



e-UPDATE #98 - 1.06.21

Welcome to this update. I hope you were able to enjoy some of the glorious weather over the Bank Holiday. I was at the Lido on Sunday for a party for one of my daughter's friends, and it was wonderful to see so many people out and about in the Cheltenham sunshine.

There's a pretty packed update below. You'll find information about the **reopening of Cheltenham A&E**, which I'm sure you're already aware of, in just over a week's time - fantastic news for the town. I'm delighted too that **£6.5m has been secured for the CGH Radiology department**. Improvement works have already started.

Tackling rough sleeping has long been a particular priority for me, and I am so pleased that we've been able to secure **a further £1.1m for Gloucestershire**. **Here in Cheltenham that will help strengthen the Homelessness Hub at Cheltenham YMCA**, which we were able to get up and running a few years ago - with beds and on-site addiction and other support.

In something to keep an eye on, **I have been updated by Cheltenham Fire Station that vaccine uptake for the over 30s in Cheltenham has been lower than expected over recent days**. It may be the Bank Holiday effect, but there have been more unanswered invitations than we would have liked. Getting that job is really important - for you and the community. I'll be watching trends closely.

It was great too to catch up with the former World Cup-winning rugby great, **Phil Vickery**, at his restaurant at 12 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham - see below. And thank you to the brilliant volunteers at the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, who through sheer determination (and a vast amount of planning) have managed to get the competition up and running this year.

As for Ministry of Justice news, you'll find updates about my Prisons Minister duties - including an interview on **BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour about women in the criminal justice system**. There were also reports in the national media about my call for inmates to be called 'prisoners', rather than 'residents' or 'service users'.

And I had a great chat with Fred from TV's 'First Dates' about employment opportunities

in the hospitality sector for prison leavers!

Thank you for reading.

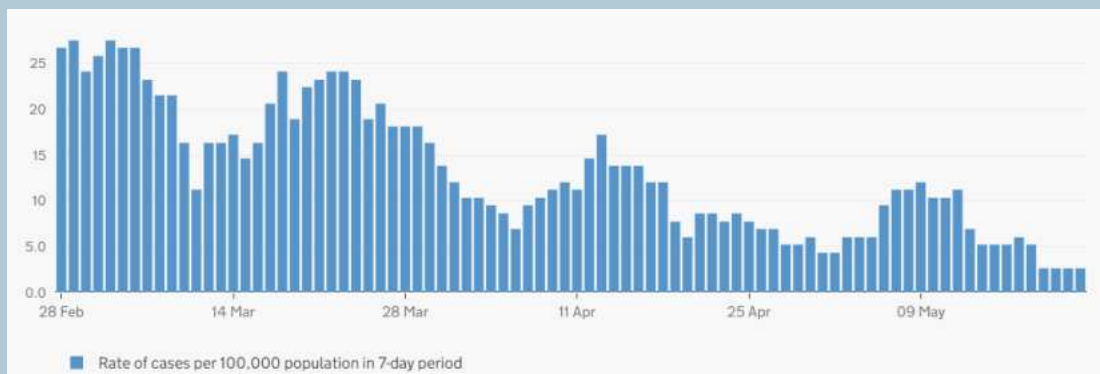
Best wishes,



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



[Overview of the 7-day rate of cases per 100,000 in Cheltenham from February to present. Source: DHSC.]

NB - data is less up-to-date than usual because this update is being sent after the BH weekend

COVID Hospital Patients:

As at 27 May, there were seven COVID-positive patient in Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHFT), including two on a ventilator.

Cases in CHELTENHAM (as at 27 May):

- Cases in last 7 days: 3
- Rate per 100,000 in last 7 days: 2.6
- Total cases: 3,780

Cheltenham continues to have the lowest seven-day Covid infection rate in Gloucestershire, and is 28th lowest in the UK.

Cases in GLOUCESTERSHIRE (as at 27 May):

- Cases in last 7 days: 65
- Rate per 100,000 in last 7 days: 10.2
- Total cases: 22,689

Gloucestershire Death Registrations Mentioning COVID-19:

0 in last 7 days (as at 27 May).

The South West R value range:

Between 0.9 and 1.1 for the South West. The value for the whole of England is between 0.8 and 1.1

VACCINATION UPDATE:



OVER 30s TAKE UP LOWER THAN EXPECTED

The vaccine is now being offered to all those over the age of 30.

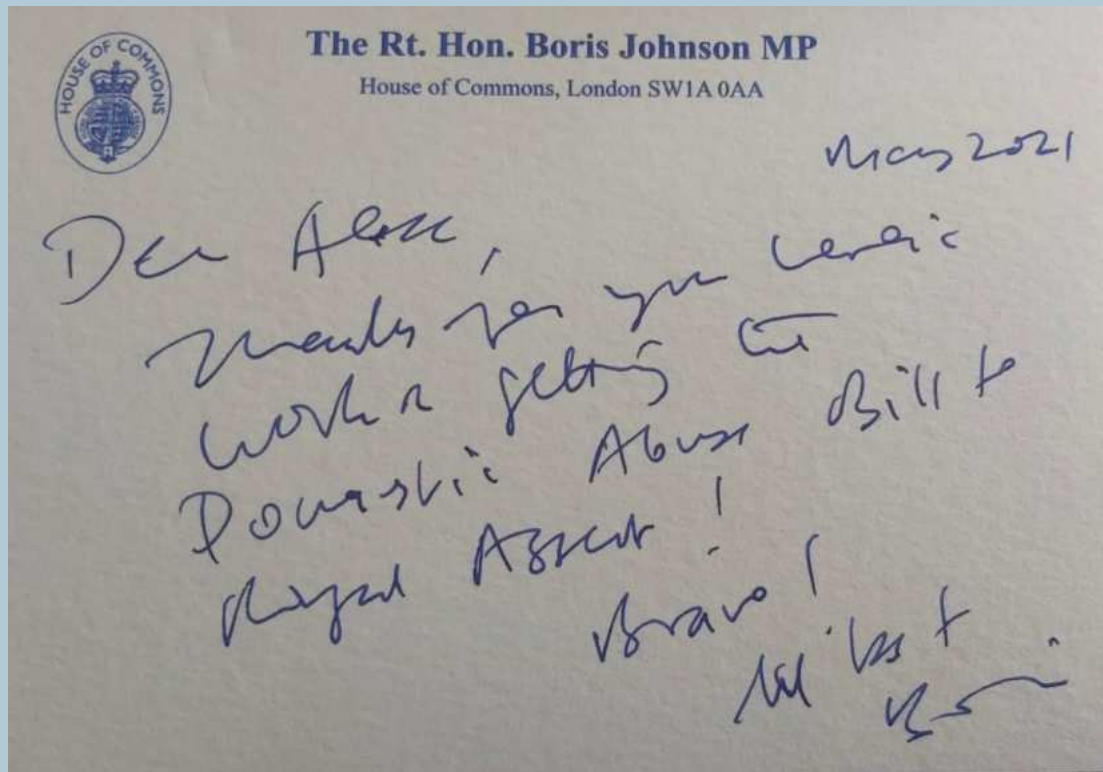
At present, the uptake in the 30-35 age group is lower than expected - at around 50%. In Cheltenham, this means several thousand vaccine invitations are waiting to be taken up.

Local NHS vaccination teams are calling on anyone who has been invited for a job to book an appointment as soon as they can.

Up to and including 25 May 2021 there have been a total of **627,986** vaccinations undertaken in Gloucestershire (first and second doses).

Counting the number of PATIENTS (without double count)						
JCVI Priority Group	JCVI Priority Group Description	First Dose Only	First and Second Dose	Total Group Size	Remaining	Uptake
1	Care Home Residents (excl. Residential Care Workers)	386	2,721	3,107	0	100.0%
2	80+ & Health and Social Care Workers	2,274	47,590	52,050	2,186	95.8%
3	75-79	635	26,727	28,097	735	97.4%
4	70-74 & CEV	1,707	47,664	51,452	2,081	96.0%
5	65-69	1,282	30,776	33,895	1,837	94.6%
6	At Risk	17,425	48,397	74,899	9,077	87.9%
7	60-64	8,003	14,794	24,677	1,880	92.4%
8	55-59	17,597	11,097	31,299	2,605	91.7%
9	50-54	22,071	7,805	33,176	3,300	90.1%
10	40-49	41,883	8,183	60,818	10,752	82.3%
11	30-39	21,560	5,001	66,784	40,223	39.8%
12	18-29	3,972	4,787	77,405	68,646	11.3%
JCVI Priority Groups 1-9 Total		71,380	237,571	332,652	23,701	92.9%
JCVI Priority Groups 1-12 Total		138,795	255,542	537,659	143,322	73.3%

ALEX'S MINISTERIAL ROUND-UP



PM THANKS ALEX FOR WORK ON THE DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL

Alex has received a message of thanks **from the Prime Minister**, Boris Johnson, following the Domestic Abuse Bill achieving Royal Assent.

The legislation, which was piloted through the Commons by Alex and Home Office colleague, Victoria Atkins MP, has been described as **“groundbreaking”** by MPs and stakeholders.

The Domestic Abuse Bill gives victims greater protections, courts greater power, and creates a legal definition of domestic abuse for the first time.

For those struggling to decipher the handwriting (!) it states:

"Dear Alex, Thanks for your heroic work in getting the Domestic Abuse Bill to Royal Assent! Bravo! All best, Boris"

Jail bosses told to stop calling prisoners residents or clients

Matt Dathan, Home Affairs Editor

Monday May 17 2021, 12.01am,
The Times



Prison officers have warned that referring to prisoners as residents can often be counter-intuitive for the offenders
ALAMY

Prison officials have been told that they must stop calling inmates residents, clients or supervised individuals because it creates the wrong impression of criminals.

Alex Chalk, the prisons minister, told civil servants, prison staff, governors and probation officers that they should stick to using the word prisoner, *The Times* has learnt.

IT SHOULD BE 'PRISONER', NOT 'SERVICE USER' SAYS ALEX

Alex's has called on prison governors and staff to stop calling prisoners "residents" or "service users".

The move came after growing complaints about prison officials using the word "residents".

Supporting Alex, the president of the Prison Governors Association said: "*The word prisoner is inoffensive, it refers to everyone who's in prison - whether they are on remand and unconvicted or convicted.*

'We've had residents, we've had clients, we've had service users - all sorts. It muddies the water. Prisoner is simple, it's inoffensive and it refers to every single person who is in prison.'

Alex wants prison to be a place of safety, rehabilitation and hope. But sending out confusing messages about the status of prisoners does not help that cause - it risks distracting from it.



ALEX ANNOUNCES ON RADIO 4'S 'WOMAN'S HOUR' £46M INVESTMENT TO DIVERT WOMEN FROM PRISON

Alex has announced Government funding of £46m for community services to provide female offenders alternatives to custody. He made the announcement on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour in a programme about women in the criminal justice system.

The £46m is part of a £200 million investment in rehab services to cut crime.

To hear the episode, click [here](#) (Alex starts speaks at approximately 19mins 50secs).

Charities and companies which help rehabilitate offenders have been awarded around £200 million of Government funding to help cut crime in the new probation system.

Alex Chalk said: "*Tackling homelessness, unemployment and illiteracy is vital to our drive to cut crime, but these issues cannot be solved by our brilliant probation staff alone.*"

"The expertise and support of charities and companies like those we are funding today plays a crucial role in helping offenders to rehabilitate and lead a crime-free life."

Almost **£46 million has been awarded to charities which provide wraparound support** to women in the criminal justice system, acknowledging the complex array of issues female offenders particularly face. Organisations including The Nelson Trust, who do fantastic work here in Gloucestershire, will work with vulnerable women to help them get their lives back on track.



[Alex at HMP Five Wells - please click the image to read more about the project and see a video of Alex visiting the site]

ALEX VISITS £250M NEW BUILD PRISON

In his capacity as Prisons Minister, Alex visited HMP Five Wells - a £250m Cat C new-build prison due to accept its first prisoners in January 2022.

As part of the build, prisoners from HMP Sudbury have been working on-site with a construction company to learn new skills as part of their rehabilitation.

Alex said "*Prison is rightly a place of punishment for those who have betrayed trust, robbed innocence and destroyed lives. But it must be a place of hope too, with support for prisoners to turn their lives around.*

This new prison will provide modern, secure, decent, cell blocks - as well as new workshop and education space to teach prisoners new skills and prepare them for life on the outside."



[Alex speaking during the Women and Equalities questions]

ALEX ANNOUNCES NEW INVESTMENT IN THE FEMALE PRISON ESTATE

Alex has been at the despatch box in Parliament to answer questions during Women's and Equalities OPQs (Oral Parliamentary Questions).

Alex was asked about what the Government is doing to reduce the number of women in prison.

He said "It is important that we continue to invest in women's centres in the community, and that is exactly what we are doing. For the very reason that the hon. Lady makes about keeping relationships with the family, part of the money that she refers to will go to providing accommodation so that individuals can make family visits to those women sentenced to custody, to keep those relationships going. Prisons need to be a place of security, but they must also be a place of humanity, rehabilitation and hope, and that is what we are investing in."

To see the clip of Alex speaking, please click [here](#).



ALEX ANNOUNCES THAT PRISONERS CONVICTED OF SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIMES WILL SERVE MORE OF THEIR SENTENCE IN PRISON

In a debate on The Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme, Alex confirmed that (as part of the new PCSC Bill currently before Parliament) **offenders sentenced to over four years' imprisonment for serious violent and sexual offences will now serve two thirds of their sentences.**

Speaking in relation to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, Alex said:
"Measures in the Bill would ensure that serious sexual and violent offenders who receive a standard determinate sentence of four years or more serve two thirds of their sentence in custody, aligning their release point with serious violent and sexual offenders sentenced to seven years or more.

"To recap: more offences, longer sentences, longer in custody. But we have gone further, because we have longer licence periods as well. We have brought in a wider range of terrorism offences within the scope of the extended determinate sentence...if they transgress again...they can expect to be punished!"

[Read the Westminster Hall debate in full here.](#)



£100M TO BOLSTER PRISON SECURITY

Alex recently took part in Justice Oral Parliamentary questions where he was asked what steps the Government are taking to reduce crime in prisons.

Alex said: "*Reducing crime in prisons is a key priority. We are delivering on our commitment to **invest £100 million** in bolstering prison security and clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This investment enhances security at the entry point to prisons, using the latest technology, and strengthens staff resilience to corruption, as well as targeting organised criminals who exploit prisons as a lucrative market.*"

The Government's £100 million **investment to prevent crime in prison** has enabled hundreds of security items to be purchased, including **176 search dogs, 300 metal detection archways and wands, mobile phone detection technology and 51 X-ray body scanners.**



ALEX BACKS FUNDING FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE RAPE SUPPORT SERVICES

Alex was delighted to visit Gloucestershire Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC), which offers female-only support across Gloucestershire, including Independent Sexual Advisor services, counselling and therapeutic support.

They are a free service, providing confidential and non-judgemental support and information.

The Ministry of Justice provides core funding to GRASAC from their 'Rape Support Fund' and Alex was delighted to announce they have boosted it by 50%, as well as provided an COVID grant to cover additional costs.

This year, GRASAC is receiving **£91,754 from the Ministry of Justice** Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund.

Alex said: *"It's really good news that it's been possible for the MOJ to fund two new Independent Sexual Violence Advisor posts - vital one-on-one support for complainants going through the criminal justice process."*

Thank you to all the committed and professional staff I met during my visit for the life-changing (and even life-saving in some cases) support they provide to victims of these devastating crimes."

If you would like more information on GRASAC, please visit their website [here](#).



MET WITH FRED SIRIEIX FROM FIRST DATES TO DISCUSS JOBS FOR PRISON-LEAVERS

Alex recently held talks with Fred Sirieix from First Dates, to discuss how the hospitality sector can do more to help prison leavers rehabilitate.

In the UK, there are four restaurants in working prisons in Brixton, Cardiff, High Down and Styal. All are registered catering colleges.

They give prisoners skills that can help them them to rehabilitate and be ready for employment for when they are released.

CHELTENHAM UPDATES:



A&E TO RE-OPEN!

Alex was delighted to be informed by senior Trust management that **Cheltenham's A&E department will re-open on Wednesday 9 June** as before: a consultant-led service, 7 days a week.

Alex said "*This is hugely welcome news.*

"It was tough, frankly, to accept the suspension in the first place – even if we all recognised that difficult decisions had to be made in the face of the pandemic. Whether you live in Cheltenham, or Bourton-on-the-Water, or Moreton-in-Marsh, many of us rely on CGH. And we also well understand that GRH doesn't have capacity for a county of over 600,000 people.

"It's welcome too because, given bitter past experience, some of us retained a certain cynicism about whether this 'suspension' would quietly morph into more permanent – even though Trust bosses gave me (several!) welcome written commitments that the A&E would be coming back."

Following the news, Alex has spoken to the Trust leadership, and it has been confirmed to him that what is reopening is the same, consultant-led service that was there before.

As for the overnight nurse-led service, this will resume on Wednesday 30 June.

In addition, Cheltenham General is in line for additional investment. **On top of the £900,000** allocated for the refurbishment of the A&E waiting areas, **a further £6.5**

million has been secured for the Radiology department.

That means emergency patients accessing Cheltenham's A&E will benefit from **three new CT scanners and an additional MRI scanner** - meaning faster, more accurate and better diagnostic tests such as X-rays and MRI scans. This comes on top of new LINAC (linear accelerator) cancer-fighting radiotherapy machines which have been installed in CGH.

The improvement works have already started and are scheduled to be completed in the autumn.



WELCOMED IMPORTANT ANIMAL WELFARE IMPROVEMENTS SET OUT IN THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

Alex welcomed new measures which were laid out in the queens speech at the opening of the new parliamentary session.

Measures include:

- **Sentience and Enforcement**

The Sentience Bill will recognise and enshrine animal sentience in law, and will create an expert committee on animal sentience to report on government decisions.

- **International Trade and Advocacy**

We will ensure our high animal welfare standards are not compromised in our trade negotiations. Legislation will be introduced to ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered animals broad, and to ban the import and export of detached shark fins.

- **Farm Animals**

We will end the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening.

- **Pets and Sporting Animals**

We will bring forward legislation to tackle the trade in puppy smuggling and introduce compulsory cat microchipping.

- **Wild Animals**

Keeping primates as pets will be prohibited by law. We will improve standards for zoos, including in relation to their conservation activities.

This is on top of important steps already taken, including in relation to banning third-party puppy sales and increasing the penalties for animal cruelty.

Alex said: *“Many local people in Cheltenham share my passion for animal welfare, and have written to me about the subject. I am therefore delighted at some of the measures in the Queen's speech that will make significant improvements in this area.”*



VOLUNTEERED AS A STEWARD AT THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF PERFORMING ARTS

This year, thanks to the heroic work of volunteers, Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts has been able to take place again - providing invaluable opportunities for young people to perform, develop their skills and grow in confidence.

Alex spent a couple of hours at Pittville Pump Room on Saturday helping to manage the flow of parents and excited children around the building, to keep it COVID-secure.



VISIT TO ARLE ROAD TO SEE CITYFIBRE INSTALLATION

Alex went to visit the team who are working at Arle Road to install **Cheltenham's first full-fibre network**.

Once the work is completed, it will mean **Cheltenham will become one of the best-connected towns in the world**, and will also strengthen foundations as a cyber hub of the future.

Gigabit broadband means users will be able to download HD films in minutes rather than hours, and will open up new possibilities for smart home technologies.



ALEX HOLDS TALKS WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE

Alex recently met with Gloucestershire police to discuss issues of concern for him and local people.

Topics on the agenda included progress dealing with anti-social behaviour, patrol plans and the use of bikes, the approach to domestic abuse and **officer recruitment**.

They also discussed the early intervention work of the Aston Project. The Aston Project's aim is to help inspire positive futures for young people, and has partnerships with various organisations, including the police. A young person on the project will undertake activities in order to earn credits which they can then spend on a reward activity.

Alex would also like to take this opportunity to give a warm welcome to Insp Mike Yates, our new Neighbourhood Inspector, and a big thank you to Insp Rich Smith for his excellent service to the local community.



ALEX OPENS £5M ACCOMMODATION IN CHELTENHAM

Alex was delighted to formally open a **£5m investment on Lansdown Road in Cheltenham** - newly refurbished accommodation for up to 80 trainee pilots.

These pilots, pictured above, are training with Skyborne Aviation Ltd, which tutors students at Gloucestershire Airport on the latest aircraft.

Alex commented : *“It's great to see this investment in our town, which is a real vote of confidence. I was delighted too to speak to the students, some of whom come from as far afield as South Africa, and hear how warmly they spoke of Cheltenham.*

I wish them well for their future careers, and hope they will retain a link with our town in future.”



ALEX WELCOMES TSB DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFE SPACE

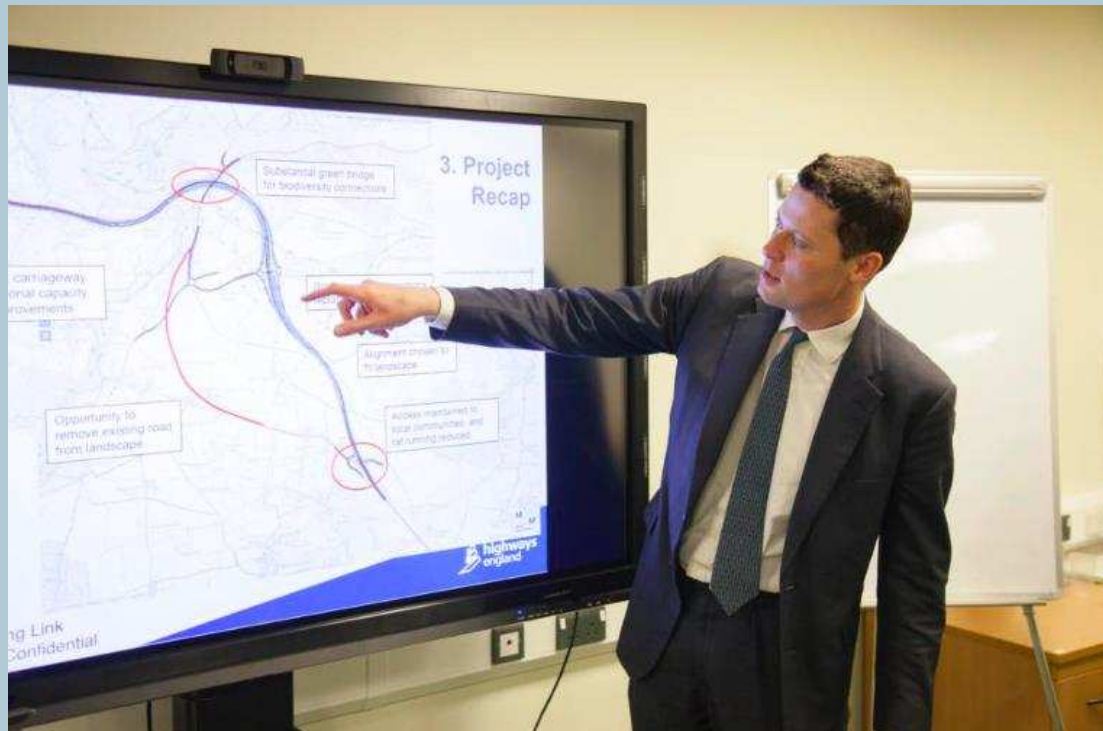
Alex was delighted that the local branch of **TSB bank has launched a domestic abuse 'Safe Space' partnership in the town centre with the charity, Hestia.**

This will provide a safe space in Cheltenham town centre for local people suffering from domestic abuse, through a scheme successfully trialled across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Alex as Cheltenham's MP. He said: *"I am so grateful to TSB for setting this up. For people who might not know where to turn, this is another vital local resource."*

Specialist training has been delivered to TSB branch employees to help them advise and assist on numerous issues including financial coercion, human trafficking and other criminal activity. **Victims can use a private room to make telephone calls, speak to a trained staff member, and get a referral to the local police service. The support is available to both TSB customers and members of the general public.**

The branch rooms set aside for Safe Spaces adhere to current health and safety regulations, ensuring people can still visit safely in line with coronavirus restrictions.



RECEIVED BRIEFING ON A47 'MISSING LINK' PROJECT

Alex attended a meeting with the other Gloucestershire MPs and DfT minister, Baroness Vere, to receive the **latest update on the A47 improvement scheme.**

Back in October, a digital consultation was held on the latest changes to the scheme.

Highways England are now in the process of analysing comments and will shortly submit their 'Development Consent Order' application to the Planning Inspectorate. **They are on track to submit the Order by June 2021.**

The Planning Inspectorate will examine the application through written representation and public hearings. They will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will decide on whether or not the scheme will go ahead.

The planning and examination process is likely to take up to a year.

Subject to approvals, work is expected to start in 2023. Alex regularly expresses his impatience, but recognises that it has been necessary to take account of stakeholders' concerns; responding to those concerns has led to a better scheme with improvements for biodiversity and the environment.



[Alex speaking on the panel]

TOOK PART IN "LIFE AFTER THE PANDEMIC" PANEL

Alex was invited by Justin Urquhart-Stewart to take part in a panel discussion hosted by Regionally Ltd, to discuss Life After the Pandemic in the South and South West.

He was joined by investors and CEOs of tech firms and spoke on the new policies in place that aim to promote regional economies and business, especially here in Cheltenham.

If you would like to see the full panel discussion, please do follow the link [here](#).

£1,145,171

TO HELP FIGHT ROUGH SLEEPING IN

GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Conservatives

ALEX WELCOMES £1.1M TO FIGHT ROUGH SLEEPING

Alex is passionate about tackling rough sleeping, and was delighted to learn that Gloucestershire is to receive **a further £1.1m to help address the issue.**

This is part of **£203m from the Government** to help more rough sleepers off the streets and into safe accommodation.

This funding is one part of an unprecedented £750 million investment this year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping – part of the government’s drive to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament.

Analysis of the Rough Sleeping Initiative – now in its fourth year – shows that the programme has reduced rough sleeping by almost a third compared to areas which have not taken part in the programme.

Here in Cheltenham, it will help support the Homelessness Hub at the YMCA which Alex campaigned for. The hub provides beds, but also access to support services focused on substance abuse and mental health challenges.



ALEX VISITS GCHQ TO MEET DIRECTOR

Alex has visited the GCHQ site in Cheltenham to catch up with the Director.

Although it was a private discussion, Alex can state that he thanked GCHQ for their work to keep our country safe - and also for their support for Cheltenham's cyber hub, which Alex first set out as an ambition for Cheltenham in 2014 at a speech at local IT firm Converge.

Alex's vision is to build on the presence of GCHQ to grow Cheltenham's existing civilian technology cluster. This will bring even greater benefits to Cheltenham, such as generating high-value jobs and driving social mobility to benefit disadvantaged young people in Cheltenham.

Since then, the Government has supported this vision, funding a **Cyber Innovation Centre** here with start-up companies nurtured by GCHQ. The first iteration of this centre, the Cyber Accelerator, is already up and running and our town has supported several tech start-ups, which are now estimated to have a combined value in excess of £35 million. It has also attracted businesses from as far afield as Spain and the United States to benefit from local expertise.

In addition, £23m has been secured (and is currently being spent) to support the development of a cyber park in West Cheltenham.



ALEX VISITS NO3 CHELTENHAM

Alex was delighted to support former England rugby player, Phil Vickery, at his restaurant in Cheltenham.

No3 opened its doors last year in the midst of the pandemic.

Alex said: *"Phil Vickery is incredibly talented, both on and off the field. I am so delighted that Cheltenham is benefitting from this great restaurant. I'm looking forward to eating there soon."*

ADDITIONAL UPDATES

ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE, ALEX HAS:

In his Ministerial role:

- Visited Kent, Sussex and Surrey probation office to meet offenders and probation staff
- Given a speech at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sport in the Criminal Justice System. [Read more here](#)

As Cheltenham's MP:

- Held a virtual constituency **surgery** with local constituents
- Spoke to the head teacher of **Pittville School** about the need for certainty about next year's exams for Year 11s. Alex subsequently took the matter up with the Education Secretary

Attended Events:

- Centenary of the formation of the British Legion at Cheltenham war memorial

Received Briefings from:

- NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group about the **vaccine rollout** in Cheltenham
- **Vaccines Minister** Nadhim Zahawi on vaccine uptake and inequalities

Held Talks with:

- **Stagecoach** bus company to discuss the future of buses in Cheltenham and what initiatives can boost uptake and promote greener travel.
- The **Vice Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire** (regular catch-up).

WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS:

Since the last update, Alex has answered **23** Written Parliamentary Questions. Some of the topics raised included prison standards, recruitment and females in prison.

See below some examples:

Q. To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of self-harm in women's prisons in 2020?

Alex responded:

"The self-harm rate increased by 13% in the 12 months to December 2020. In the most recent quarter, self-harm rates decreased by 19% on the previous three months.

Despite recent improvements, the level of self-harm in women's prisons remains too high and we will continue to prioritise improving safety outcomes.

We have established a Women's Estate Self-Harm Taskforce and the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model, while expanding therapeutic services and improving gender-specific training for staff."

Q. To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the proportion of current prison staff that (a) began work after covid-19 regime restrictions were introduced in March 2020 and (b) have no experience of prison regimes prior to the outbreak of covid-19.

Alex responded:

"From 23 March 2020 (when the national lockdown was introduced) to 31 March 2021 there were 4,293 new entrants to either HM Prison Service or the Youth Custody Service, and of these 3,797 were still in post as at 31 March 2021. As at 31 March 2021 the headcount in HM Prison Service and the Youth Custody Service was 37,671, and therefore the new entrants still in post as at 31 March 2021 made up 10% of all HMPS and YCS staff. Of the 3,797 new entrants since 23 March 2020 that are still in post on 31 March 2021, 186 had worked for HMPPS previously, prior to 23 March 2020.

Throughout the 12 months to 31 March 2021 there have been significant restrictions to prison regimes due to Covid-19. These restrictions have been necessary in order to prevent the spread of Covid across the prison estate. Our plan for easing restrictions in prisons and probation, and re-introducing them where necessary, will be guided by public health advice alongside an operational assessment of what can be safely implemented, whilst ensuring we can keep staff and prisoners safe. We are focused on ensuring that we recover, expand regimes and begin to address the backlog of activity created by Covid-19 restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so, and in a way that supports our staff and prisoners. Staff training and professional development is also being prioritised as we emerge from the pandemic.

We do not underestimate the challenges faced by everyone working in prisons throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We are committed to making prisons a safe place to work and providing prison staff with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs, including the roll-out of Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), a peer to peer support programme for staff designed to assist people to deal effectively with the effects of a traumatic event.

To support staff who have joined in the past 12 months, we are focusing on supporting new recruits in their early days. Following training, all new starters receive an in-house support programme designed to meet the specific needs of their establishment, and in line with Prison Safety Policy. Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) has also continued to be as robust and thorough as prior to the pandemic to prepare new entrants for the role of a Prison Officer in a non-pandemic situation. Support for new joiners will continue to be provided for them as regime restrictions change.

Whilst staff who have joined in the 12 months to 31 March 2021 will have had less experience delivering some key elements of the regime than those who joined prior to

Covid-19, we have prioritised restarting activities focused on offender management / 1-1 activity, rehabilitation, education, progression and resettlement. POELT training and ongoing support at establishments will continue to aid new joiners to deliver these important aspects of the regime successfully.

As part of a body of work looking at learning and recovery from Covid-19, we are feeding learning into prison safety and wellbeing initiatives, regime redesign, planning and ongoing mitigations for prisoners. Prisons are also using lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic to prioritise resources to focus on safety and wellbeing, adapt provision, reinforce fair and decent behaviours and to show visible leadership. We are building on learning with a programme of events happening this month which will be an opportunity for operational staff to further share and reflect on learning from Covid to inform practice and both recovery and future reforms. Experienced staff as well as staff who joined in the 12 months to 31 March 2021 will be involved in these in order to best inform discussions."

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

IN THE MEDIA

SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:

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

1. Expressed disappointment at French decision to recommend Bournside coach crash enquiry be shelved. [READ HERE.](#)
2. Reflected on local election results. [READ HERE.](#)
3. Welcomed news of A&E reopening. [READ HERE.](#)

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD



CHELTENHAM BUSINESS WINS QUEEN'S AWARD

Cheltenham based Ocere Ltd has won the Queen's Award for International Trade for Outstanding Short Term Growth in Overseas Sales over the last three years.

Ocere was founded in March 2009 by 22-year-old Tom Parling with just £1.

A Digital Marketing Agency, Ocere helps its clients to grow their businesses online by bringing them greater visibility on search engines. It has itself grown by almost 70% in the last three years, mostly by increasing its overseas revenue by 245%.

Exports now represent just over half of Ocere's sales. The company has a strong strategy combining market research with proactive marketing.

2021 CHELTENHAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



CHELTENHAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Cheltenham International Film Festival is taking place from 24 May to 04 June.

For the second year, the festival will be presented online, bringing the best new films from around the world right into your home.

Film Festival organisers have very kindly offered a discount of 25% off of all films. Simply visit the website [here](#) and use the code **ALEX25**



FOOTBALL REBOOTED

Football Rebooted is a new environmental campaign that aims to save at least one million pairs of pre-played football boots back onto the pitch. This will have the same

impact on the environment as taking 7,000 cars off the road for one year, in terms of the pollution avoided.

The 'donate and claim' campaign, enables anyone with spare football boots or AstroTurf boots to request a freepost 'boot bag' to donate their boots, after which their boots will appear at one of many claim stations that will pop up in parks, training grounds, and at some of the UK's largest football clubs. Premium pairs of the 'most wanted' retro boots and former and current players' boots and other items will also be in the mix, giving anyone a chance to come along and grab a pair to be proud of, for free.

[Read more about the campaign here](#)



**BATHERS
BEATS
CANCER**

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BATHERS BEATS CANCER FUNDRAISING APPEAL

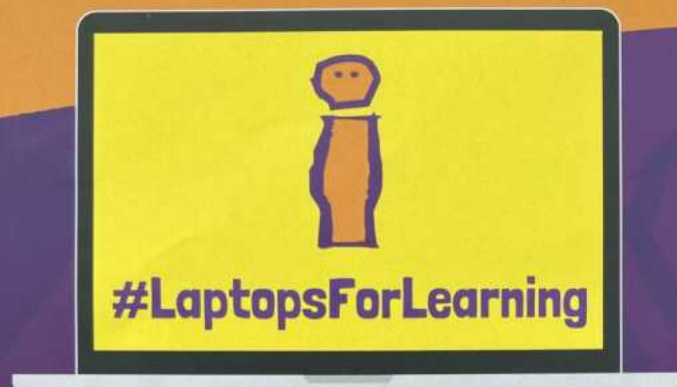
Last week, Alex went along to Up Hatherley Village Hall to join the Bather beats Cancer fundraising event.

Friends and family of Stuart Bathers have been raising money to fund life saving treatment.

As part of the event, Alex donated a bottle of House of Commons Whisky, signed by the Prime Minister to donate to raise funds - NB donations of this nature are paid for by Alex personally, and not claimed on expenses!

If you would like more information on the appeal, please click [here](#).

CAN YOU HELP CHELTENHAM CHILDREN BECOME DIGITALLY ENABLED?



The COVID-19 pandemic has meant more and more children need access to IT devices to support them to learn from home. Even now that children are back in school, many children still do not have adequate digital access at home to support them with homework and revision.

#LaptopsForLearning are continuing to collect donations of laptops and tablets that are less than seven years old and no longer needed. We also welcome donations of money, which goes towards buying new devices, software and anything else they need to support home learning.

Your donations really make a difference!

Find out where and how to donate at:

www.nclbcheltenham.org.uk/laptops-for-learning



LAPTOPS FOR LEARNING

Laptops for learning is a campaign designed to help get devices to children who need them for learning.

So far 50 new laptops across All Saints' Academy and Pittville and 42 refurbished devices across Pittville, All Saints' Academy, Hesters Way Primary, Battledown Centre, Christchurch and Widden (a partner school in a deprived area of Gloucester) have been delivered. There are another 90 devices in the pipeline and further funds to make a second bulk purchase.

Laptops for Learning are currently having a final push (for this school year) on getting the word out that schools are still in need of devices.

Please visit <https://nclbcheltenham.org.uk/laptops-for-learning> to find out how you can help.

USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

Gloucestershire County Council

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

01452 425000

Cheltenham Borough Council

www.cheltenham.gov.uk

01242 262626

Age UK Gloucestershire

www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire

01452 422660

Gloucestershire Abuse Support

01452 726570

Citizens Advice Gloucestershire

01452 527202



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Our mailing address is:

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