

# Update from the UK Chief Medical Officers on the UK alert level

News story

An update from the CMOs for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the alert level in the UK.



The Joint Biosecurity Centre has recommended that the COVID-19 alert level should move from Level 4 (A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially) to Level 3 (A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation).

The CMOs for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have reviewed the evidence and agree with this recommendation to move to Level 3 across the UK.

There has been a steady decrease in cases we have seen in all four nations, and this continues. It does not mean that the pandemic is over. The virus is still in general circulation, and localised outbreaks are likely to occur.

We have made progress against the virus thanks to the efforts of the public and we need the public to continue to follow the guidelines carefully to ensure this progress continues.

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty

Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride

Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Gregor Smith

Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Chris Jones

Published 19 June 2020

---

# Competition concerns raised over educational supplies merger

Press release

The CMA has found that YPO's anticipated acquisition of Findel raises competition concerns in the supply of resources to educational institutions in the UK



Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Findel Education Limited (Findel) supply a wide range of educational resources such as stationery, furniture and art and science materials to different types of educational institutions across the UK. They are the second and third largest generalist educational distributors, respectively.

After its initial Phase 1 investigation of YPO's anticipated acquisition of Findel, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has found that both YPO and Findel compete closely with each other. If the planned merger goes ahead, YPO would face effective competition from 2 other generalist distributors – RM Plc (which operates across the UK) and ESPO (a large regional player) – and, to a lesser extent, KCS (a smaller regional player). The competition from smaller local generalist distributors, alternative specialist suppliers, high street retailers and online-only distributors, such as Amazon, would only be very limited.

The CMA therefore concluded that the merger may reduce competition both by eliminating Findel's significant competitive constraint on YPO and potentially leading to market conditions in which some generalist distributors focus only on some regions of the UK.

As a result, the merger could leave educational institutions with fewer alternative suppliers and worse terms when purchasing educational supplies.

This merger will be referred for a Phase 2 investigation unless the parties offer acceptable undertakings within 5 working days to address the CMA's

competition concerns.

For more information, visit the [Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation / Findel Education merger inquiry](#) web page.

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk).

Published 19 June 2020

Last updated 19 June 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 19 June 2020

First published.

---

## [Toward a Clean, Inclusive, and Resilient Recovery](#)

The United Kingdom and the Philippines, alongside governments around the world, have been facing the unprecedented and truly global challenges of COVID-19. Beyond the tragic and widespread loss of life, COVID-19 has also pushed economies to the brink with increased unemployment and disruption of business operations. Our daily lives have been turned upside-down as many of us learn to work and connect with each other in new and different ways. Indeed, these are trying times.

Governments have stepped up their response. The Philippines is no exception. We have been full of admiration for how the Philippines and Filipinos showed enormous courage, resilience and kindness in difficult times. The UK is immensely grateful to the Philippine government for helping to bring home British people stranded due to the pandemic. Back in the UK, we applaud the care, compassion and professionalism of Filipino healthcare workers in the NHS.

As restrictions are slowly being relaxed and many countries are already entering the period of recovery, the Philippines – like many countries worldwide – is preparing an economic recovery plan. The challenge seems great. But as we reconstruct our world in the new reality, it also enables us to ‘build back better’.

We now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to lay the foundation for a greener recovery: sustainable growth that creates jobs and provides improved social services while addressing equally important concerns on climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity conservation.

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has already called

countries to action. We would highlight several key points:

- The economic case for placing clean energy at the heart of our recovery is clear. Across South East Asia, including the Philippines, renewable energy is increasingly cost-competitive with fossil fuels, and has the potential to meet growing energy demand. Countries which build new coal plants now risk locking in higher costs and higher emissions for decades to come. By instead prioritising renewable energy development, IRENA reported that it would increase jobs in the sector to 42 million globally by 2050, four times more than today.
- Now is the time for high impact local programmes on energy efficiency, biodiversity/forest conservation, deployment and promotion of e-vehicles for public transport, as well as other non-motorized transport. These are immediate interventions that can be mainstreamed and accelerated. As Lord Nicholas Stern highlighted, these interventions are fast, labour-intensive, and have strong multipliers in terms of growth, employment and climate payoffs.
- We must mobilise greater volumes of global financial flows, both public and private, to support the trillions of investments required for economies to recover. The UK has doubled our International Climate Finance to at least \$11.6 billion between 2021-2025 and we are asking other donor countries to match the scale of our ambition.
- Climate-related risks can and should be integrated in financial systems and decision making. We congratulate the Central Bank for recently issuing the Sustainable Finance Framework to mainstream climate risks in banking operations.

The message is clear: we cannot go back to business as usual. Bold and solid actions are needed to ensure that our decisions today will not lock in polluting and unsustainable investments and economic forms with accompanying stranded assets.

The UK stands firm on its existing commitments and is keen to work hand-in-hand with the Philippines toward a clean, inclusive and resilient recovery. The British Embassy in Manila has revisited all its programmes to ensure we are effectively partnering and supporting the Philippines' needs in COVID-19 recovery, particularly in health, digital economy, fin-tech, green/low carbon solutions, and science and innovation. Our UK-ASEAN-wide programmes aim to contribute to the region too, including transition to low carbon development.

The UK government also sees the Philippines as an important partner in our wider preparations for the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26), which we will host, in partnership with Italy, in Glasgow on 1-12 November 2021. In the run up to COP26, the UK and Italy will actively engage with the Philippine government and wider society towards an ambitious and meaningful outcome at

COP26. Together we can build a new global consensus that allows the people to thrive in harmony with the planet.

---

## [Consultation launched on the England Tree Strategy](#)

- Consultation to run for 12 weeks, seeking views on how to increase tree planting and tree and woodland management.
- Trees are a unique natural asset that play a crucial role in combating the biodiversity and climate crises we face.
- The government's environmental programme will play its full part as we build back better and secure a fair, green and resilient recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Plans to accelerate tree planting and improve the management of our existing trees and woodlands are underway as the government today (19 June) launched a [consultation to inform a new England Tree Strategy](#).

Everyone – from farmers, foresters and land managers, experts and environmental organisations, to members of the public – is being invited to give their views on the future creation and management of our trees, woodlands and forests.

Subject to consultation, the new strategy will set out policies to expand tree cover, support woodland management and increase public engagement with trees and woodlands. It will help ensure the government's tree planting commitment – to increase tree planting to 30,000 hectares per year across the UK by 2025 – is delivered, working closely with the devolved administrations, communities and landowners to do so.

### **The government is asking for views on:**

- how to expand, protect and improve our public and private trees and woodlands,
- the increased role that trees and woodlands can play in supporting the economy,
- how best to further connect people to nature, and
- the most effective way in which trees and woodlands can be created and managed to help combat climate change.

By growing, protecting and restoring our trees, forests and woodlands we can help reduce carbon emissions, encourage biodiversity and nature recovery, grow our sustainable timber market, and improve people's health and wellbeing.

Launching the consultation, Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith, said:

In many ways the coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the importance of nature. Growing and protecting our nation's forests will be an integral part of our recovery, and the England Tree Strategy will give us the tools to do this.

This consultation will help inform a keystone strategy which will be vital for helping us deliver the government's tree planting commitment, our commitment to the recovery of nature and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

But, we need input from the sector and public. I encourage everyone to give their views to design a tree strategy that delivers the maximum benefits for our environment for generations to come.

In the March Budget, Defra welcomed the new Nature for Climate Fund from HM Treasury. The England Tree Strategy will help inform how elements of this £640million fund will be used to deliver against the manifesto tree planting commitments, alongside peatland restoration and wider nature recovery.

Forestry Commission Chair and former National Tree Champion, Sir William Worsley said:

The England Tree Strategy will set out how we plan to accelerate woodland creation, but also importantly how to manage and protect the trees we already have. Significant work has gone into developing the groundwork for a strategy which will ensure the right tree is planted in the right place, and for the right reason.

We now need people to submit their views, to design a strategy that increases and balances the different benefits that our woodlands provide, to nature, to people, and to the economy.

The Forestry Commission will be at the forefront of delivery and I look forward to working closely with Defra and all stakeholders involved at this exciting time.

The England Tree Strategy will be developed in parallel with other key strategies that flow from the 25 Year Environment Plan. These include the recent Tree Health Resilience Strategy and the forthcoming England Peat Strategy and Nature Strategy, as well the future Environmental Land Management Scheme which will operate on the basis of providing public payments for public goods.

In close alignment with the England Tree Strategy, targeted stakeholder engagement is currently underway to shape the development of the England Peat Strategy and the peatland aspects of the Nature for Climate Fund.

Integrating the aims of the England Tree Strategy with the wider ongoing work in these areas enables a coordinated vision that delivers real, sustainable change.

The consultation period is due to conclude in 12 weeks on 11 September 2020. Subject to review, the England Tree Strategy will be published later in the year.

## Notes to Editors

- The consultation will open on 19 June 2020 and under current plans, will close on 11 September 2020. However, in light of the coronavirus outbreak, the closing date will be kept under review.
- All feedback for the consultation is to be submitted online in line with [latest government guidance](#).
- Through this open consultation, the government is encouraging people to give their views on 4 key areas, including:

### 1. Expanding and connecting trees and woodlands by:

- increasing the supply of planting material, the size of the forestry workforce and encouraging collective agreement from stakeholders to obtain widespread support for woodland creation
- providing farmers and other landowners and managers with the right incentives through improving grant funding and simplified application processes
- working with partners to increase tree cover across public land
- encouraging private investment in woodland creation by helping to develop the market for the ecosystem services generated as trees grow
- expanding tree and woodland cover to contribute to the Nature Recovery Network, which aims to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat

### 1. Protecting and improving our trees and woodlands by:

- building the capacity of the domestic UK nursery sector to ensure planting stock is bio-secure and from a known provenance
- reducing damage to woodlands through the sustainable management of invasive species
- stronger protection for ancient woodland sites, building on newly proposed measures of the Environment Bill which give communities a greater say in the protection of local trees
- increasing the percentage of woodlands in active management
- adapting treescapes and woodlands to the future climate and maximising the benefits they can provide to support adaptation measures, such as natural flood management and helping improve the resilience of wildlife

### 1. Engaging people with trees and woodland by:

- providing more and better-quality green infrastructure – including in urban areas – to make towns and cities attractive places to live and work and bring about long-term improvements in people's health
- supporting Community Forests to create new woodlands and facilitate access to existing woodlands
- closer engagement with the education and health sectors, developing skills and expertise in the forestry sector to support health programmes through social prescribing

## 1. Supporting the economy by:

- growing the market for wood products, and supporting and upskilling farmers and land managers to add trees to their business
  - supporting the sustainable timber industry and increasing the use of all domestic forest products including timber and forest biomass for energy
  - designing grants and clearer policy to increase the uptake of agroforestry
- 

# Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 18 June 2020

Good afternoon, and welcome to the Downing Street daily coronavirus briefing.

I'm joined today by Baroness Dido Harding, the Executive Chair of NHS Test and Trace.

Before we start, I want to recognise the sad loss of Dame Vera Lynn. She united us in the worst crisis that this country faced. Ever since, she's inspired us all with the words she will always be associated with: 'we will meet again'.

We send our condolences to her family and we will all remember her warmly.

First things first, I'd like to take you through the latest data, then talk about NHS Test and Trace and vaccines.

First slide please.

The first slide shows that yesterday there were 136,516 tests, taking the total to 7-and-a-quarter million tests in total. There were 1,218 positive test results.

If we go to the next slide, this slide shows the estimated number of people who had COVID-19 in England according to ONS's (Office for National Statistics) survey. As you can see, the number has been coming down over time. And this same survey implies around 4.5 thousand new cases per day.

Data from hospitals also shows that broad downward direction. There 490 admissions with COVID-19 on 15 June and, as we can see, the number of people on mechanical ventilator beds is 360.

The number of people in hospital continues to come down in almost every region. You can see a very small up-tick in the east of England. But, as you can see from the charts, there is some movement in the variation in each of



the lines.

Overall movement continues to be down. Overall, 5,193 down from 5,863 this time last week.

Final slide of this group. When it comes to the number of people who have sadly died from coronavirus, yesterday the number of deaths reported was 135, bringing the total to 42,288. Again, we can see the downward trajectory, thankfully, of that number.

The number of 135 is lower than this time last week, but there's still some way to go.

There's one additional report that's worth looking at.

Today's weekly surveillance report from Public Health England shows that last week, for the first week since mid-March, the number of people who died in this country, in total, from coronavirus or anything else, was no higher than is normal at this time of year. So that demonstrates that the number of deaths is coming right down

But the battle against this virus is not over.

And it's a battle with many fronts. And there are 2 areas that I want to update you about today.

## **Vaccines**

The first is vaccines.

Before I talk about coronavirus vaccines, I just want to mention a very important reminder about other routine vaccines that are there to protect you.

Throughout the crisis we've tried to keep the vaccination programme for children going. That has been largely successful.

But if you, or your child, is invited for a vaccination, like MMR, please make sure you attend. It's very important we don't fall behind on vaccinations for other diseases because of this crisis.

During this pandemic, we have put stringent measures in place to protect people who are getting vaccinations.

And, in the long run, the best way to defeat this virus is, of course, the discovery of a vaccine. And, since the start, we have been supporting the most promising projects.

As of this week, the Imperial vaccine is now in the first phase of human clinical trials and AstraZeneca has struck a deal for the manufacture of the Oxford vaccine.

They're starting manufacturing now, even ahead of approval, so we can build

up a stockpile and be ready, should it be clinically approved. Just like with dexamethasone, the treatment which we stockpiled before we had the proof it was clinically effective. So we are starting the manufacture of the Oxford vaccine now so that it will be ready should the science come off.

Today, we have published the way in which we propose to prioritise people for access to a vaccine, as soon as one comes available.

Just as we did for testing, we will be guided by the clinical science, prioritising those in most need.

I am very grateful to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which has published its interim advice today.

They recommend priority vaccination for 2 groups: frontline health and social care workers, and those at increased risk of serious disease and death from coronavirus, including, for example, adults over the age of 50 and those with heart and kidney disease.

As we learn more about the virus, we will continue to take into account which groups may be particularly vulnerable, including for example those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

So we can protect the most at risk first should a vaccine become available and get this country back on her feet as soon as we possibly can.

## **Test and Trace**

Our approach on vaccines is to throw everything at it, as fast as we can, and rigorously to test and make sure they are safe before deployment.

This is our approach across the board, including for Test and Trace too. That's the second area I want to focus on today.

Baroness Harding will talk through the latest figures from our NHS Test and Trace programme shortly.

Today's data shows a system that is working well and constantly improving. And, remember, each one of the thousands of people who are now isolating because of the NHS Test and Trace programme and all the work of those involved is someone who would have been innocently going about their daily lives not knowing that they were a risk to their community.

And, as you may remember, our plan is to complement this human contact tracing with a contact tracing app. Like other governments around the world, we have been working hard on this, and I want to be up-front and open about the challenges that we, and other countries, are facing.

Over the past few weeks, we have rigorously tested our prototype app in the Isle of Wight, and in field trials – and I want to thank everyone who has been involved and all the islanders of the Isle of Wight: the council, who have been brilliant, the local NHS, and Bob Seely, the local MP, who has

played a real leadership role.

Because of this testing, we discovered a technical barrier, that every other country building their own app is also now hitting. We have found that our app works well on Android devices, but Apple's software prevents iPhones being used effectively for contact tracing, unless you use Apple's own technology.

After we started work on our app, Google and Apple then started work on their own product, and as soon as they did this, we began working on both. We kept our options open, in the same way as we do with other areas

And I feel, personally, in this fight, more than any other, we must leave no stone unturned. So I asked Dido and the NHS expert Test and Trace team to make sure they worked on both products.

Of course, we have been testing Google and Apple's product too. And as we did this, we have found that it does not estimate distance well enough. Measuring distance is mission critical to any contact tracing app.

So, as it stands, our app won't work, because Apple won't change their system. But it can measure distance.

And their app can't measure distance well enough to a standard we are satisfied with. Throughout this, for me, what matters is what works. Because what works will save lives.

And I will work with anyone, public or private sector, here or overseas, to gain any inch of ground against this disease. So we have agreed to join forces with Google and Apple, to bring the best bits of both systems together.

We will share our algorithm and the work we have done on distance calculation and combine that with their work, to deliver a new solution.

I have always been optimistic about the contribution technology can make in this battle against coronavirus. Coming together in this way will bring together some of the best minds to find a solution to this global challenge and help to save lives.

In the meantime, the NHS Test and Trace system, based on good, old fashioned human contact tracing, is working well identifying local outbreaks and helping us to control this virus.

And so I want to ask you all once more: if you get a call or message from NHS Test and Trace, the most important thing is please do your bit to protect your community, to protect your loved ones and to protect the NHS by following their instructions.

Now I'd like to hand over to Baroness Harding, to take you through the Test and Trace statistics.