

# Cost of NHS travel tests to be reduced and private provider list reviewed

- Cost of travel tests from NHS Test & Trace will be reduced from £88 to £68 for one test and from £170 to £136 for two.
- List of private testing providers to be reviewed to ensure pricing is accurate and transparent.
- Any misleading pricing will be clamped down on swiftly and we will urgently remove listings found to have misleading prices.
- Wider Competition and Markets Authority review ongoing following urgent request from Health and Social Care Secretary.

UK holidaymakers will benefit from cheaper travel testing packages, with the price of some tests to fall by a fifth from today.

The cost of NHS Test and Trace tests for international arrivals will now be reduced from £88 to £68 for green or fully vaccinated amber arrivals, and from £170 to £136 for two tests for amber arrivals who are not fully vaccinated.

The Health Secretary has also announced there will be a rapid internal review of the pricing and service standards of all providers of day 2 and 8 tests. Any misleading pricing will be clamped down on swiftly and we will urgently remove listings found to have misleading prices. The review will start this weekend and last 10 days, and providers failing to meet necessary standards will be urgently removed.

The price of travel testing has fallen significantly. This is the second time pricing of NHS tests has been reduced, following a review in May which reduced the cost of a day 2 and 8 package from £210 to £170.

NHS Test and Trace advertises these tests alongside private companies' testing packages and they are available to purchase to fulfil the UK government's testing requirements for international travel.

The Health and Social Care Secretary has also commissioned a rapid review of the private testing providers list on gov.uk to ensure the prices advertised align with what is genuinely available.

This follows a request on Friday 6 August from the Health and Social Care Secretary for an urgent high-level review from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to address exploitative behaviour in the private testing market and crack down on excessive pricing or misleading claims. While the CMA carries out this review it will provide ongoing support to DHSC.

PCR testing remains completely free for people with symptoms of COVID-19, and – from 16 August – for people who are double jabbed or under 18 and have been identified as a close contact of someone with the virus.

People can continue to book free PCR tests, or order home PCR tests online or

by calling 119, but as has always been the case, all tests used for travel must be purchased.

**Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:**

I know how much people have looked forward to their summer holidays and that the cost of PCR testing can be a barrier to that. That is why I am determined to protect consumers and hardworking families from exploitative practices and ensure high quality tests are available at a reasonable price.

I am pleased to announce that with immediate effect we're slashing the price of day 2 and 8 tests from NHS Test and Trace by a fifth – this will benefit people right across the UK. And I look forward to reviewing initial advice from the Competition and Markets Authority over the coming days. I've also ordered my department to urgently review the list of private providers on gov.uk to ensure pricing is clearer and transparent. Any provider found to be misleading the public will be kicked off.

Too many providers are acting like cowboys and that needs to stop. The public should be allowed to enjoy their summer holidays without having to face excessive costs or anxiety.

Top quality clinical standards are fundamental to a successful testing programme. Test providers must use laboratories that are either accredited or undergoing accreditation by the independent United Kingdom Accreditation Service. Companies using laboratories that fail to meet the high standards required will be removed from the list of approved suppliers without hesitation.

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## **Military operation established to support the drawdown of British nationals from Afghanistan**

Operation Pitting will be commanded from the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood and is the name for military support to the evacuation of British Nationals and former British staff eligible for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

This will be led by the 600 members of the Armed Forces who have already begun to deploy, with members of 16 Air Assault Brigade leaving this weekend.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

Protecting British Nationals and ensuring their safety as they leave Afghanistan is our top priority, which is why we are commencing Operation Pitting, for which our military are very well prepared.

Over the next few weeks, we shall all do our very best to support the Afghan Government and those that have worked with us over 20 years.

As announced yesterday, UK troops will be providing force protection and logistical support for the relocation of British nationals where required and assist with the acceleration of the ARAP.

To accelerate this process the Home Office will be deploying a small team of officials to assist the FCDO in Kabul. They will be tasked with streamlining the processing of new visas and other documents needed for British nationals, former UK staff and other eligible people to leave Afghanistan and travel to the UK.

Over 2,000 eligible local staff who supported the UK Government in Afghanistan, and their families, have been relocated to the UK since April this year. Over 3,000 locally employed civilians and their families have been relocated since 2014, demonstrating the UK's commitment to ensuring the safety of those who supported the government.

**Home Secretary Priti Patel said:**

We have a moral obligation to support the fearless Afghan staff and their family members, who served alongside our brave troops in Afghanistan.

No one should have their lives put at risk for working with the UK Government, which is why we have significantly expanded and accelerated our dedicated resettlement scheme, deployed Home Office officials to help process British nationals for evacuation, and waived visas for their dependants.

The UK urges British nationals to leave Afghanistan immediately, given the deteriorating security situation. We are providing support to help British nationals leave, including providing where appropriate emergency travel documents and loans.

British nationals who have not already done so should call the British Embassy Kabul on +93 (0) 700 102 000 and select the option "Consular services for British nationals" as soon as possible to discuss their departure plans.

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## **Guidance: Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person**

Guidance for contacts of a person with a positive test result for coronavirus (COVID-19) who do not live with that person.

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## **Guidance: COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection**

Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

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## **Ministerial appointment: 13 August 2021**

Press release

The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP as a Minister of State (Minister for Security) in the Home Office.



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