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Campaign for an **E**nglish **P**arliament

Think of England Number 99: January 2020



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Number 99 January 2020

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RECOMMENDED READING: A Short History of England by Simon Jenkins published by Hurst £20 pp320



Campaign for an English Parliament Aims, Principles and Policies.

We campaign for an English Parliament, meaning a parliament for the people of England, for whom England is their chosen or inherited home and who are legally entitled to vote.

We campaign for an English Parliament with powers at least as great as those of Scotland's, i.e. a Parliament and Executive (Government) that can make Acts (primary legislation) on the same domestic issues (e.g. health, welfare & education) that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

The CEP works with academics, business groups, trades unions, think tanks and the media to create the conditions whereby UK MPs see that there is no alternative to the re-establishment of the English Parliament.

The CEP is a pressure group. It is not a political party. It does not contest elections.

The CEP is not and will not be affiliated to or formally linked with any political party

Editorial: Welcome to our first edition for 2020 and we wish all our readers, members and supporters a very happy and prosperous New Year.



Now that the Brexit vote has illustrated the differences in outlook between Scotland and England we hear voices from Scotland calling for a federal UK. Perhaps the British elite will listen to them—they usually do! Still we are hearing more voices expressing what we have pointed out over the decades namely that only a federal UK with an English parliament will keep the UK united.

However Boris Johnson is an avowed unionist so we need to keep up the pressure and we shall be reporting on our actions in due course. I expect there will be little to report on English domestic politics as Parliament will be caught up in negotiations with the EU. Indeed with the current international crises I doubt there will be time for the UK parliament to devote to English matters except where they hope to keep the vote.

The Northern Powerhouse has a powerful voice and Boris Johnson has made many promises about increased spending there but nothing about reforming the discriminatory Barnett formula. In fact the increased spending in England will mean increased spending in the whole of the UK as any capital expenditure in England attracts Barnett funding for the devolved administrations.

While our opponents claim that the preponderance of MPs from English constituencies means Westminster is an English Parliament read Jack Sheldon's research from the Constitution Unit that demonstrates it has not been the case.

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Campaigning for England: Don't moan about England, stand up for her!

By member Mattanza M Fedora

With the dawn of a new year, we're all faced with time for reflection on past actions and right the wrongs we might have made.

Every year for Hogmanay, I always make the same resolution to be honest with myself and not allow whatever stands in my way to stop me from continuing to fight for progressive social change. This year, all the Westminster parties are guilty of not listening to the ever-growing demand for change to the status quo, and as such leaves it open for the

media to manipulate the masses into voting against their best interests. The impact on how many people in England see their own country after many working communities voted on impulse for people they knew did not hold their best interests at heart is PRECISELY the opposite of what needs to happen.

Having spoken to many members of many parties across the political spectrum about ways to save England from being ruled by a minority government, English Devolution elected under STV, they often express an interest. Still, due to being caught up in the heat of the moment of despair at the recent results of an election or referendum, they often fail to think clearly in terms of long term goals.

I understand how our mental health can take a toll in times like these, and how it's often tempting to fall into despair. But as history has proven on multiple occasions, this is the perfect time for a movement to take centre-stage in retaliation. It was the same as the '60s with such forms of music The Hippie Movement in protesting against Vietnam, Heavy Metal and Punk Rock in resistance to the assault on Working Communities during the days of the Miners Strike, mass unemployment, as well as both institutionalised racism and homophobia.

Now more than anything is the time for you activists AND artists alike to think England and build Jerusalem on the foundations of what the Westminster Elite have *supposedly destroyed. By creating our protest art AND radical ideas of political reform for making so we never fall into this state again!

English Devolution elected through STV is the first thing we must aim for to make that long-term goal a reality, and whatever party you support, make that abundantly clear in your message that it's the way for us all to win!

In the words of Edmund Burke: "[W]hen bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."

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### Times letters Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Sir, I am sure I am not alone among Lib Dems in regretting Sir Vince Cable's decision to stand down last summer. He rightly foresaw the "revoke Article 50" decision as a disaster and was too mature to have proclaimed himself as potential prime minister. Now that we may have an independence referendum in Scotland and a border poll in Northern Ireland, is this not the time to be considering again the possibilities of a British Isles confederation, replacing the House of Lords with a senate elected by its component institutions? **Lord Steel of Aikwood**, House of Lords

### Times letters Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

Sir, Lord Steel of Aikwood is absolutely right to advocate a federal constitution for the United Kingdom. The imminent decanting of MPs and peers to new premises while the Houses of Parliament are refurbished provides an opportunity to create a suitable home for a new English Parliament, which is the most essential prerequisite for a properly federal UK. It could be housed in the new building to which MPs will move, constructed as a permanent rather than a temporary structure, with the refurbished Palace of Westminster housing the federal parliament, with or without the House of Lords, which might well become redundant in a federal model.

Moving towards a federal United Kingdom, perhaps initially through the establishment of a constitutional commission, has the virtue of addressing rising demands for greater autonomy in Northern Ireland and Wales as well as in Scotland. It might also bring to an end the disastrous and divisive recent trend of government by referendum.

**Ian Bradley, Emeritus professor of cultural and spiritual history, St Andrews University**

*Editor's comment in The Times: I couldn't agree more with Ian Bradley, and Lord Steel. My colleagues and I (google Scilla Cullen) have been working and lobbying for this since 1998.*

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Boris Johnson's brave new era must start with a ruthless Whitehall revolution

Telegraph, 15 December 2019: Nick Timothy

The People's Government, elected with a thumping majority, has urgent work to do. Yet its first declara-



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tion of intent is to begin the apparently insular task of reforming the machinery of government. In fact, with five years in power ahead, and ambitious plans to transform the country, reforming the state is a vital first step for the Prime Minister. As anybody living in the regions, relying on public services or working at any level of government knows, our state is broken.

This explains why voters complain that “nobody ever listens” and “nothing ever gets done.”

Despite the need to improve regional productivity, public investment in R&D is higher in London, the South East and East of England than anywhere else. According to government figures, London, Oxford and Cambridge receive almost half – 46.1 per cent – of all public R&D investment in England.

We can blame political decisions for these failures, but the nature of the state plays its part. The power of the Treasury in Whitehall, and the power of Whitehall across the nations, regions and institutions of the state, is a related problem that needs to be reversed. Whatever the performance of the devolved Scottish and Welsh governments, for example, they can blame London because London has never let go the levers of power. England has no national parliament – and its regions are neglected as a result – and even the new metro-mayors are feeble institutions that need to be strengthened vis-à-vis both Whitehall and their relevant local councils.

The UK should move to a fully federal model, with an English Parliament. The House of Lords should be replaced by an elected chamber. Powerful new regional and cultural institutions should be established. More senior civil servants should be appointed by secretaries of state and made more directly accountable to Parliament. Quangos should be more accountable to ministers, mayors and MPs.

representation in the House of Commons?

Posted on December 21, 2019 by The Constitution Unit

We have a new parliament, a new majority government and a significant number of new MPs. As Jack Sheldon explains, the distribution of MPs by party is not even across the UK, which could have a significant impact on how the Commons handles key matters related to Brexit and the devolved administrations.



The general election result has underlined that there are substantially different patterns of electoral competition in each of the four territories that comprise the United Kingdom. For the third consecutive election, a different party secured the most seats and votes in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Moreover, the large majority secured by Boris Johnson’s Conservatives relied overwhelmingly on an exceptionally strong performance in England – of the 365 seats won by the Conservatives, 345 are in England.

Breakdown of 2019 general election result by territory

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Spk	SNP	PC	DUP	SF	SDLP	All
England	345	179	7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotland	6	1	4	0	-	48*	-	-	-	-	-
Wales	14	22	0	0	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
N. Ireland	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	8	7	2	1

** Including Neale Hanvey, who is sitting as an independent after being suspended by the party following the close of nominations.*

The territorial divergence that the UK’s politics has experienced over recent decades has important implications not just for election outcomes, but for the substantive activity of representation performed by MPs in the House of Commons. MPs often seek to act as ‘territorial representatives’, focusing on the specific concerns of their nation or region. This has not so far received much attention from academics, a gap which my PhD project is seeking to fill by examining the parliamentary behaviour of MPs from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and two English counties, Cornwall and Yorkshire, between 1992 and 2019. Early findings suggest that substantive territorial representation is particularly prevalent among members of nationalist parties and other parties that run candidates only in one territory, but that it is also a relatively common feature of the parliamentary contributions of many members of the UK-wide parties, at least in more recent parliaments. It can take various forms including representation of the material interests, public opinion and culture and/or identity of the territory in question, or of sub-state political institutions. With crucial questions pertaining to the future of the Union set to be up for discussion, how can we expect MPs

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from the different parts of the UK to go about representing their territories in the new parliament?

England : Despite being drawn so overwhelmingly from English constituencies, there are few indications that the enlarged group of Conservative MPs will explicitly focus on England as a unit. While the Conservatives introduced English votes for English laws in 2015 and some prominent Conservative MPs have called for an English Parliament in the past, the ‘West Lothian question’ has slipped down the political agenda over the past few years as Brexit has emerged as the dominant issue for the right. That seems unlikely to change now, despite some interest from external commentators such as Nick Timothy, Theresa May’s former special adviser. Conservative interest in the constitutional English question was always motivated to a significant extent by concern that a Labour-led government might be able to force through policies applying only to England even though a majority of English MPs were opposed, as happened on a few occasions in the New Labour years. With the Conservatives now having a large majority overall, the political incentive to focus on the English question just isn’t there at the moment.

Having said this, it is natural that Conservative MPs in the new parliament will have a better feel for politics in England than elsewhere in the UK. It can be expected that the agenda of the Johnson government and the issues taken up by Conservative backbenchers will be shaped by public opinion in the seats that they hold, and especially the sorts of seats – many in towns that voted heavily for Brexit in 2016 – that they have gained from Labour and will be defending at the next election. Thus, even if Conservative MPs do not explicitly present themselves as advocating ‘English’ interests it is inevitable that English opinion will be their focus far more than that elsewhere.

Current English Affairs:

A renewed focus on innovation can deliver a resurgence in the regions

The Times. December 4 2019, David Smith, Comment

Perhaps most starkly, as highlighted recently in a speech by Andy Haldane, the Bank of England’s chief economist, in his capacity as chairman of the Industrial Strategy Council, the gap between the highest and lowest regions in terms of income per head is about 150 per cent. Having narrowed between 1900 and 1960, it is back to where it was at the beginning of the 20th century.

Mr Haldane also highlighted how large the regional divisions in the UK are compared with similar countries. “The gap between richest and poorest regions in the UK is almost twice as large as in France and three quarters larger than in Germany,” he noted. These differences in income per head are driven in large part, though not entirely, by massive regional differences in productivity. London, the South East and the East of England act as Lady Bountiful to the rest of the country, official statistics showing them to be the only three regions paying more in tax revenues than they take out in government spending. One of Scotland’s Achilles’ heels for independence is a budget deficit of 7 per cent of gross domestic product in 2018-19.

Social care crisis wastes £½m of NHS money a day

The Times, December 5 2019: Chris Smyth, Whitehall Editor

Analysis of NHS figures on “delayed transfers of care” found that in 917 days since the last election elderly patients have spent two and a half million nights needlessly stuck in hospital because of the social care crisis not medical need.

Delays because of a lack of help at home or care home beds have wasted half a billion pounds of NHS money since 2017, according to Age UK. All patients wait longer to be treated because ministers have left hospitals to pick up the pieces of a crumbling elderly care system, the charity said. The Conservatives have been criticised for failing to announce a policy on social care in their manifesto, instead promising to “urgently” seek a consensus. The party is committed to starting cross-party talks on the issue within 100 days if it wins a majority.

About 1.5 million older people are denied help with tasks such as washing and dressing as council care budgets struggle to keep up with an ageing population. NHS leaders have warned that this is piling pressure on hospitals as they are overwhelmed with frail elderly people who have nowhere else to go.

Caroline Abrahams, the Age UK director, said: “We are all paying for the inability of our politicians to fix social care, whether you are waiting for a knee operation or waiting hours in A&E. When hospitals get jammed up because they can’t discharge older people there are no beds for new patients.”

An average night in a hospital bed costs £346 against £84 for a care home and £17 a day for help at home, suggesting that £587 million has been wasted on delays. There is simply not nearly enough social care available to allow older people to be safely discharged. The waste of money is staggering but the human



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cost is arguably even greater, with many older people finding their recovery and rehabilitation is seriously delayed or in the worst cases out of reach altogether.”

Nick Ville, director of policy at the NHS Confederation, which represents health bosses, said: “Ninety-seven per cent of health leaders we surveyed in **England** believe the social care crisis is damaging the NHS and patient care. Age UK’s analysis is further evidence. “Creating a sustainable care system has to be a priority for the next government. Like the NHS, it needs a long term plan and significant investment. Otherwise, people will continue to suffer by being left in hospitals when services are busier than ever, waiting time standards are not being met and we have significant staffing gaps.”

Boom in council ‘stealth’ taxes for waste removal and funeral services

The Times , December 7 2019: Andrew Ellson, Consumer Affairs Correspondent
Families have been hit by a huge rise in local “stealth” taxes over the past decade as councils introduce garden and bulky waste removal charges and raise the cost of funeral services, pest control and even public lavatories.

Analysis by *The Times* of council accounts shows that revenue from environmental, regulatory and planning charges has increased by almost 50 per cent to £2.3 billion since 2009. Last year, revenue from these charges increased by more than two and a half times the rate of inflation as councils scrambled to raise cash after ten years of austerity. This means every home in **England** is now paying an average of more than £100 a year in council charges on top of their average council tax bill of £1,671.

The figures exclude parking, traffic management and transport charges, which add £2.4 billion to local authority coffers, taking the annual cost to more than £200 per household. Those fees have increased by 10 per cent on a decade ago, suggesting that councils feel unable to milk any more money from motorists so have moved on to other areas to raise revenue.

In recent years dozens of councils have introduced charges or subscription schemes to collect or dispose of garden waste or bulky items. Reading council, for example, charges residents £60 a year to collect green waste and a further £51.10 for a bin to put it in.

Often the charges are discounted for people on benefits but there are growing concerns that the cost is disproportionately felt by the least well-off households and is leading to less recycling and more fly tipping. Households are paying 40 per cent more than a decade ago for waste collection and disposal services, with councils earning £329 million a year. Last year, revenue from these services increased by 7 per cent. Councils also generated a record income of £320 million for cemetery, cremation and mortuary services last year, a 45 per cent increase on a decade ago. The cost of running these services is only £219 million a year, suggesting a profit margin of 46 per cent. Revenue from planning fees jumped 92 per cent to £423 million last year.

The public are even being charged more for spending a penny — if they can find anywhere to do so. Charges for public lavatories increased by a fifth last year after the closure of about half of facilities since 2009. Businesses have also seen huge increases in fees. Local authority income from alcohol, entertainment and taxi licensing has jumped by 50 per cent since 2009 to raise more than £200 million. Higher costs to pubs, shops and mini cab operators are inevitably passed on to customers. Councils say that planning and licensing fees are set by central government and much of the extra revenue is from more applications.

Fees charged to builders for trade waste have also increased by 65 per cent and now raise £211 million. Councils said that many of the charges did not cover the cost of administering the services. The Local Government Association said: “Councils strive to keep fees and charges low for residents. Faced with escalating costs and unprecedented demand for services, this is increasingly difficult. The reality is that income from fees and charges is too small to deal with the financial challenges councils face.”

However, the TaxPayers’ Alliance said it was unfair to keep asking residents and businesses to pay more when they are already facing the highest tax burden in 50 years. John O’Connell, chief executive of the campaign group, said: “These stealth taxes are just another revenue raiser for local authorities. Councils are still wasting money to the tune of millions every year; they should eradicate wasteful spending to keep charges and fees as low as possible.”

THE HIGHEST-PAID EXECUTIVES

Slough borough council: In 2017-18 Roger Parkin, the interim chief executive, below, was paid £595,077. In July 2018 the council introduced charges for bulky waste collections at £5 per item with a minimum charge of £15.



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Northumberland county council: In 2017-18 Steven Mason, the chief executive, was paid £413,492. In 2015 the council started charging residents between £12 and £20 per car for waste and rubble taken to its tip.

Darlington borough council: In 2017-18 Ada Burns, the chief executive, was paid £387,652. In 2018 the council introduced a garden waste collection service at a cost of £35 a year.

Folkestone & Hythe district council: In 2017-18 Alistair Stewart, the chief executive, was paid £333,287. In 2018 the council introduced pay and display parking at £7 a day on the seafront road at Princess Parade.

Wandsworth borough council: In 2017-18, Paul Martin, the chief executive was paid £294,805. In 2013 the council was identified as having the second highest cremation charges and the third most expensive burial fees in the country.

Note: Executive pay includes salary, pensions, benefits and severance pay.

Source: Taxpayers' Alliance and Times research

Sorting social care can be Johnson's legacy

The Times, December 21 2019: Janice Turner

The Tories need to reform funding, raise the status of care workers and create health centres offering geriatric MoTs

A phrase in the Queen's Speech made wise heads shake in dismay. "My ministers will seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long-term reform of social care." Consensus? Right now Labour and the Tories probably couldn't agree on whether the Earth is round. How will a decade of polarised, point-scoring politics segue into selfless harmony to resolve the most intractable issue of our age? Jaded care sector veterans, who've seen 12 white and green papers or consultations, fear "cross-party consensus" is code for "long grass". The Conservatives have promised £1 billion to patch up provision they stripped down to the bare bones but no timeframe for reform.

Meanwhile, I think of the 225,000 families who this year will have discovered a partner or parent has dementia, recoil at care home costs and bleakly hope their loved one doesn't outlast their savings.

It seems inconceivable that a government blessed with such a majority could end a five-year term with nothing done. But, as one champion of the elderly tells me, the Tories could employ sleight of hand: "Look at the millions we gave the NHS, behold shorter waiting lists." Because health is a universal priority while social care is a boring, depressing irrelevance — until the moment nothing matters to you more.

Anyone who has battled with this patchy and opaque system, as I've done for a decade with my parents, can rattle off needed reforms. Start with supporting old people to stay where they want to be: at home. The Scottish provision, which gives over-65s free care for serious needs such as getting dressed and taking medicines, is a first step. But just as New Labour created Sure Start centres, I dream of community hubs for the old: let's call them Sure End.

These would be geriatric health centres where the elderly get a full MoT, advice on exercise and diet, chiropody (so important for balance), and have their mobility assessed. Here too, as required, they could access help with shopping, transport and socialising or just relax in a supervised bath (so many are too scared to bathe alone at home). Sure End needn't be set up by the state from scratch but could use an existing excellent private care home as a base.

Sure End centres sound extravagant until you consider the grotesque NHS waste: 2.5 million "lost bed days" between the 2017 election and this one, according to Age UK. Old people are transferred to "step down beds", often low-grade care homes acting as holding bays, for weeks or even months while care packages are put in place. Many have another fall because they're too vulnerable: more wasteful, miserable hospital time.

A central problem is a simple lack of carers. Caroline Dinenage, the social care minister, launching a recruitment drive to fill 110,000 vacancies (compared with a "mere" 40,000 nurses) called it the "Cinderella service". Too true: carers who do complex, emotionally demanding jobs are treated worse than skivvies. Councils use agencies whose carers are on minimum-wage, zero-hours contracts. If one of the four old ladies on your round is in hospital that week you'll be paid less. "Carers quit," says one hospital liaison officer, "because they can work at Aldi for the same hourly rate and get a whole shift, not a few hours here and there."

The Tories should adopt Labour's pledge for a nationally recruited care staff, employed as an extension of



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the NHS. Increasingly, with long-term conditions such as dementia, the division between health and social care is wholly arbitrary. Uniting them would allow proper training, career progression and staff retention. How much longer can we pretend the basic needs of 850,000 dementia sufferers, expected to rise to 1.6 million by 2040, are a luxury? The defining question, of course, is how do we pay? Yet here plans are not so much oven-ready as stacked, already costed, in the deep freeze. At the very least a cap on the lifetime care bill, as suggested by the Dilnot Commission eight years ago, must be agreed by this parliament. Beyond that there is growing voter acceptance — 62 per cent, up from 51 per cent in May last year — that the elderly must be helped via taxation. Perhaps the only thing Corbyn's Labour achieved was to make the Tories concede the state's remit should expand, not contract. Indeed there are good reasons for both parties to climb out of their trenches to meet on this issue. If the Tories founded a successful universal care service alone, an uncooperative Labour Party would look narrowly sectarian: the very image it needs to vanquish. If the Tories wish to retain red-to-blue seats they should note that towns such as Grimsby and Workington have a far older demographic than cities: their voters don't just have greater needs but more of them are employed as carers.

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### GP crisis: 'Third world' conditions at surgeries with no female doctor

1.3 million women have no access to regular female GP

The Sunday Times, December 22 2019: Paul Morgan-Bentley, Head of Investigations | Anna Lombardi, Interactive Journalist | The Times

Women said they were made to feel inconvenient for asking to see a female GP

More than one million women in **England** do not have access to a regular female GP, a *Times* investigation can reveal. The patients include tens of thousands of elderly women who often prefer to see a female doctor. Practices can book female locums to see them for one off appointments but they are expensive and patients say they have faced hostility from staff when they have requested this or complained.



The findings come after this newspaper revealed that the national shortage of GPs has left some surgeries with only one permanent doctor caring for as many as 11,000 patients. It has become so difficult to book appointments that some have had to wait up to nine weeks to be seen or call ambulances for basic health concerns. Dozens of patients have also been in touch with *The Times* since the investigation was published with harrowing tales of how they have been failed by staff shortages at their practices.

There are 26,958 full time equivalent GPs in **England** who are fully qualified and work permanently at a practice, compared with 28,631 in 2015, a fall of almost six per cent. The full time equivalent (FTE) measure is used as the most accurate representation of staffing levels as it takes into account the hours worked by each GP.

The fall in numbers of almost 1,700 has come despite a pledge by David Cameron in 2014 of an extra 5,000 GPs. The average permanent qualified GP is now caring for over 200 more patients than four years ago. In total, 51 per cent of GPs are female. However, in some parts of the country there are disproportionate numbers of male doctors.

In the Swale Clinical Commissioning Group area of Kent, three in four FTE family doctors are male, NHS figures show.

At St George's Medical Centre in the area there are five male doctors for 10,600 patients. More than 5,300 of the patients are women, including 1,333 aged 65 and over and 153 aged 85 and over, but there is no permanent female GP. The practice can book locums but has admitted it is not always possible for patients to choose to see a female GP. A patient review from last year complained that it is "impossible to get appointments, especially with a female doctor".

The practice responded, stating: "Unfortunately it is not always possible to see a female GP although we consider ourselves lucky to have two part time ladies at this time but they are always in high demand."

Other areas with poor rates of female family doctors include Hull, where a third are women, and Lincolnshire East, where the rate is 35 per cent.

Kate Snow, 62, a small business owner, has had problems seeing a female doctor at Oakridge Park Medical Centre in Milton Keynes. She said that she was told that a female doctor would have to be sourced externally for her. "It is important. When you need to see a female doctor because it is going to be an intrusive examination, you need to be able to feel free, without judgment, to talk about what's going on and when that's not available you fold into yourself."

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This newspaper found 614 practices with no permanent female GP, 9.2 per cent of all surgeries in **England**. These practices have 2.7 million patients and more than 1.3 million of them are women. In previous years the numbers have been worse with as many as 1,000 practices having no permanent female GP, affecting two million women patients. The majority of practices have less than half of their appointments taken by female doctors. About one in 20 have exclusively women doctors.

St George's Medical Centre did not respond to a request for comment. NHS **England** said record numbers are training to be GPs and an extra £4.5 billion is being invested annually in primary and community care.

**The fight to see a doctor:** Patients have told of their struggle to see a family doctor and of "third world" conditions at some surgeries following a *Times* investigation into the NHS staffing crisis.

Many have reported waiting several weeks for appointments and having to queue in the cold before 8am for the chance to be seen.

Andrea Goodman, 30, was told she would have to wait six weeks for an appointment at the Village Medical Centre in Great Denham, Bedfordshire. She is among 8,500 patients at the practice, including 4,370 women, but NHS figures show there have been periods where just one regular male doctor has been available. The practice uses locums to cover other sessions.

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Treasury to rip up public spending rules in cash boost for north and Midlands

The Times, December 27 2019: Oliver Wright, Policy Editor

Under proposals being drawn up before the spring budget, ministers will reassess how officials calculate the value for money of government investments in transport infrastructure, business development and initiatives such as free ports. The change is seen as key to fulfilling Boris Johnson's election pledge to unlock investment in communities that voted Conservative for the first time. Investment decisions would be less focused on overall national economic growth and, for the first time, Whitehall resources would be allocated on the basis of improving the wellbeing of people in the north, or narrowing the productivity gap with the south.

Mr Johnson's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, has criticised Treasury rules for favouring rich areas of London and the southeast. Under the department's existing value for money criteria an investment has to be shown to maximise economic return in terms of a measurement known as gross value added (GVA). The criteria, set out in the Treasury's Green Book, affect everything from transport infrastructure projects to the promotion of scientific research and development.

Last year a paper by academics at Cambridge and Manchester universities argued that the policy had contributed to a disparity between the least and most productive regions that was "extreme" by the standards of most developed countries.

A change in methodology could affect, for example, where the government opens free ports, tax-free zones intended to encourage economic activity after Brexit. When Mr Cummings was told by officials that plans for free ports in deprived coastal communities would simply divert businesses from other areas he is understood to have said that that was his intention.

A senior Treasury source told *The Times*: "It is a very big thing. You have to think about the outcomes you want to achieve and work backwards. The source added that it would not affect the fiscal rules that Sajid Javid, the chancellor, set out during the election: "We still need to be fiscally prudent. The truth is that if you spend one pound in one area that is a pound you don't have to spend somewhere else."

The Tories are also set to start introducing free parking for thousands of NHS patients and visitors from April. Under plans being outlined today, blue-badge holders and patients with long-term conditions regularly attending hospital will be eligible. Hospital trusts will also be expected to provide free parking for parents required to stay overnight with sick children, and for NHS staff working night shifts.

What is the criticism of the current system?

Many, including former ministers and officials, say the rules are too rigid and have held back economic development in the north and Midlands. For example, transport infrastructure guidelines favour looking at how shorter journey times in various parts of the country can improve productivity. But this calculation uses average earnings, and as these tend to be higher in London and the southeast it favours transport development projects in these areas. Critics say that if you do not improve transport links in poorer regions they will never fulfil their potential.

What is being proposed?



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The Treasury is seeking to change its approach, such as looking at how a measure would improve the economic wellbeing of the target area. For example, it could analyse forecasts for how much the investment would raise average earnings. It could also prioritise closing the productivity gap as these have always been higher in poorer parts of the UK. No final decisions have been made but it is accepted that the rules must change.

English politics: Nothing to report

England's heroes/heroines:

Peter Mark Roget LRCP FRS FRCP FGS FRAS 18 January 1779 – 12 September 1869) was a British physician, natural theologian and lexicographer. He is best known for publishing, in 1852, the *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, a classified collection of related words.

He was born in London, and after his father's death, the family moved to Edinburgh, in 1793, and he shortly began to study medicine at the University of Edinburgh, graduating in 1798. Samuel Romilly, who had supported his education, also introduced Roget into Whig social circles. Roget then attended lectures at London medical schools. Living in Clifton, Bristol in 1798–9, he knew Thomas Beddoes and Humphry Davy, and frequented the Pneumatic Institute. At this period he moved to Manchester, and there he became the first secretary of the Portico Library.

Roget c. 1865

Roget was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1815, in recognition of a paper on a slide rule with a loglog scale. He was a secretary of the Society from 1827 to 1848. In 1823 Roget and Peter Mere Latham were brought in to investigate disease at Millbank Penitentiary. On 9 December 1824, Roget presented a paper on a peculiar optical illusion to the *Philosophical Transactions*, which was published in 1825, as *Explanation of an optical deception in the appearance of the spokes of a wheel when seen through vertical apertures*. It has often been heralded as the basis for the persistence of vision theory, which has for a long time been falsely regarded as the principle causing the perception of motion in animation and film. In 1828 Roget, with William Thomas Brande and Thomas Telford, submitted a report on London's water supply. In 1834, Roget claimed to have invented "the Phantascope or Phenakisticope" in the spring 1831, a few years before Joseph Plateau introduced this first device that demonstrated stroboscopic animation. In the same year he became the first Fullerian Professor of Physiology at the Royal Institution. One of those who helped found the University of London in 1837, he was an examiner in physiology there. One of the promoters of the Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, which later became the Royal Society of Medicine. He wrote numerous papers on physiology and health and articles for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Roget retired from professional life in 1840.

As a chess player, in an article in the *London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine* Roget solved the general open knight's tour problem. He composed chess problems, and designed an inexpensive pocket chess-board.

By 1846 he was working on the book that perpetuates his memory. The thesaurus was a catalogue of words organized by their meanings. Its first printed edition, in 1852, was called *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases Classified and Arranged so as to Facilitate the Expression of Ideas and Assist in Literary Composition*. During Roget's lifetime the work had twenty-eight printings; after his death it was revised and expanded by his son, John Lewis Roget (1828–1908), and later by John's son, the engineer Samuel Romilly Roget (1875–1953).

It has been claimed that Roget struggled with depression for most of his life, and that the thesaurus arose partly from an effort to battle it. A biographer stated that obsession with list-making as a coping mechanism was well established by the time Roget was eight years old. He began to maintain a notebook classification scheme for words in 1805. Roget in later life became deaf, and was cared for by his daughter Kate. He died while on holiday in West Malvern, Worcestershire, aged 90, and is buried there in the cemetery of St James's Church.

England's history: January 6, 1066 - Harold, Earl of Wessex, was crowned King of England following the death of Edward the Confessor. Harold II was England's last Anglo-Saxon monarch.

Harold was a powerful earl and member of a prominent Anglo-Saxon family with ties to Cnut the Great. At the end of 1065 King Edward the Confessor, his brother-in-law, fell into a coma without clarifying his

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Harold Godwinson, from the Bayeux Tapestry

preference for the succession. He died on 5 January 1066, according to the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*, but not before briefly regaining consciousness and commending his widow and the kingdom to Harold's "protection". The intent of this charge remains ambiguous, as is the Bayeux Tapestry, which simply depicts Edward pointing at a man thought to represent Harold. When the Witan convened the next day they selected Harold to succeed, and his coronation followed on 6 January, most likely held in Westminster Abbey and the first to be held there; though no evidence from the time survives to confirm this. Although later Norman sources point to the suddenness of this coronation, the reason may have been that all the nobles of the land were present at Westminster for the feast of Epiphany, and not because of any

usurpation of the throne on Harold's part.

In early January 1066, hearing of Harold's coronation, Duke William II of Normandy began plans to invade England, building 700 warships and transports at Dives-sur-Mer on the Normandy coast. Initially, William could not get support for the invasion but, claiming that Harold had sworn on sacred relics to support his claim to the throne after having been shipwrecked at Ponthieu, William received the Church's blessing and nobles flocked to his cause. In anticipation of the invasion, Harold assembled his troops on the Isle of Wight, but the invasion fleet remained in port for almost seven months, perhaps due to unfavourable winds. On 8 September, with provisions running out, Harold disbanded his army and returned to London. On the same day Harald Hardrada of Norway, who also claimed the English crown joined Tostig, Harold's brother the outlawed and exiled former earl of Northumbria, and invaded, landing his fleet at the mouth of the Tyne.

The invading forces of Hardrada and Tostig defeated the English earls Edwin of Mercia and Morcar of Northumbria at the Battle of Fulford near York on 20 September 1066. Harold led his army north on a forced march from London, reached Yorkshire in four days, and caught Hardrada by surprise. On 25 September, in the Battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold defeated Hardrada and Tostig, who were both killed.

On 12 September 1066 William's fleet sailed from Normandy. Several ships sank in storms, which forced the fleet to take shelter at Saint-Valery-sur-Somme and to wait for the wind to change. On 27 September the Norman fleet set sail for England, arriving the following day at Pevensey on the coast of East Sussex. Harold's army marched 241 miles to intercept William, who had landed perhaps 7,000 men in Sussex. Harold established his army in hastily built earthworks near Hastings.

The two armies clashed at the Battle of Hastings, at Senlac Hill (near the present town of Battle) close by Hastings on 14 October, where after nine hours of hard fighting, Harold was killed and his forces defeated. His brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were also killed in the battle, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.



Coin of King Harold Godwinson

English culture: Jack Frost is a personification of frost, ice, snow, sleet, winter and freezing cold. He is a variant of Old Man Winter who is held responsible for frosty weather, nipping the fingers and toes in such weather, colouring the foliage in autumn, and leaving fern-like patterns on cold windows in winter.



Frost patterns on a window pane

Starting in late 19th century literature, more developed characterizations of Jack Frost depict him as a sprite-like character, sometimes appearing as a sinister mischief-maker or as a hero.

Jack Frost is traditionally said to leave the frosty, fern-like patterns on windows on cold winter mornings (window frost or fern frost) and nipping the extremities in cold weather. Over time, window frost has become far less prevalent in the modern world due to the advance of double-glazing, but Jack Frost remains a well-known figure in popular culture. He is sometimes

described or depicted with paint brush and bucket coloring the autumnal foliage red, yellow, brown, and orange. Sometimes he is portrayed as a dangerous giant:

He may originate from Anglo-Saxon and Norse winter customs and has an entire chapter named after him in *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic compiled from their ancient oral tradition.

Promotion: English produce: Jerusalem artichoke

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The misnamed Jerusalem artichoke has no real link with Jerusalem, and isn't related to other artichokes. It looks a bit like a knobby pink-skinned ginger root and has a sweet, nutty flavour, reminiscent of water chestnuts. Although not widely used, it is an inexpensive and versatile food that can be used both raw and cooked and makes a delicious soup



Jerusalem artichokes are native to North America. The French explorer Samuel de Champlain brought them to Europe after coming across them at Cape Cod in 1605. He described them as tasting like artichokes, and is likely to be responsible for this part of their name. The *Jerusalem* part is thought to be derived from *girasole*, the Italian for sunflower. Another theory suggests the name is a corruption of *Terneuzen*, the Dutch city from where the root was introduced to England in 1616.

Jerusalem artichokes will keep for a couple of weeks in the fridge. Roots should be free from soft spots, wrinkles or sprouting. Knobbles and unevenness are unavoidable (and not indicative of quality), but smoother, rounder artichokes are easier to prepare.

Like potatoes, Jerusalem artichoke can be served with or without the skin - scrub clean and leave it on for maximum nutritional benefit. Cook as you would potatoes - roast, sauté, bake, boil or steam. If peeling or cutting, drop pieces into water with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent discolouration. Unlike potatoes, Jerusalem artichoke can also be used raw (e.g. in salads) or lightly stir-fried.

There are not many commercial growers in England but they are available from small niche farmers. The Community Farm is a social enterprise based in Chew Magna, Somerset. DGM growers in Lincolnshire only supply British-grown Jerusalem artichokes, when in season. They're usually available from around December to March, depending on the weather. Riverford organics farmers is in Buckfastleigh, Devon,

Recipe: Crispy Jerusalem artichokes with roasted garlic & rosemary

By Rosie Birkett

PREP: 20 MINS, COOK: 50 MINS plus soaking: SERVES 4

The unusual savoury tang of Jerusalem artichokes works well with the wild flavours of game. This dish is crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.

Ingredients

800g Jerusalem artichokes
1 tbsp rosemary leaves, chopped
pinch ground mace
2 tsp lemon juice

1 garlic bulb, cut down the middle
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
20g butter



Method

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Soak the artichokes in cold water for 20 mins or so to loosen any dirt, then scrub them with a scourer, being sure to remove any grit. Halve the small ones and quarter the bigger ones, and put them in a roasting tin with the split garlic bulb and rosemary. Coat everything with the oil and season. Roast for 45-50 mins until tender inside and crispy outside.

To finish, squeeze the softened garlic cloves from their skins and toss with the roasted artichokes, along with the mace, butter and lemon juice.

Recipe from Good Food magazine, October 2016

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