



### **e-UPDATE #96 - 21.03.21**

Welcome to this update.

At the time of writing, I hope that at least half of those receiving this will by now have had their vaccination. Yesterday was the UK's biggest vaccination day yet, with 873,784 doses administered - the equivalent of vaccinating the entire population of Cheltenham seven times over. A huge thank you, as ever, for all those involved - particularly the expert team at Cheltenham East Fire Station. They've put in a marathon shift this week.

There are updates below on new measures being taken to **reduce burglaries** in the county - as well as updates on the rollout in Cheltenham of **gigabit broadband**, and the latest on **Junction 10 of the M5**.

There's information too on what the [Budget](#) means for Cheltenham, and a breakdown of where the [£300m](#) of Government pandemic support for Cheltenham is going. Local parents may be interested in the news on the [£30m Leckhampton school](#), with the judicial review into its planning permission being withdrawn.

Local Covid hero, [Caron Sayner](#), landlady of the Kemble Brewery Inn, is also featured for her work serving our community during lockdown

Finally, I've been appointed (temporarily whilst my predecessor fills in as Solicitor General) [Prisons and Probation](#) Minister. There's a summary of my first session at the despatch box in the new role.

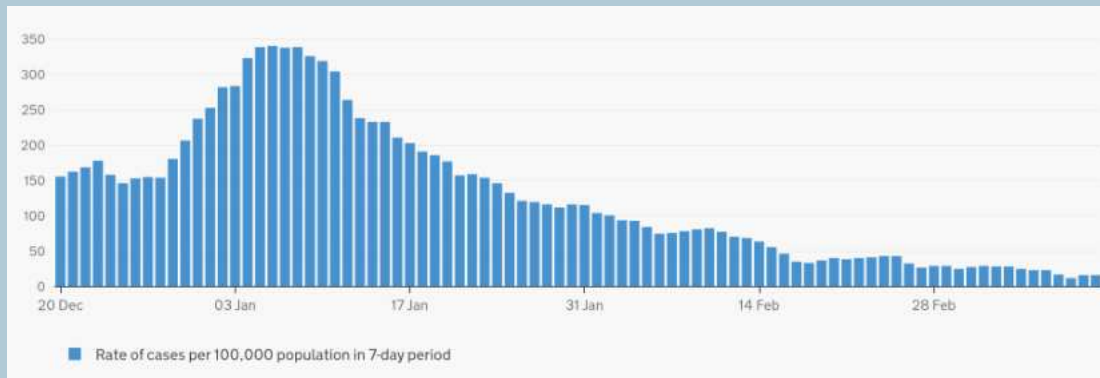
Thank you for reading.

Best wishes,

**Alex Chalk MP**

*In line with data protection regulations, Alex Chalk's office processes constituents' data for policy and casework purposes under the lawful basis of public task. In instances where this lawful basis is not sufficient and explicit consent is required, a member of staff will get in touch with you to establish consent. You can find the full privacy notice on Alex's website [HERE](#)*

## COVID UPDATE



[7-day rate of cases per 100,000 in Cheltenham from late December to present. At 6 Jan, this peaked at 338.8. This has now declined to 19.8, as at 17 Mar. Source: DHSC]

### **COVID Hospital Patients:**

As at 19 March, there are 11 COVID positive patients in Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHFT), including one patient on a mechanical ventilator.

### **Cases in CHELTENHAM:**

Cases in last 7 days: 23 (w/e 17 March).

Rate per 100,000: 19.8 per 100,000 (w/e 17 March).

Total cases: 3,678 (17 March).

### **Cases in GLOUCESTERSHIRE:**

Cases in last 7 days: 112 (w/e 17 March).

Rate per 100,000: 17.6 (w/e 24 Feb).

Total cases: 22,094 (17 March).

### **Gloucestershire Death Registrations Mentioning COVID-19:**

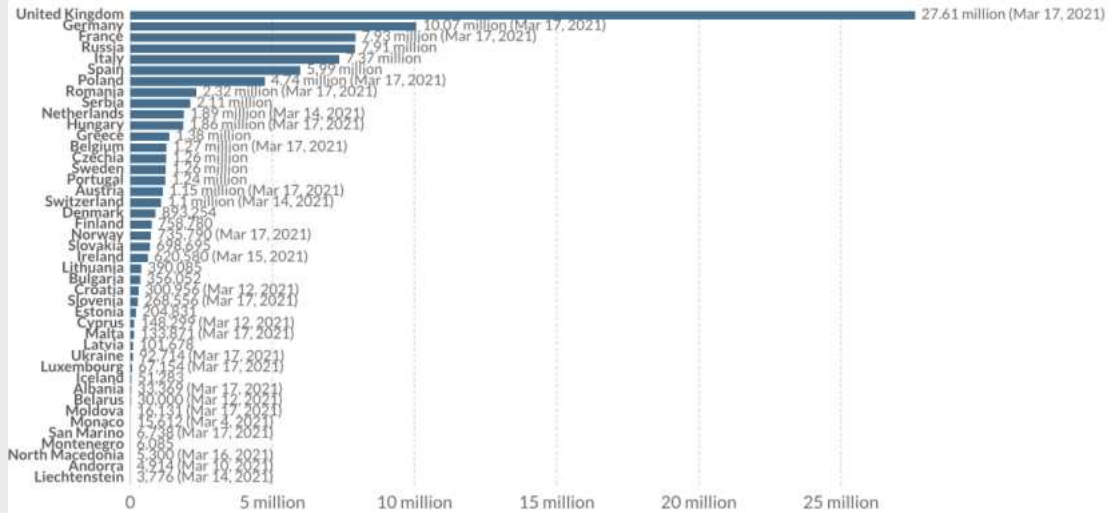
3 in last 7 days (w/e 17 March).

## VACCINATION UPDATE:

### COVID-19 vaccine doses administered, Mar 18, 2021

Total number of vaccination doses administered. This is counted as a single dose, and may not equal the total number of people vaccinated, depending on the specific dose regime (e.g. people receive multiple doses).

Our World  
in Data



[Source: World in Data. As at 19 March. Click for more info].

### **UK DELIVERS 25.7M FIRST DOSES AND 1.9M SECOND DOSES**

In the UK, over 25m people had received their first dose of the vaccine, and close to 2m their second dose.

In Gloucestershire, over 262,000 people in the top priority groups have had their first dose of the vaccine.



**IMPORTANT UPDATE: YOUR GP WILL OFFER A LOCAL JOB IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO TRAVEL OUT OF COUNTY**

After several constituents reported to Alex that they are being directed to vaccination hubs as far away as Bristol or Malvern, Alex wrote to Professor Steve Hams, responsible for Gloucestershire's COVID-19 vaccination programme, to seek clarification.

Prof Hams responded confirming that Cheltenham's GP-led primary care networks are moving rapidly through the priority cohorts, and that those who choose not to travel out of county will be contacted by GP services, and have the opportunity to book their vaccination at Cheltenham East Fire Station.

It is worth noting that those who get their first jab out-of-county will need to travel back for their second.

---

**MOJ UPDATE: ALEX APPOINTED PRISONS MINISTER**

---



### **ALEX TAKES ON PRISONS AND PROBATION ROLE**

Alex has been appointed Prisons and Probation Minister. His new portfolio includes:

- Prison operations, policy, reform and industrial relations
- Probation services, policy, reform and industrial relations
- Public protection (including Parole Board, Imprisonment for Public Protection and Serious Further Offences)
- Offender health
- Female offenders
- Transgender offenders
- Veteran offenders
- Offender rehabilitation and release
- Extremism
- Release On Temporary License and Home Detention Curfew
- Youth Justice
- Mental capacity and the Office of the Public Guardian
- Race Disparity in the Justice System
- Parliamentary Minister (scrutinising Statutory Instruments)

Alex said:

*"Prisons is an area that Cheltenham MPs have long focused on. My Conservative predecessor, Sir Charles Irving MP, was a notable campaigner. For my part, I will focus on capacity, security and education – and seeking out what Winston Churchill memorably referred to as 'the treasure in the heart of every man.'"*



[Click to watch]

### **ALEX ANSWERS QUESTIONS ON PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND PRISON SAFETY DURING FIRST SESSION IN NEW ROLE**

Alex was at the despatch box to answer questions relating to his new portfolio as Prisons and Probation Minister.

On prison safety, Alex confirmed that the Government is **investing £100 million to introduce robust safety measures** such as x-ray body scanners and phone blocking technology, as well as tools such as body-worn cameras and PAVA spray.

On prison education programmes, Alex reiterated the Government's commitment to to an enhanced prison education service, saying:

*"Education helps prisoners to boost their employability, build their self-esteem, and make a law-abiding contribution to society post release. Since April 2019, we have **invested more than £20 million in improving technology in prisons**, including investing in infrastructure that will support educational delivery."*

To watch Alex's answers in full, click the image above.

## Cheltenham MP driving forward increased protections for youngsters from abuse

ALEX Chalk has been leading work on legislation to outlaw sports coaches and faith leaders having sexual relationships with 16 and 17-year-olds in their care.

Under the current law, someone in a "position of trust" cannot engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent.

Teachers, care workers and doctors are examples of some of those on the "positions of trust" list. However sports coaches and faith leaders are not currently included on that list.

Prior to becoming a Justice Minister, Alex Chalk had raised a number of cases of alleged child abuse with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Speaking in Parliament, Alex Chalk said the Government "recognises the current law may not be sufficient" in dealing with situations in which an adult abuses their position of trust to exploit a 16 or 17-year-old and that an "exhaustive review is nearing completion".

He said: "Many of those we



heard from agreed that any change or reform of existing laws raised difficult and complicated issues.

"It is fair to say most stakeholders, however, felt a change in the law was required and I can see the merits of change here.

"It was made clear during the review that any legislative changes would also need to be bolstered by changes outside the criminal law in order to ensure an effective overall

approach to safeguarding young people.

"Let me conclude, however, by saying this; the Government is very sympathetic to concerns raised throughout the process, not just sympathetic, and we agree it requires a clear, considered and decisive response.

"We're continuing to look at how the law might be strengthened in this area, and I hope to set out our plans very shortly."

[Alex's work was reported on by the Cheltenham Post].

### **ALEX'S WORK TO TIGHTEN LAW ON THOSE IN POSITIONS OF TRUST WILL PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHELTENHAM**

Alex's recent work in Parliament to tighten the law on relationships between children and those in positions of trust will protect young people from predators in Cheltenham and across the country.

Under current legislation, it is an offence for those defined as in 'positions of trust' to engage in a sexual relationship with those in their care aged under 18. Those in these positions include teachers, doctors, and care workers.

However, concerns had been raised in Parliament and society more widely that this definition was too narrow, and that an extension was required to include **a wider range of relationships where adults held a position of influence or power over 16 and 17 year olds.**

New legislation will expand the definition to include sports coaches and religious leaders.

Alex said:

*"As Cheltenham's MP I have heard from constituents about this, and in the past wrote to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to call on them to consider allegations about historic abuse by faith leaders.*

*"I have also listened to concerns from sports governing bodies, including British Gymnastics, Swim England and British Athletics, about the risk posed by sexual predators like Barry Bennell, who used his position of trust as a sports coach to abuse young players in his care.*

*"Sport should be a wholly positive experience. These laws draw a clear line in the sand that coaches must not have relationships with children they have a position of authority over, whether that's in a pool, on a pitch or a court.*

*"I'm delighted that position has been welcomed by the NSPCC."*

## Burglars now to be **tagged** on release from prison.



### **ALEX ANNOUNCES THAT NEW MOJ SCHEME TO TAG BURGLARS WILL BE COMING TO GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

Alex is helping to roll out a new scheme to tackle reoffending by burglars, and Gloucestershire has been chosen as one of the first areas in the country to take part in the programme. They are among six forces which will **fit GPS tags to convicted burglars following their release from prison**, to track whether they have been in the vicinity of recent robberies.

Currently, more than half of those convicted of theft and burglary go on to reoffend within a year. This new world-first scheme aims to cut reoffending, with burglars, robbers and thieves that have served a prison sentence of a year or more being fitted



with a tag on release. This will track their whereabouts by GPS satellites 24 hours a day for up to 12 months. Gloucestershire Police will start monitoring tagged offenders from April 12.

Alex said:

*"Burglary is a vile crime, which very often leaves victims feeling traumatised and violated. I know from speaking to people in Cheltenham the impact it can have.*

*So it's really positive news that here in Gloucestershire burglars, thieves and robbers released from prison will now be fitted with GPS tags in a landmark new Ministry of Justice scheme to crack down on neighbourhood criminals."*

---

## CHELtenham UPDATES:

---

## INVESTMENT UPDATE:

---

CityFibre

# Gigabit-speed broadband coming to Cheltenham!

Find out more:  
[cityfibre.com/your-street](https://cityfibre.com/your-street)



## **CHELTENHAM GETS £30M INVESTMENT IN FULL FIBRE BROADBAND**

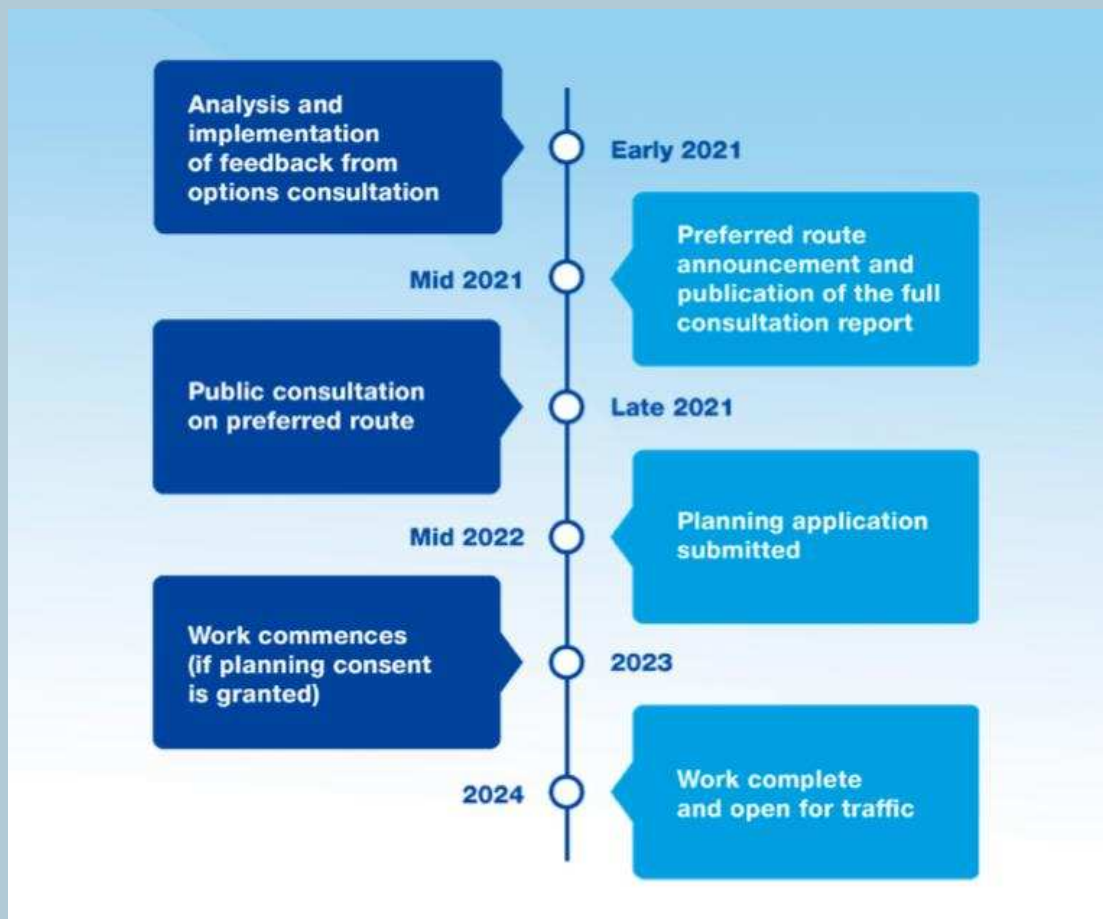
CityFibre has named Cheltenham as the next UK town in line for a £30 million investment in its digital infrastructure – a move that will see it become one of the country's best-connected communities.

Work is set to begin next month on a brand new town-wide ultrafast broadband network for Cheltenham. **It will bring full fibre connectivity – the best technology for the job – within reach of every home and business in Cheltenham.**

Full fibre networks, unlike many of the copper-based 'fibre broadband' services available today, use 100% fibre optic cables to carry data at light speed all the way from the home to the point of connection. This gives users speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps for upload and download, near limitless bandwidth and connectivity users can depend on.

Alex said:

*“Securing ultrafast broadband for Cheltenham has long been a key personal priority, and I am delighted to see this latest investment. Having been briefed by CityFibre, I'm assured this will bring full fibre connectivity within reach of every local home and business. It will help us build back better, and positions Cheltenham as an even better place to live, work and visit.”*



[Timeline on the plans to upgrade J10].

### **TIMELINE ANNOUNCED ON M5 JUNCTION 10 UPGRADE**

Last year, the **Government awarded £219 million to Gloucestershire, to upgrade Junction 10 of the M5**, to provide access from the motorway both northbound and southbound into Cheltenham. This will open up land for housing and employment in the north and west of Cheltenham, including for the planned **Cyber Park**, providing a boost to the local economy.

Gloucestershire County Council have now released a timeline on when each stage of the upgrade is expected. They have also released a report on the consultation held at the end of 2020 on the scheme options.

View their report on the consultation [HERE](#).

A full public consultation report will be published alongside the **Preferred Route Announcement in mid-2021**, demonstrating how consultation feedback has informed the option choice for the improvements to Junction 10.



[How the Gloucester-Cheltenham cycleway could look].

### **PLANS REVEALED FOR NEW CYCLEWAY TO LINK GLOUCESTER TO CHELTENHAM**

Plans have been revealed for a cycleway between Gloucester and Cheltenham. The new route, part of Gloucestershire County Council's wider transport improvements works, **will link Gloucester with the cycling and walking improvements** currently under construction as part of the £22 million West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme.

As mentioned in previous updates, Alex secured the £22m funding back in 2018 after lobbying then Communities Minister Sajid Javid, to deliver infrastructure improvements to help open up land for a cyber park in the west of Cheltenham. This latest plan for a **segregated cycleway** will allow those from Gloucester to safely commute into the cyber park via bicycle.

See below planned route for the new cycleway:



Find out more [HERE](#).

#### HEALTHCARE:



#### **ALEX WELCOMES DECISION TO PROVIDE FREE PARKING FOR LOCAL NHS WORKERS PROVIDING HOME VACCINATIONS**

Alex has campaigned for cheaper parking for NHS staff, including at Cheltenham General Hospital where he has raised the issue with the Trust leadership.

So he was delighted that NHS staff delivering the COVID-19 vaccine to vulnerable people at home will be able to park for free, after the county council expanded its parking permits.

The county council is now offering two types of on-street free parking permits for NHS workers:

- On-street NHS Permit Holder Only bays: located near Cheltenham General Hospital
- NHS Home Vaccination On Street Parking Permits: for use in resident parking zones.

Find out more [HERE](#).

## SCHOOLS:



[Alex pictured pre-COVID, supporting a campaign for the new school.]

**LECKHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE: JUDICIAL REVIEW OF PLANNING**

### **PERMISSION HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN**

Alex has received confirmation that the applicant has withdrawn the judicial review for the new school at Leckhampton. The £30m investment in the future of Cheltenham's young people will now progress as planned.

Click [HERE](#) to visit the new school's website and find out more.



### **PLANS TO SHUT LAKESIDE SCHOOL FOR POLLING DAY ARE SHELVED AFTER COMMUNITY BACKLASH**

After being made aware by many concerned parents of a plan to close Lakeside Primary School on polling day for the local elections, Alex wrote to the local council calling on them to reconsider.

Alex was pleased that CBC were able to find a solution, which means Lakeside students will not have to miss school.

Alex said:

*"I am grateful to Head Teacher Ben Jordan, the Lakeside team and the school Governors who worked hard to make the case for the school to stay open. As I have said previously, after everything that we have been through over the past year, losing a precious school day was the last thing Lakeside pupils, their families and the school needed."*

*I would also like to thank the civil servants at Cheltenham Borough Council for working to find an alternative solution. Common sense prevailed."*

## **TREASURY SUPPORT FOR CHELTENHAM:**

### **TOTAL COVID SUPPORT FOR CHELTENHAM NOW TOPS £300M**

The Chancellor's Budget means that total funding for Cheltenham to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic now exceeds £300 million (including loans). A summary of the funding packages for Cheltenham are below:

- £42m in **grants** for small businesses such as pubs, hairdressers, shops and cafes
- £29.1m in SEISS grants for 3,700 **self-employed** workers
- An estimated £74m for the **furlough** scheme
- An estimated £10.8m for **Restart Grants**
- £119m in guarantees on 2,348 Government-backed **loans**
- £30m for 12-month **rates relief** for retail/hospitality/leisure industry
- An extra c.£7.5m for another 3-month rates relief to June 2022
- Plus c.£15m for two-thirds business rate cut until April 2022
- £2.5m to support Cheltenham's **arts institutions**, including the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham Trust and the Cheltenham Festivals
- £321k for Cheltenham **community groups**, including 4<sup>th</sup> Cheltenham Boys Brigade, Family Space in Hesters Way, and Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre.
- £220K for **Leisure at Cheltenham** and the Prince of Wales Stadium
- Over £1m for discounted meals in the **Eat Out to Help Out** Scheme;
- £1.8m in other additional funding assigned to Cheltenham Borough Council.

The above **totals around £332m.**

There has also been an extension of the initial six-month VAT cut to 5% for hospitality, now due to last until the end of September, meaning an approximate **£18m tax cut** for Cheltenham businesses. Moreover, around £3.5m has been pumped into welfare support in Cheltenham, boosting Universal Credit by £20 a week for those in need.

As well as this, Cheltenham has benefitted from a share of **almost £60m in funding assigned to Gloucestershire County Council** to tackle COVID-19.





### **WHAT THE CHANCELLOR'S BUDGET MEANS FOR CHELTENHAM:**

Alex welcomed the Chancellor's extension of many key COVID support measures, and the creation of new ones, and the implications for individuals and businesses in Cheltenham. These include:

**Furlough scheme extended until the end of September:** the scheme will continue to safeguard local jobs. So far 15,400 Cheltenham employees have been furloughed since the start of the pandemic.

**Support for the self-employed extended until the end of September:** the SEISS has also been widened to allow 2019-20 tax returns to be submitted, enabling newly self-employed people in Cheltenham to apply.

**Restart Grants for businesses:** around 900 Cheltenham businesses are expected to receive grants of up to £18,000. These include non-essential shops, pubs, restaurants, gyms, salons, and other businesses.

**New Loan Recovery Scheme:** this new scheme will allow businesses of all sizes to borrow between £25,000-£10m, with the Government guaranteeing 80% of the finance.

**5% VAT cut for hospitality extended until the end of September:** this tax cut for hospitality business saved the average Cheltenham household around £160 in its first six months. This cut now been extended for a further nine, lasting until the end of September. Even then it won't jump back to 20%, but will be eased up to 12.5% until the end of March 2022.

**Business rates 100% holiday extended until June 2021:** all Cheltenham businesses in retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will benefit from this extension. For the remaining

nine months of the year up to April 2022, their business rates will be cut by two-thirds.

Alex said:

*"The extension of the business rates holiday will make a particular difference for shops, pubs, gyms and personal care businesses in Cheltenham. Taken together with grants of up to £18,000, this tax break will help the businesses we know and love survive and bounce back."*



#### **WHY THE BUDGET IS GOOD NEWS FOR 'SILICON SPA' VISION FOR CHELTENHAM:**

Tech Nation have published an [article](#) outlining how some of the measures the Chancellor announced will drive expansion of the UK's tech industry, meaning great news for Cheltenham's cyber start-ups. These businesses often face challenges 'scaling up', but the measures announced will support them during this process and help them grow.

#### **Some of the measures to support tech scale-ups include:**

**New visa for tech talent:** a new elite, points-based visa route will be rolled out, including a fast-track scheme specifically for tech scaleups, allowing UK businesses to attract the best and brightest in the industry.

**£375 million to match private investment in innovation:** the UK-wide 'Future Fund: Breakthrough' is a £375m scheme to encourage private investors to co-invest with the Government in high-growth, innovative firms.

**Boosting digital skills:** the Chancellor has made billions in funding available for a number of training programmes to encourage 'reskilling'. These include:

- A new **£2.9 billion Restart Scheme** to provide tailored support to over 1 million unemployed people and help them find work
- The **Kickstart Scheme**, which provides fully-subsidised jobs for young people at risk of long-term unemployment (120,000 vacancies have been created so far)
- The **Lifestyle Skills Guarantee**, which provides fully-funded courses for adults to build their skillset, including their digital skills.

Alex said:

*"The Chancellor's Budget is so exciting for Cheltenham. Not only is money being made available to ensure businesses in all sectors bounce back from the pandemic, but the importance of the tech sector in creating jobs and prosperity has been recognised.*

*"Giving tech start-ups the tools they need to thrive and scale-up will ensure that the work so far to establish Cheltenham as a national cyber hub is built upon, and that Cheltenham can look forward to a bright and hi-tech future".*

**ALSO IN CHELTENHAM:**



**CHELTENHAM PLAYHOUSE SEEKS VIEWS ON FUTURE PLANS**

The Cheltenham Playhouse is seeking the public's views about its future activities as it plans its post-COVID recovery. This comes after Alex has supported efforts to secure a government grant to support the theatre during the pandemic.

To take part in the Adult Survey click [HERE](#). For the Youth Survey, click [HERE](#).

### **A SPRUCE-UP FOR CHELTENHAM SPA STATION SIGN**

After several constituents made Alex aware that the **sign at Cheltenham Spa Railway Station was in a state of disrepair**, Alex got straight onto GWR and pressed for it to be repaired.

The grot-spot is no more!

See the **before and after** pictures below:





**ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE, ALEX HAS:**

- Held a virtual constituency **surgey with local constituents**
- Hosted a **Q&A with students** from the University of Gloucestershire's School of Health and Social Care.

**Received Briefings from:**

- NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group about the **vaccine rollout** in Cheltenham
- **Vaccines Minister** Nadhim Zahawi
- **Health Secretary** Matt Hancock, regarding proposals for a Health and Care Bill to ensure the NHS is able to offer the best possible service to patients.

**Held Talks with:**

- **Clean Air Cheltenham**, to discuss decarbonising transport in town
  - The **developer MF Freeman**, to investigate Cheltenham Borough Council's decision to hand back a £3m government grant after joint plans for new homes on the Portland Street Car Park site fell through.
-

## ALEX'S MINISTERIAL ROUND-UP

### WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS:

Since the last update, Alex has answered **42** Written Parliamentary Questions. Some of the topics raised included accommodation provision for vulnerable women leaving prison, and young people subjected to forced marriage.

See below some examples:

**Q. To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to make permanent the accommodation provision for vulnerable women leaving prison.**

Alex responded:

*"We are **investing more than £20m in supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation**. Individuals released from prison will be provided up to 12 weeks of temporary accommodation and will be supported into long-term settled accommodation before the end of that 12-week period. The service will support around 3,000 offenders in its first year and will be commencing in Summer. It will be in operation during the next financial year 2021-22, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally, though the Spending Review 2021 will set out the approach for future years.*

*The service will **take account of the needs of women**, including those with complex needs and accommodation provision will be dedicated to single gender usage as required. Community Offender Managers, working together with local partners, will be responsible for ensuring that vulnerable female prison leavers with complex needs receive appropriate support and are provided with housing beyond the 12 weeks emergency accommodation.*

*To support its COVID-19 response, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPT) to help find accommodation for offenders upon release. HMPPS are considering how the regional HPTs might be a feature of the future landscape going forward."*

**Q. To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to review the age of consent for marriage; and what steps is he taking to help protect young people from coercion and forced marriage.**

Alex responded:

*"Forced marriage, whatever the age, was made an offence in 2014. Since 2017, lifelong anonymity has been available to victims of forced marriage.*

*Evidence shows that the number of people marrying in England and Wales at 16 or 17 has been in decline over the years. In 2017, the latest year for which statistics are available, 183 of the people entering 235,910 opposite sex marriages did so at those ages.*

*Primary legislation would be required to raise the marriageable age to 18 and thereby to remove the existing requirement for parental or judicial consent at 16 or 17. The Government continues to listen carefully to the debate on the legal age of marriage. My noble friend Lord Wolfson, in his new role as Minister for family justice, will arrange to meet with my Honourable friend, the member for Mid Derbyshire, to discuss her Private Members' Bill on these important issues."*

See them all in full [HERE](#).



#### **NEW BILL MEANS TOUGHER SENTENCES FOR WAR MEMORIAL VANDALS**

Following a debate in Parliament in which Alex promised to toughen law on those desecrating war memorials ([SEE HERE](#)), Alex was pleased that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (PCSC Bill) includes new laws to deliver that.

Under the current law, cases of criminal damage with a value less than £5,000 must be tried in the Magistrates' Court and carry a maximum penalty of three months' imprisonment or a £2,500 fine. **The Bill will strengthen the law by removing the consideration of monetary value** which would otherwise determine venue and limit sentencing powers.

Alex said:

*"While incidences of damage to memorials are typically of low monetary value, they can cause serious pain and distress. In Cheltenham we have a profound collective respect for our memorials which record the deaths of over 1,000 local men in World War I alone. Damage to them would be felt by our whole community. I'm delighted that in the Ministry of Justice we have been able to bring this to Parliament."*

# SURVEY REOPENED:

The government wants **your views**  
on tackling **Violence Against  
Women & Girls.**

[GOV.UK/HOMEOFFICE/VAWG-BE-HEARD](https://gov.uk/homeoffice/vawg-be-heard)

## **HAVE YOUR SAY ON TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

In light of the appalling murder of Sarah Everard, as Justice Minister Alex was pleased to see the Home Secretary reopen the Government's survey on its strategy for tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Alex said:

*"Later this year the Government is due to publish its latest VAWG strategy. The public survey had closed, but in light of the appalling and upsetting murder of Sarah Everard it has been reopened. I hope people in Cheltenham (men and women) will have their say."*

Have your say [HERE](https://gov.uk/homeoffice/vawg-be-heard).

---

**IN THE MEDIA**



## **SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:**

Alex has written three articles for the Gloucestershire Echo, in which he:

1. Underlined the need for new measures to **make Cheltenham's streets safer**, following the appalling murder of Sarah Everard. [READ HERE.](#)
2. Announced measures to protect young people from sexual predators. [READ HERE.](#)
3. Welcomed progress on the **£22m works to transform west Cheltenham's** transport network in advance of developing the new Cyber Park. [READ HERE.](#)

Alex's work to secure Changing Places accessible toilets in Pittville Park has also been highlighted by the Cheltenham Post:

## **More investment in disabled toilets**

DISABLED people in Cheltenham could benefit from greater access to restroom facilities as the government announces a new £30 million fund to increase the number of Changing Places toilets across England.

Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for people who cannot use standard disabled toilets, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers. One Changing Places toilet was recently installed in Pittville Park following a Parliamentary intervention by Cheltenham MP Alex Chalk. He said: "I took the issue of disabled toilet provision up with ministers after I visited the Phoenix Centre on Winchcomb Street to hear from people with disabilities about the importance of disabled toilet facilities in the town centre. I also highlighted the difficulties that many disabled people encounter when visiting the town socially, including the restrictions faced by those with assistance dogs. "Following that,

Gloucestershire County Council awarded £88,000 for the erection of a specialised "Changing Places" disabled toilet in Pittville Park.

"This is a great opportunity to improve even more facilities across Cheltenham. "I'm determined that Cheltenham should be a disabled-friendly and accessible town. I hosted Cheltenham's first ever Disability Confident Fair at St Vincent's and St George's back in 2016.

"I was encouraged that so many local businesses are keen to recruit those with disabilities. Employment levels are at an all-time high. But I'm under no illusions how much remains to be done. Improving toilet facilities and access is another important element in supporting our disabled community to work and socialise."

Councils will now be invited to "opt in" to bid for a proportion of the £30 million funding so they can install facilities in their communities and boost the number of Changing Place

toilets in existing buildings, such as leisure and sports, cinemas, and arts and tourism venues.

Kerry Thompson, Changing Places campaigner, said:

"The biggest challenge I face when going anywhere outside my home is locating a Changing Places facility. They really do make a world of difference when planning days out so this announcement will open up a whole new world for the hundreds of thousands of people who rely on them. This wouldn't have been possible without support from Muscular Dystrophy UK, co-chairs of the Changing Places Consortium. "Knowing I have access to a Changing Places toilet lets me enjoy myself without having to worry about finding an accessible facility that can accommodate my needs."

The programme will be delivered in partnership with the charity Muscular Dystrophy UK, co-chairs of the Changing Places Consortium, who will



provide advice to support councils in their delivery. Robert Burley, Director of Campaigns, Care and Support at Muscular Dystrophy UK, said: "The announcement of £30 million-worth of funding to improve facilities in existing buildings is fantastic news for disabled people across England who need Changing Places toilets.

"Everyone has the right to use a public toilet when they need to, and these accessible toilets vastly improve a person's independence and make planning days out much easier.

"This is a big step towards tackling the exclusion that many disabled people, including those with muscle-wasting conditions, experience when they are out and about."

## **CHELTENHAM COVID HEROES:**



**CARON SAYNER - LANDLADY OF THE KEMBLE BREWERY INN - HAS BEEN USING HER PUB TO HELP THOSE IN NEED DURING LOCKDOWN**

Caron Sayner, licensee of The Kemble Brewery Inn, has received a 'Lockdown Hero' award from Cheltenham CAMRA, for exceptional service to the community.

Despite only being open from 6 October to 4 November since the March 2020 lockdown, Caron has continued to cook and deliver hot meals every Saturday. Although the pub is closed, and cannot supply takeaway beer directly from the pub, Caron also takes orders and delivers beer to her locals, at cost price.

Despite the financial losses from the long shutdown and having to continue to pay a reduced rent to her pub company, **Caron uses the income from food sales to help those in need.** Since the second lockdown onwards Caron has provided free 'school meals' to families in need and also to local people who are isolated – even delivering shopping for people when she is 'tipped off' by her pub regulars and neighbours.

On Christmas Day, Caron cooked and delivered 72 Christmas meals to people who

were in need, or who were spending Christmas on their own.

Meals can be ordered for collection or delivery every Saturday.  
See [www.facebook.com/thekemble](https://www.facebook.com/thekemble) for details.

## CHELTENHAM BOUNCEBACK:



In each update, Alex will be featuring Cheltenham businesses who are bouncing back from the pandemic. It is Alex's goal to showcase local shops, hospitality businesses, and events in Cheltenham, when restrictions allow. Each update will highlight a different featured business.

**Would you like your business featured? Email Alex on [alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk).**



**FEATURED BUSINESS: SANDFORD PARKS LIDO**

**CHELTENHAM'S LIDO SET TO REOPEN 1 MAY - GET YOUR SEASON TICKET NOW!**

Sandford Parks Lido recently announced that it will reopen on 1 May, and plans to remain open until 8 October for the summer season. Season tickets went on sale from 15 March. Get your early bird season ticket [HERE](#).

---

**COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD**

---



The No Child Left Behind #LaptopsForLearning campaign has so far raised £9,000 and collected 45 laptops to distribute to children in Cheltenham schools. Find out more [HERE](#).



Mental health charity TIC+ have published a report into the impact of the pandemic on children, to raise awareness amongst teachers and parents. See [HERE](#).



Sustainability charity Severn Wye have launched a survey for young people in Cheltenham about their views on climate change, and how they might like to get involved in campaigning. See more [HERE](#).



The University of Gloucestershire have launched resources on equality and diversity issues, as they work to create an inclusive environment. See more [HERE](#).



*Copyright © 2021 Alex Chalk MP, All rights reserved.*

You have received this email as someone who has opted in to receive these updates. I like to keep constituents updated on my work for Cheltenham with regular email updates. If you would like to stop receiving these emails, please click 'UNSUBSCRIBE' at the top or bottom of this email or reply and ask to be removed from the list. In line with GDPR guidelines regarding data protection, I will continue to send you these updates unless you request to be removed.

**Our mailing address is:**

Alex Chalk MP

Office 11, Unit 22 Lansdown Industrial Estate

Gloucester Road

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 8PL

United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).