

New UK Government Covid Testing Centre opens in Renfrew

The test centre, located at Renfrew High Street Car Park (PA4 8QL), is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of eight drive through sites, 55 walk-through sites, 42 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all COVID testing and test processing outside of the NHS.

PCR tests must be booked in advance at: www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 119. People should only book a test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) or have been instructed to do so by a clinician or NHS contact tracer.

Lateral flow test kits are also now available for pick up without an appointment at local walk-in or drive-through test sites from 8am – 8pm each day. Tests can also be ordered online or by phone by calling 119. For more information and to order a test kit online, go to: Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested in Scotland – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Jenny Harries, CEO of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

This new walk-through site is part of our ongoing work to make it even easier for people who need a PCR test to get one.

If you have developed a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, or you are asked or advised to get a test, please book one and follow any advice you're given.

As we return to a more familiar way of life, testing, and isolating when necessary, remain a vital way of controlling the spread of the virus and protecting one another.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of testing in Scotland, a programme which is vital to our recovery from this pandemic. Alongside the roll-out of UK Government-funded vaccines, testing is helping us to manage the virus, slow down the rate of transmission and protect communities.

This new walk-through facility in Renfrew is the latest in our

extensive network of testing centres supporting people in all parts of the UK.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Renfrew who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

[Armed Forces Covenant was signed by the Bank of England](#)

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed by the Bank of England, pledging that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

The agreement formalises the Bank's commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community and recognises the contribution to the country that serving military personal, veterans and their families have made and continue to make.

The covenant was signed by Andrew Bailey, the Governor of the Bank of England, and General Sir Patrick Sanders, Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command, on behalf of Defence.

General Sir Patrick Sanders said:

Through deep historical military roots, it is abundantly clear that in signing the Armed Forces Covenant, the Bank of England understand and recognise the value of supporting the Armed Forces community.

The Bank recognise the importance of our nation's defence and those that form it.

Andrew Bailey, the Governor of the Bank of England said:

I am proud that today the Bank of England has entered into the

Armed Forces Covenant. We recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to the Bank. By signing the Covenant, we hope to demonstrate our appreciation of their contributions and how we hope to support them in the future.

As the UK's central Bank and financial leaders in the city the covenant was also signed by The Lord Mayor, William Russell. The Lord Mayor of the City of London is the head of the City of London Corporation, the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK. The Lord Mayor is also President of the City of London Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association, so only fitting that he should also pledge alongside the Bank.

The Bank of England is not just our friendly neighbour at Mansion House, it is the pre-eminent institution in the Square Mile – and throwing its weight behind the Armed Forces Covenant is a significant step. The City of London Corporation signed the AFC back in 2013 and personally too, as President of the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association in the City, I feel a strong affinity with reservists for both their day jobs in financial institutions and their parallel careers in uniform. City reservists help to maintain this historic and global centre, our modern financial markets and the defence of all the things which business needs to go about its day safely. The Square Mile is one the UK's greatest strengths, for which we are recognised around the world, and so are our Armed Forces.

Alderman William Russell, the Lord Mayor of the City of London.

By becoming a forces friendly employer and choosing to partner with defence by signing the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) an organisation demonstrates its intention to support the Armed Forces community and provides the signatory with the opportunity to be recognised by the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) award. An ERS award shows that the recipient is delivering tangible support for the Armed Forces community. The Ministry of Defence (MOD), as the representative of HM Government, welcomes these commitments and is grateful for the support being pledged and provided.

To date nearly 8,000 organisations have signed the Armed Forces Covenant including businesses and charities nationwide since its introduction 2011.

[Find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant](#) and how your organisation can help to support the wider forces community.

View a list of [organisations who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant](#).

PM call with President Xi Jinping: 29 October 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to China's President Xi Jinping.



The Prime Minister spoke to China's President Xi Jinping this morning in an extensive conversation.

They discussed a range of issues, including action to address the climate crisis ahead of COP26, global trade and economic cooperation, and security and human rights.

The Prime Minister acknowledged China's new Nationally Determined Contribution and welcomed their work on the COP15 Biodiversity Summit, noting how critical protecting nature is to our overall climate objectives.

He emphasised the importance of all countries stepping up their ambition on climate change at COP26 and taking concrete action to cut emissions and expedite the transition to renewable energy, including phasing out coal.

They also discussed wider international security issues, including the situation in Afghanistan. The leaders recognised that there were areas of disagreement and difficulty in the bilateral relationship. The Prime Minister raised the United Kingdom's concerns about the erosion of democracy in Hong Kong and human rights in Xinjiang.

At the same time, they agreed to cooperate on areas of shared interest, such as developing clean and green technology and supporting the sustainable recovery of the global economy.

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International travel update

Red list review

The government has conducted a further review of the red list under our new and simplified system of international travel. From 4am on Monday 1 November (2021), Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Panama, Peru and Venezuela will be removed from the [red list](#).

Delta is now the dominant variant in most countries around the world. This means the risk of known variants entering the UK has reduced and the government can confidently remove these seven destinations from the red list, with decisions informed by the [UK Health Security Agency's](#) assessment.

We will keep the red list in place as a precautionary measure to protect public health, and we are prepared to add countries and territories if needed as the UK's first line of defence if the situation changes.

Expansion of the inbound vaccination policy

From 4am on Monday 1 November (2021), we will expand our inbound vaccination policy to include eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the 10 days before their arrival into the UK, to over 30 countries and territories.

- Angola
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belize
- Botswana
- Cambodia
- Costa Rica
- Djibouti
- Eswatini
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Mauritius
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Panama
- Peru
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone

- Sri Lanka
- Suriname
- Tanzania
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Uruguay

This will also include all British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, who previously qualified for fully vaccinated travel as part of the UK overseas vaccination policy.

Our inbound vaccination policy now covers over 135 countries and territories, and eligible fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s resident in those countries will be treated the same as those vaccinated in the UK. Eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the 10 days before their arrival into the UK will no longer need to take a pre-departure test before their departure, a post-arrival test on day 8 or self-isolate upon their arrival.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, UK government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach. The devolved administrations will be aligning to the policies set out in this statement.

Finally, since 4am on 24 October (2021), eligible fully vaccinated passengers and most under 18s arriving in England have been able to use a cheaper lateral flow device test post-arrival, with a free confirmatory PCR test if they receive a positive result. The devolved administrations have also confirmed that such passengers arriving in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will from 31 October (2021) be able to choose to take a lateral flow test instead of a [PCR test](#).

[Pubs Code Adjudicator Proposes Changes to Free-of-Tie Process to Improve Fairness for Tied Tenants](#)

Press release

Fiona Dickie, the Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA), has today asked for views on a series of measures aimed at removing potential barriers to tied tenants seeking a Market Rent Only – or free of tie – option for their pubs.



The PCA has launched a formal [consultation](#) on using her powers to issue guidance about the operation of the Market Rent Only (MRO) process for tied tenants seeking the option from the 6 pub-owning businesses regulated by the Pubs Code.

The launch of the consultation followed an independent study commissioned by the PCA confirming Ms Dickie's experience that despite her introducing improvements to the process tenants were still finding challenges in accessing their statutory right to request an option from their pub company. Significant barriers for tenants can include uncertainty about the process and its complexity, the upfront costs being demanded for going free of tie and concerns about a negative impact on the relationship between the tenant and the pub company.

Pubs Code Adjudicator Fiona Dickie said:

I have taken steps to make it easier for tied tenants to access their right to a MRO option and there is evidence that those changes are having an impact.

But, as reported to the statutory review of the Pubs Code, many still feel the process is weighted against them and I believe more regulatory steps may be necessary, including reducing the areas for disputes and the need for arbitrations.

Tenants and other interested parties are asked to respond to the consultation by 10 December 2021. It covers proposals to ensure fair rents, remove potential financial barriers and reduce concerns that pub companies may take back pubs if a tenant makes a free-of-tie request.

Under the PCA's proposals pub companies would be required to provide more documentation on levels of trading over the past three years, detailed profits valuations and forecasts of trading to justify MRO rent offers. In addition, the pub company would have to show how it was treating any previous improvements made by the tenant in determining the rent while rent deposits or advance rents would have to be introduced on an incremental basis.

Ms Dickie is also consulting on the issue of paying for dilapidations which have proved a hurdle for many tenants.

And she is proposing a higher level of transparency over decisions that pub companies may make on taking back tenancies. Pub companies would have to keep a written contemporaneous record of any decisions relating to opposing the renewal of a tied tenancy alongside ensuring their Business Development Managers keep full and accurate notes of all conversations with the tied tenant about either lease renewal or the MRO option.

Ms Dickie said:

Parliament introduced the Market Rent Only option to give tied tenants the right to make the best decisions for them and their business. The ability of a tenant to access a compliant MRO offer effectively is central to the success of the Pubs Code.

Requesting a MRO may be the start of going free of tie or it may be the beginning of a negotiation over a new tied rent. But for the tenant to be fully empowered the MRO process must work smoothly and it must not involve barriers or unnecessary disincentives which can put them off from using it.

If tenants are frustrated in accessing their statutory right to MRO or there are obstacles which make it an unrealistic option, the commercial pressure exerted on the pub-owning business to offer a competitive tied offer is reduced and the tenant cannot make an effective choice.

My resolve to ensure the MRO process is accessible and fair for tied tenants remains firm. I am determined that tied tenants can negotiate on a level playing field.

- the full consultation document can be accessed [here](#)
- the deadline for responses is 10 December 2021
- the 6 pub-owning businesses currently covered by the Pubs Code are: Admiral, Greene King, Marston's, Punch, Star Pubs & Bars and Stonegate (trading name of Ei Group)

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