

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.