

Government seeks views on contingency proposals for certification

The government has today [published the policy proposal](#) for mandatory vaccine certification as a contingency measure under the government's Autumn and Winter Plan.

As set out by the Prime Minister on 14 September, mandatory vaccine-only certification could potentially be introduced in certain settings as part of 'Plan B'.

However, the government remains confident 'Plan A' will prevent the NHS from facing unsustainable pressure and certification will not be required.

In the event Plan B is adopted in response to changing data and unsustainable pressure on the NHS, the government will need to act swiftly and potentially adopt measures, like vaccine certification, at short notice. The government is therefore publishing this detailed proposal now in order to allow time for businesses to prepare.

The government continues to encourage the voluntary use of certification and the NHS COVID Pass.

The government carried out a review into COVID-status certification earlier this year, which concluded that certification could have a role to play in keeping events going and businesses open if the country is facing a difficult time in autumn and winter. The proposal published today draws on the findings of the review, on evidence from the Events Research Programme which trialed the use of certification, and on views from organisations, experts and the public gathered over the course of the review and since its conclusion.

Over 200 events and venues have used certification on a voluntary basis over the summer, including matches in the Premier League, festivals such as the Reading and Leeds Festivals and All Points East, some nightclubs, and the BBC Proms. 11% of people have already been asked to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test to enter an event or venue, and the NHS COVID Pass on the NHS app provides an easy way to check your COVID status.

The government is asking for views on its proposals by 12 October and in the coming weeks, government officials will be directly engaging businesses and key stakeholder representative groups.

Health Minister Maggie Throup said:

Our Autumn and Winter plan puts us on a sure footing and gives the whole country the best possible chance of living with COVID-19 in the months ahead, without the need for unwanted social and economic restrictions.

The vaccine programme has tilted the odds in our favour in our shared fight against this virus and while we are totally confident the careful steps we are taking will help rule out the need for mandatory vaccine certificates, we need to be prepared for all scenarios.

We know these kinds of contingency plans will only work if businesses and the public get to have their say and I'm urging everyone who could have to use certification: give us your views, give us your ideas.

The government is particularly interested in views from businesses, event organisers, and venue operators that have experience of using certification on a voluntary basis over the summer, and on the proposals for testing or vaccination of their workforce.

The views shared will enable the Government to take into account relevant comments and views, and make any necessary changes.

The proposals published in a policy statement today set out how, if introduced, all visitors 18 and over to the following settings could be required to be fully vaccinated:

- all nightclubs, and other venues open after 1am with alcohol, music, and dancing;
- indoor events with 500 or more attendees where those attendees are likely to stand and mix to a significant degree, or move around during the event, such as music venues or large receptions;
- outdoor, crowded settings with 4,000 or more attendees where those attendees are likely to stand, or move around during the event, such as outdoor festivals; and
- any settings with 10,000 or more attendees, such as large sports and music stadia. Staff aged 18 or over in settings could also be required to test regularly if they are not fully vaccinated or exempt.

Thanks to the phenomenal success of the vaccination programme, the data continues to show the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths has weakened significantly. Plan B recognises this success – prioritising measures which can help control the spread of the virus, while seeking to minimise economic and social impact.

The COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan aims to sustain the progress made and prepare the country for future challenges, while ensuring the NHS does not come under unsustainable pressure during this period.

Five key measures are being implemented as part of Plan A to avoid the need to deploy Plan B: Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions:

- Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission;
- Supporting the NHS and social care;

- Advising people on how to protect themselves and others; and
- Pursuing an international approach

Plans outlined by the government in its Winter Plan include rolling out booster vaccines to the most vulnerable, continuing to offer free rapid lateral flow tests, and backing the NHS with the funding needed to provide care through the winter months.