, every other advert will be for gambling, it's just everywhere during lockdown.

“There's nothing positive to look to right now and my go-to is just to escape, to get into the casino, into my little gambling world.

“I live on my own with my dog and going through [the pandemic] is already difficult. To just have the odd conversation with a family member, rather than see people and get a hug, has left me feeling isolated and alone,” he said.

Last year, Alex resorted to a private rehab centre in Spain but again found that his gambling problem wasn't well understood.

He said: “When I returned to the UK, it was just a matter of time and it happened quickly.

“I was straight back into the horses and sports [betting]. It soon turned into casinos because it’s just one push of the button. I’d start off with a 50p each way bet on the horses and before I know it I’d lost £2,000 on the casino.”

**Jordan from Cheshire**, whose name has been changed at his request, tried various methods to give up gambling, without success.

“In the bookies they have signs up [for industry-funded treatment services] but it was always just a leaflet and while you’re in there, you’re not looking to stop.

“Lockdown made it worse because during those times some of the shops were shut so I’d go online more than I would have done. You can do a lot of damage in the shops but it’s not like what you can do online, with £500 spins in seconds.”

Jordan has attended sessions at the NHS Northern Gambling Service, which offers cognitive behavioural therapy favoured by many gambling addiction experts, and he has been bet-free for nearly eight months.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/07/every-other-advert-will-be-for-gambling-addicts-tell-of-lockdown-struggle>

## [Shipping industry](#)

# Twelve crew rescued from cargo ship adrift in huge seas off Norway

Four crew jump off stern as Dutch ship listed dangerously, while remaining eight airlifted off deck

00:52

Cargo ship crew in dramatic rescue after vessel loses power in rough seas off Norway – video

*Agence France-Presse*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 21.42 EDT

A Dutch cargo ship is adrift in the Norwegian Sea after all of its crew members were airlifted, with some having to jump into the rough waters to be rescued.

The Eemslift Hendrika, which was carrying several smaller boats from Bremerhaven in Germany to Kolvereid in [Norway](#), made a distress call Monday, reporting a heavy list after stormy weather displaced some of its cargo.

The 12 crew members were evacuated from the listing vessel in two stages later the same day by Norwegian rescue services.

The first eight were airlifted by helicopter from the deck.

But the last four had to jump into the huge seas because the waves were rocking the boat and the list was too severe.

Footage from the Norwegian authorities showed a man in an orange survival suit throwing himself into the rough sea off the stern of the ship. The ship



also suffered an engine failure and was drifting towards to the Norwegian coastline.

On Tuesday morning it was about 130km (80 miles) north-west of the port city of Alesund.

One of the boats it was carrying on deck fell into the sea, potentially helping to reduce its list, which is now estimated to be about 30 degrees after hovering between 40 and 50 degrees.

[Suez canal: Ever Given container ship freed after a week](#)  
[Read more](#)

“The situation seems to be more stable but there is still a risk that it could capsize,” Hans-Petter Mortensholm with the Norwegian Coastal Administration (Kystverket), told AFP.

“We want to put someone on board to arrange for a tow as soon as the weather conditions allow,” he added.

The cargo ship contains 350 cubic metres of heavy fuel oil, 75 cubic metres of diesel and 10 cubic metres of lubricating oil.

A Norwegian Coast Guard vessel arrived at the ship on Tuesday.

The operator of the vessel has also called in the Dutch company Smit Salvage, which was involved [in the refloating of the Ever Given](#) in Egypt’s Suez Canal last week.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/07/twelve-crew-rescued-from-cargo-ship-adrift-in-huge-seas-off-norway>

# Wednesday briefing: Keep getting jab, Johnson urges

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/07/wednesday-briefing-oxford-vaccine-blood-clot>

## Global development

# UK's 'headlong rush into abandoning human rights' rebuked by Amnesty

Covid failings, crackdown on protest, police discrimination and resumed arms trade with Saudi Arabia all listed in annual report



Nurses protest outside Downing Street, London, June 2020. The Amnesty report criticises the UK's handling of the pandemic . Photograph: Barcroft Media/Getty

Nurses protest outside Downing Street, London, June 2020. The Amnesty report criticises the UK's handling of the pandemic . Photograph: Barcroft Media/Getty

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[Kate Hodal](#)

[@katehodal](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.01 EDT

Amnesty International has published a stark rebuke of the UK government's stance on human rights, saying that it is "speeding towards the cliff edge" in its policies on housing and immigration, and criticising its seeming determination to end the legal right for the public to challenge government decisions in court.

In its annual report on human rights around the world, Amnesty International says the UK's increasingly hostile attitude towards upholding and preserving human rights legislation raises "serious concerns".

The report also highlights Britain's poor handling of the coronavirus pandemic, recent assaults on the right to protest, police discrimination against black and Asian communities, and the resumed arms trade with [Saudi Arabia](#).

"For years, the UK has been moving in the wrong direction on human rights – but things are now getting worse at an accelerating rate," said Amnesty

International's UK director, Kate Allen.

“Having made mistake after lethal mistake during the pandemic, the government is now shamefully trying to strip away our right to lawfully challenge its decisions, no matter how poor they are.”

The report – which details 2020 global human rights trends, as well as those of 149 individual countries – condemns the UK's high Covid-19 death rate, one of the highest in Europe, which saw at least 74,570 deaths over the course of the year, [many of them in care homes](#). The failure to provide adequate PPE and regular testing, the direct discharge of infected patients from hospitals to care homes and [blanket imposition of do not resuscitate orders](#) on care home residents without due process all gave rise to further serious concern, the report says.

The refusal to conduct an urgent independent inquiry into its handling of the pandemic is a “shocking demonstration that there is no appetite from this government to learn lessons and apply them in real time”, said Allen. “There needs to be an inquiry that gets to the bottom of all of this.”

['Narcos are looking for me': deadly threats to Peru's indigenous leaders](#)  
[Read more](#)

The report also underscores the disproportionately high death rate among black and minority ethnic healthcare workers, as well as racial discrimination against black and Asian people by police during 2020. Official figures show that black people are [nine times more likely to be stopped and searched](#) than white people, and more likely to have force used against them, said Amnesty.



A poster calls for an end to section 60 stop and search, near Tottenham police station, London, August 2020. Photograph: Thabo Jaiyesimi/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock

The government's decision in July to [resume military exports to Saudi Arabia](#), resulting in about [£1.4bn worth of sales](#), while slashing foreign aid to Yemen, was also heavily criticised in the report.

Amnesty expressed serious concern about the government's reviews into the [Human Rights Act](#) and [judicial review](#) – both of which “are being sped through during the pandemic” and could seriously diminish the public's capacity to challenge government decisions, said Allen. The report also highlighted the controversial and far-reaching [police, crime, sentencing and courts bill](#), which Amnesty warns could severely curtail the right to peaceably challenge or protest in the UK.

Two separate pieces of legislation that could effectively give “get-out clauses” for rape, murder and torture to police, [MI5 officers](#) and [overseas military personnel](#) are also deeply troubling, said Allen.

“On the right to protest, on the [Human Rights Act](#), on accountability for coronavirus deaths, on asylum, on arms sales or on trade with despots, we're speeding toward the cliff edge,” said Allen.

“We need to stop this headlong rush into abandoning our human rights.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/07/uks-headlong-rush-into-abandoning-human-rights-rebuked-by-amnesty>

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## Transgender

# Arkansas is first state to ban gender-affirming treatments for trans youth

Lawmakers overrode the governor's veto despite criticism that the measure would harm an already vulnerable community



Elijah Baay, a trans person, speaks at the #LoveALTransYouth Press Conference on 30 March in Montgomery, Alabama. Photograph: Andrea Mabry/AP

Elijah Baay, a trans person, speaks at the #LoveALTransYouth Press Conference on 30 March in Montgomery, Alabama. Photograph: Andrea Mabry/AP

*Guardian staff and agency*  
Tue 6 Apr 2021 20.06 EDT

Arkansas has become the first state to ban gender-affirming treatments and surgery for transgender youth, after lawmakers overrode the governor's



objections to enact the ban on Tuesday.

The state's governor, Asa Hutchinson, had vetoed the bill on Monday following pleas from pediatricians, social workers and the parents of [trans youth](#) who said [the measure would harm a community](#) already at risk for depression and suicide. The ban was opposed by several medical and child welfare groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics.

However the [Republican-controlled](#) house and senate voted to override Hutchinson's veto.

The ban prohibits doctors from providing gender-affirming hormone treatment, puberty blockers or surgery to anyone under 18 years old, or from referring them to other providers for the treatment. The treatments are part of a gradual process that can vastly improve young people's mental health, and can be life-saving, experts say.

[Trans kids on the Republican bills targeting them: 'I'm not a problem to society'](#)

[Read more](#)

Opponents of the measure have vowed to sue to block the ban before it takes effect this summer.

"This legislation perpetuates the very things we know are harmful to trans youth," said Dr Robert Garofalo, the division head of adolescent and young adult medicine at Lurie Children's hospital in Chicago, speaking on a press conference call held by the Human Rights Campaign. "They're not just anti-trans. They're anti-science. They're anti-public health."

The bill's sponsor dismissed opposition from medical groups and compared the restriction to other limits the state places on minors, such as prohibiting them from drinking.

"They need to get to be 18 before they make those decisions," said the Republican representative Robin Lundstrum.

Hutchinson said the measure went too far in interfering with parents and physicians, and noted that it will cut off care for trans youth already receiving treatment. He said he would have signed the bill if it had focused only on gender-affirming surgery, which currently isn't performed on minors in the state.

"I do hope my veto will cause my Republican colleagues across the country to resist the temptation to put the state in the middle of every decision made by parents and healthcare professionals," Hutchinson said in a statement after the vote.

The law will take effect in late July at the earliest. The American Civil Liberties Union said it planned to challenge the measure before then.

"This is a sad day for Arkansas, but this fight is not over – and we're in it for the long haul," said Holly Dickson, the ACLU of Arkansas' executive director, in a statement.

The ban was enacted during a year in which [bills targeting trans people](#) have advanced easily in Arkansas and other states. Hutchinson recently signed legislation banning trans women and girls from competing on teams consistent with their gender identity, a prohibition that also has been enacted in Tennessee and Mississippi this year.

Hutchinson also recently signed legislation that allows doctors to refuse to treat someone because of moral or religious objections.

And the legislature isn't showing signs of letting up. Another bill advanced by a house committee earlier Tuesday would prevent schools from requiring teachers to refer to students by their preferred pronouns or titles.

The Human Rights Campaign, the largest US LGBTQ rights group, said more than 100 bills have been filed in statehouses around the country targeting the trans community. Similar treatment bans have been proposed in at least 20 states.

Clarke Tucker, a Democratic lawmaker who opposed the measure, compared it to the anti-integration bills Arkansas' legislature passed in 1958 in

opposition to the previous year's desegregation of Little Rock Central high school.

“What I see, this bill, is the most powerful again bullying the most vulnerable people in our state.”

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## Northern Ireland

# Northern Ireland protocol critics have no alternative, says EU ambassador

João Vale de Almeida says protocol is the solution for the problems created by Brexit



Vale de Almedia was speaking after four nights of disturbances in the Waterside area of Derry and Carrickfergus near Belfast. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Vale de Almedia was speaking after four nights of disturbances in the Waterside area of Derry and Carrickfergus near Belfast. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

[Lisa O'Carroll](#) and [Rory Carroll](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 13.24 EDT

Political leaders who want the Brexit arrangements for Northern Ireland dumped have failed to come up with any better ideas, the EU ambassador to

the UK has said, as police confirmed 41 officers were injured during [violence on the streets](#) over the weekend.

João Vale de Almeida called on unionist leaders to focus on making the protocol work rather than fighting against it, pledging the EU's commitment to flexibility on its implementation if the British government demonstrated good faith.

“The protocol is the solution for the problems created by Brexit in [Northern Ireland](#) and that's where I believe we should focus,” he said.

Vale de Almedia was speaking after four nights of disturbances in the Waterside area of Derry and Carrickfergus near Belfast.

[Northern Ireland clashes reflect loyalists' fear of marginalisation](#)  
[Read more](#)

Nine police officers were injured in the latest disturbances on Monday night.

Darrin Jones, the police commander in Derry and Strabane district, called the behaviour reckless and criminal. “I would also appeal directly to parents and guardians to know where their children are and what they are doing to ensure they do not get caught up in criminality and that they are kept safe and away from harm,” he said.

Northern Ireland's assembly is to be recalled from its Easter break on Thursday to debate the violence after an Alliance party petition drew the necessary 30 signatures.

Politicians across the spectrum have condemned the violence but traded blame over who is responsible, with some linking it to tensions over Brexit and others pointing to Sinn Féin's alleged breach of pandemic rules at a [republican funeral last summer](#) along with unionist party denunciations of the police, which they said had created a “toxic” environment.

In an interview with the Guardian's Politics Weekly podcast, the EU ambassador said he understood the “sensitivities” and the “delicate and volatile situation in Northern Ireland”, which he visited last year.

He said the EU was “fully committed in a constructive way to find solutions for those problems” but it had to be “within the limits of the protocol that we have agreed not long ago”.

Vale de Almeida said the EU “can look at ways and means to facilitate it [the protocol] and make it even more flexible” and was examining an overdue plan for the implementation of the agreement delivered by London to Brussels last Thursday.

The solutions, he said, would come from “implementing the protocol, implementing it fully; implementing it well”.

But he said Britain needed to own the [Brexit](#) it got, including the protocol, as it was a result of the government’s decision to go for a hard [Brexit](#) putting sovereignty ahead of collaboration on trade.

“[Let’s] not forget the origin of the issues. We are talking about the impact of Brexit, which was decided by the British people,” he said.

“We are talking about the impact of the departure from the single market, which was decided on the British side as well.

“Squaring the circle is finding solutions for very intricate and delicate problems that were created by decisions taken and decisions [that] have consequences.”

The protocol “took a few years to negotiate, I can guarantee that from listening to those who negotiated – and Michel Barnier and David Frost were among them – I can tell you that they turned every stone to try to find alternatives to this protocol. No one came with a better idea – even those who attack the protocol today, who would like to see it scrapped, have no alternative to the protocol. So that what should be our focus. Our focus should be to implement the protocol,” the ambassador added.

Relations between the UK and the EU over Northern Ireland have also been strained after the partial implementation of the checks on the Irish sea but hit rock bottom four weeks ago when the UK decided to unilaterally delay the scheduled full implementation.

That decision is now the subject of legal action by the EU, which Brussels hopes can be averted through further negotiation.

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## Wildlife

# Wildlife charities raise £8m to boost nature schemes across England and Wales

Efforts to reverse decline include transforming an ex-golf course and rewilding a village



A wildflower meadow at Bowber Head farm in Cumbria, one of the 10 projects aimed at helping nature recover. Photograph: Stephen Trotter/PA

A wildflower meadow at Bowber Head farm in Cumbria, one of the 10 projects aimed at helping nature recover. Photograph: Stephen Trotter/PA

*PA Media*

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Projects to transform a former golf course for nature, rewild a village and restore ice age “ghost” ponds are among schemes being launched to boost



wildlife across England and Wales.

The [Wildlife](#) Trusts coalition has over the past year unveiled 10 new projects, which also include restoring arable fields to heathland, improving wildflower meadows and quadrupling the size of a nature reserve to help a rare butterfly.

The trusts have raised almost £8m since launching a campaign to help nature recover across 30% of land by 2030 six months ago, including £900,000 from the public.

The attempt to reverse declines over recent decades is backed by the broadcaster and naturalist Sir David Attenborough, who said: “If given a chance, nature is capable of extraordinary recovery.

“The Wildlife Trusts’ campaign to secure 30% of our land and sea for nature’s recovery by 2030 offers us the vision and level of ambition that is urgently needed to reverse the loss of nature, and so improve all our lives.”

Attenborough warned: “We are facing a global extinction crisis which has implications for every one of us. It’s tempting to assume that the loss of wildlife and wild places is a problem that’s happening on the other side of the world. The truth is that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries on the planet and the situation is getting worse.”



Barmstonpond in Sunderland, part of a project by Durham Wildlife Trust to restore and manage nature in 20 urban sites in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside. Photograph: R Richards/PA

The Wildlife Trusts chief executive, Craig Bennett, said: “Just protecting the nature we have left is not enough; we need to put nature into recovery, and to do so at scale and with urgency.

“We need to transform nature-poor areas into new nature-rich places – and change the way we think about land, looking for opportunities to help nature outside traditional nature reserves.”

The new projects by the coalition of wildlife groups, some of which are still fundraising to help them deliver the schemes, are:

- Transforming a 17-hectare (42-acre) ex-golf course in Carlisle into an urban bee and butterfly oasis, by removing golf infrastructure, creating wildflower-rich meadows and wetland scrapes and planting trees and shrubs – **Cumbria Wildlife Trust**.
- Restoring 38 hectares of arable fields back to heathland in Worcestershire to connect four surrounding nature reserves and provide

home to wildlife including the hornet robberfly and minotaur bee – **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust**.

- Reviving ice age ghost “pingo” ponds and expanding heathland across 140 acres of arable fields and woodland by Thompson Common, Norfolk, to support rare wildlife including the northern pool frog – **Norfolk Wildlife Trust**.
- Quadrupling a nature reserve at Emmett Hill, Wiltshire, to help the rare marsh fritillary butterfly, with the purchase of 44 acres of land at Upper Minety and plans to introduce blue devil’s-bit scabious plant, which is the insect’s preferred food source – **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust**.
- A project in 20 urban sites in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside to look after woodland, restore ponds, manage grasslands, clear scrub and plant hedges to help wildlife and bring people closer to nature on their doorsteps – **Durham Wildlife Trust**.
- A pilot working with local people in Baston village, Lincolnshire, to put more nature into the village through hedgehog highways, “bee lines” for pollinators and wildflowers on road verges and in churchyards, with hopes to spread the concept to other communities – **Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust**.
- Raising £200,000 to restore the 6-hectare Ail Meadow, Herefordshire, increasing wildflowers to boost numbers of the wood white butterfly, providing a home for species such as bog pimpernel, and a stepping stone between other nature sites – **Herefordshire Wildlife Trust**.
- Improving 12 hectares of hay meadows at Bowber Head farm, near Ravenstonedale, Cumbria, to restore them to top condition and encourage more northern specialities such as wood crane’s-bill, melancholy thistle, and saw-wort – **Cumbria Wildlife Trust**.
- Restoring 5 hectares of unsprayed fields around the Stiperstones ridge, above Tankerville, Shropshire, to allow harebells, yellow mountain pansies, stonechats and skylarks to thrive – **Shropshire Wildlife Trust**.

- Restoring Rhos pasture, with surveys and advice for landowners to help bring back biodiversity to this grassland that supports small pearl-bordered fritillary and in the past, marsh fritillary butterflies, but which is now concentrated in a few areas of Wales – **Radnorshire Wildlife Trust**.

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/07/wildlife-charities-launch-10-schemes-to-boost-nature-across-england-and-wales>

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## [The Pacific project](#)[Papua New Guinea](#)

# Miss Papua New Guinea stripped of her crown for TikTok twerking video

Lucy Maino faced intense online harassment over clip in incident that critics say highlights misogyny in PNG



Lucy Maino was stripped of her Miss PNG crown for sharing a TikTok video of herself twerking. She also served as co-captain of Papua New Guinea's women's football team. Photograph: Facebook

Lucy Maino was stripped of her Miss PNG crown for sharing a TikTok video of herself twerking. She also served as co-captain of Papua New Guinea's women's football team. Photograph: Facebook

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[Leanne Jorari](#) in Port Moresby

Tue 6 Apr 2021 20.10 EDT

Miss [Papua New Guinea](#) has been stripped of her crown after sharing a video of herself twerking on TikTok, with critics saying the incident reveals a deep-seated culture of misogyny in the country.

Lucy Maino, 25, who has also served as co-captain of Papua New Guinea's women's football team, faced intense online harassment after she shared a video of herself twerking on the video-sharing app [TikTok](#).

Though twerking videos are common on the application, Maino's now-deleted video was singled out by critics who said it was not fitting for a "role model" to share a video of herself dancing in this way.

[Inside the Covid unit: crisis threatens to overwhelm PNG's biggest hospital](#)  
[Read more](#)

The video was downloaded from her private account and shared on social media platforms and YouTube, where thousands of people piled on to criticise Maino.

After the video and the backlash to it, Maino was “released” from her duties by the Miss Pacific Islands Pageant PNG (MPIP PNG) committee this week.

“Our core purpose is empowerment of women. We are a unique pageant style platform that promotes cultural heritage, traditional values and sharing through tourism about our country and people,” the committee said in a statement. “MPIP PNG promotes the virtues of confidence, self-worth, integrity, and community service with a parallel focus on education.”

Allan Bird, the governor of East Sepik and co-chair of the Coalition of Parliamentarians against Gender-Based Violence, denounced the online harassment of Maino, writing on social media: “What kind of society condemns the torture and killing of women yet get upset when a young woman does a dance video?”

A former Miss PNG, who did not wish to be named, said the incident showed deep-seated misogyny in the country.

“I am sure if a male public figure did a TikTok [video], we would all be laughing or even praising him,” she said.

Maino received a football scholarship which allowed her to complete a degree in business administration at the University of Hawaii. She represented Papua New Guinea as co-captain of the 2019 national team, winning two gold medals in the 2019 Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa.

She was crowned Miss Papua New Guinea – a role that involves acting as a cultural ambassador for the country and an advocate for women – in 2019. She has continued in the role for an additional year [due to the Covid-19 pandemic](#).

Many people criticised the committee for not supporting Maino after she was attacked for the video.

A women’s advocate, who did not wish to be named for fear of becoming a target of the people who harassed Maino online, said: “The committee could have handled it better by first outlining the clause that she breached as a

reigning queen ... I feel that they threw her under the bus and didn't give her a chance to come out and talk. That is not the way to go."

The United Nations in Papua New Guinea expressed their dissatisfaction through a statement on Facebook: "We see the devastation of violence against women and children in this beautiful country. Some through bullying have lost their lives ... It starts with telling women they should cover up. It starts with telling women, they shouldn't dance like that."

The Guardian approached Maino and the MPIP PNG committee for comment but they did not respond by time of publication.

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## 2021.04.07 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: EU drug agency to respond over blood clot concerns; Delhi imposes curfew](#)
- [Hospitality Pubs and clubs attack UK Covid passport scheme](#)
- [Joe Biden All US adults will be eligible for Covid vaccine by 19 April](#)
- [Greece Aegean islands aim to become fully vaccinated](#)
- [Brazil Coronavirus death toll passes 4,000 a day for first time](#)
- [Education Teachers reject extended school day and shorter holidays](#)
- [Covid status certificates UK ministers' plans run into growing opposition](#)

[Coronavirus live](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

# Coronavirus live news: EU drug agency to respond to AstraZeneca blood clot concerns; Delhi imposes curfew

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## Hospitality industry.

# Pubs and clubs attack UK Covid passport scheme

Nationwide chains criticise plan as undemocratic, unworkable and unfair to younger people



A London pub promotes its reopening on 12 April Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

A London pub promotes its reopening on 12 April Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

[Joanna Partridge](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 13.08 EDT

The government has been accused of “unreasonably targeting” the [hospitality sector](#) through the proposed introduction of [Covid status checks](#) for customers entering pubs, bars and restaurants, as three nationwide pub

and bar chains and the UK's largest nightclub operator voiced their opposition to the plans.

“This feels like a measure which is unreasonably targeting our sector, they are not proposing this to go into a supermarket,” said Alex Reilley, founder of Loungers, a bar and restaurant operator which has 170 sites in the UK.

['Sunshine shifts' and parasols as English pubs prepare for reopening](#)  
[Read more](#)

“It is undemocratic, it's potentially incredibly discriminatory, and it is requiring a sector which has suffered immeasurable financial losses through the last 15 months to have to adhere to yet another nonsense rule in order to operate ‘as normal’,” he said.

He added that the process of checking a Covid health certificate would be easier at venues such as cinemas, theatres or sporting events, where tickets are inspected on entry.

“Going to pubs, bars and restaurants is a much more informal, often off-the-cuff experience where people will just drop in and there isn't a form of checking anything on the door,” Reilley said.

Tim Martin, the outspoken founder and chairman of pub group [JD Wetherspoon](#), a regular critic of the government during the pandemic, criticised the suggestion that vaccine passports could be used to allow venues to dispense with social distancing.

“Wetherspoon's has no faith in this sort of trade-off or in any initiatives dreamt up on a daily or weekly basis, by a small group of ministers, under emergency powers, following discredited and counterproductive curfews, substantial meals, table service, moonshots and other idiocies,” Martin said.

Pub group Fuller, Smith & Turner believes a Covid status scheme is “fraught with issues for the hospitality sector”, according to its chief executive, Simon Emeny.

“It flies in the face of the whole ethos of a public house being one that is open to all, and it will create a superfluous potential point of conflict for our teams,” he said.

Hospitality venues are also concerned that checking customers’ health status would require at least one member of staff to be permanently stationed by the door.

Joining the hospitality industry’s opposition to so-called “vaccine passports” is the UK’s largest nightclub operator, Rekom UK. The government’s current proposals are “not workable or fair”, said a spokesperson for the company which runs venues such as Pryzm in Birmingham and Eden in Newcastle and Manchester.

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The firm, [formerly known as Deltic Group](#) before it was bought out of administration by a Scandinavian hospitality firm in January, operates 42 bars and nightclubs in the UK. It believes that vaccine passports would disadvantage its mostly younger customers, who may not have received their vaccinations by the time clubs are due to be permitted to reopen on 21 June.

The government is also facing a legal case over its decision to delay the opening of indoor hospitality until 17 May, a month after non-essential retail businesses are allowed to reopen.

The high court has agreed to expedite [the case brought by Hugh Osmond](#), a former Pizza Express director, and Sacha Lord, a nightclub and festival operator who is also the Greater Manchester night-time economy adviser, to the week beginning 19 April, when it will be heard by a judge. Osmond and Lord argue there is no scientific reason for allowing people to shop indoors but not eat and drink inside.

[Joe Biden](#)

## Biden announces all US adults will be eligible for Covid vaccine by 19 April

President touts success in accelerating vaccination effort but warns US still in 'life-and-death race' against virus



Joe Biden speaks at the White House in Washington DC on 6 April.  
Photograph: Oliver Contreras/EPA

Joe Biden speaks at the White House in Washington DC on 6 April.  
Photograph: Oliver Contreras/EPA

[Lauren Gambino](#)  
[@laurenegambino](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 17.55 EDT

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Joe Biden announced on Tuesday that all US adults would be eligible to receive the Covid-19 vaccine by 19 April, even as he warned that the nation

was still in a “life-and-death race” against the virus.

Pairing optimism with caution, the president touted the administration’s success in accelerating the pace of the vaccination effort, including the milestone of administering a record [4m doses](#) in a single day. But that progress, he said, is threatened by the rise in coronavirus cases in many states across the US as dangerous variants spread and some officials loosen public health restrictions.

“We aren’t at the finish line. We still have a lot of work to do,” Biden said in remarks at the White House on Tuesday. “We’re still in a life-and-death race against this virus.”

In his remarks, Biden expressed confidence that every American over the age of 18 would be eligible to get in the “virtual line” to be vaccinated soon.

A number of US states have already said they will meet the accelerated timeline, which is roughly two weeks earlier than the initial 1 May goal. Meanwhile, states such as New Jersey and Oregon announced this week that all Americans over 16 would be eligible to sign up for a vaccine on 19 April.

Biden said the new deadline would eliminate uncertainty about eligibility, which varies by state. “No more confusing rules, no more confusing restrictions,” he said.

The president delivered his remarks after visiting a Covid-19 vaccination site in Alexandria, Virginia, where he thanked healthcare workers for administering the shots and urged those getting them to encourage their friends and family to do the same.

“When you go home, get all your friends, tell them, ‘Get a shot when they can,’” he said. “That’s how we’re going to beat this.”

The administration informed governors during a weekly conference call that more than 28m doses of the coronavirus vaccine will be delivered to states this week, the White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, said at her daily briefing. That allocation brings the cumulative total over the past three weeks to 90m doses, she said.

Psaki also said that the administration does not support the creation of a vaccine passport or a federal vaccine database.

“The government is not now, nor will we be supporting a system that requires Americans to carry a credential,” she said. “There will be no federal vaccinations database and no federal mandate requiring everyone to obtain a single vaccination credential.”

Biden also announced that the US had delivered 150m doses of the coronavirus vaccine since the start of his presidency, putting him on track to “beat” his goal of administering 200m shots by his 100th day in office. Biden initially set a goal of achieving 100m shots in his first 100 days, which many experts worried was not ambitious enough. But the administration surpassed that target in March and doubled the number.

The White House has said that more than 40% of US adults have received at least one shot. On Tuesday, Biden touted another encouraging statistic: more than 75% of Americans over the age of 65 have been vaccinated, he said, calling it a “dramatic turnaround” in the country’s fight against the virus.

At the same time, he stressed that vaccinating more than 300 million Americans would take time and until then, he said it was imperative to continue to follow public safety measures like mask wearing and social distancing.

Sketching a tantalizing vision of a Fourth of July barbecue with friends and family, Biden promised: “Better times are ahead.”

“I want to have an Independence Day – an independence from the Covid,” he said, adding that the challenge remained: “How much death, disease and misery are we going to see between now and then.”

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## Greece

# Aegean islands aim to become first fully vaccinated areas of Greece

Authorities vow islands hoping for influx of tourists will be fully inoculated by the end of April

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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With the islands, like the Greek economy at large hugely dependent on tourism, the vaccination programme – codenamed Freedom – has elicited overwhelming support. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

With the islands, like the Greek economy at large hugely dependent on tourism, the vaccination programme – codenamed Freedom – has elicited overwhelming support. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

[Helena Smith](#) in Athens

Tue 6 Apr 2021 12.40 EDT

Isles scattered across the Aegean archipelago are to become the first “Covid-free” areas of Greece as vaccination efforts intensify in tourist destinations hoping for an [influx of summer visitors](#).

In one of the biggest operational challenges of modern times, authorities have vowed at least 69 islands will be fully vaccinated by the end of April.

“We have so many smaller isles,” said Marios Themistocleous, the health ministry official overseeing the programme. “Precisely because they’re so difficult to get supplies to, we decided to vaccinate entire populations in one go with the aim that when they begin receiving tourists, permanent residents are fully vaccinated and protected.”

Under the scheme, conceived with the help of the armed forces, delivery of thousands of vaccines to far-flung isles will be stepped up in the coming weeks.

Themistocleous described the operation as complex and logistically fraught. Planes, helicopters and coastguard boats had been seconded with soldiers, civil protection officials and the police all involved at different stages. “It’s very difficult to transport vaccines to an island,” he told the Guardian. “It requires a specific process involving lots of people ... each one is a special mission from the moment boxes leave our warehouses.”

As urban centres across Greece struggle to suppress the third wave of coronavirus infections now [spreading across Europe](#), the country’s vast array of islands have remained remarkably untouched by the crisis.

On Lipsi, part of the southern Aegean’s Dodecanese chain, Fotis Mangos, the island’s mayor, proudly proclaims there has been “only one case” since the outbreak of the pandemic. “And that was of a soldier who returning from leave was found to be positive,” he said.

“We look at Athens, and other cities, and realise how lightly it’s touched us. We’ve been in lockdown, our shops and schools are shut, but I put our success to throwing all our weight at people coming in. They’re tested twice and we’re very strict about it.”

With the island, like the Greek economy at large hugely dependent on tourism, Mangos said the vaccination programme – codenamed Freedom – had elicited overwhelming support.

[Vaccine passport plan could help Britons holiday in Greece](#)

[Read more](#)

Almost the entire adult population of the 800 people permanently living on Lipsi had been vaccinated. “Forty-five percent are under the age of 18 but nearly everyone who is eligible have had both shots and 86 people are getting their second jab this weekend. I hear tourist bookings are up. We’re very, very satisfied.”

On the adjacent island of Patmos, popular with celebrities, religious pilgrims and the well-heeled cosmopolitan elite, the prospect of being “Covid-free” within weeks has been met with elation.

“In the winter we have around 3,100 people living here and most over the age of 60 have been vaccinated,” said Eleftherios Pentes, its mayor. “The list closes this Friday and almost everyone between the ages of 18 and 59 is signing up for the shot. Last November we had 25 Covid cases here and I think it was a lesson for all of us.”

The scheme, which is echoed on the other side of the world as Thailand puts the island resort of [Phuket to the front of its vaccine queue](#), is not without critics. This week the Greek tourism minister, Haris Theoharis, insisted that with the nation setting a target date of [14 May](#) to reopen to tourists, the focus was not only on islands but “all of Greece” being a safe destination.

On outposts that can often feel cut off from the rest of the world out of season, the vaccination drive has also boosted morale. For those working in the tourist sector it had been very positively welcomed after last year’s terrible showings, said Dimitris Grillis, who runs a small hotel on Patmos.

“Just the idea that we are going to be Covid-free removes a whole layer of uncertainty,” he enthused. “You have to be happy to work and practically and psychologically this will help motivate staff. Last year we had the sort of losses you see in war.”

Even as far away as Australia, programme Freedom has not gone unnoticed. “We’re very pleased and very comforted,” said Chrissie Verevis who in more normal times spends much of the year with her husband, Yiannis, on Kastellorizo, an island opposite the Turkish coast that is often at the centre of friction with Ankara. “It’s an unexpected delight that this tiny, and at times vulnerable island, should now be in such an enviable position globally.”

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## Brazil

# Brazil's coronavirus death toll passes 4,000 a day for first time

Covid crisis 'out of control', says expert as president Jair Bolsonaro continues to resist lockdown

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A patient being taken by ambulance to a dedicated coronavirus hospital in Rio de Janeiro state on Tuesday. Brazil's death toll has climbed to almost 337,000. Photograph: Felipe Dana/AP

A patient being taken by ambulance to a dedicated coronavirus hospital in Rio de Janeiro state on Tuesday. Brazil's death toll has climbed to almost 337,000. Photograph: Felipe Dana/AP

[Tom Phillips](#) in Rio de Janeiro and agencies

Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.48 EDT

Brazil's coronavirus catastrophe has deepened further after more than 4,000 daily deaths were reported for the first time since the outbreak began in February last year.

At least 4,195 people were reported to have lost their lives on Tuesday, taking Brazil's total death toll – the world's second highest after the US – to nearly 337,000.

Brazil also reported 86,979 new infections. Experts fear a record 100,000 Brazilians could lose their lives this month alone if nothing is done.

“It's a nuclear reactor that has set off a chain reaction and is out of control. It's a biological Fukushima,” said Miguel Nicolelis, a Brazilian doctor and professor at Duke University in the US, who is closely tracking the virus.

### [Brazil deaths](#)

Despite the growing crisis, Brazil's far-right president, [Jair Bolsonaro](#), continues to resist the idea of a lockdown and downplay the epidemic. “In which country aren't people dying?” he said last week.

Brazil, which has 212 million citizens compared with the US's 328 million, is expected to overtake the US weekly average for daily deaths in the coming days.

Many governors, mayors and judges are reopening parts of the economy despite lingering chaos in overcrowded hospitals and a collapsed healthcare system in several parts of the country. Local authorities nationwide claim that numbers of cases and hospitalisations are trending downward after a week of a partial shutdown.

Miguel Lago, the executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials, said reopening was a mistake that he feared would bring even higher death numbers, though he thought it unlikely to be reversed.

“The fact is the anti-lockdown narrative of President Jair Bolsonaro has won,” Lago said. “Mayors and governors are politically prohibited from

beefing up social distancing policies because they know supporters of the president, including business leaders, will sabotage it.”

Bolsonaro, who has long dismissed the risks of the coronavirus, remains fully against lockdowns as damaging to the economy.

### Brazil cases

Covid-19 patients are using more than 90% of beds in intensive care units in most Brazilian states, though figures have stabilised over the past week. Still, hundreds of people are dying as they wait for care and basic supplies such as oxygen and sedatives are running out in several states.

Less than 3% of Brazil’s 210 million people have received both doses of coronavirus vaccines, according to Our World in Data, an online research site.

Over the weekend, supreme court justices started a tug of war about the reopening of religious buildings, which were closed by many local authorities despite a federal government decision to label them as essential services.

Some churches welcomed their faithful on Easter Sunday, but others were stopped by mayors and governors. Their reopening will be settled at the supreme court on Wednesday, but some local councils, such as Belo Horizonte, voted on Tuesday to keep religious buildings open.

Also on Tuesday, a Rio de Janeiro judge allowed schools to reopen as the mayor, Eduardo Paes, wanted. Hours later, the mayors of Campinas and Sorocaba, two of the most populous cities in São Paulo state, agreed to reopen business with a drive-through purchase system after a 10-day halt.

Professional football executives in São Paulo said they expected to play games this week after a 15-day interruption, promising local prosecutors they would follow stricter health protocols.

*The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report*

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## Teaching

# Teachers reject Covid catchup options of extended school day and shorter holidays

Union survey in England, Wales and Northern Ireland also shows lack of enthusiasm for tutoring scheme

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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National Education Union members called for flexibility in the curriculum rather than more time spent at school. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/the Guardian

National Education Union members called for flexibility in the curriculum rather than more time spent at school. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/the Guardian

[Sally Weale](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

The overwhelming majority of teachers – 98% – are opposed to an extended school day and shorter holidays as a means of helping children’s learning recovery after the pandemic, according to a major union poll, which also revealed a lack of enthusiasm for the government’s tutoring scheme.

The wide-ranging survey of 10,000 members of the National Education Union (NEU) highlighted the devastating impact of poverty on disadvantaged children, [exposed by the pandemic](#), with teachers describing panic in families struggling without [free school meal vouchers](#), and having to support families evicted during the Covid crisis.

The survey, conducted between 2 and 10 March, involved 10,696 union members in schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including classroom teachers, support staff and headteachers..

The government has said it was considering all options to help pupils catch up on [learning lost](#) during the pandemic, including [longer school days](#) and shorter holidays, as well as subsidised one-to-one and small-group tuition for disadvantaged pupils.

NEU members, asked a series of questions about the best way to achieve education recovery, called instead for flexibility in the curriculum (82%), as well as more opportunities for sport and exercise (68%) and an increase in creative and practical learning (66%).

Just 21% agreed that tuition, under the government’s [controversial national tutoring programme](#), was important and just one in 10 agreed that “a strong focus on delivering all of the existing curriculum” was the best way forward.

The survey concluded that school staff supported working with students “in a way that is nimble and unconstrained by curriculum diktat, with active and creative elements forming a strong part of that approach”.

Asked, through multiple choice questions, what interventions the government should be making, 85% said teacher workload should be kept at

an acceptable level and 80% called for a focus on the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of students.

Almost seven in 10 (68%) said the government should urgently tackle child poverty as the best way to support pupils after lockdown. Members' comments showed that school staff have at times been a lifeline for poor families struggling during the pandemic.

"I called home during the first lockdown and spoke to an older sibling who was panicking because the free school meals vouchers email hadn't arrived," said one NEU member. "It was the evening before a bank holiday weekend and there was no food in the house. I will never forget the panic in that girl's voice. No school child should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from."

Another said: "We have had pupils and their families move in to hostels during the pandemic when they were evicted. They were rehoused – but literally were given a house. No furniture, ovens, fridge, washing machine, no carpets. Nothing. We rallied as a school and furnished two homes."

"In 20 years teaching I have never seen the situation so bad," said another.

The survey, published on the first day of the NEU's annual conference, which is a virtual event this year because of Covid restrictions, showed 69% of respondents were enjoying new ways of working with technology during lockdowns, 57% said online parents' evenings were a good innovation, and nearly half (49%) welcomed the greater public recognition of the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

[Mary Bousted, NEU joint general secretary](#), said: "If the government is serious about building back better, then they should take on board these views. Education professionals have been on the frontline, either virtual or physical, throughout the last 12 months and it is their insights on what has worked best that should be taken forward."

The shadow education secretary, Kate Green, said the government's "chaotic" response to the pandemic had exposed inequalities that had been holding children back during a decade of failed Conservative governments.

“Labour, parents and teachers are calling on the government to prioritise delivering a world class education for every child, with valued staff supporting them to recover learning and delivering activities that promote wellbeing, rather than half-baked ideas about the length of the school day or term dates.”

A government spokesperson said: “We have already invested £1.7bn in ambitious catch-up plans, with the majority of this targeted towards those most in need, while giving schools the flexibility of funding to use as they believe best to support their pupils.

“We are working with parents, teachers and schools to develop a long-term plan to make sure all pupils have the chance to recover from the impact of the pandemic – and we have appointed Sir Kevan Collins as education recovery commissioner to specifically oversee these issues.’

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## [Coronavirus](#)

# Ministers' plans for Covid status certificates run into growing opposition

Hospitality sector joins Labour MPs and backbench Tories in opposing plans for passes

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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An NHS Covid vaccination card, used to log records of inoculations.  
Photograph: Alan Morris/Alamy

An NHS Covid vaccination card, used to log records of inoculations.  
Photograph: Alan Morris/Alamy

[Peter Walker](#), [Aubrey Allegretti](#) and [Joanna Partridge](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 15.09 EDT

Ministers' plans for [Covid status certificates](#) to help ease the UK out of lockdown risk descending into chaos after hospitality groups joined opposition parties and Conservative MPs in opposing the idea.

In a demonstration of the strength of feeling among dozens of Tories, backbencher Steve Baker said forcing people to show an app-based pass to go to shops, pubs or other crowded public places would create a “miserable dystopia of Checkpoint Britain”.

[Labour plans to vote against the plans](#), calling them “discriminatory” and saying the party would in particular oppose the idea of passes being needed to go to most shops, a possibility spelled out in an official review of the idea published this week.

Ministers also face a revolt against the idea within the bar and nightclub industry, with pub chains saying it would particularly penalise a sector heavily reliant on impromptu customers who can arrive at will.

Under the proposals, a pass could be granted through proof of vaccination, a negative Covid test from that day or the previous day, or a test showing antibodies for coronavirus within the last 180 days. The same system would be used within the UK, and for international travel.

The review talked of certificates being used in theatres, nightclubs, sports events and festivals, and to help cut the need for social distancing in pubs and restaurants, as well as for all shops except those deemed essential.

[Boris Johnson confirms easing of England lockdown next week](#)

[Read more](#)

But asked which stores would count as essential, Boris Johnson's spokesperson said: “I obviously don't have that detail for you now.” He added that certificates “could have an important role to play both domestically and internationally, in terms of allowing people to move back to something more close to normal”.

Downing Street argues that the process remains at an early stage and has to be looked at, in part because of the expectation that without an official



scheme different sectors and businesses will impose their own requirements.

But it faces a particular fightback from the hospitality industry, with three nationwide pub and bar chains and the UK's largest nightclub operator voicing their opposition to the plans.

“This feels like a measure which is unreasonably targeting our sector, they are not proposing this to go into a supermarket,” said Alex Reilley, founder of Loungers, a bar and restaurant operator which has 170 sites in the UK.

“It is undemocratic, it's potentially incredibly discriminatory, and it is requiring a sector which has suffered immeasurable financial losses through the last 15 months to have to adhere to yet another nonsense rule in order to operate ‘as normal’,” he said.

He added that the process of checking a Covid certificate would be easier at venues such as cinemas, theatres or sporting events, where tickets are inspected on entry.

“Going to pubs, bars and restaurants is a much more informal, often off-the-cuff experience where people will just drop in and there isn't a form of checking anything on the door,” Reilley said.

Tim Martin, the outspoken founder and chairman of pub group, [JD Wetherspoon](#), a regular critic of the government during the pandemic, criticised the suggestion that vaccine passports could be used to allow venues to dispense with social distancing.



Simon Emeny (left) said the scheme ‘flies in the face of the whole ethos of a public house’. Tim Martin, chairman and founder of Wetherspoon’s, ‘had no faith in this sort of trade-off’. Photograph: Sky News

“Wetherspoon’s has no faith in this sort of trade-off or in any initiatives dreamt up on a daily or weekly basis, by a small group of ministers, under emergency powers, following discredited and counterproductive curfews, substantial meals, table service, moonshots and other idiocies,” Martin said.

Simon Emeny, chief executive of pub group Fuller, Smith & Turner, said a Covid status scheme “flies in the face of the whole ethos of a public house being one that is open to all, and it will create a superfluous potential point of conflict for our teams”.

The UK’s largest nightclub operator, Rekom UK, which runs 42 bars and nightclubs, said the plan was “not workable or fair”, and would discriminate against its mostly younger customers, who will be having vaccinations later.

The plan faces the even more significant obstacle of getting through the Commons. While Downing Street has yet to absolutely confirm MPs would get a say, Nadhim Zahawi, the vaccines minister, said on Tuesday that if the plans went ahead “then of course we will go to parliament for a vote”.



At least 40 Tory MPs have said they would oppose the plans, as well as the Liberal Democrats and Labour backbenchers on the left of the party. If other Labour MPs joined in, the government's 80-seat majority would be in severe peril.

Late on Tuesday, the SNP's Westminster leader Ian Blackford has said that as things stand, the party's 44 MPs would not back the measures in a Commons vote, making it even harder to pass. "The UK government hasn't published any proposals yet, and the Tory position has been mired in confusion and contradiction. On the basis of the information available, there is not a proposition in front of us that SNP MPs could support," he said.

Labour had previously said it was likely to vote against "domestic vaccine passports". Sources said later this did not mean opposing certificates based just on vaccination records, but included the wider proposals outlined in the government review.

[What are Covid-status certificates and how might they work?](#)  
[Read more](#)

A party briefing emailed to Labour MPs confirmed the party would oppose "[domestic vaccine passports](#)", which it said would bring uncertain benefits but "add a huge burden to businesses and come at huge cost to the taxpayer".

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour's shadow health secretary, said that forcing everyone to carry an "ID card" to show their health status would not be fair: "I'm not going to support a policy that, here in my Leicester constituency, if someone wants to go into Next or H&M, they have to produce a vaccination certificate on their phone, on an app."

The party could, however, support the idea of one-off tests to allow people into events like football matches. The government is running a series of pilot events this month, including having crowds at the FA Cup semi-finals and final.

Baker, the Tory backbencher who is deputy chair of the Covid Recovery Group, which is calling for a faster economic reopening in light of the speed

of the UK's vaccination rollout, said a certificate scheme, or a requirement for regular tests "would be discriminatory, lead to a two-tier Britain and be entirely incompatible with freedom".

He said: "After the toll families and friends have paid all over the country in the face of Covid, and after enduring the devastating cycle of lockdowns and restrictions, the last thing we should do is allow Covid to have the victory of changing our country forever into the miserable dystopia of Checkpoint Britain."

Asked about the growing revolt, Allegra Stratton, the prime minister's press secretary, sought to play down any nervousness in Downing Street about the fierce opposition.

"We are quite a way away from knowing specifics of the proposal," she said. "There isn't yet a conversation to be had with backbenchers because we haven't yet got the proposal."

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## 2021.04.07 - Spotlight

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- [Analysis Why Godzilla vs. Kong saved cinema, not Tenet](#)

# Escaping the pandemic: East London's secret paradise – in pictures

Hackney heatwave ... 'River goers would spread towels along the banks and just relax' Photograph: Sophia Evans/The Observer

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2021/apr/07/escaping-the-pandemic-east-london-secret-paradise-sophia-evans-in-pictures>

## Art

# The horror safari: why was Francis Bacon so triggered by dead elephants?



‘A release’ ... one of Beard’s photographs from the 1970s. Photograph: Peter Beard/Estate of Peter Beard

‘A release’ ... one of Beard’s photographs from the 1970s. Photograph: Peter Beard/Estate of Peter Beard

When the great painter died, 200 macabre photographs of elephant carcasses were found in his studio. They were by Peter Beard – and they propelled the artist into the heart of darkness



[Jonathan Jones](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

If you look into the eyes of a portrait, especially a self-portrait, by Rembrandt, you seem to see a “soul”. Such religious ideas and readings have shaped the story of art from its very beginnings and continue to seduce us today. But [Francis Bacon](#) was the first artist to paint people as animals. His subjects are rendered without souls, as flesh and bone, as blood and brain – in short, as animated meat. This ruthless Darwinian vision of the struggle of life makes him one of the most unnerving of artists. And his radical eye for humankind’s natural history gives a certain resonance to his friendship with one of the most brilliant wildlife photographers of the 20th century.

After the Irish-born British painter died in 1992, more than 200 photographs of dead elephants were found in his London studio. They were given to him by Peter Beard, who took many of them from an aeroplane flying low over the grasslands of Kenya. The two would converse avidly about Beard’s images of these great, grey giants slowly rotting into monuments of white bone and ivory in the African sun. They inspired some of Bacon’s most pungent thoughts about art and life. “I would say the photographs of elephants,” he said, “are naturally suggestive.” What he saw was “a trigger – a release”.

Beard's charged photographs of dead elephants are about to go on show at Ordovas in London, alongside a great diptych of the photographer by Bacon himself, called *Two Studies for Portrait* and featuring near-identical images. The black void in which Beard's face is isolated invades part of his face. His left cheek has gone and his mouth is a gory mess. It seems likely that this double portrait, painted in 1976, was inspired by photographs of first world war soldiers with horrific facial wounds. It is a good example of how Bacon let photographs "release" his thoughts.



Devoured by the void ... Bacon's portraits of Beard. Photograph: Estate of Francis Bacon/DACS/Artimage 2021

The work reveals Bacon's complicated feelings for a man he loves but cannot have, at least not physically. The photographer's renowned good looks are still there in the portrait, despite the disfigurement. The pair met in 1965 but their relationship intensified from 1972 onwards, as Bacon mourned and tried to recover from his disastrous relationship with small-time criminal George Dyer. [In 1971, Dyer was found dead](#) from an overdose in the toilet of a Paris hotel where he and Bacon were staying, just before the opening of a retrospective at the Grand Palais that would secure Bacon's reputation as the greatest figurative painter since Picasso.

Bacon's art in the 70s is one long howl at this loss, not just in his depictions of his lover's death, but with a string of despairing self-portraits, too. Then suddenly, in the middle of this anguish, he starts portraying Beard. And you see something like joy emerging. He's in love. A friend observed that Bacon had "a thing" for the photographer. But you don't need the gossip. The portraits say it all.

Beard was a nightclub regular who married model Cheryl Tiegs and is credited with "discovering" [Iman](#), after spotting her on a street in Nairobi. Born wealthy, the New Yorker styled himself after Ernest Hemingway, but instead of hunting Africa's big mammals, he reported their peril in his 1965 book *The End of the Game*. [He died last year at 82](#), after vanishing from his Long Island home and wandering into woods, where his body was found more than a fortnight later. He had dementia.



'Complicated feelings' ... Bacon, left, and Beard in the 1970s. Photograph: Estate of Peter Beard

It wasn't just Beard's looks that inspired Bacon. The two shared an intense creative dialogue driven by a shared passion for animals, Africa and the macabre. In *The End of the Game*, Beard included pictures of living elephants as well as the rotting forms and desolate skeletons of creatures that



starved to death due, he argued, to the mismanagement of wildlife reserves. With each edition, he added more shots of elephant remnants.

Dead elephants trigger off more ideas than living ones. They are suggestive of all types of beauty

Taken from above, these photographs home in on death with a raw honesty. There is what an elephant looks like when its insides have been eaten away. And here is what one looks like when it is nothing but a bleached structure of bone. Bacon found these much more memorable than the shots of live elephants. He explained why in 1972, when the two met in London to record a series of conversations known as The Dead Elephant Interviews. “Dead elephants,” he told Beard, “are more beautiful because they trigger off more ideas in me than living ones. Alive, they just remain beautiful elephants, whereas the other ones are suggestive of all types of beauty.”

It is a startling concept of the beautiful: Bacon clearly took a perverse pleasure in what some might call horror. “I once saw a bad car accident on a large road,” he says at one point in the conversations, “and the bodies were strewn about with broken glass from the car, and the blood and various possessions, and it was in fact very beautiful.”



Grey giant ... a live elephant in a shot titled The Snows of Kilimanjaro, Mountain of Caravans, 1984/2008. Photograph: Peter Beard/Estate of Peter Beard

It sounds like he had been reading [Crash](#), JG Ballard's novel about a group of people who are sexually aroused by car accidents, except it wasn't published until the following year. The Dead Elephant Interviews show Bacon as a man of that moment, chatting to the fashionable Beard, who was friends with the likes of Mick Jagger. In his apparently affectless claims that car crashes and dead elephants are beautiful, Bacon captured the darker side of early 1970s decadence.

Of course, he was not as wicked as he sounded. He gave Beard a full explanation of why death can be beautiful – and it's the oldest, most moral theory of art there is. He mentioned the [Isenheim Altarpiece](#), the harrowing masterpiece of German Renaissance art that shows Christ covered with festering sores on his grey-green body, already rotting while still just alive on the cross. "But that is grand horror in the sense that it is so vitalising, isn't it?" said Bacon. "Isn't that how people came out of the great tragedies of Greece, the Agamemnon?"



The horror, the horror ... another from Beard's Dead Elephant series. Photograph: Peter Beard/Estate of Peter Beard

In other words, a dead elephant is something on a par with Greek tragedy. Here are the remains of a creature so immense it's like a living world in its own right. And we are not the only animals impressed by the sight of elephant bones: the creatures themselves will recognise the remains of their species. They will stop by skeletons and fondle the bones with their trunks.

Bacon's admiration for Beard's art was interesting for another reason: it was a unique instance of him treating photographs as something more than raw material. He took medical illustrations, female nudes and [Eadweard Muybridge's famous motion studies](#) and transfigured them – quoting them in new contexts, assimilating them into his nightmares of sex and death in orange rooms. But his friendship with Beard was that of two artists. Photography did not have the artistic status in the 1970s that it enjoys today. Bacon gave Beard confidence he was making art. Encouraged by this approval, Beard created collages and annotated albums of his nature photographs. It may be that Bacon helped Beard to see photography in a new way.

One of their shared passions was Joseph Conrad's 1902 story [Heart of Darkness](#), which inspired the film *Apocalypse Now*. In the book, narrator Marlow skips a boat on the River Congo where he meets Kurtz, a supposedly idealistic imperialist who turns out to be a dying husk of moral nothingness. For Bacon, there was a bit of Kurtz in this last of the great white photograph hunters. One of the photographs Beard sent Bacon was not by him, but of him: it showed Beard with a shaved head, after he was arrested for assaulting a poacher on his ranch in Kenya. Bacon turned this photograph into a giant looming head in a large and spectacular painting called [Triptych 1976](#), which he told friends was directly influenced by Conrad's story – as well as Greek drama. It also features a man cradling an elephant fetus in his lap.

Does Conrad's story also explain the black void that so encroaches on Beard's face in Bacon's other portrait of the photographer? It was painted the same year. The face that saw so many dead elephants seems to be literally consumed by, to quote the famous line from *Heart of Darkness*, the horror, the horror of it all. No other artist in recent times has created such a comprehensive personal mythology, such a claustrophobic theatre of tragic extremes. Despite Bacon's feelings for the photographer, he couldn't resist

his own creative urge – to turn those impressive features into a ruin, a tragedy, another dead elephant.

[Wild Life: Francis Bacon and Peter Beard is at Ordovas, London, 12 April-16 July.](#)

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## US television

# **‘Sometimes, it’s shocking’: Raoul Peck on his bold new colonialism series**



Director Raoul Peck and Josh Hartnett making *Exterminate All the Brutes*.  
Photograph: HBO

Director Raoul Peck and Josh Hartnett making *Exterminate All the Brutes*.  
Photograph: HBO

The Oscar-nominated film-maker behind *I Am Not Your Negro* returns with *Exterminate All the Brutes*, a dense new HBO docuseries about a horrifying history

[Lisa Wong Macabasco](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.19 EDT

Truly, what else was there left to say about race in America after the words of James Baldwin? This is what Raoul Peck found himself contemplating after the success of his 2016 documentary, *I Am Not Your Negro*, which was nominated for an Academy Award and won an Emmy, a Bafta and a César



award. He was confounded and disappointed to realize that some audiences, particularly in Europe, weren't fully comprehending the work of what he calls "one of the best, if not the best analyst of what racism is", believing it to be primarily an American concern.

['We're all part of the story': behind Will Smith's 14th amendment docuseries](#)  
[Read more](#)

"I wanted to prove them wrong, that in fact they *are* the origin story and that United States racism is just the continuation of a long history of Eurocentric domination," he told the Guardian via phone from Paris. "If Baldwin's words are not sufficient to understand what it is about, what else can? I felt the need to even go to a broader scope of the story of racism and white supremacy."

His new [HBO](#) series *Exterminate All the Brutes* is a sweeping journey back through some of the most horrific moments in civilization over the past half-millennium to trace the roots of humanity's worst impulses: genocide, slavery, fascism, white supremacy, colonialism. Written, directed and narrated by Peck, the four-hour series (pruned down from 15 episodes) is scaffolded by the ideas of three cornerstone texts: Sven Lindqvist's *Exterminate All the Brutes* (examining Europe's genocidal colonization of Africa), Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (the first history of the country told from the perspective of indigenous peoples) and Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past* (an analysis of power and silence in history, focusing on Haitian history). The work of the three authors, who are credited in the opening titles, serves as a lodestar in the same way Baldwin's writing did in *I Am Not Your Negro*.

Peck spent three years assembling a staggering battery of imagery, including archival footage, film clips, infographics, historical documents and ephemera, photographs, artwork, scripted interludes and animated scenes. (Conspicuously missing are talking heads.) The result is a discursive collage of uncommon ambition that connects injustices and atrocities from the Spanish Inquisition (when the notion of biological race was born) to Christopher Columbus, the transatlantic slave trade, the Indian Removal Act, the Alamo, the Congo Free State, the Battle of Omdurman, the Nazis, Hiroshima and the presidency of Donald Trump, braiding the micro with the

macro, personal accounts with mass culture, history with contemporary life and fiction. As Baldwin himself said: “History is not the past – it is the present.”

And the personal: Peck also threads his own peripatetic story throughout, via family snapshots, Super 8 home movies, clips from his own films and gravelly narration, leveraging his distinct experience as one raised in former colonies (Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) who has now spent many decades in colonizers’ nations (the US, France, Germany). “I am an immigrant from a shithole country,” he says over footage of his family, smiling, at leisure.

References to Trump are many, but Peck says he didn’t intend to speak to our particular age or any specific audience. “I don’t go about my work looking for what is the right moment. On the contrary, my work is always from a very organic point of view. I just follow the vibes around me. There is a limited amount of film that I probably will be able to make. I do make sure that my films will survive the test of time. And to be frank with you, I don’t really care if the film is well received or not right now. It’s about, will it be possible for young people in 30 years, 40 years to find that film? They can find some materials to use for their own fight.”

That attitude emboldens him to highlight groups and events that have been silenced in history and interrogate what he sees as taboo topics, like settler colonialism, whereby settlers violently replace indigenous peoples and then use the land in perpetuity. “Everybody needs to acknowledge that the story of the United States started with a genocide,” Peck says. “Until you can do that, nothing makes sense.” He believes this is the first time such concepts have been delineated in a film. “I don’t know any other film that voices it so clearly and so solidly. It’s like a no-no in the US – you don’t play with their origin story. There clearly have been big differences between immigrants, refugees and natives. They decided to call it a country of immigrants, but it’s not.”

The selected film clips are an indictment of cinema’s role in propagating these myths, ranging from *Apocalypse Now* to *Tarzan*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, *Gangs of New York*, *The Last Samurai* and

even the 1949 musical *On the Town*. (Peck has admitted that it was [challenging](#) to secure the rights to some of these clips given the context.) Many literary classics are also marshaled as evidence: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, HG Wells's *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr Moreau*, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*. As Baldwin [put it](#): "We have made a legend out of a massacre."



A still of Caisa Ankarsparre in *Exterminate All the Brutes*. Photograph: HBO

All together, the series is a strident deconstruction of western narratives, both popular and academic, that prods the audience to probe their assumptions. And some of the moments that most challenge are ahistorical or scripted dramatizations: a black priest encounters a group of white children who are shackled and beaten in a jungle; a white photographer brusquely poses Congolese rubber workers whose hands have been cut off for a portrait; a 19th-century scholar lectures on racial hierarchy to jeers from a multicultural, modern audience. "I had feelings, emotions, experiences that were very difficult to convey through normal means, but I knew that I could in fiction," Peck says of these sequences. (Actor Josh Hartnett, who has portrayed several all-American archetypes in his career, was the director's choice to play a murderous white Everyman throughout history.)



[Some reviewers](#) have critiqued the series' relatively brief mentions of sexual violence as a tool of colonization, a reading that Peck calls "very superficial". "For me it's exactly the tribalistic attitude that people have now," he says, his voice rising with irritation. "They only see their own little story. I'm sorry, this story is bigger, and exactly that's what I tend to do, to include everybody, not to say your story is more important."

The series is likely to provoke most viewers in some way, and Peck admits it's a work that demands active participation. "The film is very dense, but I leave room for you as an audience to find your place, to bring your own experience, your own emotion, your own reflection. Sometimes it's shocking what is happening on the screen, but there are moments when you can draw back to yourself. It doesn't leave you outside."

After all, as Peck says in the film: "It's not knowledge we lack. What is missing is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions."

- Exterminate All the Brutes starts on HBO on 7 April and in the UK this summer

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## Television

# 'A lovely bit of squirrel': Paul Ritter's most memorable roles



Clockwise from top left: Paul Ritter in Friday Night Dinner; Vera; Chernobyl; Really Old, Like Forty Five on stage at the National Theatre; and The Trial of Christine Keeler. Composite: Channel 4/HBO/ITV

Clockwise from top left: Paul Ritter in Friday Night Dinner; Vera; Chernobyl; Really Old, Like Forty Five on stage at the National Theatre; and The Trial of Christine Keeler. Composite: Channel 4/HBO/ITV

Ritter carved out a wonderful career, culminating in the acclaimed Chernobyl – but he'll be remembered most as oddball patriarch Martin Goodman in Friday Night Dinner

- [Paul Ritter: Friday Night Dinner star dies of brain tumour at 54](#)



[Stuart Heritage](#)

[@st heritage](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 08.51 EDT

Paul Ritter, who [died on Monday at the age of 54](#), is destined to be remembered as the dad from Friday Night Dinner. And rightly so. If you think of Ritter, or Friday Night Dinner for that matter, one image will almost certainly be seared into your mind: Ritter, walking around with his top off like it was the most normal thing in the world, complaining about the heat, or enquiring after a “lovely bit of squirrel”.

That role, and that image, brought Ritter a level of fame he had previously never achieved. Before the sitcom, which began in 2011, he had worked solidly in a number of small screen parts, usually playing characters who were professions first and people second – Detective Sergeant in 1998’s Big Cat, Geography Teacher in 2007’s Son of Rambow and Prisoner Louis in Hannibal Rising from the same year – while tending to a growing reputation on the stage. In 2006, he was nominated for an Olivier award for Coram Boy, and a Tony three years later for The Norman Conquests.

But [Friday Night Dinner](#) would change that. Ritter was the least well-known performer on the show – Simon Bird came into it with the white heat of The

Inbetweeners, Tamsin Grieg juggled it with Episodes and Tom Rosenthal was a fast-rising comedian – but by the end of the first episode he was undoubtedly the star. Martin Goodman was one of those tremendous characters who seem to exist in a looping orbit that only occasionally intersects with the rest of the show they appear in. He was a Father Jack, a Barney Gumble, a Super Hans: a big, broad figure capable of crashing into an episode, setting it on fire and leaving a crater for the other characters to work around. That he managed to combine this with a weird relatability is testament to Robert Popper's writing and Ritter's skill as an actor. There have so far been three attempts to remake [Friday Night Dinner](#) in the US. You suspect that the main reason for their failure was the lack of Paul Ritter.

Friday Night Dinner brought the actor recognition, along with bigger roles. He played an eccentric forensics expert in Paul Abbott's [No Offence](#), rarely driving the plot, but considerably brightening things up whenever he was on screen. He did the same in Hang Ups, Stephen Mangan's adaptation of the US show Web Therapy, quietly carving out MVP status alongside big hitters including Charles Dance, Richard E Grant and Celia Imrie. And in the Cold Feet revival he played a lifeless, weaselly number cruncher with such panache that you could at times be forgiven for thinking that it was actually secretly a show about him.

But at the same time, Ritter also carved out a decent niche as a character actor in prestigious period pieces. In 2012's The Hollow Crown, he was a swaggering, overcompensatory Ancient Pistol. In Toby Whithouse's The Game, he added huge depth to a quietly regret-filled cold war spy. He played Jimmy Perry and Eric Sykes. He played Christine Keeler's barrister and Brigadier-General Sir Ormonde de l'Épée Winter.

And in [Chernobyl](#), he played Anatoly Dyatlov. In a downbeat, dread-soaked miniseries about catastrophic lapses of judgment, the sneering, lazy Dyatlov was the closest thing to an all-out villain. It was Dyatlov's arrogant ineptitude that caused a routine test to result in the worst nuclear plant disaster in the history of the planet. To those who only knew Ritter's work on Friday Night Dinner, Dyatlov's casual cruelty was a revelation. It was hard to watch the show without fully hating him.

Chernobyl wasn't Ritter's final role (he subsequently appeared in Julian Fellowes's *Belgravia*) but it was his last truly indelible one. It marked yet another breakthrough, and a future full of bigger baddies in high-profile projects seemed certain. That we have been robbed of that is a great sadness. That we will always have Martin Goodman – belly out, muttering “Shit on it” to nobody in particular – is a gift. Paul Ritter won't be forgotten in a hurry.

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## Television & radio

# **‘My TV bellwether, my wonderful friend’: a tribute to Sarah Hughes**

Lady Sarah faced her illness with such bravery, even writing Line of Duty recaps from her hospital bed. With her wit, energy and knowledge, she touched the lives of so many

- [‘Brilliant and versatile’ Observer and Guardian journalist Sarah Hughes dies at 48](#)



‘She gave so much’ ... Sarah Hughes at Glastonbury in 2005. Photograph: © Alex Maguire

‘She gave so much’ ... Sarah Hughes at Glastonbury in 2005. Photograph: © Alex Maguire



[Kate Abbott](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 11.06 EDT

They called her Lady Sarah, and they came for her in their droves.

Over the past 10 years, Sarah Hughes cultivated the most wonderful and witty community for fans of the cultural juggernaut [Game of Thrones](#). Readers flocked to [her weekly recaps](#) to share in her great love and knowledge of television. With boundless energy and absolutely no spoilers, she gave telly addicts a home and she always made them feel loved and listened to.

I had the honour of editing my TV bellwether, my wonderful friend, [who died of cancer on Monday](#) after outliving by years the prognosis doctors dared to give her. I put her longevity down to her passion for life, telly, trashy books, Tottenham Hotspur and Cheltenham races – plus, of course, the depth of her love for her husband, Kris, and their two children, Ruby and Oisín.

[‘Find a part of each day to relish’: coping with cancer and Covid](#)  
[Read more](#)



Sarah's devotion to the job was gobsmacking. Her oncologist told her not to wake up at 2am to watch the final episode of [Game of Thrones](#) live. Did she listen to them (or us)? She did not. She filed before the crack of dawn, her piece as funny and detailed as ever.

That morning, I wept as I read [the outpouring of thanks below the line](#) – thousands of people whose lives were touched by Sarah, whose writing amused them greatly and bettered their lives. She gave so much and was always willing to discuss every theory, no matter how daft. Each week, she appeared on the list of the most prolific staff commenters at the Guardian and Observer – although she always laughed with bitter irony that she was never a staffer at all. But what dedication she showed to the end. Today, I weep again.

[Line of Duty recap: series six episode three – the old band are back together](#)  
[Read more](#)

There are so many brilliant things to remember, though. When the creator of Game of Thrones, George RR Martin, decided to give one interview around the [finale of the show](#), he sought her out. No one else would do. [Kit Harington](#), who played Jon Snow, once rushed to find her at an awards ceremony to let her know how sorry he was to hear about her illness – and how much he loved her writing. Oh, how she dined out on that.

Her reach went way beyond Game of Thrones, of course. On top of reviewing for various publications and writing copious articles and interviews, she somehow found the time to create similar communities online for fans of [Line of Duty](#) – defending to the hilt her beloved Ted Hastings, who may emerge as the ultimate Weasel of the Week – plus [Peaky Blinders](#), [Taboo](#) and many more hit shows. I am so glad she got to see how Game of Thrones ended, but I am devastated she didn't live to see through Line of Duty.

[George RR Martin: 'Game of Thrones finishing is freeing, I'm at my own pace'](#)  
[Read more](#)



Sarah was so strong for so long after she was told she had stage 4 cancer, and that it was incurable. She was so strong when they told her if she got Covid they couldn't do anything to help her. She was so strong when she started the Game of Thrones journey for the Guardian just three days after her child was stillborn. She was so strong when she filed copy about [Line of Duty](#) from her final hospital bed.

I hope, Ruby and Oisín, that you can see through the unbearable sadness how many lives your mum touched.

And dear Lady Sarah, our archmaester, keeper of the scrolls and the ultimate watcher on the Wall: we all raise a glass of the finest Dornish red to you. Fare thee well.

- Kate Abbott is the Guardian's TV editor. She is on maternity leave

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## Self-catering

# A floating cabin break on the Broads



Messing about on the river ... sailing outside the Coot Club cabin at Hipperson's.

Messing about on the river ... sailing outside the Coot Club cabin at Hipperson's.

Reopening on 12 April, this boatyard on the Suffolk-Norfolk border is an idyllic base for rowing, kayaking, wild swimming and forgetting about the world under big, beautiful skies

[Isabel Choat](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.08 EDT

“Mum! I’m taking the boat out ...”

For a fraction of a second I hesitated ... it would take more than a few days to shake off my city-dweller nerves about letting my child roam free. But that was exactly why – after the first lockdown – we’d come to Hipperson’s

on the Suffolk-Norfolk border: for open space, fresh air and the chance for my 10-year-old to run wild(ish).

The rowing boat was tied to our floating cabin, which was moored at Hipperson's, a small working boatyard on an inlet of the River Waveney – a safe space for children to practise rowing or paddling without risk of disappearing upriver or colliding with a motor cruiser.

“Breakfast will be here soon!” I shouted as he set off, grappling with the unwieldy oars. As with virtually every other small business around the country, [Beccles station cafe](#) has tried to claw back income lost to the pandemic by diversifying, and owner Pauline's solution is to provide breakfast hampers to local self-catering businesses, including Hipperson's. I sat on our tiny deck waiting for our delivery, as a swan with a sixth sense that food was on its way pecked at the cabin.



Sunset at Hipperson's. Photograph: Isabel Choat

Mary Sparrow, a former headteacher, and her husband, Simon, who worked in IT, bought the boatyard in the small market town of Beccles in 2014, swapping stressful London lives for a life on the river. Little did they know that a few years later they'd face the worst tourism crisis on record. But, despite the pandemic, Mary has no regrets.

“I wouldn’t go back to education,” she told me. “This is almost semi-retirement – we work long hours but look at the setting! During lockdown we’ve had time to sit and enjoy the view. My senses have adapted and I’ve been able to see much more: kingfishers; barn owls. I notice more.”

Preparing to come out of the first lockdown was a mad dash as the couple rushed to adapt to new rules and regulations to ensure the safety of their family, staff and guests. This time round they are more than ready for reopening on 12 April. “We’re looking forward to it. Last year there were still so many unknowns: we couldn’t be sure how long we would be allowed to stay open. We’re much happier about it now. All the systems and processes are in place. We feel more confident.”



View from the Coot Club cabin.

This year they’ve added a beautiful curvy, wooden land-based pod to the collection of floating homes. Our cabin, the sky-blue Coot Club, had two rooms and a combined kitchen/diner/living room. From the front we could watch the comings and goings of the boatyard; from the back we had a view of Mary and Simon’s houseboat, Misterton, a Lincoln keel barge that was towed from the Thames to the sea and round the coast to Great Yarmouth, where they met it to sail the last stretch along the rivers Yare and Waveney.

In the evenings, I waved at the couple as they sat on their deck enjoying dazzling sunsets – and could see why they didn't miss their London lives.

As well as big skies, the river felt like a natural de-stresser after four months locked down in London. Most of the time. On our trip downriver in an electric boat the peace was broken by me yelling “stay on the right”, as my son zigzagged merrily from bank to bank ignoring river traffic rules and looking everywhere but straight ahead as he gave a running commentary on the trip.



The writer's son pilots their electric boat. Photograph: Isabel Choat

Our other outings were calmer. Steve from the boatyard led us on a kayaking trip upstream. We were on the lookout for otters along the wooded banks. Sadly, my otter-spotting record of zero sightings was maintained. Another afternoon, Mary's son taught mine the basics of sailing in a little dinghy, again in the safe environs of the boatyard. This year Hipperson's is offering a wooden pedal boat, too – another way to explore the river at a slow pace.

The beauty of Beccles is that it's on the southern edge of the Broads, by far the quieter side of the national park. Most of the big hire boats depart from Wroxham in the north. Given that we're heading into a second summer of holidaying at home, the problem of overcrowding in the park's most popular



spots is likely to be even worse this year. Accommodation in the Broads is already nearly 90% booked, according to Mary – who is also chair of [Visit the Broads](#).

Mostly, we cooked in the cabin but on Mary's advice made sure we booked into the [Royal Oak](#), once a so-so sports bar, now an award-winning pizzeria run by fellow London escapers Paul Jackson and Paul Williams, and one of few in the UK to be accredited by Italian pizza association AVPN. It's not much to look at from the outside but when you bite into the pizza you understand why people come from far and wide to eat here. Paul (Jackson) travelled to Naples to learn the art of the Neapolitan pizza – and it shows: the distinctive chewy dough, with just a thin slick of tomato was as good as those I've eaten in Italy. The secret, Paul told me, is in the imported OO flour and the long proving process.



Watersports on the river Waveney. Photograph: Isabel Choat

We travelled to Beccles by train and stayed for just a couple of days so had little time to venture further, although Mary gave me a whistle-stop tour to Oulton Broad (gateway to the southern Broads) via [Carlton nature reserve](#) ('the Broads in miniature') – a route we would have cycled if we'd had more time. Other than excellent pizzas, Beccles has a heated lido, a small museum

(sadly, both were closed on our visit) and photogenic rainbow ice-creams served at the cafe in town.

Of course the main draw is the river. While most of our time was spent messing about *on* the water, we also ventured *into* it briefly: a family in another cabin invited my son for a sunset leap off their balcony; and I opted for an early-morning swim, ever hopeful I might sneak up on one of those otters. I walked up river to the Beccles sailing club and got into the water from the slipway, swimming over the swaying reeds.

Otter count: zero. Motor cruiser count: zero. Sense of wellbeing: 10/10.

**Accommodation was provided by [Hipperson's](#). Floating cabins from £275 for two nights to £875 for a week. Glamping pods from £370 for two nights to £1,295 for a week. Both sleep four. The boatyard also hires out day boats, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards ad pedal boats**

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/apr/07/floating-cabin-break-boating-on-broads-norfolk-suffolk>

## The Great British art tourArt and design

# The Great British Art Tour: what connects a bleeding fresco with Lady Hamilton?



The Festival of the Madonna dell'Arco, 1777, (H102.6 x W153.7 cm), oil on canvas, by Pietro Fabris. Photograph: Compton Verney

The Festival of the Madonna dell'Arco, 1777, (H102.6 x W153.7 cm), oil on canvas, by Pietro Fabris. Photograph: Compton Verney

With public art collections closed we are bringing the art to you, exploring highlights from across the country in partnership with Art UK. Today's pick: The Festival of the Madonna dell'Arco (1777) by Pietro Fabris at Compton Verney in Warwickshire

*Dr Amy Orrock, senior curator, and Annelise Hone, collections manager*  
Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT



It is *Pasquetta* (Easter Monday) in the Neapolitan countryside. Crowds of revellers gather, enjoying the spring air and each other's company. Figures recline beneath the trees, smoking and picnicking, while in the sunlit foreground a group of young girls dance the tarantella, accompanied by musicians. One of the musicians plays a *triccheballacche*, a traditional percussive instrument of southern Italy, with three hammers that produces a sound like a tambourine. The crowds are headed towards the church of the Madonna dell'Arco, on the right, which had been a popular place of pilgrimage since 1450, when a fresco of the virgin and child was accidentally struck by a ball and, as legend has it, began to bleed. The veneration of the shrine intensified after it survived the eruption of Vesuvius in 1631 – this smouldering icon of Naples which features on the far left of the painting.

This 1777 work is one of [Pietro Fabris](#)'s largest and most elaborate canvases. It was originally one of a pair of festive scenes, its pendant showing a nocturnal festival in nearby Posillipo. Fabris painted the works for Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803), the British envoy in Naples. Both men shared an interest in Neapolitan costumes and customs. In 1773 Fabris had produced a book of prints depicting costumes of Naples dedicated to Hamilton, and in 1776 they collaborated on the *Campi Phlegraei*, a book detailing volcanic sites and artefacts.



## Compton Verney in Warwickshire

Perhaps best known today as the husband of Nelson's lover, Emma Hamilton, Sir William Hamilton was a great collector of paintings and classical antiquities, some of which can be seen in [this portrait of him and the first Lady Hamilton](#) in their apartment surrounded by his collection. A 1798 list of the collection indicates that [The Festival of the Madonna dell'Arco](#) hung in an anteroom to the gallery of his Neapolitan home, the Palazzo Sessa.

Cashflow problems following Hamilton's return to England forced him to sell the work to a UK collector for £34.14. It has been on display at Compton Verney house in Warwickshire since 2004, where it forms part of one of the richest collections of Neapolitan art outside Naples and is one of five Fabris works on display.

You can see more art from Compton Verney on [Art UK here](#), and find out more on its [website](#).

*This series is brought to you in collaboration with [Art UK](#), which brings the nation's art together on one digital platform and tells the stories behind the art. The website shows works by 50,000 artists from more than 3,000 venues including museums, universities and hospitals as well as thousands of public sculptures. Discover the art you own [here](#).*

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## Film

# Why Godzilla vs. Kong saved cinema, not Tenet

Christopher Nolan's film baffled audiences – all they wanted in this most bewildering of years was to see a giant ape and a dinosaur going at it for 15 rounds



Godzilla vs. Kong raked in £206m worldwide in its opening days.  
Photograph: PictureLux/The Hollywood Archive/Alamy

Godzilla vs. Kong raked in £206m worldwide in its opening days.  
Photograph: PictureLux/The Hollywood Archive/Alamy

*James Hanton*

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.12 EDT

In any other year, [Godzilla vs. Kong](#) could be filed as just another bloated, unoriginal franchise flick. But this hasn't been any other year. It's a year that has seen trips to the movies stolen away by a global pandemic, as all

blockbuster releases have either been postponed or shifted to a streaming-only release. This being the case, Godzilla vs. Kong has been welcomed as a thunderous return for the big-screen experience. And the numbers show it. The fourth film in Legendary's MonsterVerse raked in [more than £206m \(\\$285m\) at the worldwide box office](#) during its opening days, the highest debut of any American film in the pandemic era. There is a strong chance that it could outperform MonsterVerse's Godzilla: King of the Monsters, which was a financial disappointment in the pre-pandemic era in 2019, grossing \$383m worldwide during one of Hollywood's most lucrative years.

The joy with which Godzilla has been hailed contrasts with the muted response to the highest-performing Hollywood film during the pandemic: Christopher Nolan's Tenet. After a seemingly endless number of delays to its release, Tenet was hyped by both the industry and the press as the film that would "save cinema". For good reason: it was a new big-screen outing for a director who pushes the technological limits of film-making, bedazzling audiences with advancements in visuals, sound and cinematography. Everything Nolan touches turns to gold, it seems.

Except, not this time. When Tenet was released in August last year, it failed to set cinemas alight. Perhaps it was because audiences continued to doubt whether returning to the big screen was worth risking exposure to the virus. Or possibly because Tenet is a two-and-a-half hour flex with a bewildering storyline draped in technical razzle dazzle. Most likely, it was a mixture of both. Its global total didn't [even reach that of Nolan's previous film](#), the "difficult" second world war picture Dunkirk. [So much for saving cinema.](#)

Godzilla vs. Kong has instead romped ahead not as the hero we deserve, but the hero we need. It has chalked up \$200m worldwide in half the time that it took Tenet, enjoying a wider release in places where the virus is under control such as China and New Zealand. Godzilla vs. Kong has also been helped by a slightly wider release in the US compared with Tenet, which opened to tighter restrictions in most states and wasn't able to open at all in California or New York. The hype surrounding Godzilla vs. Kong is different too. With ever-changing release dates, and Nolan's quixotic [insistence on releasing the film in cinemas](#) whatever the cost, the buildup to Tenet was characterised by stubbornness and frustration. By contrast, when the trailer for Godzilla vs. Kong dropped in January and drew in tens of

millions of views, it became rapidly apparent that a giant ape fighting a colossal lizard is exactly what the doctor ordered. Does it bravely push artistic and technical boundaries? No. Does it matter? Not really.

Unlike [Tenet](#), the belief that a great ape and a dinosaur going at it for 15 rounds might save cinema only started to gain traction after the film's release. Rather than forcing something complicated and messy on exhausted cinephiles and punters, *Godzilla vs. Kong* is a simplistic slice of escapist heaven. A film that might otherwise have been forgotten has romped effortlessly to the rescue where [Tenet](#) tried too hard to be the hero.

*Godzilla vs. Kong* speaks volumes about what it will take to keep the movies alive. Something that makes you forget about the outside world, rather than have you longing to go back to it. Cinema is in too perilous a place right now to be stuck up on a high horse. If it takes brainless kaiju carnage to reignite love for the big screen, then we are not really in a position to complain.

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## [Opinion](#)Coronavirus

# What does ‘returning to normal’ mean with a prime minister like Boris Johnson?

[Rafael Behr](#)



We understand it in the context of Covid. But in politics, ‘normal’ can be misleading, and he’s a master of that deception

- [Coronavirus UK – latest updates](#)



Boris Johnson promises ‘some semblance of normality’ at the Downing Street press conference on 5 April. Photograph: Pippa Fowles/No10 Downing Street

Boris Johnson promises ‘some semblance of normality’ at the Downing Street press conference on 5 April. Photograph: Pippa Fowles/No10 Downing Street

Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

The pandemic has been going on long enough that it makes little sense to speak of a return to normal. We are grateful for small emancipations, counting the days to shopping and beer gardens. But the world where we took such things for granted is not the one into which we now gingerly emerge.

Even Boris Johnson has learned to manage expectations, having spent 2020 promising liberty unfeasibly soon and allowing relaxation when it was unsafe. In his [televised press conference](#) on Monday, the prime minister declared himself reluctant to give “hostages to fortune”. There might be “[some semblance of normality](#)” in June, he said.

One difference between “semblance” and the real thing could be a requirement to show proof of Covid negativity to access services – a [vaccine](#)



[passport](#). Johnson confirmed that the concept was being developed, but was cagey on detail.

Supporters of the idea see it as a minor bureaucratic intervention that can repopulate businesses with customers, reviving the nation's economy and its spirits. Opponents see it as an affront to liberty and an engine of discrimination against the unvaccinated.

With Labour and dozens of Tory MPs opposed, the scheme could struggle to clear a Commons vote. If Johnson were still a backbench MP, he would be with the rebellion. He would be mining Stasi analogies to denounce the scheme as impractical and immoral; biometric surveillance by the back door.

Johnson's libertarian impulse can be numbed but not removed by the pressures of running a government. He could have used the press conference to make the case for vaccine certification. Instead, he stressed that the plan was provisional. His eyes flitted to the corners of the room, as they always do when he is mentally scoping emergency exits.

Johnson doesn't really have a poker face. You can usually tell that he is bluffing because his lips are moving. But when he is confident he will get away with something, he looks brazenly into the camera. On vaccine passports, his shiftiness presaged retreat – implementing a scheme for the sake of government vanity, but diluting it with enough exemptions to make it functionally worthless.

The whole debate has an air of displacement activity. It is a rhetorical playground for politicians who like arguing from positions of ideological certainty, which has not been the best mode for pandemic management. Many MPs crave the restoration of “normal” politics as much as their constituents are itching to get down to the pub.

But normality in the Westminster context describes something more profound than indoor dining or maskless shopping. It refers back to a time when the competition between parties was underpinned by commonly respected conventions. Combat in the political arena was fierce, but also constrained by unwritten codes of permissible conduct. There were rules.

That consensus was unmade before the first coronavirus infection had happened in Britain. Not much of what was considered normal in UK politics before 2016 made it unscathed through the years of parliamentary trench warfare over Brexit. The ferocity of that combat cut across party lines. The corrosive and relentless ugliness of the rhetoric, the hysterical accusations of treason, the flagrant inversions of truth for campaign advantage – it all combined to inflict a trauma on British democracy. And it has not been processed because another trauma swept in straight behind it.

One casualty of that period was the notion that prime ministers are restrained from abusing their office by a sense of constitutional decorum. Johnson disproved that by illegally dissolving parliament in August 2019. The offence [was reversed](#) by the supreme court in September, but rewarded three months later in electoral triumph.

[David Cameron has ghosted Britain over Greensill. At least it's not the first time | Marina Hyde](#)  
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Johnson proceeds through life operating on the belief that rules apply to lesser people. His career is built on the charismatic knack for persuading people to exempt him from ordinary standards of decent behaviour. It has become a self-reinforcing myth of resilience. The more he weathers exposure of flagrant dishonesty, the less impact anyone expects when he is accused of telling another untruth.

If his supporters could be repelled by [deficiencies in his character](#), his various [grim libidinous adventures](#) would have done the damage by now. Each time he bounces back from some display of negligence or incompetence, it gets harder to imagine the scale of misdeed required to finish him. He has survived failure and scandal that would once have incinerated prime ministers. Since fallibility is woven so deep into the “Boris” brand, it supplies its own exoneration.

It is an impressively durable phenomenon, although that does not confer political immortality. The prime minister’s luck will one day run out. But it still confounds most conventional expectation that he should have come this far, to be speaking from the dais in the new [£2.6m Downing Street briefing](#)

[room](#), designed to confer pseudo-presidential authority, a huge union flag at each shoulder, laying out the official government roadmap to normal.

What does that word even mean with this prime minister? We can understand it in the context of the pandemic as the return to small pleasures and social proximities. It means familiarity. But in politics, what feels familiar can be misleading, and Johnson is the master of that deception. He is adept at the casual display of power, informal, unchecked, direct to camera; government by force of character. His gift is to make that seem natural, as if it has always been this way. But it is an accident of historical circumstance. It is the elision of Brexit aftermath and pandemic. And it is not normal.

- Rafael Behr is a Guardian columnist

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## OpinionFish

# Seaspiracy shows why we must treat fish not as seafood, but as wildlife

[George Monbiot](#)



The film gets some things wrong, but it exposes the grim ecological destruction of the Earth's oceans



‘t’s time to see the oceans in a new light.’ Still from the documentary Seaspiracy. Photograph: Sea Shepherd

‘t’s time to see the oceans in a new light.’ Still from the documentary Seaspiracy. Photograph: Sea Shepherd

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

When the BBC made a film about the crisis in our oceans, it somehow managed to avoid naming the [greatest cause of their ecological destruction](#): the fishing industry. The only significant sequence on fishing in 2017’s [Blue Planet II](#) was a heartwarming story about how kind Norwegian herring boats are to orcas. It presented industrial fishing not as the greatest threat to sealife, but as its saviour.

It’s as if you were to make a film about climate breakdown without revealing the role of fossil fuel companies. Oh, hang on, the BBC did that too, in 2006. Its documentary [The Truth about Climate Change](#) mentioned fossil fuel companies only as part of the solution, because one of them was experimenting with carbon capture and storage. These films consisted of handwringing about a scarcely defined problem, followed by a suggestion that we should “do something”, while offering no hint of what this something might be.

They are symptomatic of a disease that afflicts most of the media, most of the time: a phobia about confronting power. Though the BBC has subsequently made some better films, it still tends to direct us away from the massive commercial assaults on our life support systems, and towards the issues I call [micro-consumerist bollocks](#) (MCB), such as plastic straws and cotton buds. I see MCB as a displacement activity: a safe substitute for confronting economic power. Far from saving the planet, it distracts us from systemic problems and undermines effective action.

The [central premise of neoliberalism](#) is that the locus of decision-making can be shifted from democratic government to the individual, working through “the market”. Rather than using politics to change the world for the better, we can do it through our purchases. If neoliberals even half-believed this nonsense, you’d expect them to ensure we were as knowledgeable as possible, so that we could exercise effective decision-making in their great consumer democracy. Instead, the media keeps us in a state of almost total ignorance about the impacts of our consumption.



A still from Seaspiracy Photograph: Artgrid

But one of our bubbles of ignorance has just been burst. On a small budget, with the first film they’ve ever made, Ali Tabrizi and Lucy Tabrizi have achieved what media giants have repeatedly failed to do: directly confronted



power. Their [film Seaspiracy](#) has become a huge hit on Netflix in several nations, including the UK. (Disclosure: I'm a contributor.) At last people have started to wake up to the astonishing fact that when you drag vast nets over the seabed, or set [lines of hooks 28 miles long](#), or relentlessly pursue declining species, you might just, well, you know, have some effect on ocean life.

The film gets some things wrong. It cites an outdated paper about the likely date of the global collapse of fisheries. Two of its figures about bycatch and one figure about the number of illegally caught fish in US waters are incorrect. It confuses carbon stored by lifeforms with [carbon stored in seawater](#). But the thrust of the film is correct: industrial fishing, an issue woefully neglected by the media and conservation groups, is driving many wildlife populations and ecosystems around the world towards collapse. Vast fishing ships from powerful nations threaten to deprive [local people of their subsistence](#). Many "marine reserves" are a total farce, as industrial fishing is [still allowed inside them](#). In the EU, the [intensity of trawling](#) in so-called protected areas is greater than in unprotected places. "Sustainable seafood" is often [nothing of the kind](#). Commercial fishing is the greatest cause of the [death and decline](#) of marine animals. It can also be extremely [cruel to humans](#): slavery and other gross exploitations of labour are rampant.

Only 6.2% of the world's marine fish populations, according to the latest assessment by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, are neither "fully fished" nor "overfished", and they [continue to decline](#). "Fully fished" means that fish are being caught at their "maximum sustainable yield": the most that can be taken without crashing the stock.

This is a central aim of fisheries management. But from the ecologist's perspective, it often means [grossly overexploited](#). As the work of Prof Callum Roberts shows, populations of fish and other marine animals were massively greater before [industrial fishing began](#), and the state of the seabed, in many areas, entirely different. Even "well-managed" fishing at maximum yields prevents the restoration of rich and abundant ecosystems.

I agree, however, that details also matter, and while all films – like all journalism and all science – make mistakes, we should be sticklers for the facts. So why did the fisheries scientists who are screaming about the errors



in Seaspiracy not complain about the far greater misrepresentations and omissions in Blue Planet II and the BBC's 2019 follow-up series, Blue Planet Live?

Blue Planet Live took distraction and deflection to a [whole new level](#). Though it focused largely on plastics, it failed to mention the plastics industry. It was as if plastic, climate breakdown and fishing pressure all materialised out of thin air. As it swerved round powerful interests, most of the solutions it proposed were tiny technological sticking plasters: rescuing orphaned seals, seeding coral, removing hooks from the mouths of sharks. Some of its claims were not just wrong but hilarious. For example, it stated that we can “rid our oceans of plastics” through beach cleans.

So why the silence? Perhaps because some fisheries scientists, as the great [biologist Ransom Myers](#) pointed out, have come to identify with the industry on which their livelihoods depend. While they seem happy for outrageous distortions that favour industrial fishing to pass, they go berserk about much smaller mistakes that disfavour it.

To me, the problem is symbolised by two words I keep stumbling across in scientific and official papers: “underfished” and “underexploited”. These are the terms fisheries scientists use for populations that are not “fully fished”. The words people use expose the way they think, and what powerful, illuminating, horrible words these are. They seem to belong to another era, when we believed in the doctrine of dominion: humans have a sacred duty to conquer and exploit the Earth. I suspect some people are so angry because it's not just malpractice Seaspiracy exposes, but an entire worldview.

It's time to see the oceans in a new light: to treat fish not as seafood but as wildlife; to see their societies not as stocks but as populations; and marine food webs not as fisheries but as ecosystems. It's time we saw their existence as a wonder of nature, rather than an opportunity for exploitation. It's time to redefine our relationship with the blue planet.

- George Monbiot is a Guardian columnist
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## OpinionGwyneth Paltrow

# Gwyneth Paltrow is mocked for her vagina products – but I do admire her hustle

[Arwa Mahdawi](#)



With her orgasm candles and vampire protection mist, the Goop entrepreneur is easy to laugh at. Yet she is the one laughing all the way to the bank



Always hustling ... Gwyneth Paltrow. Photograph: Rachel Murray/Getty Images

Always hustling ... Gwyneth Paltrow. Photograph: Rachel Murray/Getty Images

Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

Last year, Gwyneth Paltrow created a £58 candle called [This Smells Like My Vagina](#). As soon as she put it on Goop, her lifestyle website, it attracted frenzied media coverage and sold out. “Huh,” Paltrow apparently thought. “Seems like I’m on to something.” A few months later, she launched a £68 candle called [This Smells Like My Orgasm](#). This also sold out. Now the intrepid entrepreneur, who made a (business) name for herself with [jade yoni eggs](#) before wading into the incense business, has come out with a custom candle that smells like [Kim Kardashian’s orgasm](#).

You know what this whole thing smells like? Yes, yes, yes you do! It smells like shameless attention-seeking.

I could probably conjure up a hot take about how Paltrow is an out-of-touch celebrity spreading dangerous orgasm misinformation (climaxing does not, generally, smell like “[gunpowder tea and Turkish rose](#)”; if it does, consult a doctor), but it is not really something worth getting outraged about. On the

contrary, I admire Paltrow's hustle. I like to think she chooses Goop's new products by taking sips of green juice and throwing gold-plated darts at random words on a wall, then finding or creating products to match. How else do you explain [psychic vampire repellent protection mist](#)?

Here is the thing about Paltrow: she is very easy to make fun of. Even her 16-year-old daughter, Apple, has roasted Paltrow's obsession with "wellness". "She just prances around the bathroom putting on her millions of Goopglow products for her glowing skin," [Apple joked on Goop's TikTok account](#) on Sunday. "Then she gets to work making some more vagina eggs and candles ... and vagina perfumes ... and just everything vagina."

Apple's commentary prompted headlines such as "[Gwyneth Paltrow gets trolled by daughter](#)". In truth, it would be more accurate to say Paltrow is trolling all of us. "I can monetise those eyeballs," the actor turned entrepreneur [told a class at Harvard](#) a few years ago, in reference to critical articles about her. Her vagina products are not clickbait, she clarified; they are a "cultural firestorm".

I don't know about that. But I do know that Paltrow doesn't seem to care if people mock her. All publicity is good publicity, after all, and she is laughing all the way to the bank.

- Arwa Mahdawi is a Guardian columnist

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## [Opinion](#) **Work & careers**

# Women reach 40 and hit their stride ... only to be cruelly shoved aside at work

[Rachel Shabi](#)

It's no coincidence that women are sidelined once they become confident enough to stop conforming to sexist standards



‘We’re so conditioned to both expect and reproduce gender-stereotyped behaviour that, when older women stop conforming, it’s just too much.’  
Photograph: Felix Vogel/imageBroker/Rex/Shutterstock

‘We’re so conditioned to both expect and reproduce gender-stereotyped behaviour that, when older women stop conforming, it’s just too much.’  
Photograph: Felix Vogel/imageBroker/Rex/Shutterstock

Wed 7 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

Perhaps you have heard about the mysterious case of the disappearing older woman, who almost overnight seems to vanish from the workplace, the



media landscape and society's line of vision. As [others have chronicled](#), women over 40 face a sucker punch of ageism wrapped in sexism: as our youth recedes, our currency crashes.

This hits hard at work, where we already know that multiple barriers stymie careers for those women who decide to have children. The unequal burden of unpaid labour only adds an extra blockade. Throw in some everyday workplace sexism: role-stereotyping, devaluing, appearance-judging and harassment dressed up as banter. Put it all together and it turns out that these endless obstacles do in fact obstruct, leaving fewer older women in senior jobs, or even in work at all. But the absolute kicker to this trajectory is that the sidelining takes place precisely at the time when many women find their confidence and hit their stride.

This cruel timing is no accident. "It has happened too often, to too many I know, for it to be a coincidence," one woman in her mid-40s told me, recalling female contemporaries who stopped hiding their talents only to hit a cliff-edge at work. I've heard versions of this from women in their 40s upwards, a period when a confluence of factors – experience, life skills, menopause, freedom from childcare for some and worrying about what others think – has produced a sense of assuredness, often for the first time. By our mid-40s, [confidence levels between the genders reach parity](#), as women catch up and possess it in equal amounts to men. But this exhilarating shift for women – finally shorn of ingrained behaviours such as endless people-pleasing, acquiescence and self-deprecation – clashes with expectations and incurs penalties at work. That's when we realise that gravitas and the wisdom of age are not welcome in female form.

We're so conditioned to both expect and reproduce gender-stereotyped behaviour that, when older women stop conforming, it's just too much. Vicki Marinker, a recruitment consultant and [midlife blogger](#), says that workplaces haven't "caught up with how to deal with women with this level of experience – senior women who know their stuff". Women swap stories of their newly acquired confidence causing resentment, or worse: one woman in her late-40s, who worked in the manufacturing sector, told me how a male boss furiously berated her after she questioned him for the first time in a meeting.



Others are disparaged as difficult, stropky, aggressive, jumped-up, a nag, rude, a show-off or – but of course! – hysterical. When an older woman's manner in management settings is not as expected – meek, smiley, thankful to be there – it works against her. Then the exclusionary behaviour starts: not being invited to meetings, the pub or lunches.

For women of colour, the picture is even worse. To begin with, structural racism trumps everything else and applies across workplaces. Kalwant Bhopal, director at Birmingham University's centre for research in race and education, documents how [BAME staff remain underrepresented](#) in academia. Meanwhile, BAME women, notably key workers, are [twice as likely](#) as white counterparts to be working in insecure jobs. As they accrue experience, women of colour hit a lower, earlier ceiling. And confidence from an older woman of colour provokes twice the outrage: double the how-dare-yous and don't-you-know-your-places.

[Covid-19 has turned back the clock on working women's lives | Gaby Hinsliff](#)  
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Barely mentioned, and much less factored into the workplace, is the subject that's ever-present in conversations among this invisible cohort: menopause. Like most things women are conditioned to believe, the idea of menopause as dreadful and the end of everything simply isn't true, say the many now [breaking the silence](#) on the subject. But casting menopause as sad and a bit of a joke ("Haha, hot flushes! Brain fog!") while not accommodating it at work is another way to marginalise those increasingly non-compliant older women.

Sam Baker, whose book [The Shift](#) and accompanying podcast narrate the empowerment of menopause, sees it as "a gift" that bestows clear-sightedness and a sense of ease. After speaking with more than 100 women about the menopause, she notes that almost without exception they talk of gaining the ability to say no, of being less compliant and being able to put themselves first. This may be bound up with hormonal changes, but is certainly connected with another shift, as one woman told me: "You get to your 50s, the male gaze is no longer turned on you and you realise how awful it was to live under it, how liberating to be free of it." Not having to

deal with, factor in, accommodate and tiptoe around this omnipresent, objectifying force releases a windfall of energy – along with legitimate anger over the huge efforts expended to date.

Many midlife women sidelined from work, with the means to, have left to [set up something of their own](#). I can see why: it's wearying, having the same fights over diminishing scraps at the company table. And there's usually a breaking point, of feeling too damned old to be endlessly hemmed in and held back. But however they disappear, those older women are taking their talents, skills and wisdom with them. Ultimately that's a loss for those remaining in the workplace, not least a younger generation who see gaps where there should be middle-aged women demonstrating the existence of a future path.

- Rachel Shabi is a journalist and broadcaster

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## [First Dog on the Moon](#)Industrial relations

**The expectation people should respond to work calls, texts and emails out of hours is ridiculous**

[First Dog on the Moon](#)



That we even have to ask if workers should be left alone by their employers when they are not being paid at work is offensive and weird

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## [OpinionRace](#)

# The egregious Sewell report only bolsters those who want to discredit antiracism

[Alana Lentin](#)

It is part of a strategy to blame those who speak out against racism for the very social divisions that they're identifying



‘For the report’s authors, young people who insist that institutional racism continues to structure British social life will achieve nothing.’ Black Lives Matter protest, London 2020. Photograph: Justin Tallis/AFP/Getty Images

‘For the report’s authors, young people who insist that institutional racism continues to structure British social life will achieve nothing.’ Black Lives Matter protest, London 2020. Photograph: Justin Tallis/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 6 Apr 2021 09.23 EDT

Among the first to congratulate the Commission on Ethnic and Racial Disparities on the [publication of its report](#) were, unsurprisingly, [David Goodhart of the rightwing thinktank Policy Exchange](#), and Birkbeck professor of political science [Eric Kaufmann](#). A 2017 working paper, titled [Racial Self-Interest is Not Racism](#), written by Kaufmann for Policy Exchange, foreshadows many of its conclusions. In it, racism is described, paraphrasing Goodhart, as being “subject to mission creep”; we should talk less of racism because to do so is always to unhelpfully “pack an emotive punch”.

Echoing this, the UK government’s commission claims that “society has ‘defined racism down’”, “stretching the meaning of racism without objective data to support it”. The problem for overcoming “ethnic disparities” is not the ongoing effect of race – which, following its history over the last 500 years, is best understood as a form of rule in which people are categorised in the interests of the powerful. It is, rather, the existence of a “strident” antiracism that makes it possible for “any act, including those intended to be well-meaning, to be classified as racist”. Kaufmann cheers from the sidelines, scoffing at a “master narrative of noble struggle by oppressed minorities and their virtuous white allies against a racist white society”.

The publication of the commission’s report is the culmination of a long campaign to discredit antiracism. It is part of a general strategy, not confined to the UK, to blame those who speak out against racism for the very social divisions that they’re identifying. From this perverse point of view, people who experience, study and challenge racism – not those responsible for maintaining and reproducing it – keep it alive. Every factor can be used to explain racism but race itself.

To claim that an event, policy, or action is “not racist” has become so common that, contrary to the claims of the report, it is rare to see an official acknowledgment that racism ever occurs. “[Not racism](#)” goes beyond the mere denial of racism; rather racism is redefined in ways that contradict the experiences of those affected by it – experiences that are discounted as not objective enough to provide a trustworthy definition. Years of scholarship and activism are thrown out and replaced by an interpretation of racism that separates it from social class, geography and other factors, as though it were impossible to be affected by race, economic and place-based inequalities at

the same time. As the late cultural theorist [Stuart Hall](#) put it, “race is the modality in which class is lived”. It is impossible to neatly disentangle the ways in which people are stratified.

For the report’s authors, young people who insist that institutional racism continues to structure British social life will achieve nothing other than alienating the “decent centre-ground”, as if the goal of antiracism was to assuage the feelings of white people, as part of an electoral strategy. As pointed out by the [Runnymede Trust’s Halima Begum](#), this is not a report addressed to those who experience racism; it was designed to send a message to those who believe that the opposition to racism is a zero-sum scramble for recognition and resources in which white people are losing out.

Racism constantly adapts to time and place, refusing “to stay still” as the late founder of the Institute of [Race](#) Relations Ambalavaner Sivanandan put it. In mainstream public discourse, race is narrowly defined according to a biological interpretation taken from racial pseudo-science itself. This view, for example, breeds the commonly held opinion that it is not racist to voice opposition to Muslims because “Islam is not a race”. In fact, no one is “a race” because race is a bogus concept, but people are racialised: racial meaning about their supposed inferiority is attached to them, justifying their exploitation and domination. This is seen in the practices that single them out, such as the suspicion of all Muslims as potential terrorists.

[The race report was a cynical trap – but if I point that out, I'm 'doing Britain down'| Nesrine Malik](#)  
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However, the report has an understanding of racism as frozen in the past and never changing. So, it seems that if racism today does not precisely mirror the experiences of the report’s middle-aged authors, it is not racism. In particular, their understanding of racism is narrowly based on individual economic advancement. So, because some members of ethnic minorities experience success in terms of income or educational attainment, then racism’s persistence for some groups, including migrants and asylum seekers – the latter are mentioned nowhere in the report – can be effectively ignored.



The terms of “not racism” posit that racism, if it exists at all, lies predominantly in the mind as, quoting Goodhart, an “irrational hatred, fear or contempt for another group”. Because few will admit to having a “racist bone” in their body, it is easy to discount the much less declarative forms of racism that persist and which make those governed by it vulnerable to “premature death”, as the scholar [Ruth Wilson Gilmore explains it](#). After all, the trigger for the report was the global protests for Black lives that exploded after the death of George Floyd, in the midst of a pandemic that continues to have a disproportionately morbid effect on poor racialised people. In the report’s telling, and in that of its cheerleaders, including [Spiked magazine’s Brendan O’Neill](#), the state’s ongoing brutalisation of Black people in the US as elsewhere, the UK included, is really a story of social media-enabled “identitarian sects” for whom crying racism is a “grave train”.

That the report has been so welcomed by some of Britain’s loudest opponents of antiracism should give us a clue as to who it was actually written for. For example, O’Neill, responding to Meghan Markle’s revelations about the royal family, complained “British people are [sick and tired of being called racist](#)”. The Commission on Ethnic and Racial Disparities comforted them by spending 264 pages saying: “Don’t worry, you’re not.” Thankfully, those of us who remain clear-eyed on racism see through this.

- Alana Lentin is an associate professor in Cultural and Social Analysis at Western Sydney University

## OpinionDavid Cameron

# David Cameron has ghosted Britain over Greensill. At least it's not the first time

[Marina Hyde](#)



First the former PM left us to deal with Brexit. Now he's not answering calls about a growing access and lobbying scandal



David Cameron on his way to Buckingham Palace to resign as prime minister, July 2016. Photograph: Geoff Caddick/AFP/Getty Images

David Cameron on his way to Buckingham Palace to resign as prime minister, July 2016. Photograph: Geoff Caddick/AFP/Getty Images

Tue 6 Apr 2021 10.33 EDT

Back when David Cameron was a PR for culturicidal London TV franchise Carlton – his sole non-Westminster job before politics – the Guardian’s then media correspondent rang him for a story. Cameron answered his office phone, but clearly decided he didn’t want to speak to her. Consequently, he pretended to be the cleaner. “I can’t prove it was him,” [the journalist reflected later](#), “but it certainly sounded a lot like him.”

Zip forward to the present, and it has now been a full 36 days since the former prime minister first declined to take calls from the Financial Times on [the collapse](#) and mushrooming fallout of Greensill, the specialist bank for which he was an active payrolled lobbyist with what he hoped was [\\$60m worth of shares](#). There was one time Cameron accidentally answered the phone to the FT, [then breezed](#) “Do you want to ring my office?” before hanging up. Said office has not cared to answer a single call or text.

David Cameron is still [allowed to claim](#) up to [£115,000 a year](#) from the public purse, literally to run this office. Surely that's enough for someone in it to return a call? Seemingly not. Maybe the "office" is just a burner mobile ringing out in a shepherd's hut. Either way, the firm of which Cameron was a salaried employee – and on whose behalf he lobbied the current government – has now imploded. Furthermore, its administrators have been [unable to verify invoices](#) underpinning loans to its top client, steel magnate Sanjeev Gupta, with several companies denying they have ever done business with Gupta. This is becoming quite the shitstorm. And while no one is suggesting the former prime minister is to blame for the shitstorm, he is certainly shitstorm-adjacent.

For the second time in five years, then, Britain is being ghosted by David Cameron. You'll recall that having tanked his own Brexit referendum, he [promptly retreated](#) into the usual lucrative prime ministerial afterlife, while the rest of us had to endure years of the winners – the winners! – arguing about what they'd won. Even so, this [latest silence](#) is a giant piss-take. Come on, former prime minister – we thought we had something. We KNOW you're still watching our Instagram stories. HELLO? Helloooooooooooooo? Earth to Call-Me-Dave! Call me, Dave.

While the little people wait by the phone, a quick refresher on billionaire spad Lex Greensill. Simply put, this banker was brought into the heart of government by Cameron and the late cabinet secretary Jeremy Heywood. Greensill's [big idea](#) was to push his [supply chain finance](#) on to the state, from which his own company stood to benefit. (This was all part of the Cameron government's efficiency agenda – and more on that soon.)

Given how absolutely ruthlessly he has avoided answering questions on the matter, I am sure [David Cameron](#) won't mind it being pointed out that this whole supply chain finance business appears to be – technicalese klaxon – a load of bollocks when transplanted to a government setting. The state's liquidity problems are effectively nonexistent. If government wanted to find a way for suppliers to be paid on time it could have just ... paid them on time. Given he died in 2018, it appears we will never know quite why Jeremy Heywood might have thought it beneficial to insert a profit-making private banker into this chain. But simpler and more efficient solutions surely existed.

Then again, all you need to know about the Cameron administration's "efficiency agenda" is that the "efficiency tsar" himself was [Topshop boss Philip Green](#), [who honked](#): "I'd be bust if I ran my business the way government does." Yeah, well. SPOILERS. Back then, Green was renowned for holding multimillion-pound birthday parties and running a business whose owner was his wife, a Monaco tax exile. THIS was the guy Cameron chose to write a report into government waste. Green is a man without cultural frame of reference, so didn't realise the solution he came up with – "centralised procurement" – basically hailed from the 1970s politburo. His other big idea – and you'll spot the conflict with fellow efficiency spud Lex Greensill – was for the government to sit on invoices and delay payments to contractors.

But if Cameron didn't spot an alarm-bell-clanging chancer in Green, he should have winced once Greensill started flashing around a [business card](#) reading "Lex Greensill – Senior Advisor , Prime Minister's Office", complete with government email address and Downing Street landline. As someone who governed by chumocracy, it's unsurprising to find Cameron's anonymous friends jumping to his defence. As one of them [told the Mail on Sunday](#): "His attitude is that he had a lot of responsibilities as PM and dealing with the Downing Street stationery wasn't one of them." Righto. There's a pained suggestion this is all unfairly tarnishing his legacy.

In truth, Cameron's legacy is just miles and miles of tarnish, broken only by equal marriage. That's it. If he hadn't successfully ushered in this historic progressive change, there would be nothing in the credit column. Austerity was a failure on its own economic terms, before you even get to the needless misery it wrought. Libya is a failed state. For a remainer such as Cameron, Brexit was clearly a failure. Greensill has now also failed – just an incredible run for a guy whose political catchphrase was: "It was the right thing to do".

In 2019, Cameron could be found speaking at Saudi Arabia's "[Future Investment Initiative](#)". This was just a year after the murder and dismemberment of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which [US intelligence agencies concluded](#) was approved by Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman. And it was a mere 48 hours after an investment fund whose biggest single investor was the Saudi sovereign wealth fund had agreed to plough another \$655m into Greensill (\$800m had been forthcoming just a few

months earlier). One can only picture the subsequent [desert camping trip](#) Greensill and Cameron reportedly took with Prince Mohammed in early 2020. I am imagining Dave's humorous texts home to his wife Sam – “don't worry, still in one piece”. “Gotta go – if I'm late to toast marshmallows he'll crucify me”. If only Cameron would get in touch, even joshingly, with the British public. We are still paying him, after all.

- Marina Hyde is a Guardian columnist

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## [Opinion](#) [Young people](#)

# From housing to vaccine passports, politicians act as if young people don't exist

[Zoe Williams](#)



The UK's young have become the pigeons of the public realm, only remarked upon when they leave litter in the park





‘If I were in my 20s, I’d be about ready for a revolution.’ A waitress serves coffees in a bar in Soho, central London, July 2020. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

‘If I were in my 20s, I’d be about ready for a revolution.’ A waitress serves coffees in a bar in Soho, central London, July 2020. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

Tue 6 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

House prices were having a mini-boom by last July, buoyed up by what felt like the windfall of a stamp duty holiday and the pent-up demand of the first lockdown. By the autumn, prices were still climbing, but not to worry, said the experts: they’ll crash again when people start to lose their jobs. With that foot yet to fall, [things continue to look very rosy](#), if you’re a house. For everyone else, a crazy situation has only got worse.

The latest figures in the UK from December show that house prices are [now 8.4 times](#) the annual average income. The only time that figure has ever been marginally higher was just before the global financial crash in 2008. Those who have managed to hoick themselves on to the ladder think they’re the winners in a fiendish game of skill and chance. Compared with tenants, who pour their wages indefinitely down the drain of the rentier economy, mortgage-holders do seem well blessed.

## [How do we fix the UK housing crisis?](#)

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Yet the scale of debt puts mortgage-holders in a state of indentured servitude which, if we could only stop blinking at our own good fortune for a second, we might object to. The ideal citizen for the age is the one who bought their house in January 1958, paid off their mortgage decades ago, and is now sitting on millions. This is why we're all supposed to rail against boomers (though technically people in this position, now in their 80s, are part of the "silent generation" that preceded boomers), but you can bet that they're spending all that hard-earned leisure worrying about their children and grandchildren. The world we're accelerating into is working for landlords and for banks. Or to put that more simply, for capital alone.

Of course there are solutions to all of this – there are answers that worked in the past, otherwise we'd all be paying rent to the Duke of Westminster – and answers for people with a supply-side fetish (build more social homes). There are answers that solve other economic and environmental crises (bonds for energy-neutral homes, cooperatively owned housing) and answers that might sound radically, dangerously redistributive, if you're an overlord in 1691 (the land value tax).

It is not beyond our collective wit to make secure, affordable, decent quality housing accessible to all, but our political culture is putting up one last defence against thinking seriously about change. If politicians can inflate what is essentially a rather plodding, earthbound struggle between capital and labour into a clash between generations, and keep that balloon in the air long enough, they might just distract us from the possibility of any practical solution.

But pitting one age group against another has a hard limit, a point at which this deadlock simply offends one's natural sense of justice. The aftermath of the pandemic may be that boundary. Throughout 2020, pointing out what vast sacrifices the young were making for the old tended to be an anti-lockdown position. Since the alternative to lockdown was mass death, it just wasn't a very fruitful line of inquiry. Yet we're now at the stage of reconfiguring previous norms, and we're still having debates about housing and so much more as if the under-35s were irrelevant.

## [The Guardian view on vaccine passports: a tool to handle with care](#) | Editorial

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We talk about the [return to the office](#) as if the debate is simply about balancing the interests of the worker who'd prefer to be at home against those of the chief exec of Pret a Manger. Our new word for whatever compromise may emerge is the “agile” workplace, which sounds great. Middle-aged people love agility: it reminds us of the 90s. But there's no obvious consideration here of what the office represents to those at the start of their careers. It's not just a commute and a frothy coffee. It's where you learn and progress and build your skills, hard and soft, and get away from your crappy flat where you're working on an ironing board.

Meanwhile, the [vaccination passport](#) debate unfolds as a matter of civil liberties – can the state compel you to take a vaccine, with the reward of everyday freedoms? This doesn't acknowledge the generation that has yet to be even offered a vaccine. Housing, work and health all seem like disparate issues, but once a generation is etched out of one of these spheres, they can be steadily erased from others.

When you're no longer considered a stakeholder, you're a nuisance. The young have become the pigeons of the public realm, only remarked upon for their poor mental health or when they leave litter in a park. As a discourse, it's untenable and ridiculous: but it's only from a position of middle-age that I can admire its absurdity. If I were in my 20s, I'd be about ready for a revolution.

Zoe Williams is a Guardian columnist

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## Bitcoin

# China's vast bitcoin mining empire risks derailing its climate targets, says study

China powers nearly 80% of the global cryptocurrencies trade, but the energy required could jeopardise its pledge to peak carbon emissions by 2030



China's bitcoin mines will generate 130.5m metric tons of carbon emissions by 2024, the Nature study found. Photograph: Liu Xingzhe/Chinafile/EPA

China's bitcoin mines will generate 130.5m metric tons of carbon emissions by 2024, the Nature study found. Photograph: Liu Xingzhe/Chinafile/EPA

*Agence France-Presse*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 21.54 EDT

China's electricity-hungry bitcoin mines that power nearly 80% of the global trade in cryptocurrencies risk undercutting the country's climate goals, a study in the journal Nature has said.

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies rely on [“blockchain” technology](#), which is a shared database of transactions, with entries that must be confirmed and encrypted. The network is secured by individuals called “miners” who use [high-powered computers to verify transactions](#), with bitcoins offered as a reward. Those computers consume enormous amounts of electricity.

About 40% of China’s bitcoin mines are powered with coal, while the rest use renewables, the study said. However, the coal plants are so large they could end up undermining Beijing’s pledge to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2060, it warned.

The Nature study on Tuesday found that unchecked, China’s bitcoin mines will generate 130.5m metric tons of carbon emissions by 2024 – close to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of Italy or oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

Chinese companies with access to cheap electricity and hardware handled 78.89% of global bitcoin blockchain operations as of April 2020, the study said. This involves minting new coins and keeping track of cryptocurrency transactions.

[Bitcoin rise could leave carbon footprint the size of London's](#)  
[Read more](#)

Co-author Wang Shouyang from the Chinese Academy of Sciences said: “The intensive bitcoin blockchain operation in China can quickly grow as a threat that could potentially undermine the emission reduction effort.”

The government should focus on upgrading the power grid to ensure a stable supply from renewable sources, Wang said. “Since energy prices in clean-energy regions of China are lower than that in coal-powered regions ... miners would then have more incentives to move to regions with clean energy.”

This year the crypto-mining industry is expected to use 0.6% of the world’s total electricity production, or more than the annual use of Norway, according to Cambridge University’s [Bitcoin](#) Electricity Consumption Index.

The price of a bitcoin has surged fivefold in the past year, reaching a record high of over \$61,000 in March, and is now hovering just below the \$60,000 mark.

Given the profits available, Wang said imposing carbon taxes was not enough to deter miners.

China banned trading in cryptocurrencies in 2019 to prevent money laundering, but mining is permitted.

Coal-rich regions are now pushing out bitcoin miners as they struggle to curb emissions. Last month, Inner Mongolia announced plans to end the power-hungry practice of cryptocurrency mining by the end of April after the region failed to meet annual energy consumption targets.

The region accounted for 8% of the computing power needed to run the global blockchain – the set of online ledgers that record bitcoin transactions. That is more than the amount of computing power dedicated to blockchain in the US.

Nasdaq-listed Bitmain, which operates one of the biggest cryptocurrency mining pools in the world, said it was shifting operations in Inner Mongolia to areas with more hydropower such as Yunnan.

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## Taiwan

# Taiwan train crash: new footage released as experts piece together last moments

Train hit vehicle at more than 120km/h, about a minute after the truck rolled onto the tracks, crash experts say



Taiwan train dashcam footage just before crash showing a maintenance truck on the tracks. Photograph: Taiwan Transportation Safety Board

Taiwan train dashcam footage just before crash showing a maintenance truck on the tracks. Photograph: Taiwan Transportation Safety Board

*[Helen Davidson](#) in Taipei*

*[@heldavidson](#)*

Wed 7 Apr 2021 01.18 EDT

The runaway truck that caused Taiwan's worst rail disaster in decades slid onto the train tracks just over a minute before an express train came through at more than 120km/h, investigators have said, as newly released footage revealed the drivers' attempts to brake.

At least 50 people were killed and around 200 injured on Friday last week when [the eight-car train hit a construction vehicle](#) that had rolled down an embankment, derailing the carriages as they entered a stretch of tunnel just outside the east coast city of Hualien.

01:19

Dozens killed after train carrying about 350 people derails in eastern Taiwan – video report

“There was a little over one minute between when the truck slid to the track and the Taroko Express hit it, according to our initial estimate,” the chair of Taiwan's Transportation Safety Board, Dr Young Hong-tsu, said on Tuesday.

[Taiwan train crash: truck driver expresses 'deep remorse' over disaster](#)  
[Read more](#)

As he showed a [short clip of the train's dashcam footage](#) rounding the corner and colliding with the truck, Young said the driver and assistant – both of whom died in the crash – had tried to brake but had just seconds to react. “He tried his best in the hope of avoiding a disaster,” he said.

Young said the train would have needed about 500-600 metres to come to a complete stop, but had less than half that. The train was traveling at about 125km/h but slowed only to 121km/h before impact, the Taipei Times reported.

After derailing, the front carriages were crushed and mangled against the tunnel walls, killing dozens and [trapping some passengers for hours](#). As recovery crews continued efforts to clear wreckage from the tunnel, investigators have focused on a construction vehicle that was parked on a maintenance road above the track before rolling down the hill side. The truck driver, 49-year-old Lee Yi-hsiang, has been detained, and prosecutors are seeking to determine if he failed to apply the handbrake or if there was a

mechanical failure. On Sunday, Lee [made a tearful apology](#), telling media: “I am deeply remorseful and want to express my most sincere apologies.”

“I will cooperate with the investigation by police and prosecutors to take the responsibility I should take.”

Li Gang, convenor of the board’s investigations division, said investigators had determined the construction vehicle had arrived onsite at 8.49am, and other vehicles including motorcycles and excavators were also operating, despite rail authorities saying it had told all contractors to stop work for the long weekend.

The crash was the deadliest rail incident in decades, and has devastated the people of Taiwan. Among the dead are entire families, children as young as five, and people who [died trying to protect loved ones](#) from the impact of the crash. As of Tuesday night, all but one victim had been identified. There were still 35 people in hospital, including several in intensive care.

The packed train, carrying nearly 500 people, including more than 120 standing in the aisles, was travelling south on the first day of a four-day religious festival. Funerals for the victims began earlier this week, and the government has announced various forms of financial and social support to families and survivors. Public donations have [reportedly](#) exceeded more than US\$2.1m, and the government has announced an oversight committee to ensure appropriate distribution.

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## Migration and development

# Croatian border police accused of sexually assaulting Afghan migrant

Asylum seeker says she was threatened at knifepoint in latest in string of reports of violent pushbacks on Bosnia–Croatia border



A migrant from Afghanistan with phones reportedly broken by police after his family attempted to cross into Croatia near Bosanska Bojna. Photograph: Elvis Barukcic/AFP/Getty

A migrant from Afghanistan with phones reportedly broken by police after his family attempted to cross into Croatia near Bosanska Bojna. Photograph: Elvis Barukcic/AFP/Getty

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Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.15 EDT

A woman from Afghanistan was allegedly sexually abused, held at knifepoint and forced to strip naked by a Croatian border police officer, during a search of a group of migrants on the border with Bosnia.

The European commission described it as a “serious alleged criminal action” and urged the Croatian authorities “to thoroughly investigate all allegations, and follow up with relevant actions”.

According to a dossier from the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the incident occurred on the night of 15 February, in Croatian territory, a few kilometres from the Bosnian city of Velika Kladuša.

In the report, seen by the Guardian, the woman said she tried to cross the border with a group of four others, including two children, but they were stopped by an officer who allegedly pointed a rifle at them. The Afghans asked for asylum. However, according to the witnesses, one of the officers tore the papers apart and laughed.

“He insulted us, slapped the elderly man who was with us and the children, and told us to empty our pockets and show them our bags,” said the woman. “Then he took me aside and started to search me,” she said. “I insisted that he should not be touching me. He asked me why. I told him because I am a woman and a Muslim and it’s haram. The officer slapped me over the head and told me: ‘If you are Muslim, why did you come to Croatia, why didn’t you stay in Bosnia with Muslims?’”

The officer allegedly removed the woman’s headscarf and jacket.

“After he removed my jacket, he started to touch my breasts, and I started to cry,” said the woman. “I gave the police officer 50 euros that I had in my pocket, hoping that he would stop touching me. The officer ordered me to remove all my shirts and I refused. He continued to touch me on my breasts and behind, and I cried a lot. The officer told me to stop crying while gesticulating that he would strangle me if I continued. I was scared but I stopped crying.”



A blocked-off crossing on the border of Bosnia and Croatia, in the northern Bosnian village of Bosanska Bojna. Photograph: Elvis Barukcic/AFP/Getty

Minutes later a police van arrived and the migrants were ordered to get inside and driven for about 20 minutes before being told to get out.

An officer again asked the woman to strip naked.

“I objected and I was slapped hard in the face and told: ‘strip naked,’” she said. “I had six T-shirts and three pairs of pants on me. I removed all but one shirt and trousers and I covered myself with a blanket. An officer approached me and started to touch me over the blanket. He felt my clothes and slapped me, saying I needed to remove everything, even underwear. The officer started to search and touch me, while I was naked. He then asked me if I loved him. He told me: ‘I love you, do you love me? Do you want me to take you somewhere to be with me?’.

“I was scared and in tears. He asked to take me to the forest and asked me if I understood what he meant. I gestured to him that I didn’t understand. I did. The officer then grabbed my shoulder and pushed me in the direction of another officer. They both had flashlights on the forehead and I couldn’t see well. The officer that had touched me pulled out a knife and put it on my throat. He told me that, if I ever said anything to anyone, he would kill me, and, if I ever came back to Croatia, I would meet my end, in the forest, under him.”

The officer allegedly hit the woman again and the other members of the group on their faces, heads and legs. Then the officers reportedly ordered them to walk to Bosnia.

“The testimony is truly shocking,” said Charlotte Slente, DRC secretary general. “Despite the lower number of pushbacks recorded by the DRC in 2021, the patterns of reported violence and abuse at the Croatia-BiH [Bosnia-Herzegovina] border remain unchanged.”

[‘Police searched my baby's nappy’: migrant families on the perilous Balkan route](#)

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“Once again, this underscores the urgent need for systematic investigations of these reports,” Slente added. “Despite the European commission’s engagement with Croatian authorities in recent months, we have seen virtually no progress, neither on investigations of the actual reports, nor on the development of independent border monitoring mechanisms, to prevent



violence at the EU's external borders. It really is time to turn rhetoric into reality – and ensure that truly independent border monitoring is put in place to prevent these abuses and ensure that credible and transparent investigations can effectively hold perpetrators of violence and abuse to account.”

The European commission said it expected the Croatian authorities to thoroughly investigate all allegations, and follow up with relevant actions.

“We are in contact with the Croatian authorities, which have committed to investigate allegations of mistreatment at their external borders, monitor the situation closely and keep the commission informed on progress made. The commission is assisting them in this task, financing an independent monitoring mechanism, implemented by Croatia, involving different stakeholders, such as NGOs and international organisations.”



A group of migrants in a Croatian forest after crossing the Bosnia-Croatia border near the town of Velika Kladuša, in December 2020. Photograph: Marc Sanye/AP

According to the DRC, since May 2019 almost 24,000 migrants have been illegally pushed back to Bosnia – 547 between January and February 2021.

Hundreds of migrants walk the snowy paths of the Balkan route daily, in an attempt to reach central Europe. Most are stopped by Croatian police, searched, often allegedly robbed and, sometimes violently, pushed back into Bosnia, where, for months, thousands of asylum seekers have been stranded in freezing temperatures.

The Border Violence Monitoring Network said dozens of women and young girls have reported being “[searched everywhere](#)” by male Croatian police officers.

In a statement in response, the public relations department of the Croatian interior ministry said the police would investigate the allegations but added that in preliminary checks “there was no treatment of females from the population of illegal migrants” on the day in question. It added:

“With their humane acts of saving the lives of hundreds of migrants by pulling them out of minefields, ravines, rescuing them from drowning, carrying them for miles through snowstorms, the Croatian police showed not only an organised and professional approach in the protection of the state border of the Republic of Croatia and the external border of the EU, but above all dedication and humanity.

”We cannot help but notice that the persistent portrayal of the Croatian police as a brutal and inhumane group prone to robberies and abuse of illegal migrants has now become commonplace without a single evidence,” it added.

“In order to achieve their objective, migrants are ready to use all means and even consciously risk their lives and the lives of their family members, knowing that the Croatian police will save them when they find themselves in such danger. In addition, if the Croatian police prevents them from illegal entering, they are ready to falsely accuse that same police of abuse and denying access to the system of international protection.

”After being hurt by accident or in mutual physical conflicts, migrants always say that it was the police of the country they wish to enter that beat them.”

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## Indigenous Australians

# Farmer sorry for damaging Aboriginal site says he did not know it was heritage-listed

Adrian McMaster moved part of a 1,500-year-old eel-shaped stone formation at Lake Bolac in Victoria, leaving traditional owners ‘devastated’



Victorian farmer Adrian McMaster has apologised for damaging an ancient eel-shaped stone arrangement in Lake Bolac, saying ‘it would not have been touched’ if he had known it was heritage-listed. Photograph: Neil Murray

Victorian farmer Adrian McMaster has apologised for damaging an ancient eel-shaped stone arrangement in Lake Bolac, saying ‘it would not have been touched’ if he had known it was heritage-listed. Photograph: Neil Murray

[Calla Wahlquist](#)

[@callapilla](#)

Wed 7 Apr 2021 02.27 EDT

A Victorian farmer has apologised for [damaging a 1,500-year-old Aboriginal heritage site](#), saying he was not aware it was heritage-listed and did not know the rocks he moved were part of the significant site.

The Kuyung stone arrangement, a 176-metre-long formation in the shape of a juvenile eel, sits on land that has been owned by the McMaster family, one of the early settlers of Lake Bolac in south-western [Victoria](#), for about 150 years.

Adrian McMaster has acted as caretaker for the property since his father died in 2018. He told Guardian Australia he cleared stones on the lower part of the hill, near the road, to make a track for a boom sprayer. He said he did not know the site was heritage-listed but knew that the stones at the top of the hill were of significance to Aboriginal people and not to be touched. He told Guardian Australia he did not think that prohibition applied to the stones lower down the hill.

[Traditional owners devastated by alleged damage to 1,500-year-old stone arrangement in Victoria](#)  
[Read more](#)

“We made a mistake, we shifted a few rocks, and I am very apologetic and I am very sorry it happened,” he said.

“If I had known it was a heritage site it would not have been touched, I am saying that now. We would not have had a machine go near those rocks.”

The stone arrangement was first recorded and included on the Victorian Aboriginal [Heritage](#) Register in 1975. It is one of the largest and best-known stone arrangements in Victoria.

Officers from the regulator, Aboriginal Victoria, visited the site on Tuesday and interviewed McMaster as part of an investigation into the alleged damage, and issued a stop work order. Under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, the penalty for causing unauthorised harm to a heritage site is a fine of up to \$297,396 for individuals and up to \$1,652,000 for corporations.

McMaster said he did not know much about the site, “just that the big stones up the top were meant to be in the shape of an eel”.

Asked if he knew it had been heritage-listed since 1975, McMaster said: “I did not know that, no.

“No one has ever mentioned it or put a sign there to say it is [heritage listed],” he said.

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He said he had never met with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, the traditional owners and Registered Aboriginal Party for the site. He knows that his father met with a group of Aboriginal people about the site, but he said he did not know who they were or what was discussed.

Marcus Clarke, the chief executive of the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, said [on Tuesday that traditional owners were “devastated” by the damage to the site](#) and described photos showing the impact as “pretty traumatic”.

A group of traditional owners will come to the property on Thursday to survey the damage.

“I already said I can put the rocks back if they want, it’s not hard to put them back,” he said. “I put them in a stockpile with all the other rocks that I picked up in the paddock so I would not do damage to the boom spray.

McMaster said he removed the rocks so he could get a boom spray in to spray the paddock, which he said had been overrun with weeds and was a fire risk. He had previously put sheep in the paddock but said he needed to spray to get rid of the thistles.

[Budj Bim Indigenous eel trap site added to world heritage list](#)  
[Read more](#)



“It could be a fire hazard to the town,” he said. “That was my main objective, my duty of care to the town of Lake Bolac.”

He added: “I didn’t realise that the rocks I moved were part of a heritage site. But to get a boom spray into it the rocks had to be moved. I knew not to touch the rocks up the top because I was told they were the rocks that could not be moved ... I did not know that they were heritage-listed. I just knew that they were rocks that I could not touch ... I knew that they were Aboriginal rocks or Indigenous rocks and I could not touch them and they have not been touched.”

McMaster said he was “disappointed that there was no proper conversation years ago” about the extent of the site, and the fact of its heritage listing.

“There’s no markings there, no signs, nothing,” he said.

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations said the incident showed the need for private landholders, and non-Indigenous Victorians more generally, to be better educated about Aboriginal cultural heritage.

“The idea that private landholders might not be aware that such important sites exist, despite being registered with the state government, is horrifying,” CEO Paul Paton said. “And if it’s found that they did understand the significance of the site and proceeded to destroy it anyway, then I’m sure we’d all want to see the maximum penalty apply so that a deterrent is made clear for all to see.”

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## [Ukraine](#)

# Ukraine urges Nato to hasten membership as Russian troops gather

President calls for his country to be put on pathway to membership of western military alliance



Volodymyr Zelenskiy, president of Ukraine. Photograph: Reuters

Volodymyr Zelenskiy, president of Ukraine. Photograph: Reuters

[Dan Sabbagh](#) *Defence and security editor*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 14.37 EDT

Ukraine's president has called on Nato and key member states to hasten his country's membership of the western military alliance in response to [a growing buildup of Russian forces](#) on his country's borders.

Volodymyr Zelenskiy spoke to Nato's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, on Tuesday, and urged for Ukraine to be put on a pathway to future membership

to halt the long-running conflict in the eastern Donbas region.

A statement released by the [Ukraine](#) presidency following the call said that “the most urgent issue” in relation to Nato was “the possibility of obtaining the Nato membership action plan”, seen as a pathway to future membership.

[EU and UK pledge backing to Ukraine after Russian military buildup](#)  
[Read more](#)

The Ukrainian president has been engaged in a frantic round of diplomatic activity in the past few days as [Russia](#) has markedly increased the number of troops deployed to the north and east of Ukraine and in occupied Crimea.

Russia’s purpose in the military buildup is unclear, but many western analysts are concerned about the scale of the posturing at a time of increased tensions between Moscow and Washington, after [Joe Biden told reporters he thought his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, was “a killer”](#).

Similar requests for a pathway to [Nato](#) membership were made by Zelenskiy in calls with Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister, on Monday and again on Tuesday with Justin Trudeau, Canada’s PM. Following the call with the UK, Ukraine called on the country, along with allies, to “strengthen its presence” in the region.

“Nato is the only way to end the war in Donbas. Ukraine’s MAP [membership action plan] will be a real signal for Russia,” Zelenskiy told Stoltenberg, according to Kyiv’s readout of their conversation.

Stoltenberg tweeted that he had spoken to Ukraine’s leader “to express serious concern about Russia’s military activities in and around Ukraine” and said the alliance “firmly supports Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity”.

Nato sources said alliance members discussed the Russian buildup last Thursday and continued to monitor the situation closely. But officials also said that Ukraine would have to “focus on domestic reforms” and “develop its defence capabilities in accordance with Nato standards” in order to be considered for membership.

Russia has not denied the troop movements but insisted it was “not threatening anyone”. Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin’s spokesperson, told reporters on Tuesday that Nato membership for Ukraine would do no good in resolving the conflict.

“We very much doubt that this will help Ukraine settle its domestic problem,” Peskov said.

“From our point of view, it will only worsen the situation. If you ask the opinion of several million people living in the self-declared republics [in the east of the country] you will see that for them Nato membership is deeply unacceptable.”

Renewed clashes have been taking place in the east of Ukraine, in a simmering conflict that dates back to 2014. Kyiv said two soldiers were killed on Monday and Tuesday on the frontline, battling separatists who are widely believed to have Russian backing, something which Moscow denies.

Dr Nigel Gould-Davies, a senior analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said: “We are seeing more and more commentators and analysts saying this is more serious than just a show of strength. I don’t think we can rule out anything at this point.”

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## [George Floyd](#)

# Knee on subdued suspect's neck not allowed, police trainer tells Chauvin trial

- Lt Johnny Mercil tells court use of force has to be reasonable
- [Derek Chauvin trial – live coverage](#)



Mercil said officers are trained to use force in proportion ‘to level of resistance that you’re getting’. Photograph: Jane Rosenberg/Reuters

Mercil said officers are trained to use force in proportion ‘to level of resistance that you’re getting’. Photograph: Jane Rosenberg/Reuters

[Chris McGreal](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 14.38 EDT

A Minneapolis police trainer who instructed Derek Chauvin in the use of force told [the former officer's murder trial](#) on Tuesday that placing a knee on

a suspect's neck when they are already subdued "is not authorised".

[Chauvin's use of force on George Floyd was 'in no way' policy, says police chief](#)

[Read more](#)

Lt Johnny Mercil told the court that at the time [George Floyd](#) was arrested last May, police department policy still permitted the use of neck restraints using an arm or side of a leg when a suspect was being "assaultive".

But he said the training did not include the use of a knee, as Chauvin used for more than nine minutes on the 46-year-old African American man in his custody.

Mercil said putting a knee to the neck is "not unauthorised" in making an arrest, but that it is not permitted if the suspect is in handcuffs or otherwise subdued. Floyd was in handcuffs for several minutes before he was forced into the prone position on the ground and Chauvin applied his knee.

Chauvin, 45, has denied charges of second- and third-degree murder, and manslaughter, over Floyd's death, which prompted mass protests for racial justice across the US and other parts of the world. He faces up to 40 years in prison if convicted of the most serious charge. Three other officers face charges of aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter.

Mercil, a martial arts expert specialising in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, said he trained officers that the use of force has to be reasonable when it starts and when it stops.

The prosecution is seeking to show that even if Chauvin felt that he was using a legitimate level of force when he got Floyd on the ground, keeping his knee on the detained man's neck for more than nine minutes was not reasonable. There came a point at which it should have been lifted.

00:59

Police trainer says Derek Chauvin used unauthorised neck restraint on George Floyd – video

Mercil said officers are trained to use force in proportion “to level of resistance that you’re getting”. He agreed that it should be reduced as the threat from a suspect diminishes.

The prosecutor showed Mercil a picture of Chauvin restraining Floyd as he lay prone and asked if that level of force would be authorised “if the subject was under control and handcuffed”.

The police lieutenant replied: “I would say no.”

The defence attempted to get Mercil to agree that a training manual showed an officer placing his knee on the back of a neck during handcuffing. But Mercil said the picture showed the knee was on the shoulder and it was the shin across the neck. The distinction is crucial because it means the pressure point is away from where it is most dangerous.

Mercil was the latest in a succession of Chauvin’s former colleagues to give evidence for the prosecution. Earlier on Tuesday, Sgt Ker Yang, a 24-year [Minneapolis](#) police veteran who now heads training in crisis intervention, said Chauvin was instructed to recognise whether a detained individual is in crisis and needs medical assistance. He agreed that intoxication from drugs or alcohol “can be a crisis”.

Floyd’s girlfriend has [testified](#) that he was addicted to opioids and another witness said he appeared to be high shortly before his arrest.

Nicole Mackenzie, the police department’s medical support coordinator, testified that Chauvin was trained in dealing with drug overdoses and in giving CPR. She said officers are obliged to render immediate first aid in a critical situation and not to simply wait for an ambulance to arrive.

Mackenzie said officers are instructed in how to recognise and respond to a person who is unresponsive including taking a pulse and measures to get them breathing again.

Video of Floyd’s arrest shows one of the police officers dismissing his pleas that he can’t breathe on the grounds that it takes a lot of oxygen to talk. “Just

because they're speaking does not mean they are breathing adequately," said Mackenzie.

One of the challenges for the prosecution is to persuade the jury that Chauvin, and not the Minneapolis police department, bears responsibility for the methods he used.

On Monday [the city's police chief, Medaria Arradondo](#), attempted to paint Chauvin as a rogue officer going far beyond his training and regulations in his use of force.

"To continue to apply that level of force to a person prone-out, handcuffed behind their back, that in no way, shape or form is anything that is by policy," Arradondo told the trial.

02:57

Chauvin trial: police chief says use of force violated policy – video

The defence suggested Chauvin was merely following his training by the Minneapolis police. Nelson put it to Arradondo that his department's policies did permit neck restraints under certain circumstances at the time of Chauvin's death.

These included the "unconscious neck restraint" used to cut off the blood flow to the brain. However, that hold was only supposed to be used on people "exhibiting active aggression" or sustained resistance to arrest.

Arradondo said there had been such a policy but there was no justification for the continued pressure on Floyd's neck after he stopped resisting.

The day began with an attempt by Morris Hall, the passenger in the vehicle with Floyd at the time of his detention, to invoke his fifth amendment right against self-incrimination and not give evidence.

Previous witnesses testified that Hall supplied drugs to Floyd. The prosecution opposed the application for Hall to be granted a blanket right not to testify on the grounds that there are relevant questions that do not risk



self-incrimination. The judge asked for a list of questions that might be asked.

Three other officers involved in Floyd's death are scheduled to be tried together later this year on charges of aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter.

The trial continues.

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## [Alexei Navalny](#)

# Alexei Navalny 'seriously ill' on prison sick ward, says lawyer

Russian opposition figure has fever, cough and has lost weight, according to legal team member who visited him



One of Alexei Navalny's lawyers says it is a 'complete outrage' that prison conditions have made him so sick. Photograph: Alexander Zemlianichenko/AP

One of Alexei Navalny's lawyers says it is a 'complete outrage' that prison conditions have made him so sick. Photograph: Alexander Zemlianichenko/AP

[Andrew Roth](#) in Moscow

Tue 6 Apr 2021 05.43 EDT

Alexei Navalny's lawyer has confirmed that the opposition leader is "seriously ill" after reports emerged that he had been [transferred to a prison](#)

[sick ward for a respiratory illness](#) and had been tested for coronavirus.

The Kremlin critic said in a note published on Monday that he was coughing and had a temperature of 38.1C (100.6F). Several prisoners from his ward had already been treated in hospital for tuberculosis, Navalny wrote. Hours later, the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia reported he had been moved to a sick ward and tested for coronavirus, among other diseases.

On Tuesday, Russian police arrested several Navalny supporters who had travelled to the prison 60 miles east of Moscow to petition for him to receive proper medical care. Anastasia Vasilyeva, the head of the Russian Doctors' Alliance, along with three other members of the renegade medical union were arrested. Reporters for CNN and for Belsat, a Russian-language television channel based in Poland, were also briefly detained.



Police detain the Alliance of Doctors union's leader Anastasia Vasilyeva at the prison colony IK-2. Photograph: Pavel Golovkin/AP

"We are coming here today to offer help," Vasilyeva told journalists before her arrest. "There's no war here. Let's settle this problem like people."

A lawyer for Navalny said that a member of his legal team had seen the opposition leader on Tuesday and that he was "in rather bad condition". Navalny [declared a hunger strike last week](#) because he had been denied a

visit from a personal doctor for growing numbness and pain in his back and legs that had made it difficult for him to walk.

“He has lost a lot of weight, plus he has a strong cough and a temperature of 38.1C,” Olga Mikhailova, the lawyer, said on the Echo of Moscow radio station. “This man is seriously ill. It’s a complete outrage that the IK-2 [prison] has driven him to this condition.”

In a letter published on Monday, Navalny wrote that three inmates in his ward had been taken to hospital recently with tuberculosis. [He joked](#) darkly that if he had contracted the disease, it could distract him from “the pain in my back and numbness in my legs”.

There has not been official confirmation of Navalny’s medical treatment, although a lawyer speculated on Monday that the sick ward was probably in the IK-2 prison colony, 60 miles east of Moscow, where he is being held. The prison is notoriously strict and said to specialise in isolating prisoners from the outside world.

Navalny’s wife, Yulia, on Tuesday published a letter sent to her from the prison warden who said that he could not send Navalny to hospital because he did not have his passport. In a statement posted online, she also claimed that the warden had taunted her husband by grilling a chicken and handing out sweets to his fellow inmates while the opposition leader has maintained his hunger strike.

Navalny is serving a two-and-a-half year prison term on embezzlement charges that he has said is retribution for his political opposition to [Vladimir Putin](#). Navalny survived a poisoning attempt that he traced back to Russia’s FSB last year. He was arrested in January when he returned to Russia from Germany, where he had been treated for poisoning with a novichok-type nerve agent.



Russian police officers guard the entrance to the penal colony where Alexei Navalny is being held, ahead of a planned protest in his support on Tuesday. Photograph: Kirill Kudryavtsev/AFP/Getty Images

Navalny has compared the prison colony to a “[concentration camp](#)” and complained of sleep deprivation and other psychological pressure. Last week, a pro-Kremlin activist who had been jailed on spying charges in the US visited him in the prison, telling him that he had exaggerated the poor conditions there.

“I’m tired of the complaining. He is in one of the best penal colonies in Russia,” Maria Butina, who now works for the state-funded television station RT, posted on social media. She visited the prison with a camera crew in tow.

Navalny complained about the visit in a note posted to his Telegram channel: “Instead of a doctor, today the miserable RT television propagandist [Maria] Butina came along with video cameras,” he said.

Amnesty International’s secretary general, Agnès Callamard, said on Monday that she had written to Vladimir Putin about the “arbitrary arrest and deteriorating health condition” of Navalny.

I have written to Vladimir Putin over Aleksei [#Navalny](#) arbitrary arrest and deteriorating health condition. There is a real prospect that [#Russia](#) is subjecting him to a slow death. He must be granted immediate access to a medical doctor he trusts and he must be freed [#FreeNavalny](#).

— Agnes Callamard (@AgnesCallamard) [April 5, 2021](#)

Later on Tuesday, Navalny said he had been visited by doctors representing the Vladimir region who said they would not allow him to meet with someone sent from Moscow, a decision that he said violated the law.

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## [The Pacific project](#)[Timor-Leste](#)

# **‘When I woke, the house was full of water’: daunting cleanup follows Timor-Leste floods**

At least 150 people killed in Indonesia and Timor-Leste after tropical cyclone Seroja hit region



Thousands of people have been displaced after floods and landslides caused by torrential rains hit the eastern part of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Photograph: Antonio Dasiparu/EPA

Thousands of people have been displaced after floods and landslides caused by torrential rains hit the eastern part of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Photograph: Antonio Dasiparu/EPA

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*Raimundos Oki in Dili*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 22.41 EDT

In Tasitolu, a suburb in the west of the capital, Dili, Batista Elo balances his young daughter on his hip as he stands in flood waters that reach up his thighs.

“I saved my family first and after that just got into the belongings, but there were some things that didn’t get saved,” recalls Batista of the wild Saturday night when his home was suddenly flooded.

“Now I have no place to live. I am staying temporarily at my brother’s house,” he said.

[Death toll in Indonesia and Timor-Leste from catastrophic floods rises to 157](#)

[Read more](#)

Batista is one of thousands who have been left homeless in Timor-Leste and neighbouring Indonesia after a [tropical cyclone battered the south-east Asian nations](#) over the weekend.

At least 157 people were killed – 130 in Indonesia and 27 in [Timor-Leste](#), including 13 in Dili. Dozens more are missing.



People walk next to the floodwaters in Dili, Timor-Leste. Photograph: Antonio Sampaio/EPA

On Tuesday, even as flood waters were receding across Dili, Kanisius Elo's home was still inundated with about five meters of dirty water.

"When I woke up, the house was full of water," Kanisius recalled of Saturday night. He is worried that if the water level does not drop soon his home will be lost.

"If this water is dry in the next few days I will return to my house but if it doesn't dry up for a month or two, then my house will also be destroyed."

Neither Kanisius nor Batista had received humanitarian assistance from the government and are hoping the government will visit their homes so that they can see the reality of what is happening.

"I don't blame anyone, but I hope the authorities will hopefully try to reduce this water in the future," said Kanisius. "The big problem now is the provision of clean water and food."

He also asked the government to repair the existing sewers in Dili, especially in the Tasitolu terminal section so that they would not make it difficult for the community in the rainy season.

“If the sewers at the terminal are good then it will be good here too.”



Kanisius Elo walks in floodwaters in Tasitolu, a suburb in the west of Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. Photograph: Raimundos Oki/The Guardian

[Around 8,000 people have lost their homes](#) and have taken refuge in several places in Dili, said government spokesman Fidelis Leite Magalhaes at a press conference on Monday.

Fidelis said the government would work to repair several public roads that have been cut off due to the heavy flooding.

Almost all the offices in Dili were flooded. Normal work has been suspended across the city as civil servants focus on cleaning up the mud in their workplaces.

Peter Roberts, ambassador of Australia to Timor-Leste offered its condolences to those affected by flooding in Dili and around Timor-Leste: “Our thoughts are with the family and friends of those who lost their life, or suffered injuries or damage to houses and businesses”

“We will continue to work with the government of Timor-Leste to support the response. Our Defence Cooperation Program responded to repair a generator at the Integrated Crisis Management Situation Room on 5 April, to help it continue operating”.

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## [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#)

# Western economies recovering faster than expected from Covid, says IMF

Growth forecast upgraded amid US and UK vaccine programmes and stimulus packages



The IMF said governments had spent \$16tn in their attempts to mitigate the economic damage caused by Covid. Photograph: Frederic J Brown/AFP/Getty Images

The IMF said governments had spent \$16tn in their attempts to mitigate the economic damage caused by Covid. Photograph: Frederic J Brown/AFP/Getty Images

[Larry Elliott](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 08.30 EDT

Stronger recoveries from the Covid-19 pandemic in the US, the UK and other rich western countries will result in faster than expected growth for the

global economy this year, the International Monetary Fund has predicted.

The Washington-based IMF's half-yearly World Economic Outlook (WEO) said successful vaccine programmes, businesses adapting to the challenges of lockdown and Joe Biden's \$1.9tn (£1.4tn) stimulus package had been key factors in the upgrade.

After contracting by 3.3% in 2020, the IMF said the world economy would now grow by 6% in 2021 and a further 4.4% in 2022. The last [WEO in October](#) had predicted expansion of 5.2% in 2021 and 4.2% in 2022. The October forecast for 2021 was later upgraded to 5.5% growth in [January this year](#).

[IMF calls for tax hikes on wealthy to reduce income gap](#)  
[Read more](#)

The IMF said governments had spent \$16tn in their attempts to mitigate the economic damage caused by the virus and that without the unprecedented policy response the global economy would have contracted by 10% last year.

The WEO warned that the recovery would be uneven, with faster progress in rich countries further advanced with their vaccine programmes and with the financial firepower to pay for stimulus packages. Inequality would increase both between and within countries, the WEO said.

Of the advanced countries, the US has recorded the biggest improvement in its prospects, with the IMF raising its growth forecasts by 1.3 points to 6.4% in 2021 and 1.0 points to 3.5% in 2022. The UK is expected to grow by 5.3% in 2021 and by 5.1% in 2022 – an upward revision of 0.8 and 0.1 percentage points respectively since January.

The UK was one of the hardest hit western economies in 2020 but the IMF expects it to be the fastest-growing G7 country in 2022, outstripping the US, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Canada. Gita Gopinath, the IMF's economic counsellor, said the UK's prospects had been boosted by its vaccine programme and by Rishi Sunak's budget.

Gopinath said the IMF backed the call by the US treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, for a global minimum corporate tax rate to make it more difficult for big corporations to shift their profits between jurisdictions.

“It is one year into the Covid-19 pandemic and the global community still confronts extreme social and economic strain as the human toll rises and millions remain unemployed,” Gopinath said.

“Yet, even with high uncertainty about the path of the pandemic, a way out of this health and economic crisis is increasingly visible. Thanks to the ingenuity of the scientific community hundreds of millions of people are being vaccinated and this is expected to power recoveries in many countries later this year.”

Gopinath said swift action had prevented a repeat of the financial meltdown of 2008 and as a result medium-term losses – output that will never be recovered – would be smaller at about 3% of global GDP. Unlike after the 2008 crisis, it would be emerging markets and low-income countries that could be expected to suffer greater scarring given their limited ability to stimulate their economies.

According to IMF calculations, cumulative per capita income losses over 2020–22, compared with pre-pandemic projections, will be 20% of 2019 per capita GDP in emerging markets and developing economies (excluding China), while in advanced economies the losses are expected to be 11%.

Despite becoming more optimistic about growth prospects, Gopinath said the future presented “daunting” challenges.

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“The pandemic is yet to be defeated and virus cases are accelerating in many countries. Recoveries are also diverging dangerously across and within countries, as economies with slower vaccine rollout, more limited policy support, and more reliant on tourism do less well.”

The WEO said the expected recovery followed a contraction that had been particularly hard on the young, women, workers with relatively low



educational attainment and the informally employed.

“Income inequality is likely to increase significantly because of the pandemic,” it said. “Close to 95 million more people are estimated to have fallen below the threshold of extreme poverty in 2020 compared with pre-pandemic projections.”

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## US foreign policy.

# **‘Momentous error’: Italian businessman mistakenly blacklisted by Trump to sue**

Alessandro Bazzoni’s bank account was closed after he faced sanctions in a case of mistaken identity



Nicolás Maduro. A crackdown by the Trump administration against the Venezuelan president accidentally implicated Alessandro Bazzoni. Photograph: Manaure Quintero/Reuters

Nicolás Maduro. A crackdown by the Trump administration against the Venezuelan president accidentally implicated Alessandro Bazzoni. Photograph: Manaure Quintero/Reuters

[Angela Giuffrida](#) in Rome

Tue 6 Apr 2021 15.24 EDT

A small business owner in Italy is preparing to sue the US Treasury after accidentally being [put on a sanctions blacklist](#) before Donald Trump left the presidency.

Alessandro Bazzoni, who owns a graphic design company in Sardinia, has been unable to trade since 19 January, when his business was slapped with sanctions as part of the Trump administration's crackdown on blacklisted Venezuelan crude oil.

In a case of mistaken identity, the US Treasury erroneously blacklisted Bazzoni's graphic design company, SeriGraphicLab, along with a restaurant and pizzeria in Verona owned by another businessman called Alessandro Bazzoni. Both were removed from the blacklist on 31 March. But while the restaurant owner's bank account has been reactivated, the blunder led to the Sardinian businessman's account being closed.

"It was a momentous error on their part, and one that is having serious implications as it is preventing me from working," he said.

Bazzoni, who works independently, was able to withdraw the money that was in his account but can no longer trade because, as per Italian law, he needs a bank account in order to receive payments from clients. The absence of a bank account also means he cannot access the financial support he is entitled to receive as part of the Italian government's Covid-19 relief scheme.

"I have to go to another bank to see if I can open an account there," he said. "But for now, I cannot sufficiently operate my business, so much so I have started to look for other jobs."

Bazzoni claims the US Treasury did not notify him about being on the sanctions blacklist, nor did it apologise for the mistake.

"The only notification I got was from my bank telling me my account was closing," he said.

He has made a legal complaint to the Italian police, with the aim of suing the Office of Foreign Assets Control, a unit of the US Treasury.

In 2019, Trump's government imposed sanctions on Venezuela's state oil company, Petróleos de [Venezuela](#) (PDVSA), in an attempt to force the resignation of the president, Nicolás Maduro, whom the US accused of corruption, human rights violations and rigging his 2018 re-election. On his last day in office, Trump sanctioned a network of oil firms and individuals tied to PDVSA.

A US Treasury official told Reuters that the department realised the companies were owned by different individuals than the Bazzoni it blacklisted in January.

The Guardian has contacted the US Treasury for a response to the Sardinian businessman's case. "First and foremost, I want an apology," said Bazzoni.

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## Headlines tuesday 6 april 2021

- [Coronavirus Labour opposed to 'discriminatory' and 'confusing' Covid status certificates](#)
- [Live UK Covid: Labour hardens opposition to 'digital ID card' Covid passports plan](#)
- [Covid-status certificates What are they and how might they work?](#)
- [Explainer How Covid restrictions are changing from 12 April](#)

## Health policy

# Labour opposed to 'discriminatory' and 'confusing' Covid status certificates

Shadow health secretary says 'unfair' vaccine document plan has not been clearly explained

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



Keir Starmer in the House of Commons last month. Photograph: Jessica Taylor/AFP/Getty

Keir Starmer in the House of Commons last month. Photograph: Jessica Taylor/AFP/Getty

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

Tue 6 Apr 2021 04.58 EDT

Labour has warned that [Covid status certificates](#) could be “discriminatory”, with Keir Starmer poised to vote against the measures.

The shadow health secretary, Jon Ashworth, accused the government of “creating confusion” by not explaining clearly where the documents may be needed, after [Boris Johnson confirmed](#) they were being investigated but would not be introduced earlier than mid-May.

Under the scheme, only people who can prove they have had a coronavirus vaccine, a recent negative test result or have antibodies from an infection in the last six months would be allowed into some settings.

“I’m not going to support a policy that, here in my Leicester constituency, if someone wants to go into Next or H&M, they have to produce a vaccination certificate on their phone, on an app,” Ashworth told BBC Breakfast. “I think that’s discriminatory.”

He added it made sense to ask people to get tested before going to events such as a football game, but warned that forcing everyone to carry an “ID card” proving they had been jabbed was not fair.

Johnson announced on Monday that the NHS was developing Covid status certificates, though said they would not be needed in a shop, pub garden or hairdresser before 17 May. He left open the possibility of them being needed in some indoor settings after that date, saying the government was working out “exactly what the proposal might be”.

A government-commissioned review also published on Monday only clarified that some settings, including public transport and essential shops, where the documents “should never be required”.

The scheme has still sparked anger among 40 Conservative MPs, who pledged to oppose the certificates and said they were “divisive and discriminatory”.

[Green pass: how are Covid vaccine passports working for Israel?](#)  
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Nadhim Zahawi, the vaccines minister, confirmed “If we do get to that place, then of course we will go to parliament for a vote.” With anger on the Conservative side potentially wiping out the prime minister’s majority in the Commons, attention has turned to Labour’s position.

In an effort to win cross-party support for the idea, Michael Gove, the Cabinet Office minister, launched a [charm offensive](#) last week, holding calls with Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP MPs to lobby them to support the plan.

After the Liberal Democrats leader, Ed Davey, came out firmly against the idea, saying it would mean “separating society into haves and have-nots”, Starmer came under pressure to say how he would vote.

In an interview with the Daily Telegraph last week, he did not commit to voting one way or another: “My instinct is that, as the vaccine is rolled out, as the number of hospital admissions and deaths go down, there will be a British sense that we don’t actually want to go down this road.”

A senior Labour source has since confirmed to the Guardian that Starmer and senior members of the shadow cabinet including the deputy leader, Angela Rayner, “are all minded to vote against” the proposals.

They added that they did not think ministers had adequately explained how the scheme would work, what its purpose was and the cost to the taxpayer, significantly increasing the chances that the prime minister could lose a vote in parliament.

Mark Harper, a Tory backbencher and chair of the Covid Recovery Group, said: “It is crucial MPs are allowed a vote on this, as Michael Gove promised last week. Whether the state legislates for it, recommends it or simply allows it, Covid status certification will lead to a two-tier Britain, and these issues need debating thoroughly and carefully before we allow them to affect the lives of our constituents.”

Labour officials had been questioning whether Starmer would support Johnson over the plans, which have sparked a fierce backlash from civil

liberties campaigners and human rights charities including Liberty, Big Brother Watch and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

A party insider said “it really isn’t clear at all” how the government’s proposed system would work and added that the “reservations are real”, particularly around the digital infrastructure for the certificates given the government’s handling of the development of the test-and-trace app.

Another said Starmer’s team was “worried that this issue splits the PLP [parliamentary Labour party] just like it splits the Tory party” and “really angry” that the interview he gave last week had been headlined on his criticism of the certificates. They suggested Labour could still support them, but would “probably not make much of a song and dance about it”.

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

# UK Covid: Johnson suggests testing for people returning from ‘green list’ countries could be simplified – as it happened

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## Coronavirus

# What are Covid-status certificates and how might they work?

Domestic vaccine passports could be used to help the UK economy reopen, but a broad coalition of MPs are opposed to the idea

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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The NHS is looking at how to offer certificates in both digital and non-digital form. Photograph: Philip Toscano/PA

The NHS is looking at how to offer certificates in both digital and non-digital form. Photograph: Philip Toscano/PA

[Tobi Thomas](#)

[@tobithomas](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 15.20 EDT

After months of speculation regarding whether Covid-status certificates – domestic vaccine passports – will come into force in the UK, it appears that the government is taking steps to draw up a scheme. An official document published on Monday states a commitment to examining “whether and how Covid-status certification might be used to reopen our economy, reduce restrictions on social contact and improve safety”.

## **What exactly are they?**

Under plans still in development the certificates would record whether someone has been vaccinated, has had a recent negative test, or has natural immunity. People who have tested positive for the virus within the past six months will potentially be considered to have natural immunity from the virus. The NHS is looking at how to offer certificates in both digital and non-digital form.

## **How would they be used?**

Government ministers are pushing the scheme, saying it could have an “important role to play both domestically and internationally, as a temporary measure” that would allow for higher-risk settings, such as concerts, nightclubs and sporting events, to go ahead safely.

However, there is controversy about them being used to control access to pubs, bars and restaurants. The report left this possibility open, saying banning their use in this way would be an “unjustified intrusion on how businesses choose to make their premises safe”. It also made clear they would not be required in essential shops, public service buildings or on public transport.

## **When would they come in to force?**

Although there is no official date as yet for the implementation of the plan, Boris Johnson told Monday’s Downing Street press briefing that vaccine passports would not be implemented in steps 2 and 3 of the roadmap to ease lockdown. That means not until 21 June at the earliest.

However, the government has indicated that some large-scale events taking place in a pilot scheme this month have been given the go-ahead [to trial Covid certificates](#). There has been some confusion as to whether or not the certificates will actually be part of the trials, with some venues [having rejected the suggestion that they would require them](#).

## **What is the justification for using them?**

One major reason cited is that they could play a role at mass events “to help manage risks where large people are brought together in close proximity”. The system has also been linked to a review of social distancing rules, with the government stating that “any relaxation in social distancing is linked to the questions being explored by the Covid-status certification review”.

Monday’s document points to similar schemes being brought in elsewhere – Israel’s “Green Pass” and the EU’s “digital green certificate” – and argues that even without government intervention, some way of demonstrating your coronavirus status to businesses “is likely to become a feature of our lives until the threat from the pandemic recedes”.

However, ministers can expect a backlash to the proposed Covid-certification system on civil liberties and equalities grounds, which may explain their reluctance to commit fully to one.

## **How much opposition is there?**

A broad coalition of MPs from opposing parties have come together to strongly reject the idea of Covid certificates or passports. Over 70 MPs, including key members of Labour’s left such as Jeremy Corbyn, and senior Tories such as Iain Duncan Smith, [have formed a parliamentary alliance](#) to oppose Covid identity documents.

The Labour leader, Keir Starmer, has also expressed scepticism about the idea, adding that [he believed “British instinct” would likely be against them](#).

Parliament will play an important role in whether Covid-status certificates will be able to go ahead, with the government stating that they will ensure

“appropriate parliamentary scrutiny”, and that interim findings from the Covid-status certification review will be presented to MPs later this month.

For now, it seems likely that dozens of MPs will oppose the plan if it is put to a vote.

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## Coronavirus

# How will England's Covid restrictions be changing from 12 April?

Next stage of easing of lockdown will mean non-essential retail can reopen, among other changes

- [Coronavirus – latest updates](#)
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People walk past a sign directing people to a rapid lateral flow Covid-19 testing centre at London Bridge station. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty Images

People walk past a sign directing people to a rapid lateral flow Covid-19 testing centre at London Bridge station. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/AFP/Getty Images

[Tobi Thomas](#)  
[@tobithomas](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 06.47 EDT

England is gearing up for the next stage of coronavirus restrictions being eased from 12 April. So far, step 1 of the proposed roadmap has been completed: on 8 March, pupils and college students returned to the classroom, and care home residents were allowed to receive one regular, named visitor; then on 29 March, outdoor gatherings of up to six people, or two households, were allowed, outdoor sports continued, and the official “stay at home” advice came to an end.

There is a minimum of five weeks between each stage, with four weeks to collect and assess data and then a week for people and businesses to prepare for the next step.

All the changes will be deployed through England with no return to regional tiers. However, there may be localised efforts if a new variant of the virus is detected, for example additional testing.

## **End of step 1**

### **9 April**

- Everyone in England will be entitled to take a free rapid coronavirus test [twice a week](#). This includes even those who do not have symptoms.
- The lateral flow tests will be available for home use or at test centres, workplaces and schools. Results take as little as 30 minutes.

## **Step 2**

### **12 April**

- Most of the high street is set to reopen on this date, including non-essential retail stores, community centres, libraries, hairdressers and nail salons.

- Gyms and other indoor leisure facilities are also to reopen, as well as outdoor attractions including zoos, theme parks, and drive-in cinemas.
- Campsites, holiday lets and other forms of self-contained accommodation are due to reopen, so long as indoor facilities are not shared with other households.
- Pubs and restaurants will be able to reopen to serve people outdoors, and customers will not have to order a substantial meal in order to have an alcoholic drink.
- Parent and child groups (not counting children under five) can resume indoors.
- The number of guests allowed at a wedding will be able to increase to 15. Funerals will continue with the current number of guests limited to 30.
- Care home residents will be allowed to have two regular visitors indoors.
- International holidays are still illegal, and social distancing rules still apply.

## **16 April**

- A pilot for Covid-safe live events in England will begin, with an aim of showing how large events can take place without a requirement for social distancing.
- Hot Water Comedy Club in Liverpool is one of the events that will take place as part of the trial on 16 April. Other events that will take place as part of the scheme include the FA Cup semi-final at Wembley Stadium on 18 April, and the FA Cup final on 15 May.
- There has been some confusion as to whether so-called Covid certifications would be trialled at these events, with venues involved

pushing back against a government press release [suggesting this was the case](#).

## Step 3

**No earlier than 17 May**

- Up to 30 people from different households will be able to gather outdoors.
- For indoor gatherings, however, the rule of six, or two households, will still apply.
- Indoor hospitality will reopen, as well as indoor entertainment venues such as cinemas, hotels, children's play areas and indoor group sports and exercise classes.
- The limit on guests attending weddings, receptions and wakes will increase to 30.
- The government has also said it will update advice on social distancing between friends and families no later than step 3.
- This will also be the earliest date at which [international holidays](#) may be able to resume, subject to a government review.

## Step 4

**No earlier than 21 June**

- All legal limits on mixing will be removed and the last sectors to remain closed, such as nightclubs, will reopen. Large events can take place.

**To be announced**

## Wider rollout of Covid certification scheme

- The government has said a Covid-status certification system will be developed over the coming months in an effort to allow higher-risk settings to be opened up safely.
- The system will take into account three potential factors: vaccination, a recent negative test or natural immunity.

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## 2021.04.06 - Coronavirus

- [Live Coronavirus: Indian states call for people under 45 to be eligible for vaccine; cases rising in Japan](#)
- [Australia Scott Morrison blames international supply issues for slow Covid vaccine rollout](#)
- [Oxford jab Watchdog looks into use for under-30s – report](#)
- [Tokyo Olympics North Korea pulls out, citing coronavirus fears](#)

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[World news](#)

# UK plans for Covid pass in chaos – as it happened

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## [Australian politics](#)

# EU denies blocking 3.1m Covid vaccine doses from reaching Australia

Scott Morrison blames international supply issues for missing vaccine rollout targets

- [Follow the Australia liveblog](#)
- [Trans-Tasman travel bubble to start from 19 April](#)
- [Six key things we don't know about Australia's vaccine rollout](#)
- [Disability services take vaccinations 'into their own hands' amid rollout failures](#)



A health worker prepares a dose of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine. An Australian government source said the European Union has blocked the export of the 3.1m AstraZeneca doses. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

A health worker prepares a dose of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine. An Australian government source said the European Union has blocked the

export of the 3.1m AstraZeneca doses. Photograph: Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images

[Paul Karp](#)

[@Paul\\_Karp](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 16.20 EDT

The [European Union](#) has denied blocking shipments of 3.1m doses of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine from going to Australia, contradicting Scott Morrison's claim that international supply issues were to blame for missing rollout targets.

At a press conference on Tuesday [after New Zealand announced](#) a trans-Tasman travel bubble, the prime minister said Australia had not received 3.1m AstraZeneca doses from overseas. He said that was to blame for the massive discrepancy between [the 855,000 vaccinations administered](#) so far and the missed target of 4m doses by the end of March.

The federal government is under fire for the slow pace of the rollout and a lack of transparency about how many doses have been manufactured locally and administered.

[Six key things we don't know about Australia's Covid vaccine rollout despite promises of 'transparency'](#)

[Read more](#)

An Australian government source told the Reuters agency on Tuesday that the European Union had blocked the export of the 3.1m AstraZeneca doses and that Australia had little hope of getting the remaining 400,000 doses it has been promised on time.

"They've blocked 3.1m shots so far ... we haven't given up hope but we've stopped counting them in our expected supplies," the source said.

But a European Commission spokesperson said the only export request rejected out of nearly 500 received has been so far a shipment of 250,000 doses to Australia in March, which is well known.

“We cannot confirm any new decision to block vaccine exports to Australia or to any other country,” the spokesperson told a news conference in Europe on Tuesday.

The Nationals deputy leader, David Littleproud, said on Monday that Australia had been “badly let down” by the EU. “The arithmetic is simple on this,” he told the Nine Network. “We are 3m [doses] short because of the EU who cut us short.”

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Morrison promised on Tuesday to increase the number of GPs administering vaccines from 1,500 to 4,000 but refused to say how many doses of AstraZeneca vaccine CSL was producing in Melbourne each week.

Morrison told reporters in Canberra it would be “misleading” to provide an average. At its fastest pace, the company had achieved “around the 800,000 [per week] mark”, the prime minister said. “We want to keep achieving that ... if we can do better, we will.”

Previously, health officials have said they expected 1m locally made doses to be available per week. [Morrison claimed in March](#) that CSL was already producing more than 900,000 shots a week.

In response to [a news.com.au report](#) that some 2.5m CSL doses were being held up by testing, Morrison said there had been “no hold-up” because approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and batch testing was “a necessary part of the process to guarantee Australian safety”.

“It is very important that people understand [that] the fill and finish process doesn’t involve the little vial coming off the production line and then going straight to the courier and the GP or the hospital,” the Liberal leader said.

[Australia warned it won't achieve herd immunity unless it deals with vaccine hesitancy](#)

[Read more](#)

Morrison declined to set a vaccination new target for the end of April and sought to explain the missed 4m target by blaming “frustrated” supply and “non-delivery” of vaccines. “The simple explanation is that ... 3.1m vaccines never came to Australia,” he said.

The health department secretary, Prof Brendan Murphy, offered the same explanation in mid-March when [the government walked away](#) from its pledge to “fully vaccinate” all Australians by October.

But on 5 March, after [Italy blocked 250,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine](#), the federal health minister, Greg Hunt, was keen to downplay the impact of overseas supply issues on the rollout.

Hunt said at the time Australia’s “forward projections did not involve this particular shipment of one set of doses from one country, from a firm which has a deep, broad global supply chain”.

Morrison said on Tuesday the government was providing weekly statistics on the number of vaccines administered but “there is no reason why these figures can’t be done on a more regular basis”.

“It is a good idea for us to have more data transparency on these issues and that is what we will be discussing with the premiers and chief ministers on Friday,” he said.

Morrison defended the rollout by noting 79,000 vaccinations were administered in one day last week – which he claimed was “actually better” than where New Zealand, Germany, South Korea and Japan were at the same point in their programs.

[Australia Covid vaccine tracker: how is the rollout progressing and when will you get the jab?](#)

[Read more](#)

Australia’s ambitious rollout requires it to administer at least 180,000 vaccines per day – a curve that has only gotten steeper due to the sluggish start.

The opposition health spokesperson, Mark Butler, said on Tuesday the rollout was “so far behind every single commitment [Scott Morrison](#) and Greg Hunt has given to the Australian people”. “Surely, they must admit this is not going well,” Butler told reporters. “They have to admit that, get people around the table and adjust their strategy.”

Butler proposed allowing pharmacists to administer vaccines sooner than planned and considering “mass vaccination centres of the type you see in other countries”.

But Morrison said the available vaccines matched the current distribution network and without further doses, mass vaccination centres would make no difference to the pace of the rollout. “It was never the plan that pharmacists would be involved in the vaccination program at this point,” he said.

Morrison said the early phases of the rollout focused on vulnerable populations who would receive vaccines from their GPs and pharmacists would administer doses by mid-year.

A CSL spokesperson said the company was “committed to providing the Australian government with the doses required to fulfil its Covid-19 vaccination strategy”.

“In the first week of the local rollout, 832,000 doses were released ahead of schedule to the Australian government,” the spokesperson said.

“Further batches of finished doses are now being released on a rolling basis every week. When approved by the TGA, they are delivered to the national network of vaccination centres and GP clinics. CSL hopes to reach a rolling output of 1m doses a week as soon as possible.”

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This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/06/scott-morrison-blames-international-supply-for-slow-covid-vaccine-rollout>

## UK news

# Report claims watchdog looking into use of AstraZeneca jab for under-30s

Channel 4 News cites sources saying issue being considered, but regulator says no decision made

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Doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. A decision on its use in younger patients could be made as early as Tuesday. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

Doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. A decision on its use in younger patients could be made as early as Tuesday. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

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Mon 5 Apr 2021 19.05 EDT

The UK's medicines regulatory body has said that no decision has been made on any regulatory action relating to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine following reports it is considering restricting use of the vaccine in younger people.

Channel 4 News claimed on Monday evening that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) was considering the restrictions amid concerns about rare blood clots, and a decision could be made as early as Tuesday.

It reported: "Two senior sources have told this programme that while the data is still unclear, there are growing arguments to justify offering younger people – below the age of 30 at the very least – a different vaccine."

[Blood clot cases 'could dent faith of young women in AstraZeneca'](#)  
[Read more](#)

However, both sources also emphasised their support for the Oxford jab and their concerns that any restriction of its rollout could damage public confidence in it.

Later on Monday, the MHRA's chief executive Dr June Raine said no decision had been made and urged people to continue to get vaccinated.

"Our thorough and detailed review is ongoing into reports of very rare and specific types of blood clots with low platelets following the Covid-19 vaccine AstraZeneca," she said. "No decision has yet been made on any regulatory action."

Prof Neil Ferguson of Imperial College London told BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Monday that the clots raised questions over whether young people should get the jab. He said: "There is increasing evidence that there is a rare risk associated particularly with the AstraZeneca vaccine, but it may be associated at a lower level with other vaccines, of these unusual blood clots with low platelet counts.



“It appears that risk is age related, it may possibly be – but the data is weaker on this – related to sex.

“And so the older you are, the less the risk is and also the higher the risk is of Covid, so the risk-benefit equation really points very much towards being vaccinated. I think it becomes slightly more complicated when you get to younger age groups, where the risk-benefit equation is more complicated.”

It comes as the European Medicines Agency is set to rule on Wednesday on whether countries should carry on giving out the jab as part of its vaccine programme.

In the last month, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and the Netherlands have paused the vaccine’s rollout while the EMA investigates.

The MHRA has identified 30 cases of rare blood clots out of the 18.1m doses of the jab administered up to and including 24 March. Of these reports, [seven people have died](#).

But scientists have said the risk of not getting the vaccine far outweighs the small chance of blood clots.

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## Tokyo Olympic Games 2020

# North Korea pulls out of Tokyo Olympics, citing coronavirus fears

With the Games just months away, the regime's sports ministry says it wants to protect athletes from the 'global health crisis'



North Korea will not attend the forthcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo, Pyongyang's sports ministry said on Tuesday, citing the risks of coronavirus infection. Photograph: Ed Jones/AFP/Getty Images

North Korea will not attend the forthcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo, Pyongyang's sports ministry said on Tuesday, citing the risks of coronavirus infection. Photograph: Ed Jones/AFP/Getty Images

*[Helen Sullivan](#) and agencies  
[@helenrsullivan](#)*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 03.12 EDT

[North Korea](#)'s sports ministry said on Tuesday that it will not participate in the [Tokyo Olympics](#) this year to protect its athletes amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision was made at a meeting of North Korea's Olympic committee, including its sports minister Kim Il guk, on 25 March the ministry said on its website, called Joson Sports. "The committee decided not to join the 32nd Olympics Games to protect athletes from the global health crisis caused by the coronavirus," it said.

The meeting also discussed ways to develop professional sports technologies, earn medals at international competitions and promote public sports activities over the next five years, the ministry said.

North Korea has one of the world's strictest quarantine regimes, despite the government's denial that any cases have been detected in the country.

The measures have allowed the government to increase its control over daily life to [levels similar to the famine years of the 1990s](#), according to analysts.

[Tokyo Olympic torch relay begins as sign of hope in Japan amid Covid curbs](#)  
[Read more](#)

Outsiders doubt whether the country has escaped the pandemic entirely, given its poor health infrastructure and a porous border it shares with China, its economic lifeline.

Describing its anti-virus efforts as a "matter of national existence", North Korea has severely limited cross-border traffic, banned tourists, jetted out diplomats and quarantined tens of thousands of people who have shown symptoms.

Japan's prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, has previously said he expected to invite US president Joe Biden to the Olympics and was willing to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un or his powerful sister, Kim Yo-jong, if either attended the Games. Suga, however, did not say if he would invite either of them.

South Korea's Unification Ministry on Tuesday expressed regret at the North's decision, saying it had hoped the Tokyo Olympics would provide an opportunity to improve inter-Korean relations, which have declined amid a stalemate in wider nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

Japan's Olympic minister, Tamayo Marukawa, said she was still confirming details and couldn't immediately comment on the pullout decision.

North Korea sent 22 athletes to the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, along with government officials, performance artists, journalists and a 230-member cheering group.

The contingent included Kim Yo-jong, a move that helped it initiate diplomacy with South Korea and the US. That diplomacy has stalled since and North Korea's decision to sit out the Tokyo Olympics is a setback for hopes to revive it.

[Dire situation in North Korea drives 'collective exit' of diplomats](#)

[Read more](#)

The Olympics are hugely unpopular in Japan, with up to [80% of Japanese wanting the Games cancelled or postponed again](#). The games were originally scheduled to take place in 2020 but were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. This year, the government announced that it would [ban overseas spectators](#).

With just over 100 days to go, Japanese health authorities are concerned that variants of the coronavirus are driving a nascent fourth wave.

The variants appear to be more infectious and may be resistant to vaccines, which are still not widely available in [Japan](#). Osaka is the worst-affected city. Infections there hit fresh records last week, prompting the regional government to start targeted lockdown measures for one month from Monday.

A mutant Covid variant first discovered in Britain has taken hold in the Osaka region, spreading faster and filling up hospital beds with more serious

cases than the original virus, according to Koji Wada, a government adviser on the pandemic.

“The fourth wave is going to be larger,” said Wada, a professor at Tokyo’s International University of Health and Welfare. “We need to start to discuss how we could utilise these targeted measures for the Tokyo area.”

Osaka city cancelled Olympic Torch relay events there, but the Japanese prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, has insisted Japan will carry out the Games as scheduled. Suga said on Sunday that measures employed in the Osaka area could be expanded to Tokyo and elsewhere if needed.

In response to the announcement from North Korea, a spokesperson for the Australian Olympic Committee told the Guardian it was “continuing its detailed preparations to send the Australian Olympic Team to the Tokyo Olympic Games” and that it had “full confidence” in the efforts of organisers “to deliver the Games with athlete safety as the highest priority”.

There were 249 new infections in Tokyo on Monday, still well below the peak of over 2,500 in January. In Osaka, the tally was 341, down from a record 666 cases on Saturday. Japan has confirmed a total of nearly 490,000 infections since the start of the pandemic, according to the [Johns Hopkins University tracker](#). The death toll stands at 9,227.

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## 2021.04.06 - Spotlight

- [Letting go My battle to help my parents die a good death](#)
- [Travel Why cities emptied by Covid are perfect for modern flâneurs](#)
- ['I felt like a performing monkey!' Pino Palladino, pop's greatest bassist](#)
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# Letting go: my battle to help my parents die a good death

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## [Walking holidays](#)

# Why cities emptied by Covid-19 are perfect for modern flâneurs



Marble Arch and Oxford Street, central London, on 16 April 2020.  
Photograph: Barry Lewis/Getty Images

Marble Arch and Oxford Street, central London, on 16 April 2020.  
Photograph: Barry Lewis/Getty Images

Copying the approach of Baudelaire's quizzical stroller can help us escape lockdown – even if he needs a little updating

[Chris Moss](#)

Tue 6 Apr 2021 06.32 EDT

Charles Baudelaire, whose 200th birthday on 9 April will be celebrated with stamp issues, new editions of his poetry and virtual events, is arguably more famous for his concept of the *flâneur* – an aimless stroller or ambler – than for his writing. That's partly because reading his volumes *Les Fleurs du Mal* or *Le Spleen de Paris* requires a degree of application, but also because the

idea of an individual moving through the city streets and finding aesthetic pleasure in the teeming crowds, appeals to us and continues to chime. At least, it did until spring 2020, when the crowds were told to stay at home.



Illustration drawn in 1907 by Raoul Serres for the poem Wine (from *Les Fleurs du Mal*) by Charles Baudelaire. Photograph: World History Archive/Alamy

But even in a ghost city, it's possible to think and walk like a flâneur. Rainer Hanshe has translated several of Baudelaire's books into English – including [Belgium Stripped Bare](#), about the French author's visit to Brussels just before it was struck by a cholera epidemic. He notes: "The flâneur is a figure who, while immersed in the urban throng, is simultaneously separate from it. If more empty than not, our streets are still to some degree populated, and we can engage in the form of communion that Baudelaire referred to as a mysterious intoxication."

This involves trying to get inside the heads of others – an act of ecstatic empathy that "peoples" the solitary walker's imagination. It's a radical idea that envisions the mind as a sponge or, perhaps, a social media channel. Baudelaire's most memorable phrase for the flâneur was "a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness".

Some of his ideas need updating. The flâneur might be “a prince enjoying his incognito wherever he goes”, but what about the princesses? Prof Janet Wolff of the University of Manchester has written of the [“invisible flâneuse”](#), of “respectable” women’s absence from public arenas in modern cities. In her 2016 book [Flâneuse: Women Walk the City](#) ([Penguin, £8.99](#)), Lauren Elkin calls for women to take to the streets, following the example of radically reflective female walkers from Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys to Rebecca Solnit.



Liverpool’s Albert Dock and a view of the Royal Liver building, Cunard building and the Port of Liverpool building. Photograph: Alamy

The German philosopher [Walter Benjamin](#) expanded Baudelaire’s ideas about the flâneur, adding to the myth of Paris as the archetypal modern metropolis. Some of TS Eliot’s poetic evocations of London sprang from his readings of Baudelaire.

But one can roam and ruminate equally in Cardiff, Dundee, Liverpool or Belfast. As urban consumer culture spreads, in the shape of delivery vans, Deliveroo bikes, “artisan” coffee shops and the like, you can arguably be a flâneur (there’s also a verb, *flâner*, to stroll) in towns, villages and countryside.

But to do so requires discipline. Here are 10 Baudelairean suggestions for exploring the ghost city.

## **Read the city**

In his poem *Le Soleil*, Baudelaire writes of “Stumbling on words as on cobblestones”. To say we should treat the city as a text sounds pretentious, but not if we think about street names, tree species and the colours of the brickwork, and unearth forgotten plaques and historic sites. The plaque for Tyburn gallows at Marble Arch is close to a heavily trafficked spot, but few stop to study it. Even famous monuments can be looked at from new angles. Baudelaire wrote about marble statues as if they were sentient. What emotions do they stir in you? Who might have been here before you?

## **No rush hours – so no hurry**

For some translators, “idler” is the best equivalent of *flâneur*. Ambling is best enjoyed slowly, daydreaming. “A dandy does nothing,” Baudelaire wrote. The pandemic-struck city, with its permanent Sunday-state, is ideal for leisurely meandering. Use it while it lasts.

## **The night walk**



“The mystery of shadows recast familiar places ...” Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

[Noctambulism is a magical pursuit](#), as we swap sleep and ordinary dreams (or those garish ones we’ve all been having during lockdowns) for the dreamscape of the city. Artificial light, the absence of others, prowling foxes and the mystery of shadows recast familiar places as strange and special. To see the everyday anew is the ultimate goal of *flânerie*.

## Turn off gadgets

If there’s one thing that kills the art of *flânerie*, it’s the smartphone; even worse are apps that count steps. Why look down when you can look up and about? If you want a soundtrack to walk to, visit the [University of Birmingham’s Baudelaire Song Project](#) and pick a slow-tempo *chanson*.

## Window shopping



A woman walks beside the pillars of the arcade at the western end of the rue de Rivoli, Paris, circa 1950. Photograph: Getty Images

The grand iron-and-glass arcades of Paris inspired Walter Benjamin, who was fascinated by the well-stocked *magasins*, the “temples” of capitalism. Window-shopping has not been banned, and you can still read the signage, promises, buildings, fashions. We are witnessing the gradual abandoning of the arcades; Benjamin would have been spellbound. Even Liverpool One, opened in 2008, suddenly seems old and semi-redundant.

## Stop for a sit-down

Cafes shut? Pubs shuttered? There are always benches and steps, parks and plazas, as well as doorways to loiter in. There’s no shame in sitting. In his dazzlingly erudite book, [The Walker: On Finding and Losing Yourself in the Modern City](#) (Verso), Matthew Beaumont makes a convincing argument that convalescence – the state between health and illness – is the perfect mode for discovery as it makes us raw and sensitive but also disconnected. If you’re recovering from coronavirus, you may actually be convalescing. As Covid-19 recedes, our cities are convalescing, too.

## Get surreal – or drunk



Philosopher [Guy Debord](#), who described walking as a *dérive* (drift), was influenced by the surrealists, who used chance and games to develop new ideas and perspectives. One of Debord's friends walked through a region of Germany following a map of London. Why not walk around an empty Manchester using a cut-up map reassembled at random? In his 1989 book [Panegyric](#), Debord recounts wandering around Europe's great cities trying different alcoholic drinks, including pints of mixed (half-mild, half-bitter) in England. How about a hip flask of absinthe in Aberdeen? In 1955, Debord developed the idea of psychogeography, which was later taken up by Iain Sinclair, Will Self and others.

## Reinvent the city



CGI of Stockton-on-Tees' green spaces plan. Photograph: Stockton-on-Tees borough council/Ryder

The Paris of Baudelaire and Benjamin is long gone. A flâneur today has to reckon with traffic, overtourism, selfies “in Sartre’s favourite cafe” and soulless spaces like La Défense. The emptying of our cities, and their reinvention post-pandemic has every chance of being an improvement on the hyperinflated housing, glass-and-steel phallocentricity, pseudo-public piazzas and rank consumerism of the late-20th-century metropolis. Perhaps we are ambling into a brighter future? Stockton-on-Tees’ projected giant



green space, which will replace high street shops and provide residents with a wonderful patch of *rus in urbe* when it opens in 2025, harks back to the Victorian era of city parks.

## Pick through the rubbish

Baudelaire writes of Paris's *chiffonniers* or ragpickers, marginalised proto-recyclers of the city that ignores and shuns them. Benjamin developed this into the idea of poet-as-ragpicker. The ragpicking flâneur can construct his mental collage from the messy, chaotic, ugly, dirty discarded things found around the city. Dustbins and gutters can tell us more than museums. Keyworkers – including refuse collectors – see more of the “real” city than most. UK cities have some of the most extensive and storied post-industrial landscapes in the world, and most are to be found far from honeypots and theme-park “historic centres”.

## Keep notes, make sketches



A pedestrian walks in an empty St Peter's Square in Manchester on 5 January 2021. Photograph: Oli Scarff/Getty Images

Baudelaire was not the first – or the last – wandering philosopher-writer. He took key ideas from Edgar Allan Poe, and authors as varied as Charles

Dickens, Marcel Proust, George Sand (cross-dressing to penetrate male-dominated milieux), James Joyce, Jorge Luis Borges, Franz Hessel, Ralph Ellison and Edmund White have contributed to the tradition. The flâneur appears in paintings by many artists, including Degas and Manet (while Edward Hopper painted like one), and can be seen ghosting through the work of film-makers such as [Agnès Varda](#) and [Patrick Keiller](#). Much of the best travel writing benefits from a quizzing gaze, intellectual restlessness and a degree of distance – see [Caryl Phillips’ The European Tribe](#). The empty city is waiting to be filled with new words.

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## [Music](#)

### Interview

# Pino Palladino, pop's greatest bassist: 'I felt like a performing monkey!'

[Alexis Petridis](#)



Rock's sideman of choice ... Pino Palladino, left, with Blake Mills.

Rock's sideman of choice ... Pino Palladino, left, with Blake Mills.

One of the world's most celebrated bass players has worked with everyone from Adele to Elton John, the Who and D'Angelo. But the Welsh musician has hidden from the spotlight – until now



Tue 6 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

By his own admission, Pino Palladino is not a man much accustomed to giving interviews. “Very reticent,” he nods during a Zoom call, his accent speaking noticeably louder of his childhood in Cardiff than his current home in LA. “You know, there was a time when I was featured in all sorts of musicians’ magazines, and then I just thought to myself, ‘Move over, there’s people out there that actually need the publicity.’ Not to blow smoke up my own arse,” he adds hurriedly, “but really I just didn’t want to see or hear from myself.”

It’s a remark in keeping with the astonishing career of one of the most celebrated bass players in the world. It’s hard not to blanch when you consider the sheer number of records that have been sold featuring his work. He played on not one but two of the biggest selling albums of the 21st century: [Adele’s 21](#) and [Ed Sheeran’s Divide](#), as well as with Rod Stewart, Elton John, Bryan Ferry, Simon and Garfunkel and Keith Richards. They’re the biggest names in a startlingly diverse back catalogue of collaborations: Palladino’s playing is the thread that links Perfume Genius with Phil Collins, Harry Styles with Chris de Burgh, and Nine Inch Nails with De La Soul. Indeed, his versatility and omnipresence is a running joke within the music industry. When another fabled bass player, Pink Floyd’s Guy Pratt, got

married, he opened his groom's speech with the words: "I'm only here today because Pino couldn't make it."

For a musician who seems to have turned up everywhere over the last 40 years, Palladino has remained a remarkably anonymous figure outside of musicians' circles. Indeed, he somehow contrived to spend 14 years as a member of the Who without really losing what he calls an "invisible stance". He certainly stands out in photographs of the Soulquarians, the experimental collective assembled by D'Angelo for his legendary album *Voodoo*, the solitary lanky Welshman among a crowd of African-American musicians including Questlove and the late J Dilla – but you would still struggle to recognise him in the street.



Cardiff's finest ... Palladino in 1985. Photograph: Paul Natkin/Getty Images

This is presumably how Palladino likes it. He's drily funny and self-deprecating – he says his default setting when working with a new artist is "do not fucking spoil it" – but doesn't seem terribly frustrated by life in the background. Which makes it all the more surprising that he's releasing an album on which he shares billing with Blake Mills: *Notes With Attachments*, a fascinating, head-turning collection of experimental instrumentals that sits somewhere between jazz, global music and ambient. He and Mills, who has produced for Fiona Apple and Laura Marling, met

while working on a John Legend album. “We hit it off and the next thing you know, he’s saying to me ‘Have you thought about a solo album?’ Well, I’ve thought about it, obviously,” he laughs. “For 40 years I’ve thought about it, but I’ve never really had an idea how I could do it.”

Studded with guest appearances – from avant-garde saxophonist Sam Gendel and jazz drummer Chris Dave, among others – *Notes With Attachments* foregrounds the sound that made Palladino’s name: the none-more-80s *sprrrroing* of the fretless bass put through a chorus pedal. He first used it while working with Gary Numan, but it was Paul Young’s 1983 hit *Wherever I Lay My Hat* that introduced it to a mass audience: pushed up in the mix, the bass effectively became a lead instrument. It was so striking that Palladino suddenly found himself playing with everyone from Go West and Don Henley to Tears for Fears: he turned up on *Top of the Pops* with alarming regularity, the musical equivalent of a hip item of designer clothing. “There was a lot of it around in those days,” he says of the sound. “I was so lucky – it resonated with people, captured their imagination and it took on a life of its own. It did get to the point where I was getting booked for sessions and feeling like a performing monkey: ‘Yeah, bring your fretless, make that funny sound and maybe we’ll get a hit out of it.’”

He also found himself becoming the sideman of choice for the rock aristocracy. “The first call I got like that was from [David Gilmour](#). I could not believe it: am I going to the studio with this guy and pretend I actually belong there? I was nervous as fuck, but the drummer on the session was Jeff Porcaro [famed for playing with Toto and on Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* album], and he was really sweet: ‘Come on, man, chill out, have a smoke on this.’ So I did, and that seemed to work for me. I just had to keep that attitude through all of that period: phone calls from Elton John and Phil Collins – you have to keep that headspace that you belong, even if you think you’re going to be found out any minute.”





‘You’ll have to play louder!’ ... performing with the Who at the 2016 Desert Trip festival in California. Photograph: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images

He says another phone call, this time from D’Angelo – who had heard his playing on a BB King album – changed his life. “My roots are in Motown, reggae, R&B. I didn’t get much of an opportunity to express that side of music and then I met the don – how lucky was that? D’Angelo – I’d mention him in the same breath as Stevie Wonder and Donny Hathaway and Sly Stone. When I was in the studio with D and Questlove, James Poyser, all those guys, I don’t even have to think about what I’m playing. It’s incredible, to be a Welsh guy, having no real connections to these guys other than music that we loved and played. From a personal satisfaction point of view, it was as good as it ever got, probably will get.

“It took people 10 years, 20, to really get the first album we made, Voodoo, but I absolutely knew it was unique and really special – I was probably more aware of it than the rest of them, because I’d been working for a long time. I knew this kind of thing didn’t come around very often.”

[Blake Mills: Mutable Set review – an ethereal journey into pop's avant garde](#)  
[Read more](#)



The Soulquarians went on to record with Erykah Badu, Mos Def and Talib Kweli; the influence of their loose approach can be heard on Kendrick Lamar's epochal 2015 album [To Pimp a Butterfly](#). They had just wrapped up a session with Common when Palladino learned that the Who's bassist, John Entwistle, had died – and that the band had declined to cancel their forthcoming tour and wanted Palladino to replace him ... on stage at the Hollywood Bowl, in two days.

“I flew to LA, thinking, what are you doing? You don't even know many Who songs. Pete Townshend was waiting for me at the hotel, with a big stack of CDs. ‘You don't know much of the catalogue? Fair enough. You're going to know it tonight, then, aren't you?’ At the first rehearsal, Pete comes over and says: ‘You're going to have to play louder’ – because I'm used to being the sympathetic musician, who fills in, doesn't make a racket. That's the one instruction you keep getting when you work with the Who: ‘Fucking turn it up, we can't hear you!’”

Palladino says he's “not exactly crazy about touring any more” – he stopped playing live with the Who in 2016 – but is considering doing some gigs around Notes With Attachments, pandemic permitting. Until then, there are still sessions to attend to in LA, with Covid tests in the car park for anyone taking part. “Film and music studios are considered essential to the economy here – you've got to love that, right?” he laughs. “Mind you,” he says, “that's better than Britain telling you if you're a musician or an artist you might have to look for a new job.”

- [Pino Palladino and Blake Mills: Notes With Attachments is out now on New Deal/Verve.](#)

# UK faces difficult path as it resumes courtship with India

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## 2021.04.06 - Opinion

- Sleaze fells Tory governments – and that should be a gift to Keir Starmer
- Offering twice-weekly Covid tests is futile without proper support for self-isolators
- After 26 years of baldness, I still miss my hair. But I have new hopes of a cure

[Opinion](#) **Keir Starmer**

# Sleaze fells Tory governments – and that should be a gift to Keir Starmer

[Polly Toynbee](#)



From crony contracts to lobbying scandals, the Conservatives have handed Labour one sledgehammer after another



‘Labour can lay claim to the union flag – to clean it up.’ Keir Starmer visits Milton Keynes police station last month. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

‘Labour can lay claim to the union flag – to clean it up.’ Keir Starmer visits Milton Keynes police station last month. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Tue 6 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

There has been no year like the past one, when [Keir Starmer](#) was elected Labour leader. He arrived just when opposition point-scoring was not wanted. Days after Starmer’s election, the Covid-stricken prime minister was taken to hospital, where he was later moved to intensive care.

That set a tough stamp on Starmer’s first year: the “constructive opposition” he proffered was all that was feasible at the time.

During the pandemic, all voters have wanted is to escape this horror. Listen to every conversation, and what you hear is vaccination dates, longing for unlocking, the chance to hug grandchildren and wistful hopes of holidays.

“Why doesn’t he define himself?”, ask some critics impatiently, as Labour’s [public approval ratings tumble](#). Where’s his vision? Do something! Reshuffle, turn left, shout louder, attack!

What these critics forget is that politics is a seesaw with simple political physics. When the government is up, the opposition is down, and vice versa. This government now has an 86% approval rating – yes, 86% – [on the vaccination programme](#), the only subject in town. Rob Ford, professor of political science at the University of Manchester, tells me he can think of virtually no similar approval rating happening before on the top issue of the day. Scientific genius and the efficiency of the NHS have gifted Boris Johnson an undeserved bounty. Parked at the other end of the seesaw, no amount of political vision could rescue Starmer from this downward bump.

He hasn't wasted the year. Mending the sinking ship he inherited from Jeremy Corbyn holed 20 points below the waterline, he has scrubbed at the stains of antisemitism, cleared his HQ of those who delivered the car-crash election, taken control of the national executive, installed a serious shadow cabinet and has a strong new leader in Scotland. At PMQs he skewers prime ministerial bluster.

Naturally the Corbynites don't like it, but he is polishing the party's armour for when politics properly resumes. Starmer supporters are taking fright at the polls, mistaking his strategy for vacillation. Itching to charge full tilt and fire all their ammunition, they ignore the doctrine of the right time.

After a year without meeting a voter face to face, this summer Starmer will crisscross the country on a town-hall tour: he [talks of](#) "taking the mask off and opening the throttle". [In an Ipsos Mori poll](#), a hefty 31 were neutral, saying they didn't know him or what he stood for. Will he cut through? He doesn't do barnstorming rallies of billowing rhetoric. He won the leadership with meetings where he talked powerfully for a few minutes, laying out principles on public services, inequality, education and skills, but spent most time on direct answers to questions. He left people feeling that they grasped what he stood for.

Starmer's real test will come when politics resumes and the country will need a fiercely combative opposition. His themes will be all too easy. As Covid support is withdrawn, all the underlying reasons why Britain was so undefended from the virus will be laid bare. Unemployment will rise. The NHS will stagger under a huge backlog. Schools will struggle to meet the needs of children who were abandoned [without laptops](#). Food banks will

face yet more hungry families, while gap-toothed high streets will depress neighbourhoods. Brexit will be biting harder.

The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, will dash to repair the country's finances, while the Tory benches bay to rein in the ballooning cost of state spending. Every one of Sunak's instincts will send him down George Osborne's austerity path, with few lessons learned. That future is already cemented into his budget, imposing what amounts to [an 8% cut](#) on all departments bar defence, schools and the NHS: these last two still lack funds for their alarming needs. Johnson can deny austerity with eye-catching projects, but there will be no hiding what is engraved in the budget's red lines.

The Tories have not seen how economic times have changed since last they accused Labour of spend-thrift profligacy. This time Starmer is free to borrow and propose a Franklin D Roosevelt-style New Deal, investing in jobs, people, children, biosciences, arts and the public realm. Now Joe Biden has set the fiscal benchmark with his [£1.9tn "American rescue plan"](#), nothing can stop Britain following in his footsteps. It's Tory austerity that is badly out of time.

Strategically, Labour will have more ammunition than it can fire: the message is that the country can't afford another decade of Tory destitution. Starmer talks of the inequality "fault lines" and "weakened foundations" that left Britain shamed by the highest death toll and worst recession in Europe. As he [wrote in the Observer](#), the government makes "cuts for nurses and tax breaks for second-home owners" while "handing out billions of pounds in crony contracts". It's no "blueprint for a new Britain".

[A year of Keir: has the Covid pandemic sidelined Labour's leader?](#)

[Read more](#)

Sleaze is what fells Tory governments, and this government has handed Labour one sledgehammer after another. Rachel Reeves is making headway as shadow cabinet sleaze-buster against the tide of government dishonesty and naked pilfering. There is no escape from the stink of the Cameron scandal: for a former prime minister to have lobbied the Treasury on behalf of Lex Greensill's supply-chain finance company, and to have reportedly boasted that he stands to profit by \$60m from his shares in the firm,



[according to the Times](#), is a breathtaking abuse of the highest office. He only broke no law because he left a loophole in his weak anti-lobbying rules big enough to climb through.

Here's where patriotism bites: cronyism kills Britain's prized self-image as "clean" and "uncorrupt". Here's where [Labour](#) can lay claim to the union flag – to clean it up: no more British tax havens laundering global dirty money. No more crony contracts for chums. Housing secretary Robert Jenrick's gift of planning permission for subsequent Tory donor Richard Desmond, and Jennifer Arcuri's privileged access to trade missions during her affair with Johnson, add to a rising tide of sleaze.

Wave the flag for the Good Law Project's latest sally, taking legal action against the £4.8bn ["levelling up" fund](#) that ignored the index of deprivation, to [fund wealthier Tory seats](#) – Sunak's Richmond, Jenrick's Newark – but not poorer Labour Salford and Barnsley. An MP [claiming for duck houses](#) shocked the public during the expenses scandal. But these accusations run deeper and darker into the establishment. Labour people shouldn't wince at the union flag, but appropriate it themselves for decent values. Woke? Of course: embrace that, too, as no more than a fundamental, unifying sense of fairness.

Labour is always up against impossible odds, and the local elections may yield weak results. But ahead are volatile political times. The vaccination bounce will pass: as Rob Ford told me, voters don't do gratitude. This prime minister and his cabinet of inadequates are incapable and unwilling to meet Britain's daunting post-Covid emergencies. Johnson's charisma will wear very thin, and neither bogus theatrical promises nor culture war political "traps" will disguise the threadbare realities. For now, have patience, you Labour supporters, until Covid has passed.

- Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist



## [Opinion](#)Coronavirus

# Offering twice-weekly Covid tests is futile without proper support for self-isolators

[Stephen Reicher](#)

Without sufficient self-isolation remuneration, workers in England will avoid taking any tests, undermining current efforts



Illustration by Ben Jennings

Illustration by Ben Jennings

Tue 6 Apr 2021 05.24 EDT

This week, the government announced plans to give those living in England the opportunity [to be tested twice a week](#) in a bid to ease the country out of lockdown. Increased testing is a vital tool, but it is only effective if it is part of a wider system aimed at identifying who is infected, their contacts, and

getting people to self-isolate. The last step is the crucial one, since that is the way you stop the transmission of infection. So far, this has proved to be the trickiest part.

Whereas all the evidence points to the fact [most people](#) are by and large adhering to the things that are relatively straightforward – cleaning hands, wearing masks, spatially distancing – it is a very different story when it comes to asking people to stay at home with no contact with others.

According to the Covid-19 Rapid Survey of Adherence to Interventions and Responses (Corsair) study, [only 52% have self-isolated when required](#). However, data produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that between 1 and 13 February this year [self-isolation rates were 86%](#), and in the period 1 to 9 March they had [risen still further to 90%](#). The health secretary, Matt Hancock, [enthused](#): “I am delighted that today’s statistics show the vast majority of people in this country are doing the right thing and following the rules to help protect the NHS and save lives.”

[Covid, debt and desperation: an MP’s caseload in struggling Hull](#)  
[Read more](#)

Why such a huge discrepancy between Corsair and ONS? Who was right and who was wrong? On closer inspection the answer turns out that both were right, but they were looking at very different groups of people. The ONS approached people who have had a test and provided contacts. Those already in the system, and who adhere to that extent, are very likely to take the final step and self-isolate.

Corsair, on the other hand, approached a more general sample of people. Of these, much fewer self-isolated. But the most striking finding was that only one in five people who had symptoms actually had a test in the first place (to be precise, [18.8%](#) over the year rising to 22.2% in the latest wave).

Up until now, the barriers to self-isolation have been self-evident: taking time off work means reduced pay, some are unable to self-isolate in crowded accommodation, and then there are logistical issues around caring for children or elderly relatives. The obvious solution is to provide support for people to follow the regulations. In those places that provide comprehensive

care packages, such as New York, 90% reported not leaving their homes during the self-isolation period.

England's [scheme](#) gives £500 to those on benefits plus some discretionary money to local authorities to meet other needs. However, [only one in eight workers is eligible](#), and of those, only 30% of those who apply are successful. If they do receive the cash, the sum amounts to less than the minimum wage over 10 days. Only one-fifth of those who apply for the discretionary funds are successful and in some areas (like the north-east of England), the figure falls to 10%.

[UK furlough scheme cushions Covid blow, but job losses loom](#)  
[Read more](#)

We are now realising that the impact of these barriers is more serious than we previously thought. The evidence is clear in the evaluation of mass testing that happened [in Liverpool last November](#) – the uptake rate in deprived communities was half that in more affluent areas. That was because if people tested positive they couldn't afford to self-isolate since they would lose money and possibly their job. But equally, they couldn't afford not to self-isolate, since that could land them with a £10,000 fine. The only way out was to not get tested. Similarly, if you provide the names of your friends or colleagues you put them in a similar bind, and why would you do that? Again, the solution is to avoid providing contacts.

The failure to provide support for self-isolation doesn't just affect self-isolation figures, it [undermines every phase of the testing system](#). As a consequence, the argument for increasing provision becomes greater than ever. Without extra support, it is largely pointless to offer everyone tests twice-weekly. The policy might result in huge advantages to those who manufacture lateral flow tests, but is unlikely to deliver much advantage in terms of public health.

Stephen Reicher is a member of the Sage subcommittee advising on behavioural science

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## [Opinion](#)[Hair loss](#)

# After 26 years of baldness, I still miss my hair. But I have new hopes of a cure

[Emma Beddington](#)



During a period of extreme stress, I went bald, and I am regularly contacted by women going through this wrenching loss. But there may be light on the horizon





Being bald may have upsides, but the discovery of the Gas 6 molecule is good news for many who haven't chosen to lose their hair. Photograph: Peathegee Inc/Posed by model/Getty Images/Tetra images RF

Being bald may have upsides, but the discovery of the Gas 6 molecule is good news for many who haven't chosen to lose their hair. Photograph: Peathegee Inc/Posed by model/Getty Images/Tetra images RF

Tue 6 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

A new [Harvard study](#) has confirmed the link between stress and hair loss, giving hope it could be halted or reversed. The researchers identified that the release of stress hormones suppresses a molecule, Gas6, involved in hair production, while adding Gas6 promoted regrowth. Does this mean a cure for baldness is finally a possibility? As the perpetually weary Twitter account [@justsaysinmice](#) cautions when scientific findings are dramatically reported, the research only relates to rodents, but it's an important breakthrough.

As someone who went bald 26 years ago after an exceptionally savage period of stress, it's interesting to have the anecdotal confirmed by science. But does a cure matter for me or other baldies?

I think it does. Hair loss can be desperately rough on [self-image](#). Women going through chemotherapy or diagnosed with alopecia often contact me for advice, and the wrenching loss of identity many experience is dramatic: you can be glad you are alive, aware your problem is purely cosmetic and still feel genuine grief at losing your hair. It's also a fairly common side-effect of Covid: [a recent study](#) of patients from Wuhan in China found 22% suffered hair loss in the six months after infection.

Being bald has its upsides. I am one of the few who has not suffered from a year without access (mainly) to hairdressers. My wig – professionally cut about 18 months ago – has protected me from the wonky fringes and clipper crimes perpetrated in my house, or from ending up looking like an [overgrown escaped sheep](#). The rest of me may be a natural disaster, but my hair (well, someone else's hair) is holding it together.

So would I reverse 26 years of leaving plugholes unmolested if I could? Yes, absolutely. I still wake up sad, sometimes, having dreamed my hair grew back, passing my hand over my head in the hope of feeling patches of silky baby hair, or stubble. I want the chance to cry at a bad haircut or unwise dye job; I would love to know if I have [gone grey](#). Bring on the Gas6.

Emma Beddington is a Guardian columnist

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## 2021.04.06 - Around the world

- [George Floyd Chauvin's use of force was 'in no way' policy, says police chief](#)
- [Russia Dog snatches microphone during live weather report from Moscow](#)
- [New Zealand Treasures arise from the ruins of Christchurch cathedral, 10 years after earthquake](#)
- [Antarctica Fire on Australia's resupply vessel leaves expeditioners shaken](#)

## [George Floyd](#)

# Chauvin's use of force on George Floyd was 'in no way' policy, says police chief

Medaria Arradondo says on sixth day of trial that ex-officer's treatment of George Floyd breached regulations

- [Derek Chauvin trial – live updates](#)

02:57

Chauvin trial: police chief says use of force violated policy – video

[Chris McGreal](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 17.08 EDT

The Minneapolis police chief, Medaria Arradondo, told the Derek Chauvin murder trial on Monday that he “vehemently disagrees” that there was any justification for the former police officer to keep his knee on George Floyd’s neck for more than nine minutes.

Arradondo said on the sixth day of the trial that Chauvin’s treatment of the 46-year-old Black man breached regulations and showed a disregard “for the sanctity of life”.

[Minneapolis ‘on edge’ over outcome of Derek Chauvin trial, Ilhan Omar says](#)

[Read more](#)

“Once Mr Floyd had stopped resisting, and certainly once he was in distress and trying to verbalise that, that should have stopped,” he said.

The police chief said that while it might have been reasonable to use a certain level of force “to get him under control in the first few seconds”,

Chauvin's subsequent actions did not meet the standard of "objectively reasonable force".

"To continue to apply that level of force to a person prone-out, handcuffed behind their back, that in no way, shape or form is anything that is by policy," he said.

Arradondo said that far from being aggressive, Floyd appeared to be completely passive. "As a matter of fact, as I saw that video I didn't even know if Mr Floyd was alive at that time," he said.

It is highly unusual for a police chief to give evidence against one of his own officers.

Arradondo, his city's first Black police chief, fired Chauvin shortly after Floyd's death.

Chauvin, 45, has denied charges of second- and third-degree murder, and manslaughter. He faces up to 40 years in prison if convicted of the most serious charge. Three other officers face charges.

Floyd's death last year reinvigorated the Black Lives Matter movement and prompted mass protests for racial justice across the US and other parts of the world.

The prosecutor spent the day on Monday building a case that Chauvin failed to follow his training to consider whether Floyd's resisting arrest was "a deliberate attempt to resist or an inability to comply" because of issues such as medical conditions, mental impairment or the influence of drugs.

On Thursday, Floyd's girlfriend testified that he was addicted to opioids and another witness said that he appeared to be high shortly before his arrest. Arradondo agreed that a person under the influence of drugs might be more vulnerable than dangerous.

The police chief said that Chauvin should have considered a number of factors in how he dealt with Floyd.

“Is the person a threat to the officer and others? What is the severity of the crime? Are you re-evaluating and assessing the individual’s medical condition?” said Arradondo.

Considering all those issue, the police chief added: “I vehemently disagree that that was an appropriate use of force”.

He said that Chauvin also appeared not to have been following his training to de-escalate a confrontation. “You want to always have deescalation layered into those actions of using force,” said Arradondo.

Chauvin’s lawyer, Eric Nelson, put it to Arradondo that the use of force, such as an officer pointing a gun, could be a de-escalation tactic in certain circumstances if it prevents greater violence. The police chief was hesitant but said it could sometimes be the case.

The police chief questioned the need to detain Floyd at all, saying that it would not be normal to arrest a person for passing a counterfeit bill because “it’s not a violent felony”.

The prosecutor also drew Arradondo’s attention to the failure of Chauvin and the officers with him to render medical assistance to Floyd when he stopped breathing.

The police chief said that all officers are trained in first aid and “absolutely have a duty” to render it to a person having a medical crisis such as Floyd when he said he could not breathe and then passed out.

Earlier on Monday, the emergency room doctor who tried to save Floyd’s life [told the trial he most likely died of asphyxiation.](#)

Dr Bradford Wankhede Langenfeld said he saw no evidence Floyd was killed by a heart attack or a drug overdose as Chauvin’s defence has claimed in attempting to deny that the death resulted from the officer keeping his knee on the detained man’s neck for more than nine minutes.

Langenfeld, who declared Floyd dead, told the court there was not a heartbeat “sufficient to sustain life” and that he believed cardiac arrest was

brought on by “lack of oxygen”. He was asked by the prosecutor if there was another term for that.

“Asphyxia,” said Langenfeld.

The doctor said he thought a heart attack was unlikely because when he cut open Floyd’s chest he saw no evidence of that. He also said the paramedics who brought him to the hospital said Floyd showed no behaviour typical of the condition.

“There was no report that the patient complained of chest pain or was clutching his chest,” he said.

The state medical examiner found that Floyd’s death was caused by “cardiopulmonary arrest”, which the prosecution says is a broad enough term that can be applied to any death because it means only that a person’s heart and lungs have stopped.

The defence claims the finding means Floyd died of a heart attack.

Langenfeld told the court a delay in treating Floyd, particularly giving him CPR, may have reduced his chance of survival. Ambulance paramedics reported that the police made no effort to give Floyd medical assistance even though he had passed out and was unresponsive by the time they arrived on the scene.

The trial continues.

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## [Russia](#)

# Dog interrupts live weather report in Moscow, borrowing journalist's microphone – video

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## New Zealand

# Christchurch: Treasures arise from cathedral ruins, 10 years after earthquake

Finds include 1980s time capsules, old collection boxes and a nativity scene with figures heads 'taken clean off'



A rescue worker looks through the rubble of the Cathedral of Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, New Zealand after the February 2011 earthquake  
Photograph: Simon Baker/REUTERS

A rescue worker looks through the rubble of the Cathedral of Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, New Zealand after the February 2011 earthquake  
Photograph: Simon Baker/REUTERS

[Elle Hunt](#) in Auckland

Tue 6 Apr 2021 00.17 EDT

Ten years on from [Christchurch's devastating earthquake](#), the Catholic Diocese has discovered that it is missing a pair of angels.

As work continues to deconstruct the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on Barbadoes Street – extensively damaged in the 2011 quake, along with most of the central city – many treasures thought lost have been recovered.

Triona Doocey, archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch, has been documenting [the finds on Facebook](#) – among them, decades-old time capsules, a charity collection box full of outdated currency, and a nativity scene with the figures' heads “taken clean off”.

[Before and after: how the 2011 earthquake changed Christchurch](#)  
[Read more](#)

But two bronze angels – in round panels set at each end of the altar in the Holy Souls Chapel and dating back to when the cathedral was first opened in 1905 – were found to have gone missing from the site when the altar was removed last month. “Obviously at some point over the 10 years someone thought that they’d pop in and take the bronze angels,” said Doocey.

She intends to publicise the loss on social media: “I’m hoping someone will go ‘So-and-so has those in their room’.”

The decision was made to demolish the heritage-listed Basilica in 2019, with the then bishop Paul Martin citing the multi-million-dollar expense and danger of restoration. Demolition finally got under way in October last year, with an archaeologist on site to support in the retrieval of sacred or surprising objects.



A monstrance stand retrieved from a safe room inside the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, New Zealand  
Photograph: Triona Doocey / Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

“Items that they just don’t know what to do with, they bring to me,” said Doocey. One was a collection box for St Vincent de Paul, able to be finally given to the charity after a decade – though the coins were no longer in circulation.

“Little quirky things like that, it was just fun to be able to dig them out and say, ‘This is yours’,” Doocey said.

Many of the Cathedral’s more precious items had been removed for safekeeping ahead of the February 2011 earthquake, including the Tabernacle doors and crucifix by artist Ria Bancroft.

But the number that had been found was remarkable given the damage to the Basilica and how long the site has been left in disrepair, said Doocey. “It’s been said all along that it’s opportunistic salvage. It really was touch and go because of the masonry collapsing, asbestos, all sorts of issues like that.”

One of the 14 Stations of the Cross by sculptor Llew Summers, commissioned for the Cathedral in 2000, had been vandalised while another

panel was damaged during removal, but the others were safely in storage. Plaques commemorating benefactors and the Diocesan Centennial had also been retrieved.

Doocey said that, where possible, items with liturgical use – such as an ornate monstrance stand retrieved from a safe room inside the Basilica, along with crucifixes and decorative items – would be cleaned or restored and put to use. “It makes much more sense for them to be out and in use – they don’t belong tucked away.”



Items contained in a time capsule commemorating events and activities from the cathedral’s centennial celebrations in 1987 Photograph: Triona Doocey / Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

Items that were too damaged or costly to repair, or not worth keeping, would be given to Canterbury Museum or parishioners in consultation with the bishop, or put on display in the new cathedral to honour the old one – considered architect Francis Petre’s finest work.

Time capsules from the 1980s had been unearthed containing letters about [Christchurch](#) residents’ personal connection to the Basilica, which Doocey plans to digitise for an exhibition later this year.

She also hopes to be able to restore the nativity scene – which was found with its figures beheaded, apparently by vandals – using the Japanese technique *kintsugi*, where broken pottery is put back together with the cracks highlighted in gold.

['Joy and agony': Christchurch earthquake survivors ten years on](#)  
[Read more](#)

“I thought it would be a wonderful way of telling the story every Christmas without having to be explicit ... The cracks will show the damage that was done both by the earthquakes, and by humanity.”

The three bishops [buried under the floor](#) of a side chapel will be disinterred in May, while demolition work is expected to be complete by mid-year. A site for a new cathedral has been earmarked on Armagh Street (though construction has been delayed by [rare seagulls establishing a colony](#) there).

In the meantime, Doocey remains hopeful that the missing angels will be returned to the congregation: “It would be really nice to find out what happened to them.”

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## Antarctica

# Fire on Australia's Antarctic resupply vessel leaves expeditioners shaken

Australian Antarctic Division says 109 people on board were uninjured, but the incident was 'potentially traumatic' for some



Australia's Antarctic resupply vessel, MPV Everest, is continuing its return journey after a fire in the engine room. Photograph: Wade Maurer

Australia's Antarctic resupply vessel, MPV Everest, is continuing its return journey after a fire in the engine room. Photograph: Wade Maurer

*Australian Associated Press*

Tue 6 Apr 2021 03.13 EDT

An engine room fire that destroyed two vessels on board Australia's Antarctic resupply ship has left expeditioners shaken as they begin their journey home.



The vessel, the MPV Everest, was in the middle of the Southern Ocean, four days into a two-week journey, when the ship's portside engine room caught alight around 2pm on Monday.

The room was quickly isolated to contain the fire before it was extinguished by suppression systems.

[The disaster movie playing in Australia's wild places – and solutions that could help hit pause](#)  
[Read more](#)

Two vessels on the deck were also destroyed but the ship's alternate engine room has it running at full capacity.

All 109 people aboard were uninjured but many were shaken, Australian Antarctic Division psychologist Maree Riley said.

Some 72 expeditioners are on the vessel, some who've been in [Antarctica](#) for a year and a half.

Riley said the incident could be traumatic for some, especially after a "challenging" extended season.

"When you think about the situation that expeditioners have been exposed to, they are a resilient group of people but this has been a challenging situation for them – potentially traumatic," Riley told reporters on Tuesday.

"As you can appreciate, some people have been shaken by this."

The Division's general manager of operations and safety, Charlton Clark, said the remainder of the voyage will likely not be easy either.

With the Southern Ocean an often unpredictable and challenging environment and unfavourable conditions on the way, there's still some way to go to get the crew and the expeditioners home safely.

"A fire on board any vessel in the Southern Ocean is a very serious event; the crew and the expeditioners responded remarkably to get the situation under control," he said.

“We know there is challenging weather ahead and the ship’s crew are doing all they can to minimise any impact of weather that’s on its way.”

The cause of the blaze will be examined by the ship’s owners, and regulatory authorities if required.

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## Headlines monday 5 april 2021

- [Coronavirus Everyone in England to be offered twice-weekly tests – PM](#)
- [Live Covid: UK government 'did not change mind' on vaccine passports, says minister](#)
- [Conditions of entry Covid certificates have been on the cards for England since December](#)
- [Furlough Dozens of aristocrats claim under UK scheme](#)

## [Coronavirus](#)

# Everyone in England to be offered twice-weekly Covid tests, PM to say

Boris Johnson to promise universal rollout of lateral flow testing scheme in bid to ease England out of lockdown

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



The testing scheme will involve kits for use at home or at test centres, workplaces and schools. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

The testing scheme will involve kits for use at home or at test centres, workplaces and schools. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

[Peter Walker](#), [Maya Wolfe-Robinson](#), [Nicola Davis](#) and [Vikram Dodd](#)

Sun 4 Apr 2021 19.01 EDT

Boris Johnson is to unveil a plan for routine, universal Covid-19 tests as a means to ease England out of lockdown, as the government faced a renewed backlash over the idea of app-based “passports” to permit people entry into crowded places and events.

Six months after Johnson unveiled plans for [“Operation Moonshot”](#), a £100bn mass testing scheme that never delivered on its stated aim of preventing another lockdown, all people in England will be offered two Covid tests a week from Friday.

The prime minister is to announce the rollout of the lateral flow tests at a press conference on Monday afternoon, at which he will also outline a programme of trial events for mass gatherings, as well as proposals for potentially restarting foreign travel.

The testing scheme, involving kits for use at home or at test centres, workplaces and schools, is billed as a means to limit any continued community transmission of the virus, in parallel with the vaccination programme, and as a way to track outbreaks of potentially vaccine-resistant Covid variants.

The [test-and-trace phone app](#) will also be updated so that when pubs and other hospitality venues reopen everyone in a group will have to register, not just the lead person, with those who test positive asked to share other places they have visited.

Some scientists have expressed scepticism at the plan, noting both the possibility of false negatives with lateral flow tests, and the need for better support for people to self-isolate if they do test positive.

Civil liberties groups and many MPs will also be wary if the new testing system potentially feeds into a regime of Covid certificates, which would use recent tests, vaccination or the presence of antibodies to the virus to determine entry to pubs or mass events. Sometimes also called [“Covid passports”](#), these would be purely for domestic use, and would be distinct from a vaccination record to allow foreign travel.

## Timeline

### **How England's Covid lockdown will be lifted**

Show

8 March 2021

Step 1, part 1

In effect from 8 March, all pupils and college students returned fully. Care home residents can receive one regular, named visitor.

29 March 2021

Step 1, part 2

In effect from 29 March, outdoor gatherings allowed of up to six people, or two households if this is larger, not just in parks but also gardens. Outdoor sport for children and adults allowed. The official stay at home order ends, but people will be encouraged to stay local. People will still be asked to work from home where possible, with no overseas travel allowed beyond the current small number of exceptions.

12 April 2021

Step 2

The official outline plan states that the next steps will rely on data, and the dates given mean "no earlier than". In step two, there will be a reopening of non-essential retail, hair and nail salons, and public buildings such as libraries and museums. Most outdoor venues can open, including pubs and restaurants but only for outdoor tables and beer gardens. Customers will have to be seated but there will be no need to have a meal with alcohol.

Also reopening will be settings such as zoos and theme parks. However, social contact rules will apply here, so no indoor mixing between households and limits on outdoor mixing. Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms and pools can also open but again people can only go alone or with their own household. Reopening of holiday lets with no shared facilities, but only for one household. Funerals can have up to 30 attendees, while weddings, receptions and wakes can have 15.

17 May 2021

### Step 3

Again with the caveat "no earlier than 17 May", depending on data, vaccination levels and current transmission rates.

Step 3 entails that most mixing rules are lifted outdoors, with a limit of 30 people meeting in parks or gardens. Indoor mixing will be allowed, up to six people or, if it is more people, two households. Indoor venues such as the inside of pubs and restaurants, hotels and B&Bs, play centres, cinemas and group exercise classes will reopen. The new indoor and outdoor mixing limits will remain for pubs and other hospitality venues.

For sport, indoor venues can have up to 1,000 spectators or half capacity, whichever is lower; outdoors the limit will be 4,000 people or half capacity, whichever is lower. Very large outdoor seated venues, such as big football stadiums, where crowds can be spread out, will have a limit of 10,000 people, or a quarter full, whichever is fewer. Weddings will be allowed a limit of 30 people, with other events such as christenings and barmitzvahs also permitted.

This will be the earliest date at which international holidays could resume, subject to a separate review.

21 June 2021

### Step 4

No earlier than 21 June, all legal limits will be removed on mixing, and the last sectors to remain closed, such as nightclubs, will reopen. Large events can take place.

**Peter Walker** *Political correspondent*

Was this helpful?

Thank you for your feedback.

Over the weekend, the government [unveiled plans for](#) nine pilot events, ranging from football matches and a snooker tournament to comedy and



business gatherings, to try out the practicalities of Covid certificates, whether using paper or via an app.

Such documents would allow people entry to events if they had been vaccinated, or could show they had recently tested negative for Covid or had antibodies to the virus.

But the day after the pilot events were announced, [five of the nine venues insisted they were not taking part in a Covid certification trial](#), with one saying it had received a “massive backlash” after the government announcement.



The scheme will run in parallel with the vaccination programme, and as a way to track outbreaks of potentially vaccine-resistant Covid variants. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

Liverpool city council, where four of the events are planned, said these would instead be general tests of how such venues could reopen, including social distancing, ventilation and test-on-entry systems, but were not designed to feed into a certificate trial.

Paul Blair, a co-owner of the Hot Water Comedy Club in the city, which is organising an event on 16 April, said the venue had received abuse on social media and emails accusing it of being part of a “medical apartheid”.

Johnson [has suggested](#) businesses would welcome the option to use Covid passport schemes, but he faces a battle to win parliamentary support for the idea. Last week more than 70 MPs, including 40 Conservatives, [announced they would oppose](#) the idea.

One option for the government would be to use such certificates for mass events such as sports and for places such as theatres, but not for access to pubs and bars.

The government has only recently gone public about the plans for such certificates, having previously discounted the idea. However, documents seen by the Guardian show research commissioned for the NHS's test-and-trace system reported as early as December on ways for Covid passports to operate.

The documents include mock-ups of possible app-based passports, and research about possible public attitudes towards using these as a condition of entry to not just events such as football matches or to pubs, but also for family gatherings such as weddings.

In a quote released to promote the new testing system, Johnson hailed the progress with vaccination, and said tests were now “even more important to make sure those efforts are not wasted”.

He said: “That’s why we’re now rolling out free rapid tests to everyone across [England](#) – helping us to stop outbreaks in their tracks, so we can get back to seeing the people we love and doing the things we enjoy.”

Test protocols in the other UK nations are organised by the devolved governments.



A member of staff processes a Covid-19 lateral flow test in the sports hall of Wilberforce college in Hull. Photograph: Paul Ellis/AFP/Getty Images

Free testing is already available to frontline NHS workers, care home staff and residents, and [schoolchildren and their families](#). As part of the rollout to the whole population people will be able to order tests to be delivered to their home and visit participating pharmacies to collect boxes of seven.

Stephen Reicher, professor of psychology at the University of St Andrews and a member of the Spi-B subcommittee of Sage that advises on behavioural science, said testing by itself was “no solution”, noting a rate of false negatives for self-administered lateral flow tests of up to 50%, as well as a lack of contact tracing or support for those self-isolating.

[Covid certificates won't be required in live event pilot, organisers say](#)  
[Read more](#)

He said: “All in all, the government keeps on seeking quick fixes based on one intervention. What they consistently fail to do is to build a system in which all the parts work together to contain the virus.”

John Drury, professor of social psychology at the University of Sussex and also a member of Spi-B – but speaking in a personal capacity – said: “Is

twice-weekly testing going to be accompanied by the required support for self-isolation, which currently is insufficient? If not, increased testing helps with the data but not with the practicalities of dealing with the virus.”

Labour said it backed the mass testing plan, but expressed similar worries. Jonathan Ashworth, the shadow health secretary, said: “To break transmission chains and suppress infections, testing must go hand in hand with community public health-led contact tracing to find cases and must be backed up by decent financial support so sick people can isolate.”

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[Coronavirus live](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

# Saudi Arabia reveals Mecca restrictions – as it happened

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## Coronavirus

# Covid certificates on the cards for use in England since December

Report shows government was considering plan months before ministers went public

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



A conceptual design for an electronic Covid-19 certificate using a QR code on a smart phone.

Photograph: Iain Masterton/Alamy

A conceptual design for an electronic Covid-19 certificate using a QR code on a smart phone.

Photograph: Iain Masterton/Alamy

[Peter Walker](#) and [Vikram Dodd](#)

Sun 4 Apr 2021 13.47 EDT

A government-commissioned report in December examined how Covid certificates could be used to decide whether people should be allowed into sports events, pubs and other crowded spaces, months before ministers publicly confirmed the plan.

A document prepared for NHS test and trace and seen by the Guardian shows that the research also looked into whether certificates could be made a condition of entry for family events such as weddings or even small casual gatherings.

The report, dated 17 December, was prepared by staff working for Zühlke Engineering, a Swiss-based consultancy that has worked closely on the UK's Covid contact-tracing app, and has a number of staff embedded within the test-and-trace team.

It details research into possible public attitudes to a Covid certificate, sometimes called a domestic Covid passport. This would use vaccination status, a recent negative Covid test or proof of coronavirus antibodies to allow people into potentially packed places when the country opens up.

The document includes mock-up pictures of how an app-based Covid certificate might work, using scannable QR codes. One shows this on the main NHS app, with a countdown showing when the pass expires.

Another shows the certificate attached to the NHS test and trace app. This option is seen as unlikely, because the test and trace app is anonymous while the certificate involves personal information.

Covid certificates are enormously controversial. At least 40 Conservative backbenchers are among 70-plus MPs who [announced last week](#) that they would oppose them.

There has been considerable speculation about the use of such certificates, but as recently as February the vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, said the government was “[not looking at a vaccine passport for our domestic economy](#)”.



Boris Johnson is expected to announce the initial findings of a review into the subject on Monday, but not to say categorically whether or not they will be introduced.

The December document uses focus group research to highlight public attitudes towards the idea. It found that people considered them potentially useful for events such as football matches and even weddings, but not for smaller family gatherings.

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Concerns raised included the amount of planning needed, whether test results would arrive on time and worries that people might act more recklessly if they had a certificate.

Civil liberties groups have spoken out against the idea of Covid certificates. Silkie Carlo, the director of [Big Brother Watch](#), said they would be “the first attempt at a segregation policy in Britain for decades”.

She said: “They would exclude and disadvantage the most marginalised people in our country, dividing communities without reducing risks.”

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## UK job furlough scheme

# Dozens of aristocrats claim under UK furlough scheme

Dukes, earls and marquesses, some of them owners of inherited estates, have drawn on public funds



Belvoir Castle, home to the divorced Duke and Duchess of Rutland.  
Photograph: Ian Dagnall/Alamy

Belvoir Castle, home to the divorced Duke and Duchess of Rutland.  
Photograph: Ian Dagnall/Alamy

[\*Rob Davies\*](#) and [\*Joseph Smith\*](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

Dozens of members of Britain's land-owning aristocracy have claimed under the taxpayer-funded furlough scheme to pay staff at their ancestral estates and personal businesses.

Analysis of publicly available data reveals the names of at least 50 nobles, including dukes, earls, viscounts, barons and marquesses, who have drawn on public funds.

The list includes the owners of vast inherited estates with a combined area nearly the size of Worcestershire, as well as hereditary peers already paid by the taxpayer to sit in the House of Lords, and the owners of multimillion-pound art collections.

Details of the aristocracy's use of the furlough scheme emerged after the Guardian [revealed last month](#) that tax exiles, Saudi royals, oil-rich gulf states and multi-billionaires had also drawn on taxpayer support to pay furloughed staff.

The latest snapshot reveals that claimants including companies owned by the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, who are divorced and live in separate parts of the duke's ancestral home, Belvoir Castle, which sits in 15,000 acres of Leicestershire parkland and has featured in The Crown.

Treasury disclosures suggest that the pair made four claims of up to £10,000 in December, increasing the amount to between £10,000 and £25,000 in January when a national lockdown took hold.

They also own the Engine Yard Cafe & Bistro and a clothes shop, the Duchess Gallery, which claimed up to £55,000 between them over the two months.

The duke, a former Ukip supporter, was listed as having an estimated wealth of £125m in the 2013 Sunday Times rich list, although he sold an item from his art collection, a painting by Van Dyck, to fund the estate's upkeep. The pair did not respond to requests for comment.

Wellington Estates Barn, which had one employee during 2019, received up to £10,000. Companies House data list the Earl of Mornington, heir to the title Duke of Wellington, among persons with significant control over the company.

The company is part of the 7,000-acre Wellington estate in Hampshire, including Stratfield Saye, the former home of the first duke, who triumphed over Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815.

A spokesperson said: “It is the estate’s (and we believe government) policy to furlough only those employees at risk of redundancy as a result of the law preventing the business in question from trading.”

Viscount Cowdray, Michael Pearson, owns a stake in the Pearson publishing and education company as well as the 16,500-acre Cowdray Park estate, which features a golf course and a polo club that refers to itself as the “home of British polo”. Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales were often photographed at Cowdray, where as a young royal Charles competed in tournaments.

Treasury data shows a claim on behalf of Viscount Cowdray of up to £25,000 in December 2020, rising to between £25,000 and £50,000 in January. He also owns Cowdray farm shop, which claimed up to £25,000 in January. Cowdray Park polo club and the estate’s golf course also received support. Viscount Cowdray did not return requests for comment.

An environmental consultancy owned by Christopher Monckton, the third Viscount of Brenchley and a former adviser to Margaret Thatcher, is listed as one of the smallest companies to claim taxpayer support. With one employee as of 2019 listed in its latest accounts, the firm received £10,000 in both December and January.

A regular speaker at events around the world, who has dismissed the notion of manmade global heating, Monckton is a former deputy leader of Ukip. He was sacked by Nigel Farage, who later condemned him for remarks he made about homosexuality. He did not return requests for comment.

Treasury data shows a £10,000 claim in January under the name of the Marquess of Northampton, Spencer Compton, who had an estimated net worth of more than £100m in 2017, according to the Sunday Times rich list.

A claim of up to £10,000 in December, rising to £25,000 in January, for the Falcon hotel on his Ashby estate is also registered.

“In line with government policy we used the furlough scheme at a time of great uncertainty when the only other option would have been to make people redundant. We used the scheme, as it was intended, to save jobs,” said a spokesperson.

One of the largest claimants among companies linked to aristocrats is Brechin Castle Centre, a country park, shop, cafe and garden centre in the grounds of a castle built in the 13th century near Angus, Scotland.

The company received up to £100,000 in January, after increasing its claim from up to £10,000. Its owner, the Earl of Dalhousie, is also the lord steward, a senior official of the royal household personally appointed by the Queen.

In 2019 he put Brechin Castle up for sale, citing the cost of upkeep. He did not return a request for comment.

Between them, the aristocratic claimants own approximately 448,000 acres of land, according to analysis by Guy Shrubsole, the author of *Who Owns England?*

Olivia Blake, a Labour member of the Commons public accounts committee, which oversees government spending, said: “Clearly the furlough scheme was an opportunity to protect hundreds of thousands of jobs up and down the country. It’s meant to be a lifeline for businesses hit hardest by the pandemic.

“Questions need to be asked about whether this money has gone to those who really need it, or to people and companies who could have made their way through comfortably. Many companies have been handing money back, which perhaps suggests the initial scheme needed more thought.”

Many of the claims were in the names of the peers themselves, rather than companies they own. HMRC said this was because of an ongoing process ironing out the detail in a vast repository of data.

Three hereditary peers are also listed among claimants. They are the Earl of Lindsay, Earl Howe and the Earl of Glasgow. The Earl of Lindsay, who

declined to comment, is understood to have claimed just over £2,000.

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## 2021.04.05 - Coronavirus

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## Rights and freedomEducation

# **‘I miss school’: 800m children still not fully back in classes**



Lovely Joy de Castro, 11, takes part in at an online class in the Manila cemetery where her family lives. Photograph: Eloisa Lopez/Reuters

Lovely Joy de Castro, 11, takes part in at an online class in the Manila cemetery where her family lives. Photograph: Eloisa Lopez/Reuters

Rights groups warn that children across the world are being pushed into abusive situations, from early marriage to child labour

Rights and freedom is supported by



# HUMANITY UNITED

[About this content](#)

[Harriet Grant](#), [Sally Hayden](#), [Ruchi Kumar](#), [Luke Taylor](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 03.00 EDT

Across the world 800 million children are still not fully back in school, Unicef is warning, with many at risk of never returning to the classroom the longer closures go on. There are at least 90 countries where schools are either closed or offering a mix of remote and in-person learning.

The UN agency's chief of education, Robert Jenkins, told the Guardian that the closures are part of "unimaginable" disruption to children's education.

"I didn't imagine the scale of the closures when schools shut last year, and I didn't imagine it going on for so long. In all our scenario planning for disruption, this possibility was never raised," he says.

[After Covid-19, millions of girls may not return to the classroom. We can help them | Malala Yousafzai](#)

[Read more](#)

"At the peak of the pandemic 1.6 billion children were not in school and here we are, a year later, and 800 million are still suffering partially or fully

disrupted education.

“There are a lot of lessons that need to be drawn, and one is the impact that prolonged school closures have on children.”

A new [Covid-19 Global Education Recovery Tracker](#) from Unicef, the World Bank and Johns Hopkins University is monitoring closures across the world, analysing where children are learning at home or at school.

Humanitarian organisations say the closures have contributed to a range of increasing abuses and degradation of children’s rights across the world, from increasing use of child labour to a rise in child marriages, often in communities where children already struggled to access education.



Ambrose, 11, who works at a brick-making site with his mother in Uganda. Child labour has risen steeply during the pandemic. Photograph: Sofi Lundin/The Guardian

While it is too soon for large-scale evidence to emerge, across the world human rights groups are seeing children increasingly taking on work as school closures take their toll.

A Save the Children [report](#) out this week warns that in Lebanon children are being put into work by parents desperate for money. The charity fears many

of the children will never return to school. Jennifer Moorehead, the charity's Lebanon director, said: "We are already witnessing the tragic impact of this situation, with children working in supermarkets or in farms, and girls forced to get married."

In Uganda, schools have been closed since March 2020, putting [15 million](#) pupils out of education. Only certain classes with exams coming up have been allowed to return. The rest will return in a staggered way in the coming months, though thousands of girls will not, [having become pregnant or been married off in the intervening period](#).



Ambrose with his mother outside their home in Uganda. 'Making bricks is very hard,' he says. Photograph: Sofi Lundin/The Guardian

In the Gulu district in the north of the country, Ambrose is making bricks under the burning sun for pennies, rather than attending classes. His plight is part of a wider rise in children working in the region. "Making bricks is very hard," says the 11-year-old, who suffers from an aching back and rashes across his body.

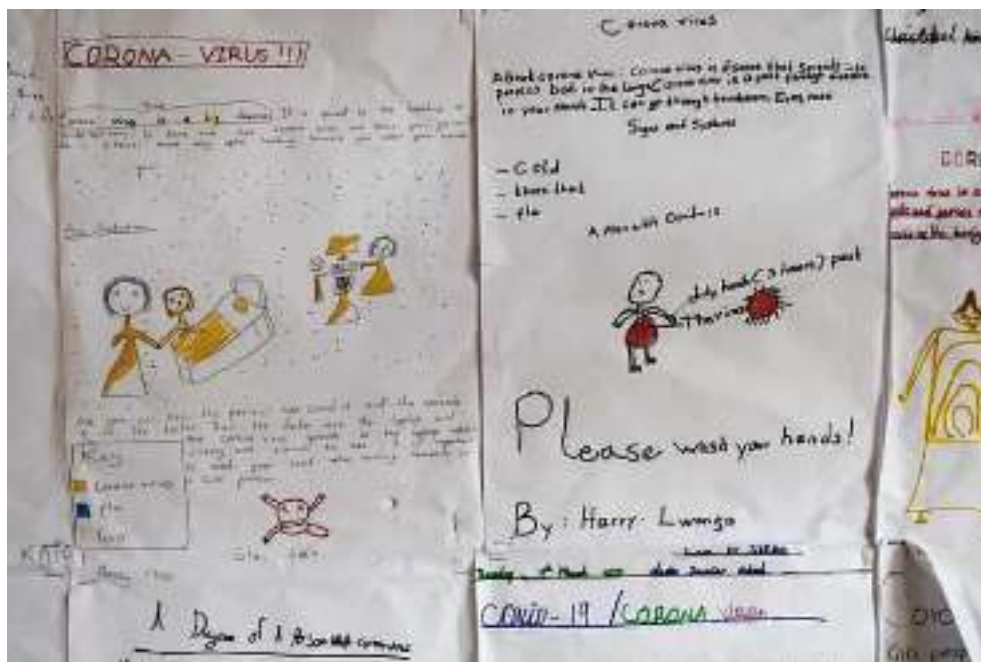
The children here still have fun, sometimes finding time to play hide-and-seek or perform tricks with skipping ropes, but Ambrose does not know if he



will ever go back to school. His mother worries about the physical impact this is having on her children.

“Bricks bring problems. Physically, you feel pain in your arms,” she says. But she can’t see any other way for them to survive.

Girls have been particularly hard hit by the closure of schools across the world. In countries such as Afghanistan teenage girls already had a high dropout rate with [about 2.2 million girls not in school before the pandemic](#). Now, groups supporting them fear that an increase in early marriage will leave even those who want to [continue their education](#) unable to do so.



Drawings about coronavirus on the walls of Clarke junior school in Kampala last April. The drawings were made by pupils just before schools closed. Photograph: Sumy Sadurni/AFP/Getty

In Kabul, 15-year-old Khatema is recovering from the death of her baby after a brutal and damaging labour. Doctors believe it was linked to her young age.

“She is still in shock,” her mother, Marzia, 40, says. “She thinks the baby is being kept alive in a machine somewhere, so we are not forcing her [to accept the truth]. We will tell her when we take her home.”

Her father decided she had to be married when her school was shut in March last year because of the pandemic.

I loved school. I was good at it too. I even wanted to go to university.  
No one asked me if I wanted to marry

*Khatema, 15*

Khatema's family immediately felt under pressure to find her a husband. Her father was worried that she would bring shame on the family by being at home without proper supervision. He decided to marry her to a farmer much older than her, and they rushed the ceremonies to ensure that Khatema would be moved to her husband's house before the lockdowns started.

"I wanted her to finish her education, but no one listens to me," her mother, Marzia, says.

"I loved going to school," says Khatema. "I only had one more year left, so it felt really bad when I was asked to leave. I was good at it too. I even wanted to go to the university someday. No one asked me if I wanted to marry."

Schools in Kabul have finally begun to open in the past week and Khatema hopes she might return – and avoid becoming one of the millions of pupils whose education ends permanently during the pandemic.





Afghan girls play in a primary school playground in Kabul in March. Schools have only recently begun reopening. Photograph: Rahmat Gul/AP

While remote learning has become a familiar concept during the pandemic, it is not a panacea, particularly in areas with poor connectivity, or where parents cannot afford to pay for internet access. For children with disabilities, remote learning can exacerbate those difficulties.

In [Colombia](#) 12-year-old Andrés joins classes on his parents' mobile phone from his village near the Venezuelan border on the Catatumbo River. The area's frequent lightning storms regularly knock the internet out of action.

"It's not the same seeing your teacher on a screen," he says. "The connection is always breaking up."

It's not the same seeing your teacher on a mobile phone screen. The connection is always breaking up

*Andrés, 12*

Andrés has spastic paraplegia, which impairs his speech and makes it particularly difficult for him to participate, even when the screen does not freeze.

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, [114 million children are still out of school](#), more than anywhere else in the world. Some public schools in Colombia's capital, Bogotá, have [resumed](#) in-person teaching. However, in rural regions such as Catatumbo, where Andrés lives, and where it is most needed, most remain closed.



Ana Milena Liberato helps her daughter Wendy Valeria, eight, with her homework near Bogotá, Colombia, in February. In Bogotá, four out of 10 children have no access to computers or the internet. Photograph: Fernando Vergara/AP

Towns like his are hotspots for coca production – the base ingredient of cocaine – and the conflict between armed groups vying for control of it.

The number of children who have disappeared in the past year has surged as families have been pushed into poverty and have lost the teachers who watched over them, says Save the [Children](#) Colombia. Local groups are concerned that they have been recruited into armed groups or are working on coca plantations.

“A lot of kids have dropped out due to financial issues,” says Andrés’s mother, María. “Of his 40 classmates, around 25 still attend.”

Andrés hopes that one day he will be able to use complex mechanics and software to develop robotic limbs to help others with similar physical impairments to his own. “I like technology a lot,” he says.

“We always tell him that he may not be able to walk but that he can do amazing things with his brain,” María says. “And I say: ‘I might not be able give you these things but, if you study, one day you can give what we can’t give you to your children.’”

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## US healthcare

# **‘There is a solution’: a Covid survivor’s life-or-death battle for Medicare for All**

Mariana Pineda was hospitalized with Covid-19 and pneumonia last April and can only afford treatment via GoFundMe. Now she’s using her energy to fight for healthcare programs



Mariana Pineda: ‘If nothing else, the fact that I didn’t die from Covid just ramped up my overwhelming desire to get Medicare for All and the New York Health Act.’ Photograph: Courtesy of Mariana Pineda

Mariana Pineda: ‘If nothing else, the fact that I didn’t die from Covid just ramped up my overwhelming desire to get Medicare for All and the New York Health Act.’ Photograph: Courtesy of Mariana Pineda



[Amanda Holpuch](#) in New York

[@holpuch](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

Few things in Mariana Pineda's body have worked properly since she was hospitalized with Covid-19 and pneumonia last April. One day she is seeing a specialist to get nodules on her thyroid biopsied, another day it is a trip to the emergency room after her hands swell and turn red, symptoms of yet another high blood pressure crisis.

['I don't make enough': the financial cost of having Covid in the US](#)

[Read more](#)

She pays \$3,062.48 a month for health insurance to cover this constant stream of treatment, which she can only afford with the help of a [GoFundMe online fundraiser](#). She is too sick to work and is a single mother – her only income is child support payments.

Amid all of this, when Pineda's finished with doctors' appointments for the day and her four-year-old is asleep, she uses her last stores of energy to fight for the government-run healthcare program Medicare for All and its [New York](#) state equivalent.

“This is my gift from the universe,” Pineda told the Guardian. “If nothing else, the fact that I didn’t die from Covid just ramped up my overwhelming desire to get Medicare for All and the New York Health Act.”

Pineda is one of the many activists, and lawmakers, making Covid-19 part of their calls to reshape the [US healthcare](#) system to provide universal coverage. In mid-March, Democratic representatives Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell reintroduced the Medicare for All act on the anniversary of Covid-19 being confirmed in all 50 states and Washington DC.



Mariana Pineda. Photograph: Courtesy of Mariana Pineda

“There is a solution to this health crisis – a popular one that guarantees healthcare to every person as a human right and finally puts people over profits and care over corporations,” Jayapal said in a statement. “That solution is Medicare for All.”

The bill has the support of more than half the Democrats, but it is unlikely to pass the House. In the Senate, several Democrats instead are pushing for the public option, a government-run health insurance to exist alongside private health insurance.

Both reforms seek to make health insurance more affordable, easier to access and less costly and are being weighed by several state governments.

The hurdles, however, are immense.

Partnership for America's Health Care Future, a lobby which represents hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and health insurers, is already spending millions to campaign against reform. In Colorado, the group [bought \\$1m](#) in TV ads to run this spring before [a bill](#) was even introduced.

These ads, which warn of politicians having more control over people's healthcare, have been effective against health reform for decades, explained health policy expert Colleen Grogan. "The evidence from the past suggests that those advertisements really work and that's why they keep doing them," said Grogan, professor at the University of Chicago's Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy and Practice.

Americans for Prosperity, a group with financial backing from the conservative Koch brothers network, is also stepping in. The group spent millions to fight the ACA, and [told CNBC](#) in March that that campaign failed in part because they didn't present an alternative. This time, the group is showcasing a "personal option" plan which would slash regulations and is pitched toward the private sector.

Activists must also contend with the more moderate wing of the Democratic party. Joe Biden has not endorsed Medicare for All and his healthcare efforts have so far been focused on expanding the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The president has already had success: the last stimulus package included \$61.3bn to expand insurance subsidies and coverage under the ACA and other federal programs for two years. More than four out of 10 people without health insurance are now eligible for a free or nearly free health plan, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis.

The American public benefits but the American public also loses because it ends up having to pay a lot more

*Colleen Grogan*

Pineda is set to benefit from one of the changes: people who have recently lost work must be covered for up to six months under the usually costly



Cobra program. That's the insurance Pineda pays \$3,000 a month for now and she's waiting to hear from her employer or the government about the subsidy.

These efforts improve access and affordability, but also direct public money to the private healthcare industry. "So the American public benefits but the American public also loses because it ends up having to pay a lot more than a more rational system should really pay for," Grogan said.

Should Biden attempt to make these changes permanent, as is expected, discussions about public spending on private healthcare could be more prominent, a useful tool for reform activists. [In 2019](#), federal, state and local governments accounted for 45% of the country's \$3.8tn in healthcare spending.

"The interest in containing healthcare spending is not going away," said Katherine Hempstead, senior policy adviser at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "I don't think we're going to hear the end of that at all."

And Pineda will do what she can to ensure that.

The mother of four posts pictures of her vital signs and medical bills on social media, providing an intimate look at the long-term symptoms some people experience after Covid-19 infections and the costs of trying to stay alive.



Pineda posts pictures of her vital signs and medical bills on social media, providing an intimate look at the long-term symptoms some people experience after Covid-19. Photograph: Courtesy of Mariana Pineda

“I’ve done panels from hospital beds, I’ve gone on Facebook Live from the emergency room,” Pineda said. “Yes, it sucks that I am sick, but it gives me a unique insight and gives me access to all kinds of things that we might not necessarily know about.”

Pineda is energetic and quick to laugh, but she is experiencing a nightmare. Her symptoms include headaches that make her feel like someone is shaking a can of coins in her head, vomiting multiple times a week, emphysema, lesions on her kidneys, incontinence and anemia. Her period hasn’t stopped since she had a miscarriage in July. Doctors are monitoring an air sac in her lungs because if it grows much more it will need to be surgically removed.

She goes to the emergency room almost every month and in September had emergency surgery to remove six blood clots in her lungs, including one blocking her pulmonary artery – the respiratory therapist told her 99% of the people in her position don’t survive.

She is seeing a urologist, pulmonologist, endocrinologist, hematologist, gastroenterologist, neurologist and cardiologist. A quirk of her insurance,

familiar to many Americans, is that her appointments with specialists are only covered if her primary care physician gives the referral – an added layer of bureaucracy.

“I’ve actually had to myself call up specialists, get their tax ID number, get the diagnosis code, get all of the codes,” Pineda said. “So I spend hours a day on the phone with specialists and the insurance company ... if we had the NY Health Act or Medicare for All, it would all be one system and I wouldn’t have to do this while I’m home recuperating and a single parent with an autistic four-year-old.”

Pineda’s passion for Medicare for All formed when she was volunteering for Bernie Sanders’ 2016 presidential bid, knocking on hundreds of doors while pregnant. She cast her ballot in the New York primary while 4cm dilated and gave birth the next day.

Five years later, Pineda vowed to keep pushing politicians for health reform. Pineda said: “I am going to harass them until I drop dead and I hope I drop dead on their doorstep for a good photo op.”

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## Coronavirus

# As a sense of normality returns, we must not forget what this last year has been like for the NHS

Anonymous

I'm an NHS consultant. We barely had the resources to keep people alive – let alone cope with longer effects of Covid

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There was a time last year, when we were being clapped on the streets and Boris Johnson had recently survived his own Covid experience, when I thought Covid might actually spur us on to deliver real, lasting change within the NHS. My optimism is fading. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

There was a time last year, when we were being clapped on the streets and Boris Johnson had recently survived his own Covid experience, when I thought Covid might actually spur us on to deliver real, lasting change within the NHS. My optimism is fading. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images

Mon 5 Apr 2021 05.05 EDT

One year ago, lockdown had just come in. A creeping sense of dread was [spreading across the hospital](#). We were focused on the first wave of admissions, the peak of which for us occurred in early April. We were desperately learning how to keep people from dying due to this new disease. The longer-term consequences were the last thing on our minds.

Now, a year on, there is a superficial sense of normality returning. Our respiratory support unit, for so long hidden behind closed doors with “STOP: CORONAVIRUS” signs and staffed by hooded figures in head-to-toe PPE, has turned back into the bright, airy ward it used to be. Nurses, doctors, porters are back in their usual clothes instead of uniform scrubs; conversation has replaced the incessant hiss of Cpap machines. Our ITU is shrinking back to its normal size. It is easy to forget how things were even a couple of months ago.

Normality is a long way off for one group of Covid patients, however. These are the ITU survivors, those who have come as close to death as is possible without succumbing. We receive them on to our wards, damaged and broken by their time immobile on ventilators for weeks at a time. Some have been left with tracheostomies, unable to speak; others have suffered strokes or have peripheral nerve damage so severe they can barely move at all. Most are still on oxygen and many must be fed by a tube while their swallowing recovers to a point that food doesn’t simultaneously trickle down into their lungs and cause pneumonia. We are used to managing one or two patients in this situation, but to have five or six at once on our ward is unheard of. The strain on our nurses and therapists is intense, yet I know that there are more coming our way who are still in intensive care.

These people face recoveries that stretch into weeks and months. The lucky ones will improve enough to go home directly, often needing care packages

or oxygen concentrators. The others join waiting lists for inpatient rehabilitation centres where they will then stay for further weeks or months.

To us this feels like success; patients that we last saw in January as they were moved to intensive care, returning to us alive and then leaving hospital. But these people, often only in their 50s or 60s, were healthy before they got Covid. They will not work again for many months, if at all. About a third will end up [back in hospital](#), often recurrently, and I suspect many will not survive in the long term.

And they are miserable. I've lost count of the number of times these patients have told me that they wish they hadn't survived, that they would be better off dead. We have had patients effectively on suicide watch on our ward, having to request extra shifts for 1:1 care because of their risk of self-harm, although these shifts often go unfilled because of staff shortages. I offer reassurances that there's plenty of improvement to come, that they're still early in their recovery, but I do so with a certainty I don't feel and my words feel hollow. In their situation I think I might feel the same.

[Strain on NHS as tens of thousands of staff suffer long Covid](#)  
[Read more](#)

Although these patients are the worst-hit, the emerging longer-term picture from the first wave is that of people hospitalised with Covid, [70%](#) have not fully recovered even five months on. The second wave was worse, with more survivors, and we do not yet know how many people this affects. What is even less well understood is the number of people suffering with long Covid, most of whom were never in hospital at all. Estimates suggest the number with long Covid symptoms is [over 1 million in the UK](#) and even the small fraction of this number that are likely to need urgent specialist assessment and treatment is frighteningly large. I have seen these patients in clinic; they have complex, debilitating symptoms and are often feeling scared and alone. It is not possible to assess or treat them in a standard 20-minute general clinic slot, yet for months this has been the only way to see them.

While there are now [dedicated long Covid clinics](#) set up, that is only the start. Multi-disciplinary teams of specialists and therapists will be needed

but there are very limited resources for this, not to mention that the people with the expertise to do it are already employed elsewhere. Our backlog awaiting lung function tests, clinic appointments, investigations are already much higher than normal and this additional demand is further stretching our resources. We have also had [key members of our team off work](#) with long Covid themselves.

In short, this is a disease with long-term consequences for its survivors. The psychological, social, economic and medical costs of this remain completely unknown even without accounting for any future surges. The problem is that [Covid is not going away](#). It will presumably remain endemic with periodic surges, most likely during winter when our hospitals are already on their knees. We only have to [look to mainland Europe](#) for a warning against complacency.

Do not forget the large-scale cancellation of elective work that already happened most winters even before Covid, as the NHS [struggled to cope with predictable emergency admissions](#). Now add to that the demands of an unprecedented backlog caused by many months of near-complete shutdown, the need to care for the current Covid survivors, the likely need for an ongoing vaccination programme to combat emerging variants. Our thinly spread resources are getting ever thinner. And yet the purse strings have tightened again. Our financial deficit has again become the concern and all but emergency funding has been put on hold. We have been told in no uncertain terms to make do with what we already have.

This is why I viewed the recent outrage over the 1% pay rise for [NHS](#) staff as missing the most important point. Yes, our workforce are exhausted and deserve better. This is beyond doubt. But Covid has brutally exposed the structural inadequacy of the [NHS](#) to keep people alive and maintain routine care at the same time, let alone meet new demands such as long Covid. This is the natural consequence of a system that is deliberately resourced to barely meet normal demand; any small increases in pressure cause the system to fail.

There was a time last year, when we were being clapped on the streets and Boris had recently survived his own Covid experience, when I thought Covid might actually spur us on to deliver real, lasting change within the



NHS. My optimism is fading as I have yet to see any urgency or coordinated planning to address this.

We must not forget what this last year has been like.

Without immediate action and a complete change in attitude from our leaders, we are accepting an NHS that will always cancel its planned healthcare at the first sign of trouble. We all deserve better than this.

- *In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie). In the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255). In Australia, the crisis support service Lifeline is 13 11 14. Other international helplines can be found at [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org).*

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## Job losses

# Bleak future for Crawley a year after first Covid lockdown

The town in the shadow of Gatwick airport hopes the worst of the pandemic is over but fears for its jobs

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Crawley town centre a year after the first lockdown. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

Crawley town centre a year after the first lockdown. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer



[Richard Partington](#) *Economics correspondent*  
[@RJPartington](#)

Sun 4 Apr 2021 12.33 EDT

The differences with the early stage of the Covid-19 pandemic are stark in Crawley. Plenty of people are milling around Queens Square in the town centre, enjoying the early spring sun, even though most of the shops remain closed; some permanently.

In the West Sussex town close to [Gatwick airport](#), hopes are rising that the worst days of the pandemic have finally passed. But with global air travel still grounded, workers in Crawley fear there will be long-term damage for the local jobs market.



Tamara Butler worked for easyJet before lockdown. Now she may have to move away from Crawley. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

“I’ve applied for everything and it’s just so difficult, as everyone’s in the same position. The amount of people who lost their jobs at Gatwick and wherever else around here, it doesn’t surprise me that these jobs are hard to come by,” said Tamara Butler, a former easyJet cabin crew worker who is considering moving out of the town to find work elsewhere.

“Spirits are definitely a lot lower after all the lockdowns. It’s just been one thing after another.”

A year since the first lockdown, the Guardian has returned to Crawley to follow the town’s progress after it was identified early in the pandemic as [the place at highest risk of job losses in Britain](#).

In the shadow of the UK’s second busiest airport, with almost a fifth of jobs in the aviation sector, the worst forecasts are coming to pass. The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits has risen the most in Britain, soaring by 6.1 percentage points since last March to reach 8.9% of the local workforce, according to the Centre for Cities thinktank.

This time last year Butler’s career was derailed as she tried to move jobs, resigning from easyJet to join Mac cosmetics in the airport duty-free area at

just the wrong moment. Lockdown left her without either position. She found work at a local Tesco, as one of an [army of temps taken on by supermarkets](#). Now in another stopgap role with a mobile phone retailer, she is still looking for a permanent job. But with fierce competition, she will give her job hunt in Crawley until June before giving up and looking elsewhere.

“If I don’t find any jobs here from June, then I don’t really have a choice, because I can’t afford rent down here any more. The wage that I’m on isn’t enough,” she said, sitting on the same low, stone benches in Queens Square as when she spoke to the Guardian a year ago.

“It’s weird seeing pilots and captains working in Tesco. While I was working in the shop I served a pilot I used to fly with, who told me he’s now working in Waitrose. I mean, he can fly a plane but now he’s restocking shelves? It’s just bizarre.”

As a leafy new town that enjoyed relative prosperity before the pandemic, Crawley has among the highest rates of workers still on furlough in Britain. A year after the launch of the multibillion-pound scheme, almost 12,000 people, about 20% of the local workforce, are receiving wage support from the state.



Elizabeth Laker with her husband Dean and baby who was born during the pandemic. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

Elizabeth Laker received the email telling her she would be made redundant on the day Britain entered the first lockdown, 23 March, and less than six weeks after discovering she was pregnant. Since giving birth to her son Grayson in September, she has rushed back to work to make sure she and her husband, Dean, can keep paying the bills.

“While I was pregnant I tried to seek employment but it was difficult as everyone was looking at that point, and no one would take me on being pregnant either. I knew I had to return to work quickly for financial reasons, so I was applying for every job going I thought I was qualified for,” she said.

Laker started work as a care coordinator a month ago, helping isolated elderly people with everything from shopping to getting their Covid jabs. While the family finances remain tight Laker says she and Dean – an assistant store manager at Topps Tiles – are lucky to have money coming in. Both are looking forward to the easing of lockdown, but worry the process won’t be smooth.

“With the first lockdown it was very unknown. Now you take what Boris Johnson says with pinch of salt,” she said.

As lockdown restrictions are eased, Crawley residents are expecting fewer shops to reopen. Debenhams has gone for good, leaving a three-storey hole in the County Mall shopping centre, while Monsoon, Topshop and Carphone Warehouse have also closed.





Anne McQuade, centre, with friends from Phoenix choir, Chris Ollis, left, and Angela Finn. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

Sitting outside a branch of Bonmarché, which was pushed into administration by Covid late last year and has since been sold, Anne McQuade has come to town for a birthday meet-up with her friends from a choir, Chris Ollis and Angela Finn, who is with her grandson Arthur.

“Losing Debenhams is a great big loss for the town,” said Ollis, suggesting the town centre remains relatively quiet, despite its busy appearance today. This time last year, McQuade celebrated her birthday alone with an Italian meal and bottle of wine from Iceland, but will host dinner with friends in her support bubble this evening.

Phoenix, their choir, remains confined to Zoom practise sessions and the prospect of performing live a distant hope. “You can’t plan anything. We’re not sure what will be allowed and what’s not,” she said.





Peter Lamb, leader of Crawley town council, says central government has made no allowance for Crawley being so hard-hit by the pandemic. Photograph: Andy Hall/The Observer

Peter Lamb, the Labour leader of Crawley borough council, is frustrated with central government for the level of support the town has received. “As of yet, we still have no recognition for the scale of the hit that we have taken as a local area. The government has literally done nothing above if we were the least impacted economy, to help us. And you just have to scratch your head and say ‘what?’”.

The area will get £21.1m from the government’s levelling-up towns fund and a further £100,000 to help the high street. But Crawley has suffered budget cuts under the Conservatives’ austerity drive, and faces uncertainty about how quickly the town will recover after Covid.

In a sign of the long-term hit facing the area, Gatwick airport doesn’t expect passenger numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2025. As many as 36 million fewer people passed through its terminal buildings last year, a drop of 78%, with a knock-on hit for the town’s economy. Having cut staff numbers almost in half, to 1,800 from 3,000 pre-crisis, the airport is awaiting [details from the government about its plans for the return of international travel](#).

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With airport workers living in up to one in four homes, Lamb told the Guardian a year ago that he feared Crawley would turn into a modern, southern version of a northern mining community during the 1980s, bereft of employment by the death of a key industry. Although more optimistic than a year ago, he fears the end of the furlough scheme will drive up job losses, as Gatwick struggles to recover.

“The aviation industry is betting on pent-up demand after lockdown. I think there is. I’m pretty desperate to go on holiday, we’ve been absolutely destroyed over the last year. But the reality is, aviation only works when both points are safe to travel to.”

“We’ve done very well on the vaccination plan, that’s great. But until the destinations people want to go to have also got to that point, it’s not going to make a difference. Aviation is the last sector that will come back.”

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## 2021.04.05 - Spotlight

- ['Very difficult for Michael' The Jacksons on fame, family and survival](#)
- [How we met I was terrified my parents would find out I'd been intimate with another girl](#)
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## Pop and rock

### Interview

# **‘It was very difficult for Michael’: the Jacksons on fame, family and survival**

Simon Hattenstone



‘We pace ourselves for longevity’ ... Jackie, Tito and Marlon. Photograph: Bridgeman Images

‘We pace ourselves for longevity’ ... Jackie, Tito and Marlon. Photograph: Bridgeman Images

Back with a political reworking of Can You Feel It, brothers Tito, Marlon and Jackie talk about their legendarily tough father, their memories of Michael and why they always hope for another massive hit



Mon 5 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

Can You Feel It is one of *the* great disco songs. Now the Jacksons are determined to remind us that it is also one of the great political songs, with its call for “all the colours of the world” to unite and tell the “marching men who are killing their brothers” that we all share the same blood.

Forty years after first charting, Can You Feel It has been reworked to include clips from speeches by Martin Luther King and Barack Obama, part of a project to expand the band’s six albums for Epic with remixes and bonus tracks. It makes perfect sense to have MLK and Obama guesting on the song, Tito Jackson says today: “They are the two best rappers in the world.” Tito and Jackie, the oldest brother, laugh. They are Zooming from Las Vegas, where they both live. Both are youthful and run off high-energy batteries. Tito, whose three sons make up the group 3T, is wearing his customary bowler hat – he says it’s the first thing he puts on when he gets up, and the last thing he takes off at night. Jackie, who has been married three times and has four children, is smartly dressed and smiley. It’s hard to believe they are approaching 70.

The Jackson 5 (later the Jacksons) were the ultimate R&B boyband. Their first four Motown singles (I Want You Back, ABC, The Love You Save and

I'll Be There) [topped the US charts in 1969 and 1970](#), which was then unprecedented. Their music was an infectious mix of R&B, soul, funk, and pop; their dance routines a synchronised joy. They appealed equally to black and white audiences, and their songs have proved timeless. Without the Jackson 5, of course, there would have been no Michael Jackson. They were inducted into the [Rock & Roll Hall of fame](#) in 1997. As well as being arguably the world's most famous and successful music family, they are often cited as one of the strangest. There's father Joe's alleged tyranny over his children, La Toya's makeover to look like Michael, love rivalries between Jermaine and Randy, pretty much everything about Michael and so much more.



The Jackson Five circa 1967 (l to r) Tito, Marlon, Jermaine, Michael and Jackie. Photograph: Gilles Petard/Redferns

These days, the Jacksons are a foursome (Jackie, Tito, Jermaine and Marlon) and sometimes a threesome when Jermaine, who lives in Bahrain, can't make it. "A lot of people think the group was broken up when Michael was alive, but the Jacksons were never broken up. We pace ourselves for longevity," Jackie says.

Listen to them and you could be forgiven for thinking they were just starting out, despite the 37 years that have elapsed since their last hit single.

“We’re gonna have ...” Jackie says.

“... more hit singles,” Tito says. They often finish sentences for each other.

Do they miss having hits? Tito looks at me as if I’m mad. “Do we miss having hit records? *Of course*. Everyone does.”

Before signing to Motown, the Jackson brothers spent years rehearsing at home in Gary, Indiana. It was a crazy life, scheduled by their father, Joe. After school, it is said, they typically rehearsed for four hours, played a gig, did their homework and then got to bed between 2am and 4am.

“That’s about right,” Jackie says, when I mention it.

“That’s right,” Tito echoes.

When did they sleep?

“We slept in the cars,” Jackie says.

“Between shows, Jackie, remember?” Tito says. “A quick 15-minute nap.”

There were nine Jackson children in all – six boys (all of whom performed in the band) and three girls (Janet became a huge star in her own right, while La Toya also had a lengthy recording career). Joe, who died in 2018, had a reputation as the toughest father in the music business. Was that fair? “Naaah,” says Jackie. “Noooooah. I like the fact that he was tough, but he wasn’t like that with us. That’s just rumours jumping on this to sell magazines.” A moment later, he tells me: “He was real disciplined. And the reason he was tough with us was because we had gangs in the neighbourhood and he didn’t want us to fall into them, so he kept us busy. We worked all the time, whether it was on our music or just moving bricks in the backyard from one spot to another spot.”





The Jacksons with their father Joe in their backyard, 1972: (l to r) Tito, Joe, Michael, Randy, Jackie, Jermaine and Marlon. Photograph: Getty Images

Moving bricks? They nod and grin. For no purpose, whatsoever? Again, they nod and grin. That's bonkers, I say. Well, there was a purpose of sorts, says Jackie. "He did it to keep us occupied because he knew it was going to take us all day to move those bricks from over here to over there."

In 1993, Michael told Oprah Winfrey that his father would watch them rehearse and if they did anything wrong he would beat them with a belt leaving them covered in welts. But the brothers are staunch defenders of Joe. Without Joe's iron will, they say, they wouldn't have made it. Their father saw the boys' talent as a way out of Gary.

We always hear about Joe's role in the boys' success, but what about their mother, Katherine? Actually, Jackie says, there wouldn't have been a Jackson 5 without her. "She's the one who from the very beginning realised we had talent. My momma was an avid country and western fan so we would harmonise with her all the time. And she told my poppa: 'Hey Joe, the boys can really sing, you need to check them out.' After he heard us sing, he started buying instruments."



Katherine and Joe Jackson, 1984. Photograph: David Hume Kennerly/Getty Images

Jermaine Jackson, who will be touring with the band this summer, is not available to talk, though no reason is given. Jermaine has long had a reputation for being the prima donna of the Jacksons. He is no stranger to controversy, not least for starting a relationship with (and later marrying) Alejandra Oaziasa, the partner of the youngest Jackson brother Randy, with whom she had two children. Randy himself has hardly led a scandal-free life. In 1991, he was convicted of battery for beating his wife, Eliza Shaffy, and their 14-month-old, daughter Steveanna.

Marlon Jackson is at home in Georgia when we speak. Marlon is a sweet man who has led an uneventful adult life compared with most of his siblings. At 18, he married his childhood sweetheart, Carol Ann – they have three adult children and are still together today. Marlon was one of twins born prematurely, and his brother only lived a couple of hours. He was closest to Michael in age, just 17 months older, and today is wearing a [Study Peace](#) cap. He runs an organisation of the same name, which he calls a brand and a movement. Even though he didn't know it as a child, he says, peace was always the message behind the Jacksons' music. "We would go to countries all over the world and everybody would come in harmony and peace, and the music would unify people."

Marlon and Michael were a team. “We were road warriors,” he says. “We’d do things we were not supposed to. One time we were in New York City, and we started throwing toilet tissue out of a 40th floor window. We were nine and 10 years old. Another time, we filled a trash can full of water and threw it off the balcony. And Michael licked his finger and held it up and said the wind is blowing this way, so you gotta throw it out that way so you can hit the people. We both were pranksters.”

The young Marlon often incurred his father’s wrath because he was out of step or missed a note. “It took me time to catch on to things. I got in a good deal of trouble. Michael got in some trouble, too.”

When success came, in 1969, Jackie says it was a wonderful chaos. What does he remember most clearly? “The camaraderie, the pageantry, the excitement, the pandemonium. We couldn’t finish a concert – we’d sing maybe five songs and that was it.”



‘The camaraderie, the pageantry, the excitement’ ... Jackson 5 in 1970 (l to r) Marlon, Tito, Jackie, Jermaine and Michael. Photograph: RB/Redferns

Did that frustrate them? “It excites you,” Tito says, “but you build the show, so it starts here and goes up and we wanted people to see the middle and the end, but they wouldn’t let us.” What they loved most was the travel;

experiencing new cultures. “We were kids from Gary, Indiana and got to go to Japan, go to the UK and perform for the queen of England, go to Germany and perform for the president. Most kids, especially African American kids, didn’t get that chance.”

Did they experience racism on the road? “In the south our rooms would be facing the trash, and at 4am you’d hear the big trucks come in to pick up the trash,” Marlon says. “You didn’t get much sleep.” They also discovered that their music was tearing down racial barriers. “Somebody wrote a letter to us saying they had been shipped off to an all-white school and it was really troublesome for them,” Marlon says. “And they said what made it change for them with the white kids is that the teacher gave them a project to write about your favourite group, and he said everybody wrote about the Jackson 5.”

It’s impossible to know what level of success the Jacksons would have achieved if Michael had not had such an incredible solo career. But the bigger he became, the less interest the world took in the brothers’ collective work. By 1971, aged 13, he had already had a top five hit in the US and UK with Got To Be There. At 20, he released Off The Wall, which sold more than 20m copies; and at 24 came Thriller, still the biggest-selling album of all time.

When did they realise that however talented they were, he was on a different level? From the off, Jackie says. “When we started it was Jermaine, Tito and I singing. Then Marlon and Michael came in. Michael used to take a Quaker oatmeal box and they were his bongos. He used to play it so well. Then he got up and did James Brown. We all decided to put him up front.”

“You get a lot of people who can sing well, but not everybody is an entertainer,” Marlon says. “We were entertainers as well, and Michael was the greatest entertainer of them all.”



‘Michael was the greatest entertainer of them all’ ... the Jackson 5 performing on TV, 1969; (l to r) Tito, Marlon, Michael, Jackie and Jermaine. Photograph: Getty Images

Michael became one of the most recognisable faces on the planet. To deal with that level of fame must be near impossible, I suggest. Not at all, Jackie says. “He loved it. He *loved* it. He would work at it every single day – dancing, honing his craft. That’s what he did.” Did they remain close to him throughout? “When you have that kind of career, it’s kinda hard to keep pace with all your brothers, because you’re busy. People used to ask us: ‘Are you jealous of your brother’s career?’ And I’d say: ‘Why would I be? His name is Jackson.’”

I say I was going to ask the opposite – despite Michael’s achievements, wouldn’t the brothers choose the relative stability and anonymity of their lives over his?

“If you’re going for it, you go for all of it. You go with gusto,” Jackie says. So he’d rather have had Michael’s life? “Yeah, that’s right. That’s what everyone wants who’s in this business.”

Tito: “You want to be on top.”

Marlon sees it differently. He says it was impossible for any of the Jackson 5 to have a regular life. They could just about cope, but the level of fame was intolerable for Michael, he says. "Michael had painted himself into a box. And it was difficult for him. Very difficult for him. It's mind-boggling. If Michael just stepped outside, in a couple of seconds people would stop doing what they are doing. That's why he started wearing disguises."

Marlon smiles, and says Michael never fooled him. He tells me of the time he spotted Michael in a record store incognito. "I walked up behind him and whispered in his ear: 'Michael, what you doing here?' He was dressed as a bum. His clothes were dirty, he had bucked teeth, he had an afro, his shoes were dirty, his shirt was torn, but he's buying all these excellent records. I said to him: 'Another thing gave you away, Michael, you wear the same shoes all the time!' They were the same loafers he wore on stage."

Does he think Michael loved himself enough? "Yes, I think so. Of course nobody loves it when the media starts talking about you negatively." The reason I ask, I say, is because he was such a beautiful boy and he went to such extreme lengths to alter his appearance, and ended up disfiguring himself. Did that upset Marlon? "No, it didn't upset me because I look at it this way: the Lord put us on this earth to love one another, not to judge each other, and he wasn't harming anybody. It was his body, and he did what he wanted to do to be what he wanted to look like. When you get to the gates and the Lord is there, he's going to judge you not by what you obtained for yourself, or not what you did to yourself, he's going to judge you by what you did for others. Judge someone by their heart."

It's understandable why the Jackson brothers repeatedly tell us to judge Michael by his heart, and talk about negative media. In June 2005, Michael was acquitted on all charges related to the alleged sexual abuse of a 13-year-old boy. In a 2019 documentary, *Leaving Neverland*, two men alleged they had been sexually abused as children by Michael, including Wade Robson, who had testified in his defence at his trial.





Michael Jackson arrives in court in Jan 2004 on charges of sexual abuse, accompanied by his sister Janet and other members of his family. Photograph: Rex Features/REX FEATURES

I ask Jackie and Tito how damaging the court case and the allegations made in *Leaving Neverland* have been to Michael's reputation. The publicist steps in. "We're going to have to move on from that subject, I'm afraid," he says.

I ask Jackie and Tito whether they want to answer the question or not.

Jackie: "No, we're not supposed to."

Tito: "We want to keep it positive."

Jackie: "Because of court reasons."

While the Jackson estate is suing the television network HBO for \$100m over the documentary, the family are certainly allowed to talk about the court case, but prefer not to. As far as they are concerned, the best way to protect his legacy is to talk about his achievements.

It is 12 years now since Michael died, aged 50, from cardiac arrest after a drug overdose. His doctor, Conrad Murray, who had prescribed the drugs, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in 2011. I ask how Michael's



death affected them. “I never stop mourning him,” Tito says. “Even going to the local grocery store you see people who recognise you and they say: ‘I’m sorry about your brother.’ The hardest part for me is healing from that sadness.” As for his legacy, Tito says the music takes care of that. “Michael is a legend – people aren’t going to forget [Michael Jackson](#).”

Jackie says Michael is still ever-present. “Every time I go into Vegas on the bus I see Michael next to me. His whole face is parked next to me on a billboard. I stop at a light and I say: ‘What’s going on, brother?’”

Marlon feels the loss of his old road warrior acutely. “I just miss hanging out with him,” he says. There will probably be no time that he is more keenly aware of his absence than when they tour later this year, performing all the classics that Michael sang on in their heyday. Now, at least, they can perform without having to run off stage after five songs because they are being mobbed. Do they get the same excitement when they perform? “You can walk on stage and you don’t feel like doing the show,” Marlon says. “But the moment you hit that stage everything just lights up, and it’s like you’re shot out of a cannon. It’s showtime.”

The Jacksons’ catalogue is available on all streaming services

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## [How we met](#)[Life and style](#)

# How we met: 'I was terrified my parents would find out I'd been intimate with another girl'



Lucy and Hen Staveley-Brown got married in 2018 – 39 years after first meeting each other. Photograph: Image supplied by Lucy and Hen Staveley-Brown

Lucy and Hen Staveley-Brown got married in 2018 – 39 years after first meeting each other. Photograph: Image supplied by Lucy and Hen Staveley-Brown

Lucy and Hen Staveley-Brown, both 53, met at school in 1979 at a time when same-sex relationships were considered taboo. Years later they reunited and now live together in Devon

[Lizzie Cernik](#)

Mon 5 Apr 2021 05.00 EDT

Lucy Campbell was 11 years old when her parents sent her to an independent Catholic school near their home in North Devon. It was during the entrance exam that Hen Staveley-Brown caught her eye for the first time. “She was one of the least girly girls,” remembers Lucy. “A tomboy, like me.” When the pair started school in September 1979, they soon became good friends. “Lucy lived three miles from me and we were always round at each other’s houses or going out together,” says Hen. “There was definitely a connection there that developed into something else later on.” Lucy says they were “unhappy teenagers” who were “a bit wild and often in trouble”.

In 1983, the girls went on a Duke of Edinburgh trip with their classmates. They spent the night together in a tent after getting drunk, and rumours spread quickly. “Everyone knew and I was terrified my parents would find out I’d been intimate with another girl,” says Lucy. At the time, same sex relationships were pretty much unheard of, especially at a Catholic school in rural Devon. In private, the pair continued to have a stormy relationship with frequent fallouts, until they left school in 1984. “Our school shut down because it was failing and we lost touch with each other,” says Lucy. “I went off to college for a while and then later went to London to work as a nurse. I wanted to forget about it all and just blend in.” Hen joined the police and moved to Bristol. “It was a shock for some, because I think the nuns always thought I’d end up in jail,” she says, laughing.

In 1988, Lucy briefly came out, but says she didn’t feel comfortable being gay. “It was during the Aids crisis and there was a lot of hostility. My family were homophobic and I was struggling with my mental health, so I went back in the closet.” Hen had a girlfriend and in 1996 she called to invite Lucy to an affirmation ceremony to celebrate their relationship. Lucy couldn’t face it. “She seemed so confident about her lifestyle and I didn’t want to be associated with what had happened at school,” she says.

It wasn’t until 2016 that they reconnected through a Facebook group. “I’d tried to contact Lucy before, but she hadn’t responded,” says Hen. “As soon as I saw she was part of a Facebook group for our old school, I joined.” For Lucy, it felt like the right time to talk. “I was getting my life together and seeing a counsellor. It gave me the confidence to contact people who had been in my life; I don’t think I would have felt ready a few years before that.”

A few months later, they agreed to meet for a drink with another friend. “Lucy asked if we could see each first beforehand. It felt like a date without her saying it,” says Hen. In October, they found themselves at a coffee shop in an M4 services, laughing and joking like no time had passed. “We talked for hours because there was such a connection,” says Lucy.

Hen was still in an unhappy relationship with her second long-term partner and Lucy was single. “I was wary because of Hen’s situation, plus I didn’t want to rush into anything that could be messy,” says Lucy. “Emotionally I was ready to be back in touch.” Shortly afterwards, the pair met in London and decided they couldn’t be apart any longer. Hen broke up with her partner and moved to London to be with Lucy. They agreed to retire early at 50, so they could enjoy their lives together. “We moved to Bath for a while and commuted to different cities before we could retire,” says Hen. In 2018, they got married in Barnstaple and now live in Devon with their six cats. “We’re such a cliché,” says Hen with a laugh.

Although the pair are opposites in many ways, they say that is what makes them a good fit. “I love Hen’s energy and optimism,” says Lucy. “She’s the extrovert and I’m the introvert. She gets me motivated and I think I have a calming influence on her.” Hen agrees. “We’re like yin and yang. We always loved each other. It’s like living with my best friend – we’re soul mates.”

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# 'I almost wet myself laughing': 50 funny podcasts to make you feel much better

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## Global development

# 'Every year we dig mass graves': the slaughter of Pakistan's Hazara



The 10 Hazara coalminers murdered by Isis were buried at Quetta's Hazara Town cemetery. At least 1,000 Hazaras have been killed in sectarian violence in the past decade. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

The 10 Hazara coalminers murdered by Isis were buried at Quetta's Hazara Town cemetery. At least 1,000 Hazaras have been killed in sectarian violence in the past decade. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

Decades of persecution has left the Shia minority with little space left in its graveyards but prime minister Imran Khan is in no hurry to listen

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[Shah Meer Baloch](#) in *Quetta*

Mon 5 Apr 2021 01.30 EDT

Ahmed Shah had always dreamed of bigger things. Though just 17, the high school pupil had taken a job in the coalmines of Balochistan, Pakistan's south-western province, one of the harshest, most dangerous working environments in the world. Shah was determined to earn enough to educate himself, so he could escape the tough life of the Hazara Shia community, the most persecuted minority in [Pakistan](#).

[In Pakistan, tolerant Islamic voices are being silenced](#) | [William Dalrymple](#)  
[Read more](#)

But Shah never saw a brighter future. He was among 10 miners who were resting in their mud hut near the mines in the small Balochistan town of Mach when armed militants burst in. A gruesome video from the scene shows the young men blindfolded, with their hands tied behind their backs. A security official said their throats had been slit. [Islamic State](#) claimed responsibility for the massacre.



The prime minister, [Imran Khan](#), called it an “inhumane act of terrorism”, but for the Hazara, minority Shia Muslims who have been targeted for three decades in Pakistan by extremists among the majority Sunni Muslims who view them as heretics, this was not enough.

Shah’s mother, Amina, was on her rounds as a healthcare worker in the nearby provincial capital of Quetta when she heard about the massacre.

“I wanted to see my son one last time, but I was told that I would not be able to bear that,” says Amina. “The killers were not humans. They killed them so brutally.”



Amina holds a picture of her son, Ahmed Shah, murdered with other miners by Isis. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

The Hazara community, after decades of injustice and neglect by the state, were driven to act, and in a protest unlike anything seen before in Pakistan, the families of the 10 men brought the dead bodies out on to the streets, and sat beside them, in the freezing cold, to demand protection and justice.

For a full week, they did not move, stating they would not bury the bodies until the prime minister listened to their demands.

In response, Khan accused them of trying to “blackmail” him, and said he would not visit until the bodies were buried.

Ahmed Shah was one of four from his family to die in the Mach massacre. So too did his cousin Sadiq, the sole breadwinner for his wife, children and six sisters.

Sadiq, a father of two daughters, had had breakfast with his wife before dawn at his home in Quetta before leaving for Mach. One sister, Masooma Yaqoob Ali, saw the news of the Hazara miners on Facebook and stumbled upon the picture of her brother’s blindfolded body.

“These monsters have not only killed 10 people, they have killed 10 families,” she says. “It has been two decades that we are being mercilessly killed but no one has been arrested yet.”



Masooma Yaqoob Ali holds a picture of her late brother Sadiq and her 17-year-old cousin Ahmed Shah, who had their throats slit by militants in Mach. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

The Hazara Shia have been targeted over many years by Sunni extremists, such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba and now Isis. According to a 2019 report by Pakistan’s National Commission for Human Rights, an independent watchdog, at least 509 Hazara have been murdered for their

faith since 2013. The non-profit Human Rights Commission of Pakistan says that from 2009 to 2014, nearly 1,000 Hazaras died in sectarian violence. Thousands have been injured.

Our men and young can't go outside. If they go, they will be killed. Our graveyards are full of young men

*Masooma Yaqoob Ali*

To curb attacks on the 600,000 Hazaras living in the towns of Mariabad and Hazara Town in Quetta, authorities have built military checkpoints, roadblocks and walls around the areas.

In 2014, the international organisation Human Rights Watch published a 62-page report on the persecution of Hazara Shia in Balochistan entitled [We are the walking dead](#).

“We are living in two prisons. Our men and young can't go outside. If they go, they will be killed. Our graveyards are full of young men with barely any space left,” says Ali. “We are tired of carrying their coffins. Every year we dig mass graves. Yet prime minister Imran Khan says we are blackmailers. Khan is heartless.”



Behisht-e-Zainab cemetery at Mari Abad, in the Hazara area of the Balochi capital, Quetta. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

The majority of Hazara in Quetta originally came from [Afghanistan](#) and Iran to seek work in Pakistan, with many ending up in the mines of Balochistan.

For 15 years, Chaman Ali, another of the Mach victims, would travel from Afghanistan to Quetta every winter to work in the coalmines.

“I would be worried for his life when he was here and when he went to Afghanistan. I would think ‘what if he gets into the hands of the Taliban?’ I thought he was safe here, but this is where he got killed,” his sister Zara says.

Chaman Ali is survived by his wife and eight children, the youngest just three months old. Aziz and Nasim, from the Daykundi province of Afghanistan, came with Chaman Ali to work in the mines for the first time. They were also murdered.



Abdul Rahim, from Daykundi in Afghanistan, holds a picture of his 22-year-old son Nasim, another victim of the Mach massacre. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

Nasim, 22, started work to fund his education and had arrived in Pakistan just a week before he was killed. “Afghanistan is in a very bad situation and we think that something is better than nothing, which is why we come to Pakistan just to make a living,” says Abdul Rahim, Nasim’s father. Along with other members of his family, he could not get to his son’s funeral from Afghanistan, when the security forces closed routes out of the villages across Pakistan’s porous border.

Victims of the Mach massacre were all eventually buried in a mass grave at Hazara Town, on the outskirts of Quetta. The Hazara community is running out of space to bury their dead. The graveyard is full of photographs of Hazara Shia men, women and children, many of them murdered.

Having Mongolian ancestors, many Hazara are identifiable by their distinctive appearance, and it is along the single road that leads to Mari Abad and Hazara Town that thousands have been attacked by extremist groups.

“Our generation has grown up in a cage. We make houses on the mountain and are afraid of going out to see other parts of Quetta,” says Arif Hussain Nasry, 21, founder of [the Future is Young](#) campaign. “We are even afraid to gather with Hazara from other nations and communities. We have to live to survive in these two ghettos.”



The Hazara cemetery in Quetta. The flags represent the graves of all those who have been killed in sectarian violence. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

But for Naseem Javed, an author and political activist, the attacks on the Hazara are not just about sectarianism. “I don’t think Hazara are being targeted just because of their faith,” he says. “They also are being targeted to divert the attention from the Baloch separatist movement.”

Balochistan, the most impoverished province of Pakistan and wedged between [Iran](#) and Afghanistan, has a separatist movement that has been active in the province for the past 20 years. “The region also has become a hub for international proxies, including the Taliban,” Javed adds.

[Fear and defiance among Pakistan’s Hazaras - in pictures](#)  
[Read more](#)

Javed shows the pistol he keeps close to him in his shop, where he sells prayer mats and prayer beads. “We live under shadows of weapons and fear. None of us has a normal life. We are being slaughtered. If the security establishment has no role in this genocide, why have they not arrested any attacker?”



For many Hazara people the solution is simply to leave. Amjad Ali\*, 21, has made three attempts to leave Balochistan for a new life in Europe. He was first deported from Turkey and handed over to Iran, from where he was sent back to Pakistan. The second time he was deported from Iran.

During his third attempt to reach Europe, with 25 other Hazara Shia, Ali was caught a few miles from the border by Jaish ul-Adl, another Sunni militant group that operates mainly in south-eastern Iran. Pretending to be Iranian security forces, the jihadist group took Ali and others to a mountain camp in Pakistan, close to the Iranian border.



Buses to take Shia pilgrims to shrines in Iran. Many Hazara try to reach Europe to escape their persecution in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Photograph: Mashal Baloch/The Guardian

“They were very well updated and informed. As soon as we reached their camp they shot four Hazaras with Kalashnikovs. Two of them used to work in the Pakistan army. Two, as Jaish ul-Adl claimed, were going to be part of the Zainebiyoun brigade, an Iranian-backed militant force [fighting in Syria],” Ali told the Guardian.

The rest were held and their families sent ransom demands. Ali spent 55 days in the camp before his family members managed to raise thousands of



dollars in ransom money for his release.

“If I get a chance now to go to Europe, I will try again,” says Ali. “There is no life for Hazara Shia in Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

\* Amjad Ali’s name has been changed to protect his identity.

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## 2021.04.05 - Opinion

- The race report was a cynical trap – but if I point that out, I'm 'doing Britain down'
- While few jobs were lost to Covid, a closer look is less encouraging
- If you bought a dog during lockdown, they'll need help coming out of it
- We're in a new era of political sleaze – with not even a baseline of human decency

## OpinionRace

# The race report was a cynical trap – but if I point that out, I'm 'doing Britain down'

[Nesrine Malik](#)

The government has effectively declared institutional racism does not exist, and framed those who disagree as the problem



Boris Johnson with Munira Mirza, the director of the No 10 policy unit, in Downing Street, 15 December 2020: 'Lost amid all the cynical strategy are real lives harmed, real opportunities missed.' Photograph: Mark Thomas/REX/Shutterstock

Boris Johnson with Munira Mirza, the director of the No 10 policy unit, in Downing Street, 15 December 2020: 'Lost amid all the cynical strategy are real lives harmed, real opportunities missed.' Photograph: Mark Thomas/REX/Shutterstock

Mon 5 Apr 2021 01.00 EDT

The public discussion about racism in Britain today has become hopelessly binary. The starting point is always some variation of “is Britain racist?”. It is a question that sifts respondents into two camps. There is no way to answer such an inquiry that does not elide a lot of the truth, both about the pervasiveness of racism in Britain today and the clear progress the country has made. With that nuance absent from “yes” and “no” responses, each party is angered further and fuel added to the flames. This is where we stand in the UK today, trapped by a futile framing of the problem, farcically yelling at each other like pantomime audiences.

This is the result of years of work by the right to smear anti-racist positions. When we talk about racism today, what we are unwittingly doing is subjecting ourselves to a loyalty test. Pointing out that Britain is racist becomes not an observation about the facts, but a choice to undermine a well-meaning country doing its best. It is “doing Britain down”, aggressive, transgressive, a declaration of war against the country and its fine people. Thus the attempt to discuss racism becomes about everything except racism itself, reduced to merely a tool to distinguish between saboteurs and supporters.

This is an environment in which much political capital can be made. Last week’s government [report](#) on racial disparities in the UK was a clear example of using binary framing to appeal to one camp and admonish another. The report looked into institutional racism and effectively declared that it did not exist. Britain was given a pass. The report provided a sort of manual, a primer on arguments and rhetoric to be used to dismiss allegations of structural racism. It paints these as the feverish imaginings of a militant, entitled group of people who are desperate to hang on to victimhood when none exists any more. Instead we should look to “geography, family influence, socio-economic background, and culture and religion” as reasons for racial disparity. The report was accompanied by staggeringly sweeping statements such as “well-meaning ‘idealism’ of many young people who claim the country is still institutionally racist is not borne out by evidence”. Yet the evidence is there, in the [arrests of black men](#), the mortality rate of [black women in childbirth](#), the [death toll](#) of the pandemic. But in the complex interplay of race and other factors, the government’s race commission emphasises only what it wants us to see. But there I go, doing Britain down again.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinions but not their own facts, as the saying goes. But it seems this government has done its best to privilege some facts over others. It appointed commissioners, some of whom have [clearly expressed disdain](#) for the concept of institutional racism, to oversee a report into institutional racism. It therefore feels inevitable that claims of institutional racism were found to be “not borne out by evidence”, even when details in the report itself [contradict](#) that idea.

Make no mistake: this wasn't incompetence or clumsiness. The backlash to the report's findings is not an unforeseen or unintended consequence. In fact it is intended to bear out one of the themes of the report – the idea that there will always be those who “absorb a fatalistic narrative that says the deck is permanently stacked against them” and resist telling the “story of our country's progress to a successful multicultural community – a beacon to the rest of Europe and the world”. In the government's framing of this issue, the angry play an important role. They are the problem, not racism.

[The poisonously patronising Sewell report is historically illiterate | David Olusoga](#)  
[Read more](#)

Your anger is useful to a government that thrives on division. Annoying the “right people” is one of the ways the Conservative party maintains viability when its actual performance in office is so dire. We tend to think of these provocations as blunders that undermine the reputation and credibility of those in power. But the post-Brexit Conservative party is an openly combative one, pushing the belief that the country needs to recover a bit of its swagger, with a prime minister who is cheerleader-in-chief. If you don't subscribe to its view of Britain, you are banished to the sidelines as a heckler. It is a tough spot for Labour and Keir Starmer, who has already backed himself into a corner with his “constructive opposition”. How to challenge a government that has conducted a racism whitewashing exercise in plain sight, without walking into the trap laid by the racism binary?

Often the way out of these nettlesome situations for politicians and citizens alike is simply to do the right thing, to tirelessly gather evidence of institutional racism, marshal it into a counternarrative of a country that still has much to do, and support the work of grassroots organisations.

In the meantime, lost amid all the cynical strategy are real lives harmed, real opportunities missed. This report is more than an abdication of duty, it is a signal that only grateful quiescent ethnic minorities are welcome here. That if your experience is different, if your needs are different, this government is not looking out for you. If you have been failed by the police, the NHS, or your school, you are on your own. The government has decided that alleviating the impact of institutional racism on the prospects, mental health and life expectancy of citizens is less important than making political capital. The real message of this report is that there are many people whose pain is being exploited to feed a bonfire of resentment the government hopes to benefit from. But fires can rage out of control.

- Nesrine Malik is a Guardian columnist

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## [Viewpoint column](#)Job losses

# While few jobs were lost to Covid, a closer look is less encouraging

[Richard Partington](#)



If the government intends to ‘build back better’ it needs to ensure better protection for workers

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





Questions are growing about the types of job available as the crisis recedes.  
Photograph: Keith Morris/Alamy

Questions are growing about the types of job available as the crisis recedes.  
Photograph: Keith Morris/Alamy

Mon 5 Apr 2021 03.01 EDT

Plans are being rekindled and bookings made in the diary. From the high street, the shops, pubs and restaurants of Britain may remain largely in darkness, but preparations are accelerating behind the scenes for the easing of lockdown.

After more than a quarter of the year with no customers coming through their doors, non-essential shops and hospitality venues in England are starting to bring back workers from furlough and hiring new staff in the run-up to 12 April.

With employers buoyed by progress with the Covid vaccine and anticipating a boom in pent-up demand from lockdown-weary consumers, a picture of strength is emerging for the UK jobs market.

A generation ago an improving outlook would have been counted by the job adverts in the classified pages of the local newspaper. But in today's digital

labour market, platforms such as Instagram and Facebook and search engines such as Adzuna or Indeed are better ready reckoners.

Things are indeed looking up. According to figures tracked by the Office for National Statistics, online job adverts had risen to [96% of their pre-pandemic average](#) on Adzuna by the last week of March, the strongest performance since the crisis struck a year ago.

Unemployment fell in the three months to January, according to the [latest official figures](#), before the government's roadmap for easing restrictions was announced in what is hoped to be a curtain raiser of better things to come. At 5%, representing 1.7 million people, the jobless tally in Britain is above the rate in Germany but below the US, France, Spain and other comparable big economies.

So far Britain has defied the gloomiest forecasts with help from billions of pounds in emergency government support for jobs and businesses. UK unemployment is up to [2 million lower than feared last summer](#) when the independent Office for Budget Responsibility predicted an early end to furlough would have [sent the jobless rate to almost 12%](#).

To put the UK's performance in context, history shows that the average rise in the unemployment rate for each of the past three major recessions was about 4.5 percentage points. The worst was in the 1980s when it more than doubled from about 5.3% in 1979 to a peak of 11.9% in 1984.

In the most recent episode, after the 2008 financial crisis the jobless rate peaked at 8.4% in 2011, about 3.2 percentage points higher than before the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the run on Northern Rock.

On the current trajectory, and if kept anywhere near current levels, the big story of the Covid crash will be just how few jobs were lost relative to the worst recession in 300 years.

However, look under the bonnet and there are reasons to be cautious about calling the green shoots of recovery too soon. Much of the positive news comes as [almost 5 million workers remained on furlough](#) at the end of February. Add this into the mix and the picture looks far less robust.

While there are hopes for a consumer spending boom from [£180bn in additional savings](#) accumulated by mainly wealthier households, the prospects for work will continue to be influenced by the path of the pandemic. Another wave in infections would derail the spending drive. Firms will also need to assess whether the rise in spending is maintained later this year after the initial post-lockdown rush fades.

For these reasons, concerns remain that unemployment will march steadily higher later this year. With furlough due to be made less generous from July, and closed from September – before the economy is expected to be back at full strength – research published on Monday by the New [Economics](#) Foundation estimates that 850,000 jobs will be at risk of redundancy, reduced hours or lower pay.

The OBR expects unemployment will reach 6.5% after the scheme closes, representing about 2.2 million people.

Questions are also growing about the types of job available as the crisis recedes. Amid increasing demands that Britain “build back better” from the rubble of Covid, the early signs from online jobs websites aren’t too encouraging.

At the foothills of the labour market recovery, analysis from Adzuna shows rapid growth in postings for jobs where no formal qualifications are necessary. Changes in the economy caused by the pandemic are also casting a long shadow.

Without workers returning to city centres, especially in London, jobs in shops, hospitality and leisure dependent on them will fade to a trickle. According to Indeed, the share of jobs mentioning remote work has quadrupled in the past year, from 3% to 12%. While more than half are temporarily away from the office – suggesting a gradual return will come – most analysts expect a lower number of staff to make a permanent return to the daily commute.

This isn’t the say there won’t be opportunities in this new, atomised economy. Job adverts on Indeed show a rise in higher-paid positions

dependent on the online boom such as in social media, software development and digital marketing. But the numbers are relatively small.

Instead, the move to a home-working white-collar economy will drive up the more precarious blue-collar employment in Britain that was already becoming a worryingly significant feature of the economy before the pandemic hit.

With more people working from home and with shops still closed, postings for transport and logistics roles have risen to 181% of normal levels. Demand for warehouse picker jobs has more than doubled, while there have been similar increases in postings for other logistics jobs and for delivery drivers.

All of this suggests a two-tier economy could be starting to take shape between the more affluent home workers and those in lower-paying roles built around the new system.

Faced with these divergent trends, the government could play a pivotal role, ensuring workers in warehousing and distribution are not subject to the worst practices of employers who rely more on zero-hours contracts and low-pay.

Meanwhile the government's long-awaited employment bill – which would enshrine greater worker protections – remains absent. With the risks to unemployment still lurking beneath the headline figures and the rise in lower-paid work, far more action is necessary.

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## OpinionDogs

# If you bought a dog during lockdown, they'll need help coming out of it

[Rachel Casey](#)

Behavioural problems are a common reason for rehoming, so prepare them for when you're not there 24/7



‘A big worry for dog owners is the impact of lockdown on dogs’ ability to cope with being left on their own.’ Photograph: Dimitris Legakis/Athena Pictures

‘A big worry for dog owners is the impact of lockdown on dogs’ ability to cope with being left on their own.’ Photograph: Dimitris Legakis/Athena Pictures

Mon 5 Apr 2021 04.00 EDT

Despite the lows of the past year, for many lockdown has been the perfect opportunity to welcome a dog into their lives. The demand for dogs during

the pandemic has been huge, with a 60% increase in calls from people seeking to adopt from the Dogs Trust charity, and with many other rescue organisations reporting similar findings. Google searches for “buy a puppy” increased by [115%](#) after the UK first went into lockdown in March 2020, with prices for some of the most sought-after breeds reaching record levels.

Dog ownership is a wonderful thing, but it is also a huge responsibility and a commitment that spans way beyond lockdown: as the saying goes, “A dog is for life”. As restrictions ease and the resumption of normality begins, it’s important we consider the implications for our canine companions and give them a hand to help them adjust.

Having a dog around has helped many people cope with lockdown. Our dogs mostly love us being around too: going for longer walks, having more playtime, and resting by our side. Nevertheless, it’s safe to say life has not been normal for our dogs for most of the past year. Few have met other dogs, and if they have seen them, it would have been from afar or on a lead, meaning that they were unable to interact or play. There have also been fewer visitors coming into the home, but probably more deliveries, with people coming to the door carrying parcels and going away again. This is all particularly concerning for puppies acquired during the pandemic, as their expectation of “normal” is lockdown life, and they may never have seen visitors inside the house or have been left home alone.

We are all longing for a great British summer in which we can go on dog-date walks with a friend and their dog, have family round for garden barbecues and take our pooches to the pub or cafe, and of course, we need our dogs to be able to cope calmly with all of that. A return to normal is something humans are able to process, understand and prepare for. But our dogs – especially young ones – won’t understand why everything has changed. As far as our dogs know, normality for them has been enjoying time with family only – so to be expected to cope with groups of people, children and other dogs, both in and out of the home, could be overwhelming for them.

['Our rescue cat rescued us': how pets provided unconditional love in lockdown](#)

[Read more](#)



A big worry for dog owners is the long-term impact of lockdown on their ability to cope with being left at home on their own. [Dogs](#) who had separation anxiety before the lockdown are likely to get worse when left again as owners head back to work – but we also expect to see new cases developing, because other dogs, and particularly puppies, have learned to expect company all day.

One of the biggest reasons why dogs are rehomed is because of behaviour-related issues. A rise in problematic behaviours after lockdown could mean families have no other option but to give up their dog. And, really sadly, most of these problems can be prevented with the right early experiences.

Our message to owners is to start preparing now, rather than waiting until things return more to normal. It's easy to do: start building up experiences of all the things we will expect them to do once the lockdown eases. For instance, start building in minimal periods apart, initially just being briefly separated from you by a door or child gate. If they stay calm, build up the time separated really gradually, so they start to adjust to not being with you all the time. If your dog gets worried when separated – barking, whining, panting, or scratching at the door – you have progressed too fast. Go back to a shorter period to help them adjust. By gradually increasing your time apart, you can ensure they are able to settle on their own and help them prepare for the time when you need to return to work or study.

Our dogs will also need help when it comes to seeing friends and family, both outdoors and indoors. Teaching your dog how to greet new people calmly, how to settle when guests visit or when you're in a cafe are key skills. Coming back when called, walking on a loose lead and not barking when the doorbell goes are also vital skills that will set them up for success.

It is much easier to prevent problems than treat them, and it's not too late to help prepare your dogs for the changes coming. To support dog owners, there is [online training](#), so dogs and their owners can equip themselves with the skills they can put into practice as normality resumes.

When people take on the responsibilities of dog ownership, they do so with the best intentions to care for them in the long term. But the pandemic will have devastating effects on some people's lives, including their ability to



care for their dogs. While we provide lots of support to help keep dogs and owners together, we're also here for when things aren't going so well, and owners may be having trouble seeing a future with their dog. If anyone does find themselves struggling, and may be considering having to rehome their dog, please contact Dogs Trust and we will do everything we can to help.

- Dr Rachel Casey is director of canine behaviour and research at Dogs Trust

- For more information and advice, visit [www.dogstrust.org.uk/changethetale/advice](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/changethetale/advice)

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## [OpinionPolitics](#)

# **We're in a new era of political sleaze – with not even a baseline of human decency**

[Zoe Williams](#)



Asking whether Boris Johnson has breached public standards is like asking whether two pigeons trying to shag mid-air have violated public decency legislation



The sleaze-politician never defends him or herself on the facts; their defence is always: 'This is who I am, because this is who we all are.' Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

The sleaze-politician never defends him or herself on the facts; their defence is always: 'This is who I am, because this is who we all are.' Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

Mon 5 Apr 2021 02.00 EDT

When everyone is talking about the [Nolan principles for public life](#), you know you're in a new era of sleaze. Nobody thinks about them much, otherwise: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. It sounds like the elevator pitch for John Lewis. A friend was struck by the perfect mirror symmetry between Nolan and the seven deadly sins, so then I had to look those up as well. They're actually not symmetrical at all. The opposite of the sins would be chastity, humility, generosity, abstemiousness, vigour and equanimity. You're wondering why there are only six. It's because generosity is the opposite of both envy and greed. There's probably a lesson in there somewhere, but I wouldn't want to tread on Christianity's toes, least of all at Easter.

Michael Nolan didn't have a lot to say about chastity or generosity or modesty or humility, I'm guessing because he assumed that the public would

provide that firewall themselves. If a person was visibly greedy or wrathful or gluttonous, if they couldn't [handle government money without funnelling it through their friends](#), or have juniors at work [without swearing at them](#), or had such poor impulse control that they would [invite their girlfriend to their marital home for a cheesy pasta dinner](#), only to have run out of cheese, then they would never make it in public life in the first place. Standards for officials were a totally second-order affair, designed for the intricate moral dilemmas of duty versus ambition, openness versus discretion. They assumed a baseline of normal human decency. Asking whether [Boris Johnson could have breached Nolan's principles](#) is like asking whether two pigeons trying to shag mid-air have violated public decency legislation. Maybe, technically. But they're just pigeons, doing what pigeons do.

The sleaze-politician never defends him or herself on the facts; their defence is always: "This is who I am, because this is who we all are, because this is what politics is, and the sooner you price it in, the less dispirited you will feel." That's why successful critique can only really come from within the political establishment. The argument isn't really about right and wrong, which is pretty simple. The argument is: "Do politicians really need principles – God's, Nolan's or anyone else's?" It takes another politician to say: "Yes, they really do."

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## 2021.04.05 - Around the world

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## Libya

# Female Libyan activists demand politicians stick to election timetable

Women are challenging largely male political class as fears grow ‘dinosaurs’ of Libyan politics will try to cling on to power



Some members of Libya’s House of Representatives have paid lip service to elections on 24 December, but are manoeuvring to delay them. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Some members of Libya’s House of Representatives have paid lip service to elections on 24 December, but are manoeuvring to delay them. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

[Patrick Wintour](#) *Diplomatic editor*

Mon 5 Apr 2021 00.00 EDT

Libyan civil activists led by an increasingly assertive group of women are demanding their country’s largely male political class stick to their

commitment to hold parliamentary and presidential elections on 24 December, the 70th anniversary of Libya's independence.

[The interim government](#) of [Abdul Hamid Dbeibah](#), which was made possible by a ceasefire sealed in October, was sworn in on 15 March.

The primary task of the government is, in theory, to prepare the country for the next elections, but some in the political elite seem to be stalling the process, and ministers, none of whom would be allowed to stand in December, are announcing populist policies in a sign that they are trying to embed themselves.

Zahra' Langhi, a leading member of the 75-member Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), the UN body formed to choose the interim government, said: "There are political factions in Libya – an elite – that make money out of the status quo, staying in power and so do not want elections. It's another Lebanon. They are the people the previous UN special envoy Stephanie Williams called 'the political dinosaurs'. The whole idea is we must have a political reset in Libya so we have to have new elected legitimate institutions."

Langhi, an expert on gender, conflict resolution and peace-building, is part of a women's bloc in the LPDF, which is due to meet in Tunis this week to press home its demand for elections.

The female activists, many of whom are lawyers or civil society campaigners, are a newly empowered element challenging the previously male-dominated Libyan politics. They are determined to ensure the old political class, which has often seen public office as a means of plundering Libya's wealth, is not able to manoeuvre to stay in power.

Only 12% of Libya's councillors are women, and many women in the past who have put themselves forward have been abducted or assassinated.

In a sign that they are still at risk Haneen al-Abdali, the daughter of the human rights lawyer Hanan al-Barassi, who was murdered last November, was "arrested" by militia in Benghazi in March. She was seized hours after



going on Facebook to name her mother's alleged killers – identifying close associates of eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

In an effort to break the cycle by which women are excluded, Williams ensured as many as 20 of the 75 places on the LPDF were reserved for women.

“It so happened the lawyers in the room were women,” Williams said. In the end 17 attended, often operating as a cohesive bloc and insisting that a minimum of 30% of the top posts in the new interim executive authority were reserved for women.

They did not achieve all that they asked, since only five of the 33-strong cabinet are women. But one is the country's female foreign minister, Najla al-Manqoush, and another the justice minister. In one of her first steps Manqoush used a central bank audit to reduce the number of embassies abroad from 150 to 70, part of a move to cut the bloated public sector payroll.

The LPDF, and the women, are now under pressure to fade away, and have had to fight tooth and nail with the new UN special envoy, Ján Kubiš, to continue to be recognised. It was only the day after one of the LPDF members, Elham Saudi, secured enough LPDF signatories to hold a meeting without the UN's permission that he agreed to meet them on 26 March, belatedly lavishing praise on them, and assuring them of their relevance.

Langhi said calls by some members of the interim government for a summer referendum on a new constitution are part of a delaying tactic and that the LPDF must “remain as the guarantors and monitors of the roadmap towards elections, meeting every month to ensure there is no backsliding”.

Williams has also refused to let her legacy, including the role of women, be eroded by her departure, and some have even suggested Joe Biden should appoint her the US special envoy for Libya.

Speaking to the BBC, Williams said: “Here is the message the political class needs to hear: the overwhelming desire of a large majority of the Libyan

population – you see poll numbers from 75% to 87% – want national elections to take place on 24 December.”

“The existing institutions, the High State Council has been in office since 2012, the House of Representatives since 2015. Their natural expiry date has passed. They should listen to their people. They can set the framework for these elections. The clock is ticking.,” she added.

Kubiš, has only been in the job for six weeks and is feeling his way through the labyrinth of Libyan politics. Some fear his more conventional style will mean the recent momentum may dissipate.

When he met the LPDF he admitted he doubted whether the House of Representatives would meet the deadline of July to set up a constitutional framework for the elections.

Kubiš urged the LPDF’s legal committee to conclude its drafting of a constitutional base for the elections that included a clear separation of powers between the next parliament and the executive.

“This would send a strong signal to those who not only hesitate with elections but create problems and impediments to stall the process,” he said.

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## Taiwan

# Taiwan train crash: truck driver expresses 'deep remorse' over disaster

Maintenance worker issues tearful apology as investigations continue into what caused vehicle to slide down embankment



Lee Yi-hsiang, the driver of the truck in Taiwan that was hit by a train on Friday, offers a public apology on Sunday. Photograph: AP

Lee Yi-hsiang, the driver of the truck in Taiwan that was hit by a train on Friday, offers a public apology on Sunday. Photograph: AP

[\*Helen Davidson\*](#) in Taipei

[\*@heldavidson\*](#)

Sun 4 Apr 2021 20.27 EDT

The truck driver whose runaway vehicle rolled into the path of an express train and caused one of Taiwan's worst ever rail disasters has made a tearful public apology.

“I am deeply remorseful and want to express my most sincere apologies,” said Lee Yi-hsiang, his voice cracking over the derailment that killed at least 50 people. “I will cooperate with the investigation by police and prosecutors to take the responsibility I should take.”

The 49-year-old is part of a team who inspects the east coast rail line for landslides and other risks. His statement comes amid an ongoing investigation into the crash, with authorities saying the train driver likely had as little as 10 seconds to react to the obstruction.

On Friday morning, at least 50 people died, including the train driver, and more than 200 were injured when [the Taroko express train carrying 498 people derailed inside a tunnel](#), just north of Hualien city on the island’s east coast.

On Monday, recovery crews were still working to retrieve the last body from the wreckage. Hualien’s fire department said the victim was trapped under a 15-tonne train undercarriage. It did not provide details on the identity of the passenger.

“The rescue is difficult, and we are currently discussing how to overcome these difficulties, so the time it takes may be delayed,” the department said.

Investigators said the train hit a truck which had slipped down an embankment from a maintenance area above the rail line. They are now seeking to determine if there was a mechanical failure or if the driver of the truck failed to engage the parking brake. Officials also reportedly said it wasn’t clear why there were any maintenance workers at the site on Friday, which was a public holiday.

Lee was [questioned by police on the weekend](#) and released on bail, before a court reversed the decision and he was taken into custody.

[‘I couldn’t bear to look’: Taiwan train crash survivors tell of escape](#)  
[Read more](#)

After taking witness testimonies, investigators said they believe the train driver saw the truck blocking the track but would have struggled to stop in

time.

“It’s believed the train driver might have only had 10 seconds at most to react and there was not enough distance to emergency brake,” said Hong Young, chair of the Taiwan Transportation Safety Board. Local media has also reported questions over the crowding of the train and the lack of fences along that section of rail, which winds through dramatic mountains and cliffs along the east coast.

The transport minister, Lin Chia-lung, offered his resignation on Sunday, but would remain in his role for the remainder of the aftermath, in order to “shoulder responsibility” after Taiwan’s deadliest rail disaster in decades.

The train was traveling south at 9.28am on Friday, when the front carriage hit the truck, sending the train careening into the Qingshui tunnel, derailing and crashing against the inside walls. Early footage and photos showed a mess of twisted metal inside the tunnel, and rescuers struggling to access those worst affected. Most of the fatalities were in the front carriages. Dozens of people were trapped for hours. Those who could walk out broke windows and climbed along the roof of the train to escape.

Rescuers and authorities have had some difficulty in assessing the death toll, which was revised up and down over the weekend as they worked to identify the victims. Of the 50 people killed, 48 have been identified.

As the rescue and recovery mission continued over the weekend, survivors, families, and religious groups gathered to mourn and pray. [Rescuers and survivors told stories of devastation](#), with one Red Cross worker describing the scene as a “living hell”.

Priest Sung Chih-chiang told Reuters what surviving passenger Chung Hui-mei had told him. “She could not find her daughter. When she yelled, she found her daughter was under the steel panels. She put her effort to move those pieces one by one, but her daughter’s voice became quieter and quieter, and then there was no response,” he said.

The tragedy has devastated the people of Taiwan. Friday was the first day of the Tomb Sweeping festival, a religious holiday during which families

gather to attend to the graves of ancestors and pay their respects to the dead. Of 498 people the train was carrying, more than 120 were standing in the aisles. Among the victims were four rail staff, children – the youngest reportedly just four years old – and whole families. Three foreigners were also among the dead - a French national and two Americans. On Monday morning, 39 people were still in hospital including four people in intensive care.

The first of the funerals were reported to begin on Monday. Hana Kacaw lost her husband Siki Takiyo and two adult children, Kacaw and Micing, in the crash. The family had missed an earlier train and were upgraded to the Taroko express, [the New York Times reported](#).

Taiwan's government has announced compensation for the victims' families, and arranged for some quarantine exemptions for family members overseas who wish to return to Taiwan for funerals.

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## [Indonesia](#)

# Scores die in flash floods in Indonesia and Timor-Leste

Death toll may rise further after torrential rain swept Indonesian archipelago and neighbouring Timor-Leste

00:45

Flash floods in Indonesia and Timor-Leste leave scores dead and hundreds displaced – video

[Rebecca Ratcliffe](#) and agencies

Mon 5 Apr 2021 09.30 EDT

At least 97 people been killed and dozens are missing following Tropical Cyclone Seroja, which triggered devastating flash floods and landslides across eastern Indonesia and neighbouring [Timor-Leste](#) on Sunday.

Strong winds and torrential overnight rains caused dams to overflow and submerged villages, forcing thousands of people to flee to evacuation shelters.

Rescue efforts continued on Monday, with teams digging through the mud and rubble in search of victims, and using rubber boats to recover bodies swept to sea. The work was hampered by power cuts, blocked roads, the remote location of affected areas and continued bad weather.





A house collapses after its foundations were washed away as the Comoro river floods in Dili, Timor-Leste. Photograph: Janito DF Afonso/Reuters

At least 70 people are reported to have been killed across several islands in Indonesia's West and East Nusa Tenggara provinces, while a further 70 people remain unaccounted for, according to the national disaster agency BNPB. In total, 30,000 people in [Indonesia](#) have been affected by the floods, the agency said.

In Timor-Leste, at least 27 people were killed, many of them in the capital, Dili, while 7,000 were forced to flee their homes, officials said. Images from Dili showed collapsed buildings, destroyed roads, and residents wading through waist-high muddy water.

The death toll and the number of injured victims could continue to rise, authorities warned earlier on Monday.

"In several villages, flash floods hit while people were sleeping," Thomas Ola Langoday, the deputy head of Lembata district government, told Reuters.

Powerful currents continued to flow through deep waters in villages in the Malaka district on Timor island on Monday, even though the rain had

stopped. Some residents said they had climbed on to their roofs to seek shelter from the waters, which rose to 3-4 metres.

“We had to dismantle the zinc roof. We went out through the back door and pulled ourselves out with a rope,” Agustina Luruk, 36, told Reuters as she and her three daughters waited to be evacuated.

### [Massive fire engulfs Indonesian oil refinery after explosion](#) [Read more](#)

The Seroja cyclone, which hit the Savu Sea south-west of Timor island in the early hours of Monday, could strengthen further over the next 24 hours, according to Indonesia’s weather agency. However, it is moving away from Indonesia, the agency said.

President Joko Widodo offered his condolences and urged residents to stay safe by following the instruction from field officers.



The floodwaters destroyed roads in Dili, Timor-Leste. Photograph: Antonio Sampaio/EPA

“I have ordered for disaster relief efforts to be conducted quickly and well, for example for health service assistance, availability of logistics and basic needs for the displaced and the reparation of infrastructure,” he said.

Indonesia is prone to landslides and flash floods during the rainy season, while its position on the Ring of Fire, an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific basin, also leaves it vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. In January, 40 people were killed in flash floods in the Indonesian town of Sumedang in West Java.

About 125 million Indonesians, nearly half of the country's population, live in areas at risk of landslides, according to the country's disaster agency.

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## Awards and prizes

# Screen Actors Guild awards 2021: actors of color sweep for first time

Viola Davis wins best female actor for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom while her co-star, the late Chadwick Boseman, wins best actor



Youn Yuh-jung, top right, wins outstanding performance by a female actor in a supporting role for Minari in a screengrab from the Sag awards on 4 April. Photograph: Sag Awards Handout/Reuters

Youn Yuh-jung, top right, wins outstanding performance by a female actor in a supporting role for Minari in a screengrab from the Sag awards on 4 April. Photograph: Sag Awards Handout/Reuters

*Mike Jordan and agencies*

Mon 5 Apr 2021 00.35 EDT

At the Screen Actors Guild (Sag) awards on Sunday, actors of color achieved a first when they swept the individual film categories. The Sag

ceremony is often seen as a bellwether for the Oscars, which will be handed out on 25 April.

[Oscars 'no Zoom' policy proving a headache for overseas nominees](#)

[Read more](#)

At the Sag awards, Viola Davis won best female actor for the title role in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom while her co-star, the late [Chadwick Boseman](#), won best male actor for his portrayal of trumpet player Levee Green, his final film role before his death in August last year.

Also announced as winners were the British actor Daniel Kaluuya, best male supporting actor as Fred Hampton in Judas and the Black Messiah, and Youn Yuh-jung, best female supporting actor for her portrayal of a Korean grandmother visiting her family in Arkansas, in [Minari](#).

The Oscars and other major award shows have come under increasing pressure for being dominated by white actors, writers and directors.

The 2021 Sag awards, the 27th, were also notable for recognising actors in films that not only featured ensemble casts composed mostly of people of color, but also examined the experiences of marginalized groups.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom is the story of a Black blues band's struggle to work together under the pressures of finding success. Judas and the Black Messiah looks at the period leading up to the assassination of Hampton, a Chicago-based deputy chairman of the Black Panther party targeted by the FBI. Minari considers a Korean American family's attempt to put down roots in rural America in the 1980s.





Viola Davis in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. Photograph: David Lee/AP/Netflix

Youn made history as the first Asian and first Asian woman to win an individual Sag award.

Accepting her fifth Sag award, Davis thanked playwright August Wilson when she said: "Thank you, August, for leaving a legacy for actors of color that we can relish the rest of our lives."

Kaluuya thanked Hampton "for guiding us and showing us his power, even though 52 years later". He also thanked Boseman.

In 2019, Boseman gave a memorable speech at the Sag awards. Speaking on behalf of the Black Panther cast when the film won the top award, best ensemble performance, he said: "We all know what it's like to be told that there is not a place for you to be featured. Yet you are young, gifted and Black."

This year the same award reflected an increased appreciation of diversity. Aaron Sorkin's [The Trial of the Chicago 7](#) won, but nominated films included Da 5 Bloods, One Night in Miami and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom.



Kelvin Harrison Jr appears on screen after the announcement of his Screen Actors Guild award win for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture for *The Trial of The Chicago 7*. Photograph: AP

*The Trial of the Chicago 7* is based on the prosecution of individuals for allegedly inciting famous riots at the 1968 Democratic convention. Yahya Abdul-Mateen II plays the Black Panther party co-founder Bobby Seale while Kelvin Harrison Jr plays Hampton.

Sacha Baron Cohen and Joseph Gordon-Levitt are among other cast members. Accepting the award, Frank Langella, who plays the trial judge, drew parallels between the unrest of the 1960s and protests today.

“‘God, give us leaders,’ said the Rev Martin Luther King before he was shot down in cold blood on this very date in 1968 – a profound injustice,” said Langella, citing events leading up to those dramatised in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*. “The Rev King was right. We need leaders to guide us toward hating each other less.”





Chadwick Boseman, who died of cancer in August, was posthumously voted best actor for 1920s blues drama *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* in the 2021 Sag awards. Photograph: Valérie Macon/AFP/Getty Images

The Sags are considered a bellwether for the Oscars in part because actors comprise the largest branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and Sag winners often go on to take Oscars.

In 2020, the South Korean film *Parasite* won best ensemble performance, then won best picture at the Academy Awards. All the individual Sag winners – Renée Zellweger, Brad Pitt, Laura Dern, Joaquin Phoenix – won at the Oscars too.

[Film industry celebrities boycott crisis-hit Golden Globes](#)  
[Read more](#)

*Nomadland* is considered a favorite to win best picture at this year's Oscars. A victory for the film starring Frances McDormand would be a win for the Chinese film-maker Chloé Zhao, also the first woman of color to be nominated for best director.

In television categories at the Sag awards, the ensembles of *Schitt's Creek* (comedy series) and *The Crown* (drama series) won out. Other winners

included Anya Taylor-Joy (The Queen's Gambit), Gillian Anderson (The Crown), Jason Sudeikis (Ted Lasso), Jason Bateman (Ozark) and Mark Ruffalo (I Know This Much Is True).

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## [Florida](#)

# Florida faces 'imminent' pollution catastrophe from phosphate mine pond

- Millions of gallons of toxic wastewater pumped into Tampa Bay
- Governor DeSantis at scene as '20ft wall of water' is feared

01:10

Drone footage of Florida reservoir shows toxic water leak near Tampa Bay – video

[Richard Luscombe](#) in Miami

[@richlusc](#)

Sun 4 Apr 2021 17.16 EDT

Work crews were pumping millions of gallons of [contaminated wastewater](#) into an ecologically sensitive Florida bay on Sunday, as they tried to prevent the “imminent” collapse of a storage reservoir at an old phosphate mine.

Officials in Manatee county extended an evacuation zone overnight and warned that up to 340m gallons could engulf the area in “a 20ft wall of water” if they could not repair the breach at the Piney Point reservoir in the Tampa Bay area, north of Bradenton.

Aerial images aired on local television showed [water pouring from leaks](#) in the walls of the retention pond.

Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, declared a state of emergency after officials warned of the “[imminent collapse](#)” of the pond.

He toured the scene by helicopter and said at a press conference engineers were still attempting to plug breaches in the reservoir wall with rocks and

other materials, and that other mitigation efforts included the controlled release of 35m gallons daily at Port Manatee.

He said the state's department of environmental protection (DEP) had brought in 20 new pumps.

"What we're looking at now is trying to prevent and respond to, if need be, a real catastrophic flood situation," DeSantis said. "The water quality issues that are flowing from this for us is less than the risk of everyone's health and safety, particularly folks who may live in the area."

The governor also attempted to downplay reports that the water contained traces of radioactive materials.

"The water was tested prior to discharge [and] the primary concern is nutrients," he said. "The water meets water quality standards, standards for marine waters, with the exception primarily of the phosphorus and the nitrogen."

Scott Hopes, the acting county administrator, warned that despite a low population density, the nearby area could be overwhelmed by a sudden collapse of the 77-acre pond, even though discharges had lessened the quantity of remaining water.

"What if we should have a full breach? We're down to about 340m gallons that could breach in totality in a period of minutes, and the models for less than an hour are as high as a 20ft wall of water.

"So if you're in an evacuation area and you have not heeded that you need to think twice and follow the orders."

Officials widened the evacuation zone late on Saturday from a dozen or so properties to more than 300 houses. The Tampa Bay Times interviewed some residents who were [refusing to leave](#).

A local jail a mile away from the leaky pond was not being evacuated, but officials were moving people and staff to the second story and putting sandbags on the ground floor. Hopes said models showed the area could be

covered with between 1ft to 5ft of water, and the second floor is 10ft above ground.

County officials said well water remained unaffected and there was no threat to Lake Manatee, the area's primary source of drinking water.



Governor Ron DeSantis tours the area over Piney Point. Photograph: twitter/AFP/Getty Images

The pond at the abandoned phosphate mine sits in a stack of phosphogypsum, a radioactive waste product from fertiliser manufacturing. The pond contains small amounts of naturally occurring radium and uranium. The stacks can also release large concentrations of radon gas.

Nikki Fried, the Florida agriculture commissioner and the only elected Democrat in statewide office, warned of an “environmental catastrophe” and called on DeSantis – who described the toxic water as “[mixed saltwater](#)” in a tweet announcing the state of emergency – to hold an emergency cabinet meeting.

“Floridians were evacuated from their homes on Easter weekend. 480m gallons of toxic wastewater could end up in Tampa Bay – this might become an environmental catastrophe,” [she said on Twitter](#).

Environmental protection groups warned that more pollutants in Tampa Bay would heighten the risk to wildlife from toxic red tide algae blooms.

“Phosphate companies have had over 50 years to figure out a way to dispose of the radioactive gypsum wastes,” the activist group Mana-Sota 88 said. “At the present time there are no federal, state or local regulations requiring the industry to make final disposition of phosphogypsum wastes in an environmentally acceptable manner.”

In a statement, the group added: “The current crisis can be traced back to the absurd 2006 decision to allow dredged material from Port Manatee to be placed into one of the gyp stacks at Piney Point, something the stack was never designed for and should have never been allowed.”

At the Sunday press conference, Hopes said the long-term objective would be to entirely pump out the three reservoirs on the site and fill them in. Later in the day, he said the amount of water left in the reservoir was now below 300m gallons. The county commission said it was more comfortable than it had been, though a catastrophic collapse was still a possibility.

Hopes also said: “This could have been resolved over two decades ago.”

The owner of Piney Point, HRK Holdings, bought the site after it was abandoned by the Mulberry Corporation, which operated the phosphate plant for more than 40 years. As long ago as 2003, [the Sarasota Herald Tribune reported](#), reservoir walls were crumbling. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) previously authorized the dumping of hundreds of millions of gallons of toxic water into the Gulf of Mexico.

At a meeting of the Manatee commission on Thursday, called after the seriousness of the new leak became apparent, engineers pointed to the deterioration of the pond’s decades-old plastic liner.

“The condition of the liner is not particularly great,” Mike Kelley, an engineer commissioned by HRK Holdings, told the meeting, [the Times reported](#). “It’s old. There were some installation issues. There’s a long-documented history of that liner system having issues.”

The newspaper inspected records and found that staff documented small holes or weaknesses in plastic seams above the water line in July, October and December 2020.

On Sunday, DeSantis said HRK would be held accountable.

*The Associated Press contributed reporting*

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