

Thousands of patients to benefit from life-saving COVID-19 treatment

Thousands of vulnerable NHS patients in hospital due to COVID-19 are set to benefit from a ground-breaking new antibody treatment, the government has announced today (17 September 2021).

Ronapreve, a combination of two monoclonal antibodies, will be targeted initially at those in hospital who have not mounted an antibody response against COVID-19.

This includes people who are immunocompromised, for example those with certain cancers or autoimmune diseases, and therefore have difficulty building up an antibody response to the virus, either through being exposed to COVID-19 or from vaccination.

The government has taken action to secure supply of the new therapeutic for NHS patients across the four nations, buying enough to treat eligible patients in hospital from next week. Guidance will shortly be going out to clinicians so they can begin prescribing the treatment as soon as possible.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We have secured a brand new treatment for our most vulnerable patients in hospitals across the UK and I am thrilled it will be saving lives from as early as next week.

The UK is leading the world in identifying and rolling out life-saving medicines, particularly for COVID-19, and we will continue our vital work to find the best treatments available to save lives and protect the NHS.

Ronapreve is the first neutralising antibody medicine specifically designed to treat COVID-19 to be authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for use in the UK.

It will be used to treat patients without antibodies to SARS CoV-2 who are either aged 50 and over, or are aged 12 to 49 and are considered to be immunocompromised.

Antibody testing will first be used to determine whether patients are seronegative, meaning those who do not have an adequate existing antibody response, and will therefore receive the treatment. The treatment antibodies – casirivimab and imdevimab – will then be administered to patients through a drip and work by binding to the virus' spike protein, stopping it from being able to infect the body's cells.

The UK's world-renowned vaccination programme also continues to provide

protection to tens of millions of people across the country, and has so far saved 112,300 lives, prevented 230,800 hospitalisations and stopped over 24 million infections in England alone.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UK has proven itself to be a world-leader in identifying and rolling out effective treatments for COVID-19 – including the world's first treatment dexamethasone, which has since saved at least 22,000 lives in the UK so far and an estimated million worldwide.

The NHS has also rolled out monoclonal immunomodulatory antibody treatments tocilizumab and sarilumab, following clinical trial results from the government-funded REMAP-CAP trial. The treatments were found to reduce the relative risk of death by 24%, when administered to patients within 24 hours of entering intensive care.

Earlier this year, the government also brought together a new Antivirals Taskforce to supercharge the search for new treatments for patients who are exposed to COVID-19 to stop the infection spreading and speed up recovery time.

The UK's leading research infrastructure and life sciences sector makes it the ideal base for the brightest of global innovators to research and progress cutting-edge treatments for COVID-19 through the clinical trials process here in the UK.

Paul McManus, COVID-19 Lead at Roche Products Ltd, said:

Over the last 18 months, our goal has been to do everything we can to minimise the impact of the pandemic on those affected and the brilliant people who work tirelessly to treat and care for them. Ronapreve is the first dedicated medicine developed for COVID-19 to receive marketing authorisation from the MHRA, representing a significant milestone in how the NHS is able to fight this disease.

This is just another step in our journey to overcome COVID-19, and we will continue to collaborate with partners to identify and investigate multiple options that may help different groups of patients. Together with Regeneron, we're grateful for the collaboration of the vaccine taskforce and NHS England in helping to bring this important antibody cocktail to treat and prevent acute COVID-19 across the UK.

Notes to Editors:

- More info about dexamethasone can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-first-coronavirus-treatment-approved-for-nhs-use-by-government>
- Dexamethasone has saved at least 22,000 lives in the UK and a million

worldwide since being rolled out to COVID-19 patients last year – more here:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/03/covid-treatment-developed-in-the-nhs-saves-a-million-lives/>

- More info on tocilizumab and sarilumab can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-patients-to-receive-life-saving-covid-19-treatments-that-could-cut-hospital-time-by-10-days>
- More on the Antivirals Taskforce can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-covid-19-antivirals-taskforce-to-roll-out-innovative-home-treatments-this-autumn>

[PM meeting with President Barzani: 17 September 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with President Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



The Prime Minister welcomed President Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to Downing Street today.

The leaders agreed on the strength of the UK's relationship, and our deep historic ties, with the Kurdish people and the whole of Iraq. They resolved to further deepen that relationship, particularly in areas such as trade and investment.

The Prime Minister and President Barzani discussed the current situation in Afghanistan and both stressed the need to prevent any new terrorist threat emerging from the country.

They also covered a number of regional issues, including Iran where the Prime Minister underlined the need for Iran to return to compliance with the JCPOA.

The Prime Minister welcomed steps that Iraq has taken to reduce carbon emissions and pledged the UK's support to these endeavours in the run up to COP26.

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[National Highways project team get stuck into volunteering day at Painshill Park](#)

The team of 15 spent the day working alongside staff at the grade one listed Surrey park coppicing areas of laurel. Coppicing is an ancient method of woodland management which involves cutting the trees down to their stumps to allow new shoots to grow. Not only does this extend the life of the trees, but it also increases light to the area which improves biodiversity and provides a haven for wildlife.

Painshill is the beautiful 18th century landscape gardens in Cobham, Surrey which were created by Charles Hamilton as a living painting. The 158-acre site includes woodlands, a serpentine lake, meadows and dramatically placed garden buildings including a ruined abbey, gothic temple, grotto and a rustic Hermitage.

Speaking on the teams' achievements on the day National Highways regional director, Chris Welby-Everard said:

We were really happy to get our hands dirty for the day, and thoroughly enjoyed our time with the team at Painshill Park. It was great to experience first-hand the wonderful work that goes into maintaining this beautiful and historical landscape.

We all felt we had made a meaningful contribution and the end of the day came far too soon. It was a great opportunity for the project team to spend time together too after working remotely for so long and I would have no hesitation in recommending others to get involved at Painshill if they have a few hours to spare.

Paul Griffiths, Director of Painshill, added:

It was a pleasure to have the team from the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley interchange project at Painshill. We are extremely grateful to them for taking the time to volunteer in the landscape.

As a small charity Painshill relies on volunteers to protect and maintain our historic site. Volunteering as a corporate group can be a fantastic team building or community engagement exercise and we really hope they have all enjoyed their day outdoors in the beautiful scenery.

Painshill relies on volunteers to preserve the landscape and open daily to the public, and welcomes groups of volunteers from any type of organisation. Corporate volunteering provides an ideal opportunity for colleagues to come together outside of the office and interact in a new setting. For National Highways and Balfour Beatty the coppicing provided a wonderful team building opportunity, which colleagues thoroughly embraced.

The charity also relies on an army of over 250 volunteers who undertake many different roles including running the ticket desks and gift shop, to gardening and maintenance.

Anyone interested in volunteering can find details on the [Painshill website](#).

For corporate volunteering opportunities please visit their [corporate opportunities page](#).

Junction 10 on the M25 is one of the busiest in the country and experiences large queues and heavy congestion on a daily basis. It also has one of the highest recorded collision rates across England's motorway and major A roads nationally. National Highways is planning a vital upgrade which will improve journeys for hundreds of thousands of drivers who use the junction each day, and reduce collisions by around a third.

The scheme will also involve some of the most extensive environmental work ever carried out by National Highways, restoring over 22 hectares of heathland as well as planting new woodland. The UK's first ever 'heathland' green bridge will link walkers and cyclists to these important habitats for the first time.

National Highways is currently awaiting the Development Consent Order decision to press on with the next stage of the scheme, with a decision expected in November.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the scheme should [visit the scheme website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

New system for international travel

- new clearer travel system: red list and rest of world
- simpler, cheaper rules for fully vaccinated travellers coming from non-red list countries – fully vaccinated passengers will be able to replace day 2 PCR tests with cheaper lateral flow tests – from the end of October – and no longer need to take pre-departure tests (PDTs)
- 8 destinations removed from red list including Turkey and Pakistan
- government recognises full vaccinations from a further 17 countries and territories including Japan and Singapore

The Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, has today (17 September 2021) announced a simplified system for international travel in light of the success of the UK's domestic vaccine rollout, providing greater stability for industry and passengers.

The current traffic light system will be replaced by a single red list of countries and territories which will continue to be crucial in order to protect public health, and simplified travel measures for arrivals from the rest of the world from Monday 4 October at 4am.

Testing requirements will also be reduced for eligible fully vaccinated travellers, who will no longer need to take a PDT when travelling to England from Monday 4 October 4am.

From the end of October, eligible fully vaccinated passengers and those with an approved vaccine from a select group of non-red countries will be able to replace their day 2 test with a cheaper lateral flow test, reducing the cost of tests on arrival into England. The government wants to introduce this by the end of October, aiming to have it in place for when people return from half-term breaks.

Anyone testing positive will need to isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test, at no additional cost to the traveller, which would be genomically sequenced to help identify new variants.

Testing for unvaccinated passengers from non-red countries will include pre-departure tests, day 2 and day 8 PCR tests. [Test to release](#) remains an option to reduce self-isolation period.

From 4 October, England will welcome [fully vaccinated travellers from a host of new countries](#) – who will be treated like returning fully vaccinated UK

travellers – including 17 countries and territories such as Japan and Singapore, following the success of an existing pilot with the US and Europe.

Grant Shapps Transport Secretary said:

Today's changes mean a simpler, more straightforward system. One with less testing and lower costs, allowing more people to travel, see loved ones or conduct business around the world while providing a boost for the travel industry.

Public health has always been at the heart of our international travel policy and with more than 8 in 10 adults vaccinated in the UK, we are now able to introduce a proportionate updated structure that reflects the new landscape.

Part of the third Global Travel Taskforce checkpoint review, today's update reiterates the government's focus on protecting its borders from the most dangerous variants and ensures continuity for industry and passengers the remainder of the year. We will look to set out a further review for the UK's international travel policy early in the new year to provide further certainty for the spring and summer 2022 seasons.

Conducting the final regular traffic light review before the switch to the new two-tiered system, several additional countries and territories will move off the [red list](#) – Turkey, Pakistan, the Maldives, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Oman, Bangladesh and Kenya. Changes will come into effect at 4am Wednesday 22 September.

Passengers who aren't recognised as being fully vaccinated with authorised vaccines and certificates under England's international travel rules, will still have to take a [pre-departure test](#), a [day 2 and day 8 PCR test](#) and self-isolate for 10 days upon their return from a non-red list country under the new two-tiered travel programme. [Test to Release](#) will remain an option for unvaccinated passengers who wish to shorten their isolation period.

Sajid Javid Health and Social Care Secretary said:

Today we have simplified the travel rules to make them easier to understand and follow, opening up tourism and reducing the costs to go abroad.

As global vaccination efforts continue to accelerate and more people gain protection from this dreadful disease, it is right that our rules and regulations keep pace.

From late October, we will also be making changes to allow passengers who change flights or international trains during their journey to follow the measures associated to their country of departure, rather than any countries they have transited through as part of their journey.

All passengers will still need to fill in a [passenger locator form](#) ahead of travel. Passengers should continue to check GOV.UK travel guidance including [FCDO travel advice](#) before, during and after travel to keep up to date in entry requirements and ensure compliance with the latest COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 regulations for the country being visited.

[Forces given funding boost to increase roll out of Hotspot Policing](#)

18 police forces across England and Wales will receive a share of an additional £4.12 million to increase Hotspot Policing in towns and cities blighted by violent crime.

Developed by Essex Police, the tactic involves operating regular, intensive, high-visibility police foot patrols for short periods of time within specific areas where there is a risk of serious violence. Police data analysis will inform which areas are most at risk of violent crime and where the patrols should be targeted.

First piloted in Southend-on-Sea in 2020, the tactic resulted in a 73.5% drop in violent crime and 31.9% fall in street crime in the 20 highest crime hot spots on days when patrols visited, compared with days they did not. Other trials have shown similar results – a recent hot spot operation by Bedfordshire Police across 21 hot spot neighbourhoods saw harm from serious violence drop by 44% on patrol days.

Following the success of these pilots, 18 police forces in England and Wales most affected by serious violence at the time of the programme's inception in 2019 will be given the funding boost to roll out Hotspot Policing in targeted high-crime areas to help keep communities safer.

The additional £4.12m will bring the total funding given to those 18 forces to tackle serious violence to £28.6m in 2021.

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse, said:

The government is working hard to confront violence in all its forms and make neighbourhoods safe.

People want police officers visible on their streets, stopping violence and protecting people from harm and exploitation.

That is what our smart new approach to Hotspot Policing does and I am delighted to see the tactic is already reducing high harm crime in some areas and look forward to this success being replicated in

other towns and cities across the country.

Essex Police Detective Chief Inspector Lewis Basford designed the Hotspot Policing as part of his Masters degree in Criminology from Cambridge University.

He said:

We're continuing to see results from Hotspot Policing, and I'm thrilled it's been rolled out across the country.

This is simply police doing high-visibility policing. It's nothing new, but it does get results. I'm thrilled that police forces across the country are being given extra funds to continue this approach.

We're committed to tackling violent crime in Essex, and we know that one of the main factors of this type of crime in our county is the sale of drugs and the impact that has on our communities. Our Op Raptor teams, which tackle street and drugs gangs, made 272 arrests in the first 6 months of 2021, and we'll continue to arrest the perpetrators of these cowardly, destructive crimes.

The 18 forces most affected by serious violence at the Grip programme's inception in 2019 were determined by hospital admissions volume data from 2015/16 and 2019/20. They are: Metropolitan Police, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Northumbria, Thames Valley, Lancashire, Essex, Avon and Somerset, Kent, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire, South Wales.

The Home Office have also provisionally allocated £780,000 of one-off funding to support 2 force areas – Cleveland and Humberside – affected by serious violence but not currently in receipt of Grip funding.

Altogether the government has invested over £242 million from 2019-22 to address the drivers of serious violence and significantly bolster the response of the 18 police forces.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Serious Violent Crime, Assistant Chief Constable Jackie Sebire, said:

The damage caused to lives, particularly young ones, by violence is incredibly serious and tackling this issue is a priority for policing across the country.

There is good evidence that when done effectively, hotspot patrols can have a sustained impact on violence reduction. This additional funding is greatly welcomed as it will build on our understanding of what works.

The Hotspots strategy, in combination with the partnerships police have formed with violence reduction units, shows our commitment to supporting communities and our young people in the prevention of serious youth violence.

The investment in Hotspot Policing follows the government's Beating Crime Plan to reduce crime, protect victims and make the country safer.

Unveiled in July, the plan builds on progress to date toughening sentences to keep the most dangerous offenders behind bars and deliver almost half of the 20,000 extra police officers promised by 2023.

It will ensure the public is better protected across all parts of the country, with each neighbourhood having contactable, named police officers, who know their area and are best placed to ensure that persistent crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled.