

## Sorting out the vaccines

With the emergence various 'variants' of the COVID19 virus, there's been more pressure to keep up with the changes. Vaccine trials are going on all over the World.

Even as approved vaccines are being rolled out (3 in the UK) there's ongoing debate and monitoring among the Health Professionals on the conditions for their supply, storage and application.

All 3 in use have reported they are around 90% effective in late stage trials. All 3 are confident of their 'safety' and 'efficacy'.

The **ASTRAZENECA** vaccine was the first approved and given to UK patients (on 4th January). 82-year-old Brian Pinker from Oxford was the first patient in the World to receive it.

The **Pfizer/BioNTech** vaccine was the first to be approved in the UK - and is currently being rolled out across the country.

The **Moderna** jab, which has been approved for use in the US, has yet to be approved by the UK.

The Pfizer vaccine has to be kept in a commercial deep freezer at -70deg while the AstraZeneca one can be stored in a normal fridge.

The main problem holding up the vaccinations has been the supply of the vaccines.

We'll only beat COVID if everyone 'sticks to the rules'

## It was never going to "be easy"

It's as we feared and as the Health Professionals have been telling us for months, The Coronavirus isn't going to 'lie down easily' and just when we thought we could see light at the end of the tunnel, the much anticipated 2nd and 3rd phases are wreaking havoc across the world. All parts of the UK are suffering and other EU countries - Spain, Italy, France and Germany are back in lockdown - some for the third time.

### Vaccination procedure

All three vaccines require 2 doses. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has set the priority to give as many 'at-risk' people as possible a first jab. - and the 2nd dose to be completed within 12 weeks. Individuals will get letters calling them for the vaccination in an agreed order.

Individuals will be called in to central vaccination points, going down through agreed age divisions - starting with the over-80s - then the over 70s and so on - and including those with underlying health conditions.

**You must wait get an appointment letter from your Health Board.**

### Are the Vaccines safe?

It's not likely to affect many Retired Members - but individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding can take any of the UK approved vaccines, but you should have a discussion with your Doctor about the risks and benefits first.

Anyone with an allergy to a specific ingredient in the Pfizer or Oxford vaccines should not receive the jabs. The problem is they don't seem to have specified the

'products in question'. If you're in doubt, check with your doctor.

People with other types of allergies can now safely take the vaccines, according to the UK medicines regulator, who has looked at evidence from the hundreds of thousands of people inoculated so far.

## One Million Over-75s still not paying the licence fee!

"The battle to keep free TV licences for the over-75s is not over. Over a million over-75s have not paid a penny towards the licence fee, which became due last August. Silver Voices (SV) - which has been leading the campaign against removal of free licences commented

"The BBC assumed that as the immediate furore waned, most over 75s would bow to threats and pay up. They seriously underestimate the resolve of the older generation when faced with the scrapping of a hard-won welfare benefit ..."

Despite a financial crisis (a huge £160 million hole in its Budget this year) the Beeb has put off a decision on how to proceed. It's clearly impossible for the BBC to take enforcement action against such a large number of determined senior

citizens. Even to try would cause immense reputational damage. The BBC and the Government need to change strategy and find a way to restore a fair free licences scheme.

The BBC Director of Policy has written to SV as follows .....

"There are no visits taking place in relation to over-75 licences at this time nor are enforcement letters being issued to this group". SV has restated its offer to the BBC to discuss solutions to the problem.

(Continued Page 2)



Glasgow-born **CHRISTINA McANEA** has been elected as **UNISON's General Secretary**

**Christina is the first woman to head UNISON** (Full report on page 2)

**IF WE HELD A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR EVERY VICTIM OF THE HOLOCAUST WE WOULD BE SILENT FOR ELEVEN AND A HALF YEARS.**



**Holocaust Memorial Day**  
**27th JANUARY**

27th January is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. More than 6 million Jewish people were murdered during the Holocaust, alongside millions of other victims of Nazi persecution.

Since World WarII, genocides have occurred in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. Each year, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and take action to create a safer future. The more that people learn, the more empathy, and the more action.

## President Biden offers fresh hope for the World

For many of us, a major point of HOPE in the past weeks has been the result of the US Elections.

The need to focus on Covid and make its defeat must be a key priority for everyone It was heartening to hear new President Biden stressing the priority is a need to "move from the past and look ahead to the future". At last a country not at war with itself .... At last ... someone who believes in Unity and not conflict and division ... dare I say it, someone with a degree of sense.

President Biden insisted that we can only beat the virus and see some form of normality "if we all work together". Everyone has their part to play and everyone must stick to the rules.

**It's alarming to hear that London Police had to break up a wedding party involving over 400 guests at the weekend (Don't they get the message?)**



## When you get a date for your vaccine .... TAKE IT.

Don't mess about! The inoculation isn't for fun. It's our only hope of beating the Virus.

**Put the date in your diary. Make sure you attend the vaccine centre at the correct time and date.**



# Christina lands UNISON's top job ...

Commenting on her election she said "I'm grateful to all who voted for me. I become General Secretary at a most challenging time – both for the country and our public services. Staff have worked throughout the pandemic, and it's their skill and dedication that will see us out the other side. UNISON will continue to speak up for them and do all it can to protect them in the difficult months ahead.

Despite the risks, the immense pressures and sheer exhaustion, the dedication and commitment of our key workers knows no end. I will not let this Government, nor any future one, forget that."

"Supporting public service workers through the pandemic, securing an early pay rise for NHS staff and ensuring the government backs down on its plans for an ill-judged pay freeze will be my immediate priorities. Pushing for the funding and the political will to create a quality, affordable national care service, where staff are respected and paid fairly, comes close behind."

Outgoing GS Dave Prentis said: "This is a historic day for UNISON. I'm delighted that Christina has been elected. I am proud that our union with over 1M women has its first woman leader. I know she'll continue to stand up for all public service workers, holding employers and the Government to account in pursuit of the strong, well-funded services that the UK's communities both need and deserve."

### Close of Voting - 5pm Friday 27th November 2020

Election result		% Vote	
Christina McAnea	63,900	47.7 %	ELECTED
Paul Holmes	45,220	33.7%	
Roger McKenzie	14,450	10.79 %	
Hugo Pierre	10,382	7.75 %	
Number of eligible voters	1,367,084	Number of invalid votes	130
Total number of votes cast:	134,082	Total votes counted	133,952
Turnout:	9.8%		

**CHRISTINA MCANEA** is UNISON's new General Secretary – the first woman to head the union.

Born in Drumchapel, Glasgow she left school at 16 and worked in the civil service, the NHS and retail before going to University at 22 and achieved a degree in English and History before starting as a Housing Officer for Glasgow City Council.

Christina has worked at UNISON since it was formed in 1993. Before then, she served as NALGO's Women's Officer in the late 1980s.

## TV Licence debate (continued from page 1)

### TV Licence Petition

Silver Voices' petition on the official Government website, calling on the Government to take back responsibility for the free licence scheme, continues to gather signatures. At over 8000, is well on the way to achieving our target of 10,000 signatories to force the Government to respond to our petition.

SV Director Dennis Reed has said "We will never give up this fight for the older generation, many of whom fought in the World War II and who have paid taxes and national insurance all their working lives. Allowances such as free licences were introduced to compensate for the low level of the UK state pension compared to other developed countries".

Some SV members have still not signed and shared themselves! **If you haven't done so, do it now.** The more the merrier!

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/562729>



## STICK TO THE LOCKDOWN RULES

- **FACE** coverings - always wear a face mask or covering in shops and other public places
- **AVOID** crowded places
- **CLEAN** your hands thoroughly and regularly
- **TWO-METRE** gap - remember 'social distancing' and keep a 3 metre (6 ft) gap between you and others
- **SELF-ISOLATE** and book a test if you have any sign of symptoms

## "ANI" .... "Action Needed Immediately"

Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) is a new national CODEWORD SCHEME to which has been launched to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help from the safety of their local pharmacy.

Studies show that with COVID restrictions, more people are being subjected to domestic abuse. They are also more isolated and find difficulty to accessing help and support.

The Ask for ANI scheme is intended to operate alongside existing work to provide an additional help for the most vulnerable people to access emergency support.

Anyone suffering domestic abuse can use the Codeword "ANI" in participating pharmacies to let a member of staff know that they need ...

- an emergency police response
- help to contact a helpline or
- specialist support service.

Participating Pharmacies (including all branches of Boots) will display posters (shown left) in their window and around the pharmacy to let customers know they can approach staff for help.

Any information shared with staff will be treated as confidential.

If a customer uses the codeword or asks for help, the member of staff will ask the victim to accompany them to a consultation room. They will check whether the customer is in danger and wants the police to be called.

If so, the staff member will offer the use of a phone to dial 999 or make the call for them.

## The Scottish Regional Retired Members Forums

The Scottish Region Retired Members Forum meetings are still being held on-line. The numbers participating have been growing steadily and we now have a good range of branches from across the Region represented.

The Forum agenda will be issued just before the meeting. If you have any items you want discussed or you want to report to the meeting, contact the Scottish Regional Secretary Barbara Fulton (contact details below)

If you want details on how to join the meeting contact Barbara for the joining instruction and video link.

e-mail - babsunison@yahoo.co.uk  
Mobile 07954380753



Barbara Fulton

## Is it AGE or COVID?

Maybe it's age .... or maybe it's the effect of the lockdown .... but I'm sure my expectations lower than before ....

I asked Sue the other night "What's happening tomorrow?"

"Not much" she replied. "We've just got a shopping delivery coming from Morrisons".

I couldn't help respond with ....

"Don't you think that'll be enough excitement for one day ....!"

If the victim is not in an emergency situation, the staff member will support the victim to contact a national domestic abuse helpline or local support service.

They may also contact the police on 101.



## Retired Members News

is produced and edited by

Liam Chalmers 50 Brooms Rd  
Dumfries DG1 2LA

liam.chalmers@sky.com - 01387267647