

COVID-19: concerns about price, reliability and quality of PCR testing

News story

Concerns have been raised about the price and reliability of PCR travel tests and the quality of the service people are getting from PCR test providers.



The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, wrote to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on 6 August asking the CMA to consider these issues .

There are 3 areas that the CMA is currently exploring:

1. Whether individual PCR providers may be breaching their obligations under consumer law and should be subject to enforcement action
2. Whether there are structural problems in the market for PCR tests, affecting price or reliability
3. Whether there are any immediate actions that the Government could take in the meantime

George Lusty, CMA Senior Director for Consumer Protection, said:

It is essential that people paying for PCR tests are treated fairly, get what they pay for and that their rights are respected when things go wrong. We will not hesitate to take enforcement action if we find evidence that PCR providers are breaching consumer law.

We are also working closely with DHSC to get the data we need to identify the cause of any wider problems in the PCR testing market, and to ground our advice on what action may be needed.

This is a particularly pressing issue just now for families hoping to enjoy a well-earned holiday after such a difficult year, and for those reuniting with friends and relatives overseas. That is why we are also providing ongoing support to DHSC, including on steps that could be considered in the interim, before the rest of our work on the PCR testing market is concluded.

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