

**e-UPDATE #104 - 21.11.2021**

I hope you have had a good weekend. Definitely feeling more wintry today in Cheltenham!

There are updates below on issues ranging from the [Immensa Lab test failure](#) which has affected Cheltenham (I wrote some weeks ago to UKHSA calling for early answers) to my letter holding [Stagecoach and CrossCountry Trains to account](#) for what I'm afraid seems to be a growing trend of service failures.

I have also written to [Severn Trent](#) urging them to publish a long-term plan for tackling **storm overflows**. There are two sites in the Cheltenham constituency - one in **Arle** and another near the **Dowdeswell Reservoir** - and local bill-payers are entitled to know what measures are planned to end storm overflows and by when.

There are also calls for improved safety measures outside [Bournside school](#).

As Solicitor General, one of my duties is to refer cases to the Court of Appeal where I feel the sentence imposed by the court was too lenient. I decided to refer the case of James Clarke, 31, who **inflicted dreadful injuries on his young baby which resulted in the baby's death - a total of 74 fractures to his ribs on at least three separate occasions**. I welcome the decision of the Court of Appeal to increase the sentence to reflect the severity of the crime.

There's more too on the efforts I am helping to lead to improve the CPS' and Police's response to allegations of **rape**.

And there's a bit of local history (if that's your kind of thing!) about **Rowena Cade Avenue** where I was out and about meeting local people over the weekend. There's a lovely connection between Cheltenham and Cornwall.

Finally, I would encourage those who are eligible for their **boosters** to take them up. Although thanks to the local NHS we are doing well in Cheltenham compared to elsewhere in the South West (and indeed the UK is well placed compared to other peer nations) we need to increase uptake - otherwise the implications of Christmas mixing and waning antibody protection are obvious. More details below.

Thank you for reading.

Best wishes,



**Alex Chalk QC MP**

PS A number of people have written to me regarding a leaflet sent around town by a former Cheltenham MP. It is really quite misleading I'm afraid, and I have written to the individual concerned pointing out the significant errors. I have so far not received a response. For a full response, including about pensions or the Owen Paterson issue, please don't hesitate to contact me.

*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](#)*

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## REMEMBRANCE



[A well attended Remembrance Parade in Cheltenham]



[Alex planting a wooden remembrance tribute in Westminster]



[Alex handing over Cheltenham's wreath to staff from the Poppy Train]

### **ALEX PAYS TRIBUTE TO CHELTENHAM'S FALLEN**

Alex laid a wreath at the Remembrance Sunday service in Cheltenham as well as planting a wooden remembrance tribute in the Constituency Garden of Remembrance at the Palace of Westminster.

Alex was also invited by Great Western Railway to lay a wreath on its *Poppy Train* to honour those from Cheltenham who fought for our country. Cheltenham's wreath was placed at the War Memorial at Paddington station.

Posting on Facebook on Sunday, Alex said:

*"So incredibly proud of Cheltenham today. The town turned out in huge numbers to honour our servicemen and women, past and present.*

*"1,296 men and one woman are remembered on our town's memorial. They fell with their faces to the foe, and Cheltenham will never forget them."*

**COVID BOOSTERS**

Counting the number of PATIENTS (without double count)

JCVI Priority Group	JCVI Priority Group Description	Booster Dose	Booster Eligible	Booster Uptake
1	Care Home Residents & Residential Care Workers	2,163	1,024	67.9%
2	80+ & Health and Social Care Workers	39,693	9,281	81.0%
3	75-79	23,194	4,626	83.4%
4	70-74 & CEV	33,448	13,533	71.2%
5	65-69	15,960	13,146	54.8%
6	At Risk	13,165	25,261	34.3%
7	60-64	3,196	3,879	45.2%
8	55-59	2,688	2,512	51.7%
9	50-54	2,345	2,098	52.8%
JCVI Priority Groups 1-9 Total		135,852	75,360	64.3%

Thanks to the efforts of local GPs and other health professionals the uptake of boosters in Gloucestershire is the highest level in the South-West.

But the rate still isn't high enough, as the Clinical Commissioning Group data above shows. There are still thousands of people locally who have yet to take up their offer.

Alex said:

*"I meet regularly with the Hospital Trust, and they've indicated that the level of antibodies for those hospitalised with Covid is often very low, even amongst the double-jabbed, because of the waning effect. The booster offers over 93% protection against symptomatic infection in adults over 50. I would urge Cheltonians to get their booster at the earliest opportunity."*

## TOP STORIES

**ALEX CHALK MP**

Member of Parliament for Cheltenham



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

██████████  
Director of Scientific Strategy and Development  
Chief Scientific Officer Group  
UK Health Security  
SE1 8UG

**Re. Immensa laboratory, Wolverhampton**

Dear ██████████

I understand you are the Director of Scientific Strategy and Development at UKHSA and are leading a 'Serious and Untoward Incident' investigation into the PCR testing failings at the Immensa laboratory in Wolverhampton.

I am writing, purely in my capacity as a constituency MP, to ask that any early conclusions from your investigation (even if preliminary only) are shared as quickly as possible so that steps can be taken to reduce the risk of this ever happening again. The stakes are high. Here in Cheltenham, and indeed across Gloucestershire, our local health systems are dealing with the consequences of very significant infection rates – well over 1,000 per 100,000 and far higher than elsewhere in the UK. This is despite the fact that for much of the pandemic, Gloucestershire's rates have been significantly below the national average.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that errors from the Immensa lab will have played a part in this infection spike. Reassured by their negative PCR results, my constituents will have (entirely blamelessly) gone about their daily lives inadvertently spreading this infectious virus. Now our hospitals are under real strain.

It seems to me that we need to understand three things in particular, in short order:

1. Who or what was responsible for the testing failure? Was it down to an individual or individuals? If so, have they been removed from the process?
2. Alternatively, was this system failure? Has that been corrected?
3. Why weren't the anomalies acted on sooner? What procedures are in place to flag data anomalies, so that UKHSA intervenes promptly?

I'm afraid it is not enough to be told that results will come in due course. At the moment, there is nothing to reassure me or my constituents that precisely the same thing won't happen again. Even if the full report must wait, it is important that early findings are shared with the Gloucestershire CCG, and indeed Public Health Gloucestershire.

I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

Alex

Alex Chalk MP  
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham  
HM Solicitor General for England and Wales

**ALEX DEMANDS ANSWERS FROM THE UK HEALTH SECURITY AGENCY OVER FALSE NEGATIVE TESTS**

Owing to errors in a Wolverhampton lab, approximately 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October, including some from Cheltenham.

When the news of the errors emerged, Alex wrote on behalf of all the Gloucestershire MPs to the Health Secretary and the UK Health Security Agency (formerly PHE) calling for early answers to the investigation that is taking place.

Alex was not satisfied with the response received, and continues to press for the findings, even if preliminary, to be shared. You can read Glos Echo's coverage of Alex's letter by clicking [HERE](#).

Alex was also interviewed by the BBC on this subject. To watch Alex's interview, please click [HERE](#).







PLAY YOUR F  
COLLEA



poppy  
scotland

Alex CHALK MP - 3.4 km

Graham Stuart MP - 3.2 km

Jesse Norman MP - 3.0 km

Kieran Mullan MP - 2.9 km

Mike Kane MP - 2.9 km

Darrea Heagy MP - 2.8 km

David TC Davies MP - 2.8 km

James Sunderland MP - 2.7 km

Nick Thomas-Sumonds MP - 2.7 km

Lord Holmes - 2.7 km

James Daly MP - 2.6 km

Caroline Nokes MP - 2.5 km

Luke Pollard MP - 2.5 km

Chris Evans MP - 2.5 km

JEROME MAYHEW MP - 2.5 km

MATT ROODA MP - 2.5 km

Tobias Ellwood MP - 2.4 km

Stephen Flynn MP - 2.4 km

John Healey MP - 2.4 km

Alex Sobel MP - 2.4 km

JAMES MURPHY MP - 2.3 km

CATHERINE MCKINNEIL MP - 2.3 km

JAMES DUDRIDGE MP - 2.3 km

JUSTIN MADDERS MP - 2.3 km

Gary Sambrook MP - 2.2 km

Gagan Mohindra MP - 2.2 km

Kim Leadbetter MP - 2.2 km

Richard Holden MP - 2.2 km

Selaine Saxby MP - 2.2 km

DR JAMES DAVIES MP - 2.2 km

Catherine West MP - 2.2 km

SCOTT BENTON MP - 2.2 km

Lord Bethell - 2.2 km

Steve McCabe MP - 2.1 km

David Linden MP - 2.1 km

Wendy Chamberlain MP - 2.1 km

Karin Smyth MP - 2.1 km

Jo Stevens MP - 2.0 km

Jonathan Reynolds MP - 2.0 km

David Mundell MP - 2.0 km

Sarah Owen MP - 2.0 km

Gerald Jones MP - 2.0 km

Amanda Solloway MP - 1.9 km

Daisy Cooper MP - 1.9 km

JAMES CRUNDY MP - 1.9 km

ESTHER HVEY MP - 1.9 km

Jo Churchill MP - 1.8 km

JOHN HOWELL MP - 1.8 km

CAT SMITH MP - 1.8 km

Rupa Huq MP - 1.7 km

MARK FRANCOIS MP - 1.6 km

TIM LOUGHTON MP - 1.6 km

Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP - 1.6 km

STEPHANIE PEACOCK MP - 1.5 km

Amanda Milling MP - 1.3 km

PAULA BARBER MP - 1.3 km

Yasmin Qureshi MP - 1.3 km

Mia Gribbin MP - 1.2 km

RACHEL MORRIS MP - 1.0 km

Daniel Zeichner MP - 0.7 km

## **CHELTENHAM LEADS THE PACK!**

Every year, MPs and Lords participate in competition to cycle the furthest distance in five minutes in the 'Poppy Ride' to raise money and awareness for the Royal British Legion.

Alex cycled 3.4km in 5 minutes - the furthest out of the 62 participants.

On Cheltenham's behalf, Alex was presented with the Royal British Legion yellow jersey.

## **ALEX'S SOLICITOR GENERAL ROUND-UP**



## **ALEX AT THE DESPATCH BOX FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL QUESTIONS**

Alex was at the despatch box for the first time since being appointed as HM Solicitor General for England and Wales.

During the session, Alex answered questions on the strategy to drive up rape prosecutions, the recovery of the justice system since the pandemic and tackling hate crime.

Alex also highlighted the work of GARAS (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre) after a survivor praised the help and support she had received from GARAS.

To watch Alex at the despatch box, please click [HERE](#). Please fast forward to 10.10.



### **ALEX'S INTERVENTION SEES BABY-KILLER SENTENCE INCREASED**

A father who murdered his 39-day old baby will spend longer in prison after Alex referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

A post-mortem concluded the baby had sustained a total of 74 fractures to his ribs which had been inflicted on at least three separate occasions. James Clarke was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of fifteen years.

Alex referred his sentence to the Court of Appeal and Clarke's original sentence was increased to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 18 years.

Alex said: *"This was a deeply upsetting and disturbing case, involving an extremely vulnerable victim. Clarke grossly abused his position of trust and his actions stole the life of an innocent child he should have been protecting. It is only right the sentence has been increased to reflect the severity of the crime."*



### **MAN WHO GROOMED TEENAGER HAS SENTENCE TRIPLED FOLLOWING ALEX'S REFERRAL**

A man who engaged in sexual activity with a 14-year-old boy has had his sentence tripled after Alex referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

James Rampton, 36, met the victim at a youth support group for LGBT teenagers. Later that year the offender began to groom the victim by discussing sexual activity via Facebook and then met up with child for sex.

Rampton was originally sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Following Alex's referral,

he will now spend six years behind bars.

Speaking after the hearing, Alex said:

*"The offender took advantage of a young boy who was in the process of coming to terms with his sexuality. It is only right the sentence has been increased to reflect the lasting impact the offender's actions have had on the victim. I hope it can help to bring him some closure."*



 Attorney General's Office

### **ALEX PRAISES WORK OF CIVIL SERVICE "GOVERNMENT LEGAL DEPARTMENT"**

Alex visited the Government Legal Department's office in Leeds to thank staff for their hard work and to hear more about the exciting and critical work of the office.

The Government Legal Department provide legal advice on the development, design and implementation of policies and decisions, drafting secondary legislation and working with Parliamentary Counsel on primary legislation, and representing the government in court.




### **ALEX LEADS 'OPERATION SOTERIA' DRIVE AT CPS WEST MIDLANDS**

As part of his drive to improve the criminal justice response to rape, Alex visited the Crown Prosecution Service West Midlands to discuss Operation Soteria.

Operation Soteria transforms how the police and CPS handle investigations into rape and sexual offences by pushing the police and CPS to focus investigations on suspects rather than complainants' credibility.

Having been piloted with Avon & Somerset Police, Operation Soteria is now being rolled out to The Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Police, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police.



 Attorney General's Office

### **ALEX THANKS WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE FOR EFFORTS TO MEET 'DISCLOSURE' CHALLENGE**

Alex visited West Yorkshire Police to speak with disclosure specialists on the implementation

and impact of the revised Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines.

During his visit, Alex heard more about how West Yorkshire Police have been working collaboratively with the Crown Prosecution Service in order to deliver consistent and improved disclosure practices.

Alex said: "*Disclosure remains one of the most important and complex issues in the criminal justice system, and it is a priority to encourage improvements in disclosure practice in order to ensure the disclosure regime operates effectively, fairly and justly.*"

*"It was a real pleasure to visit West Yorkshire Police to see first-hand how the revised Disclosure Guidelines are helping to deliver consistent and improved disclosure practices."*

Attorney General's Office

# #ThinkBeforeYouPost

**A post like this could constitute contempt of court**

- He is back in court next week – we've all seen him deal drugs to kids down the pub. He needs to go down!! Definitely guilty #nodoubt
- When are the police going to charge Robert? He's hither before and went to anger management – obvs didn't work #chargehim
- Dora has been arrested before for a different crime - no chance she's innocent this time then #sendherdown

Attorney General's Office

## **ALEX BOOSTS #THINKBEFOREYOUPOST CAMPAIGN**

In response to a number of high-profile court cases, Alex has relaunched the #ThinkBeforeYouPost campaign.

The campaign provides advice and guidance on what information, if posted publicly, could leave social media users at risk of being held in "contempt of court".

Alex said: "*Everyone is innocent until proven guilty, and everyone deserves a fair trial.*"

*"A misjudged tweet or post could have grave repercussions and interfere with a trial. A post on social media could mean a trial is delayed or at worst stopped because a fair trial isn't possible – so I would caution everyone, don't get in the way of justice being done."*



## CHELTENHAM UPDATES



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Severn Trent,  
PO Box 407  
Darlington,  
DL1 9WD

**Re: Storm Overflows**

Dear Severn Trent,

I am writing to enquire about Severn Trent's plans for tackling storm overflows in the Cheltenham area. As ST's website notes, the 'combined sewer design is not ideal, and [ST] want to reduce the use of overflows and eventually phase them out altogether.'

Whilst I recognise this infrastructure can't be replaced overnight, I and my constituents (many of whom are billpayers) would welcome clarity on the long-term plan locally for doing so.

The thought of sewage getting into our rivers is upsetting and troubling, and I would be greatly assisted by an early update about ST's proposals for addressing a practice that many might reasonably have assumed had been consigned to history.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Alex

Alex Chalk MP  
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham  
HM Solicitor General for England and Wales

[Sent via email on 28 October]

### **ALEX CALLS ON SEVERN TRENT TO PUBLISH LONG-TERM PLAN FOR TACKLING STORM OVERFLOWS IN CHELTENHAM**

Alex recently voted in favour of stronger measures to reduce harms from storm overflows (see further below).

A new duty has been placed directly on water companies to set out how they will manage and develop their drainage and sewerage system. The Bill also created a new duty on Government

to produce a statutory plan to reduce discharges from storm overflows.

Alex has also written to Severn Trent urging them to publish an early update on its long-term plan for tackling storm overflows in Cheltenham (see above).

Severn Trent sent the following response to Alex:

*"We're absolutely committed to doing more to reduce their use and impact, including having already invested £355 million on overflow improvements and also investing a further £566m in projects that benefit our rivers and educating people on sewer misuse.*

*"We have a programme of work in place to understand and deliver these plans. Once drafted our plans will be published for consultation and we would welcome feedback from you and your constituents to help us shape the outputs.*

*"In the meantime, we do monitor our overflows and can confirm that the ones on the River Chelt are not a listed reason for the river not achieving Water Framework Directive (WFD) good status."*

[emphasis added]

Alex is not satisfied with this response, in particular the fact that the plan appears not yet to have been drafted(!), and continues to press for early publication of proposals to address the **two overflow sites in his constituency - close the the Dowdeswell Reservoir and in Arle.**

### **Misleadings Claims**

A few weeks ago, claims circulated on social media, amplified and repeated by some local politicians in Cheltenham, suggesting that MPs had voted to allow water companies to continue discharging sewage into our rivers. **That was not true.**

What happened was that an amendment tabled in the House of Lords by the Duke of Wellington was voted down because it was **defective** – something that happens quite often when MPs and peers put forward proposals without the assistance of departmental officials or other expert civil servants.

In particular, the Duke's proposals **contained no plans for HOW clean-up measures could be delivered.** There was also no proper enforcement mechanism. They didn't even allow the regulator Ofwat to fine, direct or otherwise force companies to comply with this duty. This is crucial if we are to deliver the improvements we all want.

Meanwhile, the Member of Parliament who worked with the Duke of Wellington has described accusations that MPs had voted in favour of dumping sewage into rivers as "*a wholly exaggerated and misleading social media campaign ... I publicly deplore this interpretation of the vote.*"

More positively, the defects have now been remedied, and the new measures will be far more effective as a result. The new legislation which Alex voted FOR on 10 November includes measures to:

- Create a legal duty on water companies
- Have a **workable enforcement mechanism** – the powerful mechanism in the Water Industry Act , which allows for a full spectrum of sanctions including fines
- Allow OFWAT to issue **enforcement notices**, which legally require companies to take specific action
- a new duty directly on water companies to publish **near real time information** on the operation of storm overflows



### **ALEX HOLDS STAGECOACH AND CROSSCOUNTRY TO ACCOUNT FOR POOR SERVICE**

Alex has grown increasingly concerned that the service offered by CrossCountry Trains and Stagecoach is **deteriorating**. In response he has written to them, to hold them to account and to make clear that he expects them to take all necessary steps to fulfil their advertised service.

In response, Stagecoach issued an apology to Alex's constituents and committed to "really pushing" its recruitment drive, including working with local job centres to fill its vacancies.

Meanwhile, CrossCountry have also apologised for the inconvenience caused and stating that to enable social distancing, they are continuing to use two trains coupled together, meaning they do not have sufficient trains to resume the services withdrawn last summer.

In response, Alex has written to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport and the Traffic Commissioner to escalate the issue. In respect of CrossCountry, Alex is concerned that COVID is being used a pretext to **quietly pension off services (such as the direct**

service to Manchester) which it finds inconvenient and/or costly to deliver. That is not acceptable.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Gloucestershire County Council Highways Team,  
Shire Hall  
Westgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 2TJ

**Re: Bournside School**

Dear Gloucestershire County Council Highways Team,

As you know, there was an accident recently near Bournside School, and it has reminded us all that the crossings in the picture below remain hazardous – not least because there are no markings on the tarmac to warn motorists. At present, the road safety measures are limited to bollards and tactile paving.

At the very least, it does seem to me that there needs to be some road marking to emphasise that these are school crossings. Can you advise please what plans GCC has to address this issue?

Thank you very much for your attention.

I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

Alex

Alex Chalk MP  
Member of Parliament for for Cheltenham  
HM Solicitor General for England and Wales

[Sent via email on 27 October]

**ALEX DEMANDS IMPROVED SAFETY MEASURES OUTSIDE BOURNSIDE SCHOOL**

Following an accident outside Bournside School, in which a pupil was left with a broken leg, Alex wrote to Gloucestershire County Council to call for a proper crossing to prevent further accidents.

Following Alex's representations to GCC, Road Safety Officers agreed to a site meeting with Cllr Emma Nelson (C) and the local Highways Manager, followed by the Think Travel Team.

Alex said: *"I was shocked by the news of another accident outside Bournside, and wrote to the highways authority, calling for urgent action.*

*"Whatever the outcome of the review, it is important that parents and local residents are given an assurance that actions are in train."*



[Alex at Battledown Brewery]

### **ALEX MAKES THE CASE TO RISHI ON BEHALF OF CHELTENHAM BREWERS AND PUBLICANS**

Alex is lobbying the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, on behalf of small Cheltenham providers.

He has written to HMT to raise concerns about the 40l cut-off point for the lower rate of duty. As it stands, smaller breweries who use smaller kegs and casks will not qualify the new reduced rate of alcohol duty.

Alex said: *"Beer brewing and cider making is an increasingly important part of Cheltenham's economy, and I was delighted that the Chancellor confirmed that alcohol duty will be frozen for another year."*

*"However, there is more to do to support small brewers like Battledown Brewery Co. to help the brewing and hospitality industry back on its feet."*

**KICKSTART  
SCHEME**

**We are supporting the  
Kickstart Scheme**

**ALEX BACKS KICKSTART SCHEME AS IT HELPS 100 LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK**

One hundred young people in Cheltenham are now on their way to a fulfilling career thanks to the Treasury's Kickstart scheme.

The Kickstart scheme offers six month paid placements to young people who are claiming Universal Credit and are at risk of long-term unemployment.

The placements give young people the chance to gain real experience and develop their employability skills.

*Alex said: "I'm delighted to see Kickstart is helping so many young people in Gloucestershire and beyond begin their careers. It's an invaluable stepping stone which allows them to gain work experience and learn the skills they need to secure employment in the future."*

For more information on the Kickstart scheme, please click [HERE](#).



### ALEX OUT AND ABOUT MEETING LOCAL RESIDENTS ON SATURDAY

Alex was out and about meeting local residents in town over the weekend.

Rowena Cade was an amazing Cheltenham woman who, after living in the town, moved to Cornwall where she built the **Minack Theatre**. If you don't know it, it's a stunning open-air theatre, hewn by hand out of the Cornish coastline. She did much of the excavation work herself, in her seventies and eighties.

Posting on Facebook, Alex added:

*"I had a small role in a (very amateur!) production of Midsummer Night's Dream at the Minack a million years ago, and I'll never forget how magical the theatre was. So lovely to see Rowena Cade recognised and remembered here in Cheltenham."*



[Alex at All Saints' Academy and Pate's]

**ALEX CELEBRATES "PARLIAMENT WEEK" IN CHELTENHAM'S SCHOOLS**



As part of Parliament Week, Alex visited students at Pate's, All Saints' Academy and Balcarras - and also took questions from primary schools children from Christ Church Primary and St Mark's.

Alex discussed a range of subjects, including COP26, his role as HM Solicitor General and the importance of political activism among young people.

Alex said: *"Parliament Week is always a great opportunity to meet with and engage in important conversations about the role of Parliament and democracy with young people."*

*"It was fantastic to meet so many young people who were clearly passionate about democracy and activism. I feel sure many will go on to make a positive contribution to public life."*



### **ALEX TAKES PART IN CHELTENHAM EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP CHANGEMAKERS LAUNCH EVENT**

Alex was delighted to attend the launch of Cheltenham Education Partnership's new ChangeMakers project.

ChangeMakers is a collaborative project which aims to bring young people together from partnerships schools to empower them to have a voice and take action against climate change.

During the event, Alex participated in a Q&A on COP26, Government action to tackle climate change and the steps needed to boost sustainability in Cheltenham.

Alex said: "The CEP ChangeMakers launch event was a fantastic, well organised, opportunity to share ideas with young people about how best to take action here in Cheltenham to promote sustainability and tackle the climate crisis. I particularly welcomed the focus on green transport, and I'm hoping the students I met will be the Cheltenham cyclists of the future!"



### **FURTHER £4.8 MILLION OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING SECURED FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE CARE PROVIDERS THIS WINTER**

Alex has welcomed the additional £4.8 million of Government funding awarded to Gloucestershire care providers ahead of winter.

**Gloucestershire County Council will use this additional funding to ensure Gloucestershire care providers have the support they need to keep vulnerable people safe this winter.**

Alex said: "Winter is always a challenging time for the care sector and with Covid still circulating in our community this year is expected to be more difficult than before.

"This funding is vital to ensure that we carry on protecting Gloucestershire's most vulnerable people as well as to support the staff who continue to work tirelessly to keep our residents safe."

LEVELLING UP *fund*



**£12.8 MILLION**

— *to* **LEVEL UP** —

**CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER**

BY UPGRADING TRANSPORT LINKS

**BUDGET21**

**ALEX HELPS SECURE £12.8 MILLION TO UPGRADE GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S TRANSPORT LINKS**

Alex helped to secure **£12.8million** from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to provide a cash injection into sustainable and active travel in the county.

The funding will be used to further improve connectivity between Cheltenham and Gloucester by connecting what has been known as "the missing link of cycle routes" in the heart of the county.

The funding will connect the recently enhanced Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Towpath with the **A40 West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme**, via Gloucester and the B4063 cycle path.

Alex said: *"Investing in public transport, as well as walking and cycling are crucial to building a cleaner, greener, healthier future. With vision and common sense, a historic opportunity to improve transport in Cheltenham can be seized."*

## ADDITIONAL UPDATES

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

#### **As HM Solicitor General:**

- Met with the **Lord Chief Justice**
- Met with the Bar Council
- Met with **Sir Howard Morrison**, Judge of the International Criminal Court
- Addressed the **CPS Senior Leaders conference**

#### **As Cheltenham's MP:**

- Held a constituency **surgery**
- Lobbied the Chief Secretary to the Treasury following a meeting with **TURF** (a group representing independent hospitality businesses in Cheltenham)
- Opened the new Sixth Form cafe at **Bournside School**
- Met with Gloucestershire's **Police and Crime Commissioner**
- Met with Glos Police to discuss crime trends in Cheltenham
- Visited the owner of **Edible Art Patisserie** in Montpellier
- Helped a constituent to re-register their vehicle after criminals had cloned their number plate
- Helped a constituent retrieve their Biometric Residence Permit from the DVLA so that they could attend a funeral abroad

#### Received Briefings from:

- NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group about the **rollout of booster jabs in Gloucestershire**
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about **the Environment Bill**

## WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Since the last update, Alex has answered 7 Written Parliamentary Questions from MPs. Some of the topics raised include money laundering and the International Corruption Unit.

See some examples below:

**Q. To ask the Attorney General what steps are being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the Serious Fraud Office.**

Alex responded:

*"The Law Officers' sponsorship and statutory superintendence of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is undertaken in accordance with the Framework Agreement between the Law Officers and the Director of the SFO, which was published in January 2019.*

*As set out in the Framework Agreement, The Law Officers regularly meet the Director and her senior leadership team to discuss the SFO's work in tackling the top level of serious and complex fraud, bribery, and corruption. This includes regular Ministerial Strategic Boards, chaired by the Attorney General or Solicitor General, which oversee the strategic direction of the SFO and hold the SFO to account for the delivery of its strategic objectives.*

**Q.To ask the Attorney General, how many referrals the Crown Prosecution Service has received from the National Crime Agency's International Corruption Unit for charging decisions for each year in the last five years.**

Alex answered:

*"The [CPS](#) is committed to tackling economic crime, including where these crimes span multiple jurisdictions. The CPS works closely with the [National Crime Agency \(NCA\)](#) and other investigative agencies; this includes providing early investigative advice on cases, obtaining evidence from overseas using mutual legal assistance and providing support through its network of prosecutors deployed overseas.*

*The CPS does not breakdown referrals by individual departments within the NCA. The following data is available which shows the number of cases received by the CPS Specialist Fraud [Division](#) from the National Crime Agency for pre-charge decisions.*

*Pre-charge decision receipts*

*2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019 2019-2020 2020-2021*

*11          26          20          6          42*

*The following shows number of cases where charging decisions have been reached.*

*Pre-charge decision finalisations*

*2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019 2019-2020 2020-2021*

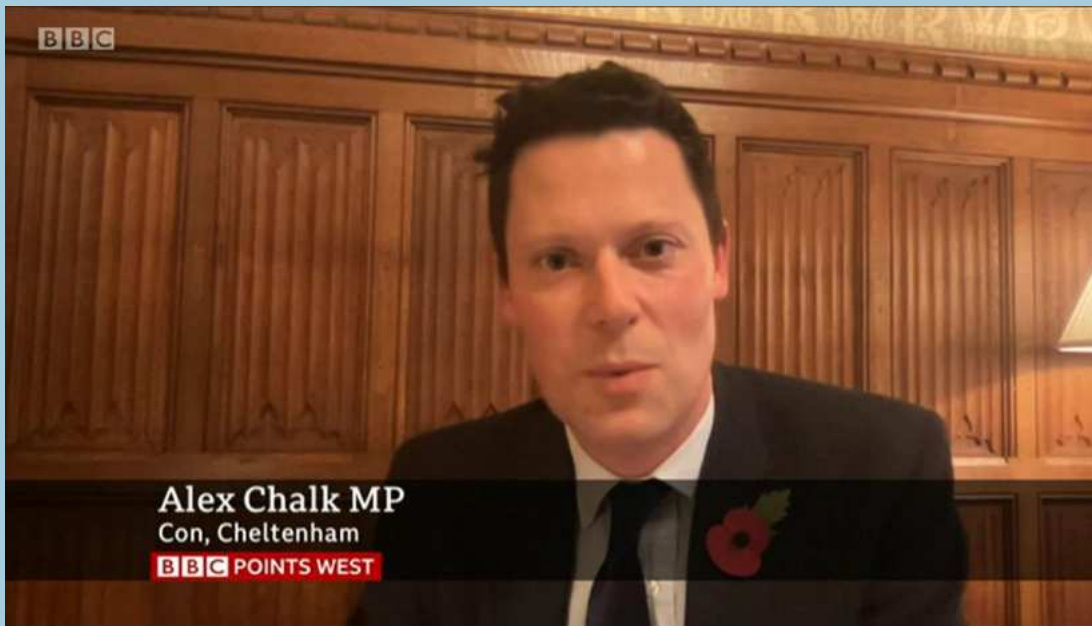
*0          2          26          42          34*

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

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## IN THE MEDIA

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[Click the image above to watch Alex's interview (10.23) about the Immensa lab on BBC Points West]

### **SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:**

Alex has:

- (i) been interviewed on BBC Points West. [WATCH HERE](#)
- (ii) been interviewed on **Greatest Hits Radio** [LISTEN HERE](#)
- (iii) written an article for the **Law Gazette** [READ HERE](#)
- (IV) written four articles for the **Cheltenham Post**
- (V) written four articles for the **Gloucestershire Echo**, in which he:
  1. Called for continued investment in Cheltenham [READ HERE](#)
  2. Welcome additional funding boost for Cheltenham schools [READ HERE](#)
  3. Explained how the Environment Bill will help to reduce the amount of untreated sewage in waterways [READ HERE](#)
  4. Reflected on COP26 [READ HERE](#)

Take back the night, march against sexual violence & harassment. Join us in justice!

Reclaim the night march gives women a voice & chance to reclaim the streets at night.

# RECLAIM THE NIGHT MARCH

26th November

18:00

Gathering at  
Montpellier Gardens  
Marching to the  
Brewery Quarter

In every sphere of life we negotiate the threat or reality of rape, harassment & sexual assault

here for you  
RAPE AND  
SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



#Reclaimthenight  
@glosrasac

ALL WELCOME  
PLEASE BRING A FLASH LIGHT  
WITH YOU

Spread the message that no woman is ever to be blamed for violence against her.

**RECLAIM THE NIGHT MARCH IN CHELTENHAM**

Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC) are organising a Reclaim the Night march on 26 November.

GRASAC would like as many people as possible to join to show their support and to help eliminate all violence against women and girls.

The march will start at 6pm and will leave from Montpellier Gardens and finish at the Brewery Quarter.



# Discounted Counselling

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

**WE ARE HERE  
TO LISTEN.**

**Session fees  
start from  
£25.00**

Are you struggling and would like to talk to someone in a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental space?

Please get in touch and make a self-referral to our adult discounted counselling (talking therapy) service.

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**ESSENTIAL SPACE COUNSELLING COMMUNITY**  
**WWW.ESSENTIALSPACE.CO.UK**  
**OR EMAIL**  
**ESSENTIALSPACECOUNSELLING@GMAIL.COM**

**We are a relatively new service so our waiting times are currently not very long, take the first step and get in contact!**

Unit A, 1 Knapp Road, Cheltenham, GL50 3QH (Next door to the RSPCA)

## **DISCOUNTED COUNSELLING SERVICE IN CHELTENHAM**

Three Cheltenham counsellors have launched Essential Space Counselling to provide a new discounted counselling service to adults.

The sessions are at a reduced cost, based on income and are assessed on a honesty basis.

Essential Space Counselling are hoping to enable people to access support quickly and at a significantly reduced cost to private therapy.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).

# 12 *days of giving*

£120,000 | 120 charities | 12 days

**VOTE FOR ST VINCENT'S AND ST GEORGE'S ASSOCIATION!**

St Vincent's and St George's Association have been nominated to receive £1,000 from Ecclesiastical's 12 Days of Giving charity fundraising event.

St Vincent's and St George's Association enable adults with disabilities, complex needs and mental health conditions to live the life they want regardless of their disability.

To vote for St Vincent's and St George's, please click [HERE](#).



### **WINTER HOLIDAY FUN FOR FAMILIES**

Registration for the winter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, funded with **£1.39m from the Department for Education** for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals, is now open.

Using grant funding, the council is also once again able to offer local holiday activities which are available to all children and young people across the county.

The winter programme will run for four days between 20 and 23 December 2021. Families who registered in the summer will be automatically enrolled and do not need to sign up again.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).

### **USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS**

#### **Gloucestershire County Council**

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk)

01452 425000

#### **Cheltenham Borough Council**

[www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk)

01242 262626

#### **Age UK Gloucestershire**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire)

01452 422660

#### **Gloucestershire Abuse Support**

01452 726570

**Citizens Advice Gloucestershire**

01452 527202

**GRASAC (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)**

[www.glosrasac.org](http://www.glosrasac.org)

01452 305421



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**Our mailing address is:**

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United Kingdom

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