

# PM call with President Erdoğan: 22 August 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.



The Prime Minister spoke to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan today about the crisis in Afghanistan.

They discussed the importance of the international community working together to stabilise the situation and support Afghans in the country and in the region.

The leaders shared the view that any new government must be representative of Afghanistan's diverse population and protect the rights of women and minorities, and that the Taliban would be judged by their actions not their words on this.

They agreed that countries must commit to burden-sharing on aid and refugees, noting that United Nations coordination would be central to that effort.

The Prime Minister and President Erdoğan also discussed intensifying UK-Turkey cooperation on trade and tackling climate change, ahead of COP26.

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## Government launches UK-wide antibody

# surveillance programme

- UK Health Security Agency to launch UK-wide antibody surveillance programme for the general public for the first time
- Home antibody tests available for up to 8,000 people a day across the UK who opt in to the service through NHS Test and Trace
- Data will improve understanding of the protection provided by antibodies generated following COVID-19 infection and vaccination

Thousands of adults a day will be given free access to antibody tests through a new national surveillance programme launched by the UK Health Security Agency next week, to help improve our understanding of immunity against COVID-19 from vaccination and infection.

For the first time, the programme will offer antibody testing to adults in the UK who test positive. From Tuesday, anyone aged over 18 will be able to opt in to take part when booking a PCR test through NHS Test and Trace. Up to 8,000 people who opt in and then receive a positive PCR result will be sent two finger prick antibody tests to complete at home and send back to a lab for analysis.

The UK Health Security Agency will work alongside NHS Test and Trace testing services in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to monitor levels of antibodies in positive cases across the UK. The data collected will help estimate the proportion of those who got COVID-19 despite developing antibodies as a result of having a vaccine or previously catching coronavirus.

The initiative could also provide insight into any groups of people who do not develop an immune response. The UK Health Security Agency will use the data to inform our ongoing approach to COVID-19 and provide further insight into the effectiveness of the vaccines against different variants.

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

Our new national antibody testing will be quick and easy to take part in, and by doing so you'll be helping strengthen our understanding of COVID-19 as we cautiously return to a more normal life.

I'm proud to see all parts of the UK uniting around this new initiative and working together to arm ourselves with even more valuable insights into how COVID-19 vaccines are protecting people up and down the UK.

Our phenomenal vaccination programme continues to build a massive wall of defence across the country – already preventing around 24 million infections and more than 100,000 deaths in England alone. I urge everyone across the UK to get both vaccinations as soon as possible.

All adults interested in the study are encouraged to opt in. Anyone taking part must take their first antibody test as soon as possible after receiving a positive PCR result, before the body has had time to generate a detectable antibody response to the current infection. The first test will determine the level of antibodies a person had before their current infection.

The second test should be taken 28 days after testing positive for COVID-19 and will measure antibodies generated in response to the infection. By comparing the two antibody test results, the UK Health Security Agency will be able to see how well vaccinated individuals boost their immunity when they are infected and how this might vary with different variants.

Testing positive for antibodies does not mean someone is immune from COVID-19 and people must continue to follow the rules, get tested if they have symptoms and self-isolate if positive or are a contact of a positive case and have not received both vaccine doses, to prevent the virus from spreading.

Chief Executive of the UK National Health Security Agency Dr Jenny Harries said:

We are rolling out antibody testing across the UK to gain vital data into the impact of our vaccination programme and on immune responses to different variants of COVID-19.

This innovative programme is only possible thanks to the thousands of people who continue to help with studies on vaccine and treatment effectiveness each week.

The best way to protect yourself and those around you is by getting vaccinated. I encourage anyone who has not yet come forward to book their first and second jabs.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Public Health England's COVID-19 Strategic Response Director said:

Our testing armoury is stronger than ever now we are rolling out antibody testing to thousands of people in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland alongside the vast testing capacity we have built including our NHS Test and Trace system.

Antibody testing surveillance shows how health teams across the UK are dedicated to working together to find innovative ways to understand the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and target future

treatments for COVID-19.

The NHS has guidance on what you can do to look after yourself and treat any symptoms you may have following a positive PCR result. It remains vital people continue to get a PCR swab test if they have symptoms and self-isolate when asked by NHS Test and Trace. Individuals should not change their behaviour based on an antibody result.

Antibodies are part of the body's immune response to help fight off infection and are generated either after being infected or following vaccination. Antibody testing looks for evidence of this immune response, whereas PCR and antigen testing tells someone if they have the virus at the time of test.

Antibody testing will contribute to our understanding of the protection provided by vaccines. 87% of people aged 16 and over have now received their first COVID-19 vaccine dose and 76% have had their second dose.

The government is working closely with the NHS to make it as easy as possible to get a vaccine, including through 'grab a jab' pop-up vaccine sites across the country, such as London-based nightclub Heaven, as well as football stadiums and festivals up and down the country.

Advice and information on the benefits of vaccination have been shared at every opportunity, including through a range of partnerships with industries catering for predominantly younger audiences.

This work has included partnerships with high-profile entertainment and sports personalities on short films encouraging people to get the jab, such as film stars Jim Broadbent and Thandiwe Newton, and football figures Harry Redknapp and Chris Kamara.

The government has also partnered with dating apps, social media platforms and large companies, such as Uber and Deliveroo, on adverts and incentives to get the vaccine.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The UK government has launched a new antibody testing to those who opt in when booking a PCR test through Test Trace Protect in Wales, which will enable us to deepen our understanding of COVID-19.

I'm proud that Wales, along with the other three UK nations, are collaborating on such an important programme and I urge everyone to opt in and take advantage of the testing available.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis said:

I would encourage as many people as possible in Northern Ireland to opt in to take part in the new national antibody testing programme

when booking a PCR test.

Improving our understanding of COVID-19 is essential in supporting the UK's fightback against the pandemic.

In addition, with over 85% of those eligible in Northern Ireland having had their first vaccination and almost 80% fully vaccinated against COVID-19, I would urge the public to continue this great effort to ensure that they and their families are protected.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

I'd urge everyone in Scotland to opt in for this new antibody test when booking a PCR test through Test and Protect. It's a quick and easy process and you'll be making a massive contribution to our understanding of COVID-19.

Ensuring as many people as possible are tested and vaccinated is our biggest line of defence as we continue our journey out of this pandemic.

#### Notes to editors

- This is the first time antibody tests have been made available to the general public. Until now, antibody testing has only been available to specific cohorts for clinical or research purposes, and to some people across the devolved administrations working in professions such as in education, social care or the NHS.
- The initiative is for surveillance only and the numbers will be limited to 8,000 per day.
- The NHS has guidance on what you can do to look after yourself and treat any symptoms you may have following a positive PCR result. It remains vital people continue to get a PCR swab test if they have symptoms and self-isolate when asked by NHS Test and Trace.
- Antibodies take time to develop. Most people make antibodies within 28 days of being infected or vaccinated, but it can take longer. This survey uses two different antibody tests, one that can see past infection only and one that can see response to the vaccine. As an example, if an individual has had a COVID-19 vaccine but no prior infection, the first antibody test taken as part of this surveillance would likely display a negative antibody result in response to their new or past infection, and a positive result for the antibodies generated by their vaccine. Following the second antibody test take 28 days after the first, there would likely be a higher positive antibody result to the

vaccine and a positive infection antibody result.

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## PM call with UN Secretary-General António Guterres: 21 August 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.



The Prime Minister spoke to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres again today about the situation in Afghanistan.

He stressed that the UN must be central to both the humanitarian response to the situation in Afghanistan and international negotiations over the future of the country, and pledged the UK's support in that effort.

The Secretary-General updated about the concerning situation on the ground and the challenges faced by humanitarian workers. They agreed that securing the progress made in the last 20 years on development and civil society was vital, and the international community must ensure the rights of women, girls and ethnic minorities are protected.

They agreed to continue working closely together in the coming days, including through the UN Security Council.

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# Boost for British shoppers and exporters from UK-New Zealand trade deal

- Chocolate, gin, buses and clothes are among British products that could see tariffs of up to 10% removed, encouraging New Zealand to buy British.
- High quality New Zealand products such as wine, food and drink could be tariff-free in UK shops.
- Total trade in goods and services between the UK and New Zealand was worth £2.3 billion last year and is set to increase with a trade deal

A trade deal with New Zealand could give British shoppers and exporters reason to cheer as both countries ditch tariffs as high as 10% on a range of high-quality products. The latest round of trade talks between both sides ended last month with good progress made towards a final deal.

Under a new deal, a multitude of UK goods would no longer be subject to import tariffs when entering the New Zealand market, and exporters would gain an advantage over international rivals in the New Zealand import market, which is expected to grow by 30% by 2030.

- Iconic British exports such as Beefeater gin and Belvoir soft drinks currently face a tariff of 5% when entering New Zealand, as do products from chocolate to cheese and crisps.
- The UK's world-famous fashion industry sold £30m-worth of clothes to New Zealand last year, and businesses like Tee-Time Clothing could now benefit when tariffs of 10% on clothing are lifted.
- Cars are the UK's biggest export to New Zealand, with £133 million-worth sold last year. Buses, motorhomes and caravans are in line to also see tariffs up to 10% removed entirely.

Much-loved New Zealand wine, including Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, which currently face tariffs of up to 20p per bottle would also be expected to have these tariffs slashed as part of a trade deal which could be agreed in principle soon.

## **Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss said:**

"We are working round the clock to get this deal done in the coming weeks. We are both big fans of each other's high-quality products, so this could be a huge boost that allows British shoppers to enjoy lower prices and British exports to be even more competitive.

"New Zealand and the UK are natural partners united by modern values. An agreement would reflect those ideals and is a win-win for both countries.

"It would also be an important step towards our accession to CPTPP, helping

the UK gain access to 11 of the world's biggest and fastest-growing economies across the Pacific region and opening doors to dynamic markets across the world."

Trade between the two countries was worth £2.3 billion last year and would be expected to increase following a deal. New Zealand is a leading member of CPTPP, a free trade area worth around £9 trillion and is supporting the UK's bid to join. Joining CPTPP would open opportunities for UK businesses to sell in some of the largest and fastest-growing markets in the world, populated by half a billion people.

**Dominic Goudie, Head of International Trade, the Food & Drink Federation, said:**

"We hope to see the UK conclude an ambitious trade deal with New Zealand which removes tariffs facing UK exports of quality manufactured food and drink. This would provide a welcome boost for producers and exporters of iconic UK products including chocolate, coffee, biscuits and soft drinks, where UK sales in New Zealand are currently £10m each year. Our sector has significant untapped potential for export growth and removing existing tariffs will make UK products more competitive, creating the conditions to drive future growth in New Zealand.

"Given their relative geographical proximity, having deals in place with both New Zealand and Australia that deliver similarly ambitious outcomes will be welcome news for UK producers seeking to expand sales around the world, as many will look to supply to both markets."

**Louise Ryan, Managing Director, The Gin Hub Pernod Ricard, said:**

"A UK-New Zealand FTA is great news for gin produced in the UK. There's a big opportunity for growth in New Zealand, with the gin category doubling in size in the last three years, led by the premium+ segment.

"Cutting the gin tariff to zero will enable us to put more investment behind our iconic British brands, such as our blockbuster Beefeater London Dry Gin, which is accelerating growth with the launch of new flavours: Beefeater Pink Strawberry and Beefeater Blood Orange."

Other popular New Zealand products which could potentially be made cheaper under a UK-New Zealand include apples and Manuka honey. We imported over £42m of apples from New Zealand in 2020 and over £32m of honey even though they currently face tariffs of 8% and 16% respectively. These are set to be eliminated as part of the agreement.

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# All schools to receive carbon dioxide monitors

CO2 monitors will be provided to all state-funded education settings from September, so staff can quickly identify where ventilation needs to be improved.

Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and is important in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Backed by a £25 million government investment, the new monitors will enable staff to act quickly where ventilation is poor and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working.

The majority of c. 300,000 monitors will become available over the autumn term, with special schools and alternative provision prioritised to receive their full allocation from September given their higher-than-average numbers of vulnerable pupils.

The government has also launched a trial of air purifiers in 30 schools in Bradford, which is designed to assess the technology in education settings and whether they could reduce the risk of transmission.

As students in England return to classrooms from next week, this is just one of the measures that will be in place in schools to help reduce transmission. Students and staff will also be asked to continue twice-weekly testing, with two on-site tests provided for secondary and college students as they return.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Providing all schools with CO2 monitors will help them make sure they have the right balance of measures in place, minimising any potential disruption to education and allowing them to focus on world class lessons and catch up for the children who need it.

By keeping up simple measures such as ventilation and testing, young people can now enjoy more freedom at school and college.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are all enjoying the return to a more normal way of life and getting our children back into school is a really important part of that process. We want to ensure schools are both safe and comfortable for students and staff – and have been clear that good ventilation is crucial.

As well as offering vaccines to 16 and 17 year olds and regular

testing, we continue to work with the Department for Education to manage COVID-19 in schools and colleges. This includes the pilot we are running to test different air cleaning methods in school settings.

CO2 monitors are portable so schools and other settings will be able to move them around to test their full estate, starting with areas they suspect may be poorly ventilated.

The programme will provide schools and other settings with sufficient monitors to take representative readings from across the indoor spaces in their estate, assessing all spaces in a relatively short space of time.

More details will be available following the completion of procurement, however all schools and colleges are expected to receive at least partial allocations during the autumn term, enabling all settings to monitor areas where they believe airflow may be weakest.

As the monitors are rolled out the department will provide guidance on their use.

Secondary schools and colleges will be conducting on-site covid testing of their pupils, which can start before the start of term. They can stagger the return of pupils over the first week of term as needed to support the delivery of testing. Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

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