



e-UPDATE #91 - 6.12.20

Welcome to this latest update.

It was really good to be out and about in Cheltenham this weekend, and see the town reopening after the lockdown. I know many will have been out supporting our local traders on **Small Business Saturday**.

There are updates below about COVID of course ([click here](#)) but also about the many other important things affecting our town - such as the local NHSTrust's 'Fit for the Future' engagement about the planned organisation of the county's healthcare. Pamphlets have been dropping through Cheltenham letterboxes, and I was pleased to see a clear written commitment to the future of Cheltenham's A&E (see a copy of the relevant section below if you haven't received yours yet).

There are updates too on further **multi-million pound investment** into the town ([click here](#)), including the site near the Minster - but also in the form of funding for dozens of local community groups, ranging from the 4th Cheltenham Boys Brigade to the Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Network. I also welcome the major national boost to defence and cyber-security spending which is good news for Cheltenham. And we're getting funding for 1,000 trees!

It has been a busy time in the Ministry of Justice (for the full round-up [click here](#)). As Coroners minister, I approved the appointment of a coroner for the inquest into the death of Dawn Sturgess following the **Salisbury novichok poisoning**. I also announced an updated Victims' Code, which sets out for the first time twelve core rights that complainants and witnesses can expect when they make an allegation of crime.

It was good too as Victims minister to be able to announce funding of a further £11m support for **domestic abuse organisations** which sadly are facing a surge in demand.

This remains a hugely tough time I realise; but with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine being rolled out from next week, the clouds are, slowly, beginning to break.

Thank you, as ever, for reading.

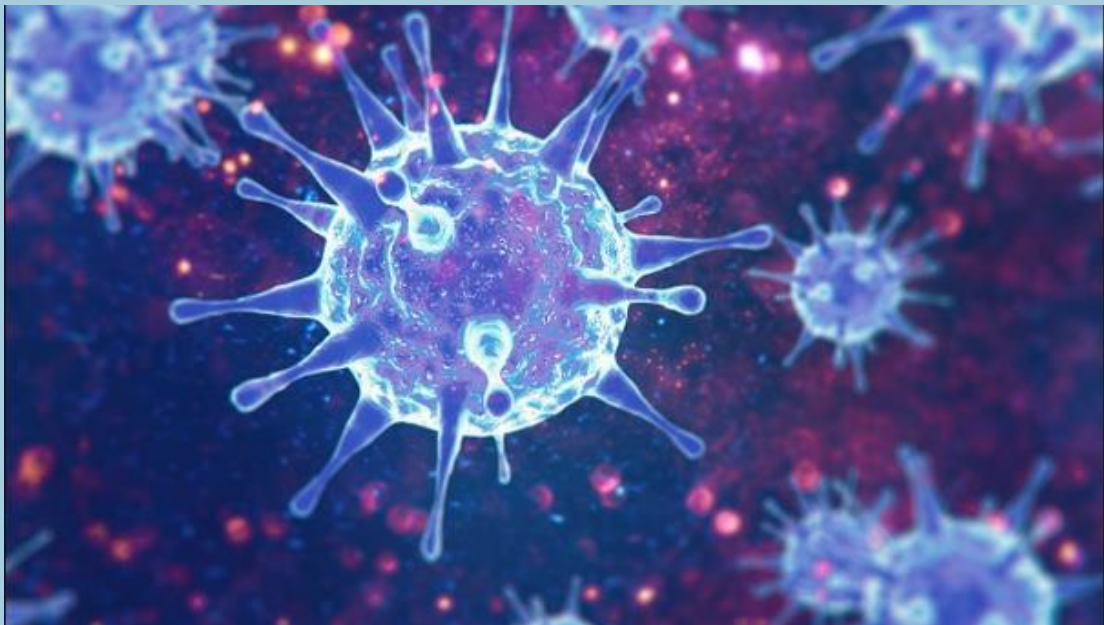
Best wishes,



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](#)

CHELTENHAM COVID UPDATE



Summary:

There are 137 COVID-19 in-patients in Gloucestershire hospital beds (as at Friday 4 Dec), down from 166 on 30 November. The Critical Care Unit is operating at full capacity. The rate per 100,000 peaked at around 170 per 100,000 (20 per 100,000 is the

approximate threshold for an international travel ban) and is now declining.

Total number of cases in the county: 8,113 (2 Dec). 584 people tested positive in the 7 days up to 1 Dec.

Total number of cases in Cheltenham: 1583 (2 Dec). 111 people tested positive in the 7 days up to 1 Dec.

Death registrations mentioning COVID-19: 19 in last 7 days (w/e 2 Dec).

Care homes cases: Between 8 and 21 November, there were 81 staff cases in 40 care homes, and 24 residents cases in 10 care homes.

South West R value: between **0.9 and 1.1**.

Testing in Gloucestershire: as of 1 Dec, 7 day Pillar 2 (ie available to the public, as opposed to NHS staff who use a Pillar 1 site) testing was at 13,140, down from the previous week of 14,274.

Local Mobile Testing Unit location: University Of Gloucestershire, Entrance 3, Park Campus, The Park, Cheltenham, GL50 2RH (4-9 December).

For Alex's post about the tiering system vote, please go to his FB page [here](#).

IN CHELTENHAM, ALEX HAS:



PAID TRIBUTE TO CHELTENHAM'S FALLEN ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Alex laid a wreath to honour those who fought for our country, in a socially-distanced ceremony on Remembrance Sunday.

Alex said:

"It was a subdued, but no less poignant, ceremony in Cheltenham. It was so important that this collective act of remembrance for Cheltenham's war dead went ahead, despite the pandemic. Over a thousand men from Cheltenham died for our country in World War One alone - hundreds more in subsequent conflicts. We will never forget their courage and sacrifice."

What Fit for the Future is not about

We know how important Cheltenham General Hospital Accident & Emergency (A&E) Department is to the people who live in the east of the county; in particular Cheltenham.

We agree it is an important part of the future for local health services. We have publicly committed to the future of the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department in Cheltenham. The service will remain consultant led and there will be no change to the opening hours.

[extract from Fit for the Future engagement documentation]

WELCOMED ASSURANCE FROM THE NHS TRUST AS PART OF THEIR 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' ENGAGEMENT THAT CHELTENHAM A&E WILL REOPEN

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust has launched an engagement exercise, asking for the public's views about the future organisation of health services in the county.

Alex has made clear that Cheltenham's A&E must be protected as part of any reorganisation - and he has been given repeated verbal and written assurances from Trust bosses to that effect.

Now those assurances have been given to the people of Cheltenham, in a booklet distributed as part of the 'Fit for the Future' engagement (see picture). **Alex has welcomed this explicit commitment.**

You can find out more about the consultation, and respond, [here](#). It's open until **17 December**.

Local campaign group **REACH** (Restore Emergency At Cheltenham Hospital) have launched their own survey about health reorganisation, which can be found [here](#).



BACKED THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S BID FOR FUNDING TO ESTABLISH WORLD LEADING CYBER RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Alex met (virtually) with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire to discuss the university's application for Government funding under the **UK Research and Innovation Strength in Places Fund**.

The 'Cyber Wales and West' team is made up of the University of Gloucestershire, the University of Bath, the University of Bristol, Cardiff University, and Airbus Defence and Space Ltd. If approved, the joint programme aims to establish a **world-leading cyber eco-system**, bringing together cybersecurity research, business, and civic leaders.

Following the meeting, **Alex met with BEIS Minister Amanda Solloway**, to follow up directly and press the case for UGlos' application. Getting this bid approved would allow the university to play a key role in the new cyber park in Cheltenham.



(Pictured: Alex taking part in a previous Cheltenham YMCA SleepEasy)

WELCOMED FURTHER SUPPORT FOR HIS CAMPAIGN TO END ROUGH SLEEPING IN CHELTENHAM

Following lobbying by Alex, Gloucestershire has been awarded **£3.8 million** in Government funding to provide accommodation to vulnerable people, housed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is part of the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to ensure those accommodated will not return to rough sleeping and prevent others at risk of rough sleeping from ending up on the streets.

Here in Cheltenham, the cash will go towards providing longer term accommodation to people who were given immediate and short-term help initially. It will see around 50, one and two bedroom flats provided in various locations across the county to people who are homeless or have been accommodated due to covid-19.

In addition, it will pay for employability support for a small group of people who are not eligible for benefits to gain employment and accommodation; and it will enable six of Cheltenham's council properties, managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes, to be furnished and made available for rough sleepers.

Alex said:

"This is really welcome, and builds on the £600k funding we received to set up the Homelessness Hub in Cheltenham's YMCA. Whilst a lot has been done, there is still much to do. Our ambition should be nothing less than the eradication of homelessness in Cheltenham."

WELCOMED CLARIFICATION ON CARE HOME VISITS AFTER RAISING ISSUE WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR



Following Alex's letter to local health chiefs, care homes have been given the discretion to allow welfare visits.

Alex (pictured visiting Whittington House in pre-Covid times) was pleased that, in appropriate circumstances, visits are able to take place. Care home managers are encouraged to involve residents and their visitors in the decision-making process, and where possible, to keep the same constant visitor.

Alex said:

"Care home managers have difficult judgements to make, and not all visits will be possible I recognise. But it is vital in specific cases to weigh in the balance the critical importance of loving contact."

You can read more about the guidance issued to care homes relating to visits [here](#).



ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE, ALEX HAS:

- Held constituency **surgeries** via Zoom;
- Hosted a Q&A with **Cheltenham Rotary Club**;

Attended the following events:

- '**Gloucestershire Heads Tea**', a meeting with headteachers of Cheltenham secondary schools and solicitors who are part of a working group

which advises the DfE on policy issues which are affecting schools as a result of COVID-19;

- **Virtual Town Hall** meeting with University of Gloucestershire students, to hear first-hand how their university experience has been impacted by the pandemic;

Held talks/meetings with:

- **ACAS** South West Director to discuss resolving employer-employee disputes before it gets to tribunal stage, saving taxpayer money;
- **HBSC's** South West Head of Commercial Banking, to discuss BBL/CBILS and supporting small businesses;
- Cheltenham **Chamber of Commerce**;
- **Headteacher of Belmont Special School** regarding support for schools during COVID-19;
- Members of **Cheltenham Referees' Association** regarding increased aggressive behaviour towards football referees;
- **Deputy Head of Bournside School** on behalf of a constituent;
- **The Secretary of State for DCMS**, regarding the decision to prevent disabled riding groups such as **Cotswold Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)** from continuing to provide their services during lockdown.

ALEX WELCOMES GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN DEFENCE AND CYBER-SECURITY



£24BN BOOST IN DEFENCE SPENDING WILL HELP DELIVER CHELTENHAM 'CYBER HUB' VISION

Alex welcomed the Government's recent £24bn investment in defence, the largest since the Cold War, which is particularly good news for Cheltenham.

This funding will help to support the **National Cyber Force**, which will work alongside the National Cyber Security Centre – part of **GCHQ** – to disrupt hostile state activities, terrorist groups and organised criminal networks threatening our national security.

Alex said:

"We need this capability more than ever. In July, the NCSC revealed Russian cyber actors, known as APT29, had even been targeting organisations involved in coronavirus vaccine development. We are responding, and the UK is now in the words of the Director of GCHQ a "world-leading cyber power" capable of taking the fight to adversaries in cyberspace, to protect our country and our way of life.

*I want to see that technical expertise delivering for our local economy too. That's why, back in 2014, I first set out my vision for **Cheltenham to become a national cyber hub** harnessing the finest GCHQ minds to support civilian tech start-ups. Since then, the NCSC's Government-funded Cyber Accelerator has been set up in Cheltenham. Over 30 start-ups have already been successfully nurtured, creating jobs and attracting millions of pounds of outside investment.*

Now, with a further £23m of Government support being rolled out in transport improvements around Arle Court to open up the Cyber Park site, we can begin to look forward to a brighter, hi-tech, future generating jobs for the people of Cheltenham."

OTHER CASH BOOSTS FOR CHELTENHAM:

£3.1M FOR MINSTER INNOVATION EXCHANGE IN TOWN CENTRE, A KEY PART OF CYBER HUB VISION



Funding has been confirmed for the Minster Innovation Exchange, a 20,000 sq ft purpose-built commercial space in Cheltenham.

The funding of **£3.1m via the Government's 'Getting Building Fund'** will fast-track the delivery of the scheme.

The new space will deliver flexible workspaces, a 300-person capacity performance arena, cafe, community and education space. The project will also help to establish Cheltenham as the global centre for cyber-tech and digital innovation, acting as a pilot for similar developments at the planned Cyber Central campus.

£4.6M TO SUPPORT CHELTENHAM BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID RESTRICTIONS



The Government has awarded **£4.6m** to Cheltenham Borough Council to **provide grants to local businesses impacted by the November restrictions**.

The Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) scheme provides grants of up to £3,000 for every four weeks that a business is legally required to close.

The Government has also given CBC the freedom to design a scheme at their discretion aimed at targeting the businesses which may not legally have been forced to close, but which have been severely impacted by the latest lockdown. These include businesses in the events sector and in supply chains. The scheme has now been launched, and eligible businesses may be entitled to up to **£3,000 per month**.

To apply for the closed premises scheme, [click here](#). For the discretionary scheme, [click here](#).

£300K FOR CHELTENHAM'S COMMUNITY GROUPS



A number of Cheltenham organisations across town have received a combined £300,000 in funding as part of the Government's COVID support package to ensure that **voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors** across the country can continue their vital work at this time.

Those benefitting include:

- 4th Cheltenham Boys Brigade (£1,000)
- Children's Chronic Arthritis Association (£7,500)
- Community Connexions (£6,500)
- Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Supporters Network (£6,768)
- Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project (£4,000)
- Ectodermal Dysplasia Society (£9,892)
- Cruse Bereavement Care Gloucestershire Area (£8,991)
- The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish of St Philip and St James, Leckhampton with St Christopher's, Warden Hill (£9,970)
- Family Space in Hesters Way Ltd (£35,000)
- St Michaels Cornerstone Trust (£18,220)
- IT Schools Africa (£25,082)
- Kidscape Campaign for Children's Safety (£30,000)
- Caring for Communities and People (£25,000)
- @ The Rock (£27, 498)
- The Isbourne Foundation (£30,000)
- Winston's Wish (£46,505)
- Cheltenham's Housing Aid Centre (£28,582).

GREEN INVESTMENT

1,000 NEW TREES FOR CHELTENHAM

Alex has welcomed that Cheltenham will receive a slice of a £10m Government fund for tree-planting, and will benefit from 1,000 new trees.



Across the South West nine projects led by community and volunteer groups, councils and individuals have been awarded a share of the funding to **increase tree numbers in urban areas through small-scale planting projects.**

The money will fund over 50 projects in total in England, planting 134,000 new trees. Read more about the national project [here](#), and about the Cheltenham project [here](#).

MAKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT GREENER

Alex, alongside his Gloucestershire MP colleagues, has been in **discussion with Stagecoach about EV improvements to their local fleet**, focusing on those serving Cheltenham and Gloucester.



In addition, local authorities have been urged to apply for the DfT grant to help pay for a new fleet of up to **200 electric buses** to reduce emissions and boost air quality. The chosen town will be used as a model by the Government as we progress towards plans to ensure **all**

buses are fully electric by 2025.

RAMPING UP CHARGING POINTS IN TOWN FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Progress is being made developing a UK Electric Vehicle charging network. Government funding, alongside private sector investment, has supported the installation of more than 17,000 devices providing approximately **24,000 public chargepoints**, including over 2,400 rapid chargepoints- one of the largest networks in Europe.

The first £70 million of the £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund has also now been allocated and will see another 3,000 rapid chargepoints installed.

Here in Cheltenham Alex has called on local authorities to roll out street chargepoints, including via lamp posts.



Using existing lamp post columns is an efficient way to increase the coverage of charging points. The installation is quicker than installing a new, standalone point.

In London, nearly 1100 new residential EV charging points have been installed on lamp posts across London, and in Brighton the council has recently announced plans for 200 to be installed on lamp posts. Alex has called on CBC to look at ways to replicate that rollout in Cheltenham.

ALEX'S MINISTERIAL ROUND-UP

Since the last update, Alex has:

The Victims' Code

The graphic features the text 'The Victims' Code' in white. 'The' is in a standard font, while 'Victims' and 'Code' are in a bold, sans-serif font. 'Victims' is partially enclosed by a green horizontal bar. Below the text is a green line-art illustration of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or support.

ANNOUNCED NEW VICTIMS' CODE

As the Victims Minister, Alex has announced that in future victims of crime will have clearer rights regarding the support they should receive from the police, courts and other criminal justice agencies following revisions to the Victims' Code.

The code has been restructured into **12 overarching rights**. Alex laid the changes before Parliament, and they will come into effect on 1 April 2021.

Alex said:

'As Victims Minister I want victims of crime to be properly served by the justice system, and to be clear about what they can properly expect. That's why I'm publishing this Code of Practice, with twelve rights clearly set out.

Perhaps the most crucial, as I know from prosecuting in the courts, is the right to make a Victim Personal Statement. That means you can, if you choose, tell a court about how a crime has affected you, and not just be left as a bystander watching the legal process from the sidelines. It's really important to ensure that justice is done - and is seen to be done.'

Read Alex's statement in full [here](#).

See below an overview of the 12 rights...

Summary of Victims' Rights

- Right 1**
To be able to understand and to be understood
You have the **Right** to be given information in a way that is easy to understand and to be provided with help to be understood, including, where necessary, access to interpretation and translation services.
- Right 2**
To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
You have the **Right** to have details of the crime recorded by the police as soon as possible after the incident. If you are required to provide a witness statement or be interviewed, you have the **Right** to be provided with additional support to assist you through this process.
- Right 3**
To be provided with information when reporting the crime
You have the **Right** to receive written confirmation when reporting a crime, to be provided with information about the criminal justice process and to be told about programmes or services for victims. This might include services where you can meet with the suspect or offender, which is known as Restorative Justice.
- Right 4**
To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs
You have the **Right** to be referred to services that support victims, which includes the **Right** to contact them directly, and to have your needs assessed so services and support can be tailored to meet your needs. If eligible, you have the **Right** to be offered a referral to specialist support services and to be told about additional support available at court, for example special measures.
- Right 5**
To be provided with information about compensation
Where eligible, you have the **Right** to be told about how to claim compensation for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of crime.
- Right 6**
To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution
You have the **Right** to be provided with updates on your case and to be told when important decisions are taken. You also have the **Right**, at certain stages of the justice process, to ask for decisions to be looked at again by the relevant service provider.

To make a Victim Personal Statement

You have the **Right** to make a Victim Personal Statement, which tells the court how the crime has affected you and is considered when sentencing the offender. You will be given information about the process.

To be given information about the trial, trial process and your role as a witness

If your case goes to court, you have the **Right** to be told the time, date and location of any hearing and the outcome of those hearings in a timely way. If you are required to give evidence, you have the **Right** to be offered appropriate help before the trial and, where possible, if the court allows, to meet with the prosecutor before giving evidence.

To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals

You have the **Right** to be told the outcome of the case and, if the defendant is convicted, to be given an explanation of the sentence. If the offender appeals against their conviction or sentence, you have the **Right** to be told about the appeal and its outcome.

To be paid expenses and have property returned

If you are required to attend court and give evidence, you have the **Right** to claim certain expenses. If any of your property was taken as evidence, you have the **Right** to get it back as soon as possible.

To be given information about the offender following a conviction

Where eligible, you have the **Right** to be automatically referred to the Victim Contact Scheme, which will provide you with information about the offender and their progress in prison, and if/when they become eligible for consideration of parole or release. Where applicable, you also have the **Right** to make a new Victim Personal Statement, in which you can say how the crime continues to affect you.

To make a complaint about your Rights not being met

If you believe that you have not received your **Rights**, you have the **Right** to make a complaint to the relevant service provider. If you remain unhappy, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Right
7

Right
8

Right
9

Right
10

Right
11

Right
12



[Click the image to hear Alex's remarks]

COMPLETED THE PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW BILL'S PASSAGE THROUGH PARLIAMENT

As Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, Alex has been responsible for piloting the Private International Law Bill through Parliament. Since the last update, Alex has taken it through the parliamentary 'ping pong' stage in the Commons, and the Bill now awaits Royal Assent.

As mentioned in previous updates, the Bill implements the Hague Conventions of 1996, 2005 and 2007 and provides for the implementation of other international agreements on private international law. The Bill provides a **legal framework for resolving cross-border disputes**, and that framework provides legal certainty about jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement for both businesses and individuals whose legal affairs cross borders.

Alex said:

"I am absolutely delighted that this Bill is now going to be supported across the House.

The Bill will be welcomed by those seeking to resolve cross-border disputes, be they in relation to a commercial contract or a child maintenance order."

Read Alex's remarks in full [here](#), Or click the image above to watch.



ANNOUNCED £11M FUNDING BOOST TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF RAPE AND DOMESTIC ABUSE THIS WINTER

Alex has announced a further £11m in funding for support to victims of rape and domestic abuse this winter as demand increases. This will allow organisations to recruit more staff, adapt to remote counselling methods during the pandemic and keep helplines open for longer.

In addition, the Home Office have announced a further £7 million will go towards a range of innovative programmes aimed at perpetrators – designed to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

It comes as charities have reported a sharp increase in demand during the pandemic, including a 46% rise in calls, with some victims feeling at greater risk of harm or deciding to report abuse for the first time.

Speaking to ITV News, Alex said:

“One of the really awful aspects of this pandemic is we know that the need in respect of potential victims of rape and domestic abuse has soared. We want to make sure the funding is there for people, so people understand if they're the victims of rape or domestic abuse they don't need to suffer in silence. They're not alone.”

You can watch Alex's interview [here](#). Or read more [here](#).

INTRODUCED NEW COURTROOM PROTECTIONS FOR VULNERABLE VICTIMS



Alex has authorised the roll-out of so-called "section 28" hearings which use technology to spare vulnerable victims and witnesses the trauma of attending court. It allows children and those who suffer from a debilitating condition to have their **cross-examination video-recorded and played during the trial.**

This is now available immediately in every Crown Court across England and Wales. The recording takes place as close to the time of the offence as possible in order to help memory recall and reduce the stress of giving evidence.

Alex said:

"The court process can be a harrowing experience for vulnerable victims and witnesses. This technology seeks to minimise stress and ensure they can provide their best evidence, without reducing a defendant's right to a fair trial. This is part of our efforts to drive improvement for victims at every stage of the justice system."

[Read more here.](#)

ANSWERED 40 WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Alex responds to questions from MPs on a wide range of issues. See below some examples of Alex's responses. To see the full list of answered questions, [click here](#).

Q: “To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of whether the automatic revocation of wills upon marriage provides a potential incentive for predatory marriage.”

Alex responded:

“The principle in English and Welsh law that marriage has the effect of revoking wills is long established. The issue of whether marriage or civil partnership should invoke automatic revocation of the wills of those involved is being considered as part of a wider current review by the Law Commission on reforming the law of wills. That review is also examining whether there should be new rules introduced which protect the person making the will from undue influence. The Government will review the case for reforming the current law when it has received the recommendations in the Law Commission’s final report.”

Q: “To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any exemptions to the normal practice of enforcement action have been specified by his Department for the duration of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown restrictions.”

Alex responded:

“On 6 November, the Lord Chancellor wrote to the enforcement agent trade associations asking their members not to enter homes to take control of goods during the period of time that the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.4) Regulations 2020 (the health protection regulations) are in force.

On 16 November the Government laid the Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction and Taking Control of Goods) (England) Regulations 2020. From 17 November, the regulations prevent enforcement agents taking control of goods inside homes while the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.4) Regulations 2020 are in force. They also prevent enforcement agents from enforcing evictions (other than in limited circumstances) until 11 January.”

ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:

- Launched a **review of family courts** which will put child protection at the core. The review will consider how the current approach to decisions on parental access made in the family courts is impacting child safety;
- Attended the **APPG on Legal Aid** meeting 'The Westminster Commission Inquiry into the Sustainability of Legal Aid';
- Appeared before Justice Select Committee as part of their **Coroner Service Inquiry**.

Held Meetings/Talks with:

- The Legal Education Foundation, to discuss early legal advice
- Victims’ Commissioner for London, Claire Waxman
- Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales, Vera Baird QC
- Family Justice Young People’s Board
- Jonathan Djanogly MP

- David Lammy MP, Shadow Justice Secretary
- Sir Bob Neill MP, Chair of the Justice Select Committee
- Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors (FLOWS)
- Lord Falconer
- Theresa May MP, regarding domestic abuse.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

Click on the images below to watch Alex's recent interviews.



ITV NEWS: Alex was interviewed about the £11m MOJ funding package to support victims of rape and domestic abuse during a period of increased demand this winter.



TALK RADIO: Alex was again interviewed about the new domestic abuse funding, which will go towards supporting organisations who offer practical and emotional help to victims.



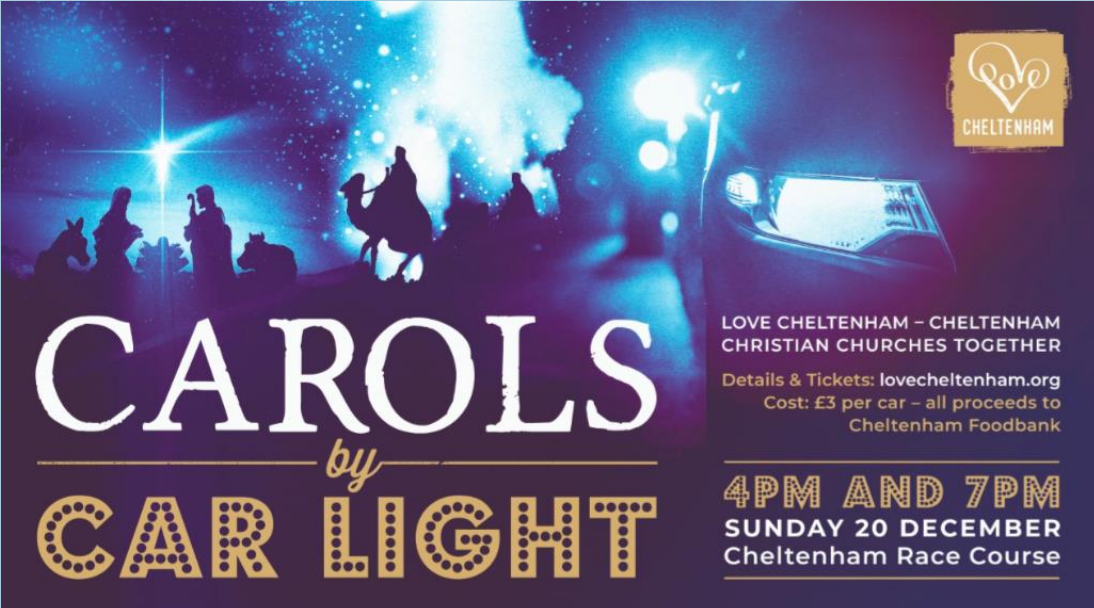
POLITICS LIVE: Alex was interviewed on a range of subjects, including the promising vaccine developments, mass testing, and the US Presidential election.

ALSO IN THE MEDIA SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:

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

1. Welcomed the Government's commitment to **invest £24bn in defence, and its implications for Alex's Cheltenham cyber hub vision**. The funding will support the National Cyber Force and GCHQ, which will in turn is providing expertise to allow civilian tech start-ups in Cheltenham to flourish. [Read here.](#)
2. Acknowledged the pain faced by those unable to **visit loved ones in care homes**, and, following his letter to Gloucestershire's Public Health Director, welcomed that individual care homes will retain discretion to set their own rules on visiting in line with their particular circumstances. [Read here.](#)
3. Highlighted the 'light at the end of the tunnel' in the form of **COVID vaccines and mass testing programme** on the way. [Read here.](#)

OTHER LOCAL NEWS



CAROLS
by
CAR LIGHT

LOVE CHELTENHAM - CHELTENHAM
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER
Details & Tickets: lovecheltenham.org
Cost: £3 per car - all proceeds to
Cheltenham Foodbank

4PM AND 7PM
SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER
Cheltenham Race Course

LOCAL CHURCHES HOST 'CHELTENHAM CAROLS BY CAR LIGHT' - 20 DECEMBER

Churches from across Cheltenham are inviting everyone to two Christmas drive-in Carol Services being held at Cheltenham Racecourse. People will be able to park up in front of a giant screen, tune-in on their car radios to sing along to well-known Christmas carols and readings in the safety and comfort of their own car. But don't forget to bring blankets, hot drinks and lots of Christmas snacks!

All the costs of this community event are being covered by local Christian churches who support the 'Love Cheltenham' initiative (see more at lovecheltenham.org). The churches are therefore asking for a donation (suggested £3 per car) to support the work of the Cheltenham Foodbank as they help individuals, families and households in need across the town.

[Click here to buy your ticket.](#)

If you're feeling anxious or alone,
there is support available.

Age UK is ready to help.

Age UK Advice Line: 0800 169 6565

The Silver Line: 0800 470 8090



AGE UK OFFER RANGE OF SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE DURING DIFFICULT PERIOD:

Age UK are working with NHS England on their *Help Us to Help You* campaign, which is encouraging older people to get the help they need with their mental health. Some older people may find it hard to recognise the symptoms of mental health conditions, and some can find it difficult to ask for help, for fear of being a burden or wasting people's time.

[Age UK's website](#) has lots of support and information for anyone who is struggling with their mental health.

The NHS is also still there for all older people who need help with their mental health. Your GP can provide support and advice, including information about accessing talking therapies. You can also refer yourself online here: www.nhs.uk/talk

Useful numbers:

Age UK **Silver Line** is there so anyone feeling lonely or isolated has someone to call day or night for a friendly chat: 0800 470 8090.

There is also a free and confidential **advice helpline**, which is open 8am-7pm 365 days of the year: 0800 169 6565.




TIER 2 HIGH ALERT

FROM 2 DEC

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY 	BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS 	RETAIL 	WORK AND BUSINESS 
<p>No mixing of households indoors, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six outdoors.</p>	<p>Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals. Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.</p>	<p>Open.</p>	<p>Everyone who can work from home should do so.</p>
EDUCATION 	INDOOR LEISURE 	ACCOMMODATION 	PERSONAL CARE 
<p>Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Children, other supervised activities for children, and childcare bubbles permitted.</p>	<p>Open.</p>	<p>Open.</p>	<p>Open.</p>
OVERNIGHT STAYS 	WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS 	ENTERTAINMENT 	PLACES OF WORSHIP 
<p>Permitted within household or support bubble.</p>	<p>15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships, wedding receptions and wakes, 30 for funerals.</p>	<p>Open.</p>	<p>Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.</p>
TRAVELLING 	EXERCISE 	RESIDENTIAL CARE 	LARGE EVENTS 
<p>Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if possible. Avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble. Avoid travelling outside your area, or entering a Tier 3 area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply.</p>	<p>Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but cannot take place indoors if there is any interaction between people from different households. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.</p>	<p>COVID secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor overnight cuts only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).</p>	<p>Sport, live performances and business meetings limited to 50% capacity or 2000 people outdoors (whichever is lower) and 50% capacity or 1000 people indoors (whichever is lower).</p>

Find out what support you can get

For example, if you're out of work, need to get food, or want to take care of your mental health, [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you have any coronavirus symptoms:

A high temperature • A new, continuous cough
A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste.

Get a test and stay at home

For more information and detailed guidance visit: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)





GLoucestershire PLACED IN TIER 2 RESTRICTIONS

Gloucestershire has been placed in tier 2, or on 'high alert'. However, non-essential retail, pubs, and restaurants are able to reopen, and outdoor sport can go ahead once again. For the full restrictions in detail, see above, or [click here](#).



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