

THAIMUN VIII

THE UNITED
KINGDOM
PARLIAMMENTARY
COMMITTEE



| Chair | Email | School |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Yewon Nam | yewonn22@rism.ac.th | Ruamrudee International School |
| Tahmim Reza | tahmim.sit@ips.ac.th | International Pioneers School |
| Manon Mowery | manonmowery@icloud.com | MSG Homeschool |
| Jeremy Kim | yhkjeremy@gmail.com | International Community School |

CONTENTS:

| | |
|---|----|
| Brief Overview of the Committee..... | 3 |
| Topic 1: Negotiating economic and diplomatic terms in leaving the European Union..... | 8 |
| - Introduction of the Topic..... | 8 |
| - History of the Topic..... | 9 |
| - Key Terms..... | 10 |
| - Discussion of the Topic..... | 11 |
| - Bloc Positions..... | 11 |
| - Questions a Resolution Must Answer..... | 13 |
| - Possible Solutions..... | 15 |
| - Bibliography..... | 17 |
| Topic 2: The question of restructuring the NHS in light of COVID-19..... | 19 |
| - Introduction of the Topic..... | 19 |
| - History of the Topic..... | 20 |
| - Key Terms..... | 21 |
| - Bloc Positions..... | 21 |
| - Questions a Resolution Must Answer..... | 21 |
| - Possible Solutions..... | 22 |
| - Bibliography..... | 23 |

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE



Welcome to the United Kingdom Parliamentary Committee - a realistic simulation of the ins and outs of the UK Parliament. The committee is divided into two: The House of Commons (represented by Delegates) and The House of Lords and the Queen (represented by the backroom).

The House of Commons is composed of 650 members of parliament (MPs) elected by the public to represent their interests. The role of MPs include proposing new legislation and audit government policies about current issues. The House of Commons is tasked with most legislative functions, and are often the primary initiator of bills.

In the UK there are over 400 political parties that exist, of them, only 10 are represented in the Parliament and the House of Commons. Below you will find a list of these parties and a short description of them and their core beliefs:

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

| Political Party | Political Position | Description |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Conservative and Unionist Party | Centre-right | <p>Led by Boris Johnson, the Conservative and Unionist Party holds an overall majority in the House of Commons.</p> <p>In terms of Economic Policy, the Conservative Party believes that free markets and individual achievement are the keys to economic success. They also advocate for reducing income taxes in hopes of higher GDP.</p> <p>The Party seeks to preserve a range of institutions such as religion, property rights and parliamentary government.</p> |
| Labour Party | Centre-left | <p>Led by Keir Starmer, the Labour Party has been one of the UK's two main political parties since the 20th century. It holds a socially democratic stance and their core political beliefs advocate for the working population.</p> <p>They believe in increasing minimum wages, taxes on large corporations and the top 5% of earners, and spending on the NHS.</p> |
| Scottish National Party | Centre-left | <p>Led by Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP is a social democratic party. It is the largest party in the Scottish Parliament. The main recent objective of the SNP has been its campaign for Scotland to leave the United Kingdom and become its own independent country.</p> <p>Other initiatives supported by the SNP include Britain getting rid of all of its nuclear weapons, and elections to the House of Lords.</p> |
| Liberal Democrats | Centre - Center-left | <p>Led by Ed Davey, the Liberal Democrats, is a centrist political party advocating for reformist, liberal policies. The Liberal Democrats are strong advocates of the UK staying in the European Union, introducing</p> |

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

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| | | proportional representation in the elections to the British House of Commons, and pro-environmental policies. |
| Democratic Unionist Party | Right Wing | Led by Arlene Foster, the DUP is a conservative party based in Northern Ireland. They are strong supporters of the constitution and most often take conservative stances on social issues. They are also strong supporters of Northern Ireland staying a part of the United Kingdom. |
| Sinn Féin | Centre-left - Left-wing | Led by Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin is an Irish republican political party advocating for the reunification of Ireland as well as an end to British jurisdiction in Northern Ireland. |
| Plaid Cymru | Centre-left - Left-wing | Led by Adam Price, Plaid Cymru is the Welsh Nationalist Political Party in Wales. Plaid Cymru advocates for the decentralisation of power, and for Wales to have full national status. The Plaid Cymru seeks to preserve Welsh culture, language and traditions. |
| Social Democratic and Labour Party | Centre-left | Led by Colum Eastwood, the SDLP is an Irish nationalist social-democratic political party based in Northern Ireland. The main goal of the SDLP is to advocate for the reunification of Ireland and higher opportunity for self-government. The SDLP is in favour of Brexit. |
| Green Party of England and Wales | Left-wing | Led by Siân Berry and Jonathan Bartley, the Green Party of England and Wales is a left-wing political party in England and Wales. The party puts special emphasis on incorporating environmentalism with left-wing economic policies, including increased funding on public welfare services. It also takes a progressive stance on social policies such as animal rights, LGBT rights, and drug policy reform. |

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

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| Alliance Party of Northern Ireland | Centre - Centre-left | <p>Led by Naomi Long, the APNI is a centrist and liberal political party in Northern Ireland. The goal of the APNI is to create a Northern Irish society "Devoid of segregation, sectarianism and prejudice where everyone – Catholic or Protestant, black or white, local or immigrant, rich or poor, young or old – can live their life the way they want, free from fear". (Adapted from The Official APNI Website)</p> <p>The APNI also voted to remain in the EU.</p> |
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The second chamber of the UK Parliament includes the House of Lords. Unlike the House of Commons, members in the House of Lords are chosen either based on appointment, heredity or official function. The roles of the house of Lords include shaping and introducing legislation and scrutinising the government.

In order for any bill to be passed as law, it has to be thoroughly vetted and approved by both the chambers of the UK parliament.

To learn more about the UK Parliament and the Political Parties check out these links to their official websites:

The UK Parliament's Official Website

<https://www.parliament.uk>

Information on the House of Commons

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/>

Information on the House of Lords

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/lords/>

The Official Website of The Conservative and Unionist Party

<https://www.conservatives.com>

The Official Website of The Labour Party

<https://labour.org.uk>

The Official Website of The Scottish National Party

<https://www.snp.org>

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

The Official Website of The Liberal Democrats

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/splash?splash=1>

The Official Website of The Democratic Unionist Party

<https://mydup.com>

The Official Website of The Sinn Féin

<https://www.sinnfein.ie>

The Official Website of The Plaid Cymru

<https://www.plaid.cymru/21for21?splash=1>

The Official Website of The Green Party of England and Wales

<https://policy.greenparty.org.uk>

The Official Website of The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

<https://www.allianceparty.org>

Topic 1: Negotiating economic and diplomatic terms in leaving the European Union

INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC:

The referendum held on June 23rd, 2016, made clear the general consensus of the United Kingdom's citizens that the UK leave the European Union. Since then, various suggestions have been made by both the Parliament and the European Union regarding the terms of the deal as well as the relation between the two stakeholders until the deal was finalized on January 31st, 2020.

Withdrawal from the European Union has caused major ripples in the British economy, and will continue to do so in upcoming years. Currently, the agreement between the United Kingdom allows the British to continue trading with the European union with the previous benefits they enjoyed, but media sources such as the CNN projects the British economy to suffer due to various effects of Brexit, caused by different facets of the deal itself and the economy of the United Kingdom.

Currently, the agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union is mitigating the negative effects on the British economy during the transitional period, but it is quite evident that once this transitional period is over, the United Kingdom will suffer from trade barriers between the UK and the EU, and any negative effects that may follow. According to Britain's revenue authority, tariffs of imported/exported goods would reach 7.5 billion pounds, and will most likely cause increased prices of various imported goods.

The deal between the United Kingdom and the European Union will also cause various issues regarding employment. Brexit, in tandem with the UK's new immigration policy, will limit immigration of unskilled laborers greatly, negatively impacting the British economy and causing economic recession. Along with these issues, the UK Economy is projected to suffer from loss of investment and economic snags.

HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

Timeline of Brexit

2016:

23 June: The UK holds a referendum on the UK leaving the EU. The majority (52%) vote to leave.

13 July: David Cameron (Former Prime Minister) resigns, Theresa May is invited by her majesty to form a new government. David Davis is appointed Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union

7 December: The UK House of Commons vote in favor of triggering Article 50 by March 2017

2017:

26 January: UK Government introduces a bill empowering Theresa May to initiate Brexit through Article 50

16 March: Bill receives Royal Assent (Monarchical Support)

29 March: A letter is sent from Theresa May to the President of the European Council to invoke Article 50, initiating the two-year process of leaving the European Union

19 June: Brexit negotiations Commence

2018:

6 July: A UK white paper regarding the relationship between the UK and the EU (Chequers agreement) is finalized

21 September: The UK white paper is rejected by the EU

14 November: The Brexit withdrawal agreement is published

2019:

15 January - 10 April: Three votes on the withdrawal agreements are defeated, the Article 50 period is extended to 31 Oct 2019 (Requested by Theresa May)

24 July: Theresa May resigns as Conservative Party Leader due to her failure to get her plans through parliament and votes of no-confidence, Boris Johnson becomes the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

3-4 September: A motion for emergency debate to pass a bill that rules out a no-deal Brexit is passed

17 October: The UK and the European commission agree on a revised agreement containing new protocol on Northern Ireland

20 December: The withdrawal agreement passed its second reading

2020:

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

22 January: Withdrawal agreement passed the UK parliament, bill is passed to the Queen to receive royal assent

23 January: European Union Withdrawal Agreement act 2020 receives royal assent

29 January: European Parliament gives its consent to conclude the withdrawal agreement

31 January: The United Kingdom withdrew from the European union, the transitional arrangements begin for the period, ending on 31 december 2020

31 December: The United Kingdom completed it's separation from the European Union

KEY TERMS:

- **Brexit**- Portmanteau of British exit, referring to Britain's exit from the European Union
- **Transitional period**- Period lasting from 31 January 2020 to 31 december 2020, when the UK is no longer a member state of the EU, but follows the EU's rules. (Agreed by both sides to reach a deal on their relationship)
- **Free trade**- Trade between two countries where neither side charges taxes or duties on goods crossing borders
- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**- A deal between two countries to reduce trade barriers such as taxes paid when trading, limits when importing goods and rules regarding hygiene or labelling food
- **WTO rules**- Each country sets tariffs or taxes on entering goods and applies them to "ALL" trading partners
- **Manifesto** - A public declaration of policy and aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate.
- **Fiscal Policy** - The use of government spending and taxation to influence the economy. Governments typically use fiscal policy to promote strong and sustainable growth and reduce poverty.
- **Monetary Policy** - The policy adopted by the monetary authority of a nation (Central Bank) to control either the interest rate payable for short-term borrowing or the money supply.
- **Austerity** - Austerity is a set of political-economic policies that aim to reduce government budget deficits through spending cuts, tax increases, or a combination of both.

DISCUSSION OF THE TOPIC:

The United Kingdom will undergo much change after the transitional period, namely major economic and diplomatic changes. The economic changes regarding trade and financial services (while the deal does not offer much clarity for financial firms) between the United Kingdom will hinder trade and financial activity between the United Kingdom and the European Union, placing heavy tolls on the UK economy. According to a report by the KPMG, failure to secure a trade deal with the EU may cause the UK's economic growth rate to fall to 4.4%.

BLOC POSITIONS/PARTY STANCE:

Most of the political parties' interests overlap one another, however, we can draw clear distinctions on their stances based on a few key factors. These include their fiscal policy, monetary policy, and stance on current environmental issues.

Below you will find material to guide your research on your specific political party's economic policies and stance on the issue, based on the key factors included above.

| Party | Stance |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Conservative and Unionist Party | <p>The most key objective outlined in the Conservative and Unionist Party manifesto is the Free-Trade deal it wants to establish with foreign nations, aiming to reduce barriers to trade. The Conservative Party has already established Free Trade deals with several nations including Japan, Switzerland and South Korea. Following suit, the party is aiming to further establish deals with other nations hereafter.</p> <p>In terms of Fiscal and Monetary Policy, the Conservative party aims to maintain their current levels of government spending and taxes. In addition, they are placing emphasis on keeping taxes low, especially for large corporations. Post-Brexit, the party is also focusing on combating climate change far more than they had previously.</p> |

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

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| Labour Party | The Labour Party places emphasis on two key objectives: to increase taxes for corporations and to nationalise nation-wide service providers such as energy firms, postal services, railways, broadband, and more. They also place emphasis on higher government spending on public and welfare services, as well as spending to reduce the effects of climate change. The Labour Party is also notably against austerity. |
| Scottish National Party | <p>The SNP places emphasis on the development of the technological industry in Scotland through increased investment and government spending. They are also in favour of uplifting businesses through increased investment.</p> <p>In terms of fiscal policy, they have a progressive stance on taxation, where high-income earners are taxed far more than low-income earners. Just like the Labour Party, the SNP is also against austerity and pro-environment.</p> |
| Liberal Democrats | The main objective of the Liberal Democrats is to create an “equal economy”, through the distribution of wealth in the economy, reducing household debt and maintaining a trade balance. They are also keen on using increased borrowing as a method to encourage economic growth. |
| Democratic Unionist Party | The Democratic Unionist Party places the most emphasis on increasing government spending on welfare services, such as the healthcare system. |
| Sinn Féin | Sinn Féin focuses on economic policies that put families and workers first. Some key initiatives they strongly approve of are capping interest rates to reduce household debt, and increasing government spending on public services. They also place emphasis on increasing employment opportunities in the economy. |
| Plaid Cymru | Plaid Cymru strongly advocates for keeping taxes high, increasing spending on education, the environment, and free social care. |
| Social Democratic and Labour Party | The SDLP in its manifesto strongly opposed cuts to benefits, tax credits and pensions. It is also in favour |

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

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| | of overturning Universal Credit. They also support efforts to deliver the living wage for workers and support businesses to deliver fairer work conditions. |
| Green Party of England and Wales | Most of the policies adopted by the Green Party is surrounded by the environment and climate change. Their key objectives are to cut carbon emissions, invest in pro-environment technology through higher government spending. |
| Alliance Party of Northern Ireland | The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland is in support of fair and progressive taxation and using government spending as a tool to encourage economic growth post-Brexit. They are also in favour of low interest rates and borrowing as a means to finance investment in capital. One of their other aims is to use protectionist policies to protect small businesses in the domestic economy. |

Pro Tip: When doing your research on an individual party's policies, make sure to check out their Manifestos. They can either be found directly on their website, or in condensed forms on UK-based news websites.

QUESTIONS THE RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER:

When forming your resolution, there are several key points that you must consider (after all, Brexit's impact on the economy is multifaceted. In order to smoothly transition into an independent country while maintaining diplomatic relations, the UK Parliament must address issues such as **but not limited to:**

- 1. Migration and regulatory policies:** The UK leaving the European Union has blurred the lines on trade agreements and migration policies between non-EU countries. In order to develop an all-encompassing solution that guarantees the most economic benefits, the UK Parliament needs to clearly define trade agreements with non-EU countries and EU countries alike, in order to ensure no repercussions stemming from a change in the balance of payments. Furthermore, migration rules need to be clearly established as well to ensure a stable workforce of skilled labour to support the UK's predominantly service-sector driven economy.

2. How to cushion the adverse effects of Brexit on the UK Economy:

In a study conducted by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR), findings estimated that trading with the EU on WTO terms rather than as a member alone would reduce the UK's GDP by 2.7%. Most economists believe that Brexit is likely to greatly hamper the UK's economic growth. Thus, your resolution should address how the UK can cushion and/or prevent these effects which if left undealt with, may lead to further economic consequences.

3. Barriers to Entry in Trade: Brexit is likely to lead to the introduction of new barriers to trade with the EU – in the form of tariffs or non-tariff barriers to trade. This is highly likely to reduce trade flows and economic growth. Researchers at the Centre for Economic Performance approximate that increased trade barriers can reduce economic output by at least 2.9% in 2030. The UK Parliament must consider what actions to take in terms of posing trade barriers with EU nations in order to cope with and/or prevent the repercussions of barriers to trade imposed by the EU.

4. Individual Productivity & Economic Output: A statement published by the Bank of England in 2019 concluded that “Productivity growth appeared to have weakened further so far this year [post Brexit].” It further estimated that “over the past three years [2016-2019], the drawn-out process of leaving the EU has reduced UK productivity by between 2 and 5 per cent.” Although at first glance 2%-5% may seem like a meagre amount, it has accounted for over 132 Billion Pounds in losses for the UK. Furthermore, due to ongoing uncertainty of the state of the economy post-Brexit, the loss in labour productivity is likely to be exacerbated. Labour productivity is directly linked to economic output, thus, in order to fully secure the economic state of the UK post-Brexit, the parliament must either adopt methods to increase productivity or dissolve the economic uncertainties in the nation as soon as possible.

5. Economic Uncertainty: Assumptions made about the impact of Brexit on trade barriers, migration and investment can have adverse economic consequences. The UK Parliament needs to address these issues and reduce uncertainty and loss of confidence in the economy.

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

- 6. Foreign Investment:** Tying in with the consequences of uncertainty, potential loss in consumer confidence in the UK's financial sector is likely to cost the UK a considerable percentage of its GDP due to a loss in foreign investments. The parliament should find methods to re-encourage foreign investment to boost their economy and overall consumer confidence.
- 7. Interest Rates:** The UK's main economic growth driver is the financial sector, with London being the second most prominent financial centre in the world. In order

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

You may consider the following solutions as a part of your draft resolution:

- 1. Using Interest Rates:** The UK Parliament can choose to work with the Central Bank to manipulate interest rates to produce different economic outcomes. Interest rates can either be increased to encourage consumer saving and boost the financial sector. The financial assets saved can be invested in the economy to boost economic growth. On the other hand, interest rates can be lowered to encourage borrowing. Increased borrowing leads to a trend of higher aggregate demand in the economy due to higher disposable income. This is likely to not only dissolve economic uncertainty by creating a need for higher productivity, but as well lead to higher economic growth. However, when employing any of these forms of monetary policy, the concept of inflation must be accounted for by the government.
- 2. Using Exchange Rates:** In order to encourage cross-national trade, the UK parliament can choose to lower their exchange rate. Lowering exchange rates would create a higher demand for UK goods due to lower prices. This may be what the UK needs to offset the economic decline resulting from Brexit.
- 3. Using Taxes:** The government can employ fiscal policy to take control of the economy. They can choose to lower taxes to increase consumers' disposable income and thus increase spending in the economy. As aggregate demand rises, so does output in the economy to meet these higher demands. This is likely to result in

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

higher GDP which can help offset the fall in GDP due to loss in productivity and economic output.

4. **Deregulation & other Legislative Policies:** The government can choose to rely on businesses to cushion the economic effects of a post-Brexit UK. One of the outcomes of the UK leaving ties with the EU is that it is no longer obligated to adopt the same legislative policies. Thus, the UK can deregulate barriers to entry of businesses to boost economic output. Not being restricted by the EU also allows them to adopt new legislative policies that are not limited by renewable energy targets, product standards and working time directives. However, when considering these it is vital to acknowledge the possible drawbacks these policies may have on international diplomatic relationships.
5. **Trade Agreements & Economic Policies:** “Unrestricted” by the EU, the UK can now choose to form specific new trade agreements between EU and Non-EU nations to boost their economy. In addition, they can also choose to employ economic tools such as quotas and tariffs to protect the domestic economy.
6. **Increasing Transparency and Providing Clear Analysis on the UK's Economic Future:** To dismiss the uncertainty facing the nation in regards to the economy, the UK could consider increasing transparency on the nation's current economic state. This can be done by providing clear analysis reports on the current and expected economic conditions consistently throughout the year. This will not only enable consumers and businesses to make informed, sound decisions but as well boost confidence.

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Topic 2: The question of restructuring the NHS in light of COVID-19

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY OF THE TOPIC:

The United Kingdom National Health Service (NHS), established in July 5th 1948 by the Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan, is a government-funded medical and healthcare service that all UK residents can utilize without paying additional cost. The medical support offers the right to access health services for UK citizens and share the burden of paying for health services offered by local doctors and other medical professionals. The NHS currently provides health services that range from visiting a doctor for health check-up to receiving urgent help from the health professionals if under the serious, life-threatening conditions.

Covid-19, otherwise known as coronavirus, is a disease that originated at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China. On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) first learned of the infection. The virus spread rapidly, affecting 219 countries and territories. Nearly two million people have died as a result of Covid-19, and ninety-one million have contracted the disease. This pandemic has caused global issues and recessions, affecting the lives of billions. The NHS is faced with difficulties after (and still during) the pandemic, and is in need of reconstruction. Certain new policies should be implemented and damage control is needed to help the NHS to return to normal.

Some key points to be addressed include the training of medical personnel and measures to protect health-care workers. Many of those in the medical field are overworked and not properly equipped. Specifically, the COVID-19 patients require a tremendous demand for acute care from the doctors, especially on Intensive Care Units (ICUs), dramatically increasing the need for resources needed for treating the patients in NHS hospitals. However, the issue lies on the fact that the number of available ICU beds and staff is excessively low compared to that of patients in the UK. Moreover, the UK has a relatively low number of doctors compared to other European Union (EU) countries. In 2015, the UK had 2.8 doctors per 1000 populations, while the average number of doctors was 3.9 per 1000.

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

The resources are included but not limited to reorganization of hospital facilities specifically designed for the COVID-19 patients, redeployment of the staff members in the hospitals, and making newly-graduated medical students to combat the COVID-19 at the front line. These insufficiencies emphasize the need for meeting the sufficient number of doctors for each patient in order to increase the quality of treatment. However, such solutions must be weighed against the consequences that may exist in diverse aspects. The appropriate, feasible actions must be taken in order to ensure the safety of those who are working to combat Covid-19 and restore people to their health.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

2019:

December 31, 2019 - Wuhan Municipal Health Commission reports cases of pneumonia, that are eventually named as Covid-19

January 5, 2020 - WHO published news on the outbreak, including advice on the situation and what was known of the virus at the time

January 9, 2020 - The disease is given the name "coronavirus"

January 24, 2020 - First cases outside of Wuhan appeared. The cases were in France.

February 11, 2020 - WHO names the disease COVID-19

April 4, 2020 - WHO announces one million cases of coronavirus worldwide

April 16, 2020 - Lockdowns begun

April 20, 2020 - The UN passes a resolution titled 'International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19'.

May 27, 2020 - WHO foundation created to support health needs worldwide

June 13, 2020 - Chinese officials release information on COVID-19 cases in Beijing, China

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

December 8, 2020 - First person, a women in the UK, receives COVID-19 vaccine

KEY TERMS:

- **NHS:** National Health Service in United Kingdom
- **ICU:** Intensive Care Units
- **EU:** European Union
- **Pandemic:** a disease prevalent over a whole country or the world
- **Recession:** a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced

BLOC POSITIONS:

Although countries all over the world are working to combat Covid-19, they often have different ways of doing so. Leaders across the globe have contrasting opinions but some of them align to form united ideas. Researching how your representative views the situation, and especially their relationship with the U.K. and other delegates, will be helpful when planning for this topic.

QUESTIONS THE RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER:

There are many questions and situations to resolve. Here are several examples, but not the full extent of what is possible:

1. How to support NHS personnel
2. How to effectively distribute vaccines
3. How to provide accessible testing for Covid-19
4. How to equip and recruit enough medical workers
5. How to prepare doctors and medical students entering or reentering the field

THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

6. How to guarantee the collaboration of world leaders to solve these global issues

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

The solutions should include, but are not limited to:

1. Training for new medical students entering the field
2. Guidelines and ways to enforce Covid-19 safety laws
3. Incentives for medical students and doctors
4. Cooperation of countries to ensure that all people have access to the vaccine

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THAIMUN VIII: Chair report - UKPC

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For Further Guidance, please refer to the UKPC Government Committee Guide linked below:

http://www.thaimun.org/uploads/4/8/1/6/48165993/thaimun_handbook.pdf