

# Pre-departure testing removed for vaccinated travellers

- A lateral flow test can be used instead of PCR tests for eligible fully vaccinated travellers and over 5s to take on or before day 2
- Eligible fully vaccinated travellers and under 18s will no longer have to take a pre-departure test or self-isolate on arrival in England – returning to the travel rules that were in place before Omicron
- Omicron is the dominant variant in the UK and is spreading widely among the community

From 4am on Sunday 9 January, eligible fully vaccinated travellers and over 5s will be able to take a lateral flow test instead of a PCR on or before day 2 of their arrival in England. Lateral flow tests for travel can be booked from Friday 7 January and taken upon arrival, by the end of day 2.

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s will no longer need to take a pre-departure test or self-isolate on arrival in England from 4am on Friday 7 January but must continue to take their post-arrival tests.

As data shows Omicron is the dominant variant in the UK and spreading widely in the community it is now proportionate to cautiously reduce testing measures at the borders.

Anyone who receives a positive result on their lateral flow test must self-isolate immediately and order a NHS PCR test from gov.uk. Positive PCR tests for arrivals will be sequenced to understand if and where variants are emerging around the globe in order to protect the UK public.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As we learn more about the Omicron variant it is right that we keep our testing and border measures under review to ensure they remain proportionate.

The steps we're taking will make travel easier for people while protecting the UK public from the virus.

Omicron continues to be a serious threat and it is important that travellers continue to get tested. The most important thing anyone can do if they haven't already is come forward for their vaccine.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

I've always said that we won't keep international travel restrictions in place any longer than they are necessary to protect public health.

That's why we're removing the temporary, extra testing measures we introduced for Omicron in November, making travel easier and cheaper for fully vaccinated passengers and providing a big boost for the travel industry as we enter the peak new year booking period.

We want to provide more certainty to passengers and businesses, and will do a full review of our international travel measures for 2022 by the end of the month.

Dr Susan Hopkins UK Health Security Agency said:

It is vital anyone who receives a positive Day 2 lateral flow test self-isolates immediately and orders a PCR on gov.uk. All travel PCRs with high amounts of virus are sequenced to help us understand if any new variants are emerging around the world and entering the UK.

Everyone must continue to wear face coverings where required, wash hands regularly and work from home to help stop the spread of the virus and keep our loved ones and community safe.

Lateral flow tests for international travel must be purchased from a private provider as NHS Test and Trace lateral flow tests cannot be used for international travel. Passengers who have already bought a PCR to use for travel do not need to buy another test as PCRs can still be used.

Unvaccinated passengers must continue to take a pre-departure test, PCR test on or before Day 2 and on or after Day 8 and self-isolate for 10 days. 'Test to release' remains an option for unvaccinated people to shorten their self-isolation period.

Proof of vaccination from over 15 further countries and territories will be accepted for entry into England from 4am on Monday 10 January: Bhutan, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Fiji, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, north of Cyprus, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Solomon Islands, The Gambia and Uzbekistan.

The World Health Organisation has recently granted WHO Emergency Use List (EUL) authorisation to the two versions of the 'Novavax' vaccine named Covovax and Nuvaxovid. Therefore, eligible travellers who have received either version of this vaccine will be recognised for international travel into England from 4am on Monday 10 January.

No countries have been added to the UK travel red list, which remains on standby. A further review of all travel measures will be carried out later in the month, and our long-term goal remains to return to safe, restriction-free travel as soon as it's safe to do so.

Notes to editors:

- PCR tests can be accessed free of charge by ordering in the usual way through NHS Test and Trace – via [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. Test providers will be expected to advise people to self-isolate and direct people towards the NHS Test and Trace booking page.
  - This is separate to the earlier decision made by the UK Health Security Agency to temporarily suspend confirmatory PCR tests in the community in the UK.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmatory-pcr-tests-to-be-temporarily-suspended-for-positive-lateral-flow-test-results>
  - Under the Test to Release scheme, unvaccinated travellers can choose to pay for a private COVID-19 test on day 5. If the result is negative (and the result of the day 2 test result is negative) they can end their quarantine.
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## PM statement to the House of Commons on COVID-19: 5 January 2022

Mr Speaker, with permission I will make a Statement on the Omicron variant, and our measures to contain this virus, fortify our NHS and keep our country open.

First, I am sure the whole House will join me in paying tribute to everyone working in our NHS and social care, for their extraordinary efforts in the teeth of yet another wave of this pandemic, and for all they have done, together with thousands of volunteers, to get Britain boosted.

Since we began the Get Boosted Now campaign just over three weeks ago, we have delivered 10 million extra boosters across the UK; we have doubled the rate of vaccination from 450,000 doses a day to a peak of more than 900,000; we have matched the NHS's previous record day, and then beaten it again and again; and we have met our target of offering a booster to every eligible adult in England a whole month early.

As a result, we have a higher level of booster protection than all our European neighbours, with over 34 million boosters administered across the UK, including in England reaching more than 90 per cent of the over-70s, and 86 per cent of the over-50s.

Together with the evidence that Omicron causes less severe disease than previous variants, and the way the public have conscientiously changed their behaviour in response to Plan B, this level of protection means we are in a very different position than during previous waves.

I know some Hon Members might therefore ask whether this means we can now do away with measures altogether. But I am sorry to report that hospital admissions are rising rapidly, doubling around every 9 days, with already

more than 15,000 Covid patients in hospital in England alone.

We are experiencing the fastest growth in Covid cases that we have ever known, with over 218,000 cases reported yesterday, although that included some delayed reporting.

And potentially of greatest concern, case rates are now rapidly rising among the older and more vulnerable, including doubling every week among those over 60, with the obvious risk that this will continue to increase the pressures on our NHS.

So in response to the latest data, the Cabinet agreed this morning that we should stick with Plan B for another three weeks, with a further review before the regulations expire on 26 January.

People in England should carry on working from home whenever they can, wear face coverings on public transport and in most indoor public places, and take a test before going to high risk venues or meeting the elderly or vulnerable.

All of these measures are helping to take the edge off the Omicron wave, slow the spread of infection, manage the immediate pressures on our NHS and buy time for the boosters to take effect.

And those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should, of course, continue to follow the rules where they live.

Mr Speaker, faced with these pressures on our NHS, I know some Members may ask the opposite question: whether we should go even further and move towards a full lockdown. But lockdowns are not cost free. They impose a devastating toll on our physical and mental wellbeing, on our businesses, jobs and livelihoods, and, worst of all, on the life chances of our children.

So this government does not believe we need to shut down our country again. Instead we are taking a balanced approach, using the protection of the boosters and the Plan B measures to reduce the spread of the virus, while acting to strengthen our NHS, protect critical national services and keep supply chains open.

We're building onsite Nightingale hospitals and creating 2,500 virtual beds to increase NHS capacity.

We've bought more antivirals per person than anywhere else in Europe. And we're working to identify those NHS Trusts which are most likely to need military support, so this can be prepared now.

From 10th January, we will provide 100,000 critical workers in England with free lateral flow tests for every working day to help keep essential services running.

This includes those who work on critical national infrastructure, national security, transport, and food distribution and processing. And these tests are separate – and in addition – to those already allocated to our public services, such as in education, where we have delivered 31 million testing

kits to schools and colleges for the start of the new term.

Mr Speaker, we have the biggest testing programme in Europe, registering almost twice as many tests as France, and four times as many as Germany.

Last month alone, we distributed 300 million lateral flow devices – enabling millions of people to get tested and keep their loved ones, friends and colleagues safe in the run-up to Christmas.

But thanks to the sheer size of the Omicron wave, we still need to take steps to ensure our testing capacity reaches those who need it most.

So we will be suspending the need to do a PCR to confirm the result of a positive lateral flow test.

From next Tuesday in England, if you test positive on a lateral flow device, you should just record that result on gov.uk and begin self-isolating.

Mr Speaker, our balanced approach also means that where specific measures are no longer serving their purpose, they will be dropped.

So when the Omicron variant was first identified, we rightly introduced travel restrictions to slow its arrival in our country.

But now Omicron is so prevalent, these measures are having limited impact on the growth in cases, while continuing to pose significant costs on our travel industry.

So I can announce that in England from 4am on Friday we will be scrapping the pre-departure test, which discourages many from travelling for fear of being trapped overseas and incurring significant extra expense.

We will also be lifting the requirement to self-isolate on arrival until receipt of a negative PCR, returning instead to the system we had in October last year, where those arriving in England will need to take a lateral flow test no later than the end of Day 2 and, if positive, a further PCR test to help us identify any new variants at the border.

Mr Speaker, all of these measures are balanced and proportionate ways of ensuring we can live with Covid without letting our guard down.

And we can only do this thanks to the biggest and fastest booster campaign in Europe.

Yet Mr Speaker, there are still almost 9 million people eligible, who haven't had their booster.

As many as 90 per cent of those in intensive care with Covid have not had their booster and over 60 per cent have not had any vaccination at all.

And there are 2 million slots available over the next week alone. So I urge Hon Members on all sides of the House to do everything possible to encourage your constituents to get boosted now.

This is the very best way to save lives, reduce the pressure on our NHS and keep our country open. And I commend this Statement to the House.

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## Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems in 2022

[Updated guidance](#) to support fishers with under-12m vessels to get ready for the introduction of Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems, has been published today January 5 2022 by the Marine Management Organisation.

MMO is urging fishers in the under-12m fleet to read the information and familiarise themselves with what they will need to do and when ahead of IVMS becoming a legal requirement later this year. Key updates include:

- The availability of a £650 grant towards the purchase and installation of a device
- A revised timetable for installation of devices based on vessel size with the tranche for 11.99 – 10m vessels due to start in mid-February
- A provisional timing of late autumn for the legal requirement coming into force

Vessel monitoring systems (VMS) comprise a device fitted on vessels to transmit digital data on location, speed and direction to the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) national operations centre. Larger vessels already provide this information under existing VMS regulations.

This is one of a number of coordinated measures used to assure legal fishing and provide a more complete picture of such activity in English waters.

Combined with data on catch volumes, scientific evidence of stock levels and a range of other significant data, I-VMS will also enable more efficient decisions on local and national measures and policies to support the fishing industry.

MMO has received applications from a number of potential device suppliers and approved four monitoring devices for the under-12m fleet. This is the outcome of a technical assessment of suppliers' products and engagement with the owners and skippers of under-12m vessels.

The contract for a device is between fisher and supplier, so fishers will be free to choose the device that best meets their individual needs and have it installed in line with MMO's timetable before they can claim the £650 grant. This will be paid out via a digital process currently being developed by MMO.

Based on indicative prices from suppliers, two of the devices approved by MMO will be covered in total. A full grant of £650 will be paid to fishers

choosing any approved device that is above this limit. The four approved devices can be used on all types of vessels in the under 12m fleet.

MMO has also been developing procedures to allow fishers to continue fishing if their device needs to be repaired or replaced. An update on the full process, together with fishers' obligations, will be published by the end of February.

A consultation on I-VMS in 2018 and the Government response in 2019 stated that the initial cost of a device, which was approximately £1,266 including installation, would be met by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. This was based on the average cost of three devices on the market at the time, which did not vary significantly.

Since the original consultation on I-VMS in 2018 the advances in technology have meant that the range of devices now on the market mean that some of those devices are significantly cheaper than those available in 2018. This means that it is possible to support fishers through grant funding and to provide much greater value for public money.

If you have any questions or comments please email [ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk)

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## **Confirmatory PCR tests to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results**

From 11 January in England, people who receive positive lateral flow device (LFD) test results for coronavirus (COVID-19) will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.

This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK. Whilst levels of COVID-19 are high, the vast majority of people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID-19.

Lateral flow tests are taken by people who do not have COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone who develops 1 of the 3 main COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate and take a PCR test. They must self-isolate if they get a positive test result, even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test – these rules have not changed.

The new approach reflects similar changes made this time last year in January 2021, when there was also a high prevalence of infection meaning it was highly likely that a positive LFD COVID-19 result was a true positive. This meant confirmatory PCRs were temporarily paused and reintroduced in March

2021 following a reduction in prevalence.

The UK's testing programme is the biggest in Europe with over 400 million tests carried out since the start of the pandemic. Since mid-December, 100,000 more PCR booking slots have been made available per day and capacity continues to be rapidly expanded, with delivery capacity doubled to 900,000 PCR and LFD test kits a day.

Under this new approach, anyone who receives a positive LFD test result should [report their result on GOV.UK](#) and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test.

After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced and must continue to self-isolate.

There are a few exceptions to this revised approach.

First, people who are eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment (TTSP) will still be asked to take a confirmatory PCR if they receive a positive LFD result, to enable them to access financial support.

Second, people participating in research or surveillance programmes may still be asked to take a follow-up PCR test, according to the research or surveillance protocol.

Finally, around one million people in England who are at particular risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 have been identified by the NHS as being potentially eligible for new treatments. They will be receiving a PCR test kit at home by mid-January to use if they develop symptoms or if they get a positive LFD result, as they may be eligible for new treatments if they receive a positive PCR result. This group should use these priority PCR tests when they have symptoms as it will enable prioritised laboratory handling.

In line with the reduced self-isolation approach announced on 22 December, anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation 7 days after the date of their initial positive test if they receive 2 negative LFD results, 24 hours apart, on days 6 and 7.

Rapid lateral flow tests are most useful at identifying COVID-19 in people without any symptoms. The tests are over 80% effective at finding people with high viral loads who are most infectious and most likely to transmit the virus to others.

[Analysis](#) by NHS Test and Trace shows LFD tests to have an estimated specificity of at least 99.97% when used in the community. This means that for every 10,000 lateral flow tests carried out, there are likely to be fewer than 3 false positive results. LFD tests identify the most infectious people. These people tend to spread the virus to many people and so identifying them remains important.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid said:



We have built a world-leading testing system and our testing capacity is the largest in Europe. This has helped save lives and protect millions of people from COVID-19. It forms a crucial line of defence alongside vaccines and antivirals.

As Omicron cases continue to rise the demand for tests has grown rapidly across the globe. We're putting plans in place to manage the demand for PCR tests in the UK so we can ensure that those who most need tests can continue to access them.

Chief Executive of UKHSA, Dr Jenny Harries, said:

While cases of COVID-19 continue to rise, this tried-and-tested approach means that LFDs can be used confidently to indicate COVID-19 infection without the need for PCR confirmation.

It remains really important that anyone who experiences COVID-19 symptoms self-isolates immediately. They should also [order a PCR test on GOV.UK](#) or by phoning 119.

I'm really grateful to the public and all of our critical workers who continue to test regularly and self-isolate when necessary, along with other practical and important public health behaviours, as this is the most effective way of stopping the spread of the virus and keeping our friends, families and communities safe.

Yesterday the Prime Minister announced the government will provide 100,000 critical workers in England with free lateral flow tests to help keep essential services and supply chains running.

Critical workers will be able to take a test on every working day and the provision of precautionary testing will be for an initial 5 weeks. This will help to isolate asymptomatic cases and limit the risk of outbreaks in workplaces, reducing transmission while COVID-19 cases remain high.

The full range of critical workers have been identified by the relevant departments and government will contact these organisations directly on the logistics of the scheme this week. Roll-out will start from Monday 10 January.

Tests will be separate from public sectors who already have a testing allocation with UKHSA, such as adult social care or education, and separate to those delivered to pharmacies and homes, so those channels will not be impacted by the new scheme.

We are now distributing around 600,000 packs of LFD tests (each containing 7 tests) on [GOV.UK](#) directly to homes every day (more than 50% higher than last week).

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# It's a Cracking Idea at Wigtown Primary

Pupils at Wigtown Primary School, Dumfries, had no need to feel sheepish as they were treated to a model-making workshop with the team who brought iconic characters Wallace and Gromit, Shaun The Sheep, and Morph to life.

The school was rewarded with this remarkable prize after budding inventor Cohen Stuart, in class P4-6 was declared the national winner in 2020 of a prestigious competition for aspiring young inventors, run by the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) in partnership with Multi-Academy Award® and BAFTA® award winning studio Aardman.

Cohen's ingenious concept of a '3 Brie' printer came top in the IPO's 'Wallace and Gromit Cracking Ideas' competition 2020, from around 1,500 entries from pupils across the UK. Perfect for moments when Wallace or Gromit feel peckish, it prints edible cheese and even lets you choose your favourite type and thickness!

The IPO flagship national competition fires young imaginations, challenging youngsters to come up with an invention. Encouraging children to take inspiration from the world around them, entrants were set the challenge to 'make life better', by building on everyday inventions to improve the lives of themselves, friends, family, or wider collective groups.

The Intellectual Property Office's Chief Executive Tim Moss said:

Our Cracking Ideas competition is all about encouraging young people to be creators and innovators from an early age, and in a fun, challenging and educational way impress on them the importance of protecting their ideas. Cohen deserves an enormous 'well done' for coming up with such an imaginative and delicious idea - I think it would go down well with our staff if ever we installed one at our office!

All the pupils who entered the competition can be really proud of their wonderfully creative contributions, that really showcase the immense talent our next generation of innovators and creators have to offer.

The school's Headteacher Kirsty Andrews said:

We were over the moon to discover that one of our pupils, Cohen

Stewart had won this prestigious national competition, and so proud that our school has received such a brilliant prize. Working with the talented model makers of Wallace and Gromit was an incredible experience for the whole class of pupils in P4-6, who got to experience in school how these world-famous characters are brought to life. The pupils asked loads of great questions and had great fun working with the model-makers, and I have to say it was equally fantastic for us 'bigger kids' on the teaching staff, too.

Merlin Crossingham, competition judge and Creative Director of Wallace & Gromit at Aardman said:

We were delighted to finally be able to reward our talented winners of the Cracking Ideas competition from 2020, and we're thrilled to see the fruits of today's model making workshop held at Wigtown Primary School. It was great to see everyone such have incredible fun on the day as Wallace & Gromit's world was brought to life, and the school can be rightly proud of budding inventor Cohen Stewart and his ingenious 3 Brie Printer

### **Notes to editors:**

- the Wallace and Gromit's Cracking Ideas campaign includes curriculum linked teacher resources for key stage one and two, plus a competition
- the project supports STEM curriculums as well as areas of English and numeracy at key stages 1 to 2
- the campaign is a flagship education programme for the IPO and contributes to 'creating a world leading IP environment', helping increase IP's impact through awareness and education
- Aardman, based in Bristol (UK) and co-founded in 1976 by Peter Lord and David Sproxton, is an independent and multi-Academy Award® and BAFTA® award winning studio. It produces feature films, series, advertising, games and interactive entertainment
- Wallace and Gromit, Aardman's most loved and iconic duo, have been delighting family audiences around the world for 30 years. They are internationally celebrated, winning over 100 awards at festivals – including 3 Academy Awards® and 5 BAFTA® Awards