

Prime Minister announced £232 million investment to support GB and Northern Ireland athletes path to Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

The £232 million will be used to back aspiring Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes as well as their coaches and support staff, in addition to funding from the National Lottery. This £77.4 million a year to elite sport agency UK Sport is an increase from the £54 million a year baseline government funding UK Sport received for Tokyo 2020 – a rise of 44 per cent.

The news will provide a major boost for Team GB's returning athletes following their stunning performances in Tokyo, and the Paralympic athletes set to grace the world stage in the Paralympic Games that begin later this month.

They will be in line to benefit from UK Sport's World Class Programme and Progression Funding, which will provide vital support towards reaching the pinnacle of their sports as preparations begin for Paris 2024 and beyond.

The investment will also support athletes and coaches targeting success at the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and help kick-start the search for the next generation of Olympic and Paralympic champions.

It comes as the Prime Minister and Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston attend the Team GB Homecoming event at Wembley Arena today, where the medal-winning success of the likes of Adam Peaty, Jason and Laura Kenny, Tom Daley and Sky Brown will be celebrated in front of a live audience and broadcast to the nation at home on BBC One.

Team GB and Northern Ireland won 65 medals in 25 different disciplines, broader than any other country, including in BMX and Skateboarding for the first time at what was the latter sport's inaugural games. These medals placed Great Britain and Northern Ireland fourth in the medal table.

The Paralympic Games will see around 240 athletes representing ParalympicsGB in Japan, including the likes of track stars Jonnie Peacock and Hannah Cockroft and swimmer Ellie Simmonds.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Team GB showed us the very best of this country in Tokyo – demonstrating sportsmanship, hard work and record-breaking performances. From the pool to the track to the velodrome, our Olympians gave us so many reasons to be proud, and to celebrate their extraordinary success. This increased funding will support Team GB to deliver their best possible performances in three years

time in Paris.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our Olympic athletes have been an inspiration to people across Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the world. Their incredible performances gave us many medal winning-moments in Tokyo that will live long in the memory and I am sure we will enjoy many more from our Paralympians later this month.

Their success is years in the making and a credit to their resilience, dedication and brilliant talent. Despite major disruption caused by the pandemic, Team GB have brought the entire nation together and inspired the next generation of athletes.

Today we reaffirm our commitment with increased government funding, ensuring they can focus on delivering more memorable performances at Paris and beyond.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

As this Government has consistently shown, including through these challenging times, we're right behind Team GB and ParalympicsGB. Our amazing elite athletes are one of our nation's greatest success stories, making us an Olympic and Paralympic powerhouse.

I'm sure they have inspired many to take up sport for the first time, while making the country proud and promoting the best of Britain abroad. So it is absolutely right that we can now deliver this certainty for them for preparations for Paris 2024.

I now look forward to the Paralympics where the nation will be cheering on our brilliant Paralympic athletes as they make us proud in Tokyo.

Sally Munday, CEO, of UK Sport, said:

On behalf of the Olympic and Paralympic sport community, I'd like to thank the Government for providing us with the certainty UK Sport, Britain's athletes, and, crucially, their world class support teams, needed for the coming three years towards Beijing 2022 and Paris 2024. The past 18 months have been challenging time for everyone, and I think we have all seen the power of sport to uplift us, demonstrated by our Olympians in Tokyo, and we are looking forward to our Paralympians doing the same in less than two weeks' time.

Dame Katherine Grainger, Chair of UK Sport, said:

This commitment from our Government, as well as the incredible support we receive from National Lottery players, gives us greater certainty of delivering more extraordinary moments to reach, inspire and unite the nation in Beijing and Paris, and also sets us up perfectly for the 'greatest decade' of sport that we hope to deliver in the years to come. Our thanks go to Government and The National Lottery for their unwavering support for Britain's Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

British Olympic Association Chair Hugh Robertson said:

This is amazing news. We are very grateful for the support from the government that will set us up for Paris 2024 and beyond.

Mike Sharrock, CEO of the British Paralympic Association said:

This is great news for our Paralympic athletes about to compete in Tokyo, demonstrating the government's backing for their hard-work and dedication in preparing for Tokyo and ensuring that we continue to be a major powerhouse in Paralympic sport through to Paris 2024 and beyond.

With the challenges of disrupted training schedules, lockdowns and additional safety measures, lottery and government funding, coupled with athletes' hard work and extreme dedication, enabled 376 Team GB athletes to be selected for Tokyo – making it the biggest Team GB at an overseas games.

The funding also comes with less than a year to go to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Birmingham and the West Midlands are benefitting from £778 million of investment, making it the biggest investment in a sporting event since London 2012. It is already generating jobs for local people, creating world class sporting facilities, attracting new inward investment to the region and promoting the very best of the West Midlands and the UK to the world.

Athletes are set to compete at venues across the region, like Sandwell and Cannock Chase. West Midlands residents can apply now for tickets with a national ballot opening later in the year.

ENDS

Government to introduce world-leading ban on shark fin trade

- Import and export of detached shark fins banned to promote shark conservation
- World-leading trade ban will extend to shark fin products including tinned shark fin soup
- Endangered and overfished species including shortfin mako and blue shark are among those to benefit from greater protections

The UK will go further than any other country to stop the cruel practice of shark finning International Ocean Minister Lord Goldsmith announced today, thanks to new legislation set to ban the import and export of shark fin products.

The UK has a strong track record in marine conservation and has been pressing for stronger international action to protect sharks against unsustainable fishing practices and shark finning, which is the practice of removing a shark's fins at sea and discarding the finless body back into the water.

Many species of shark face significant population pressures. Out of over 500 species of shark, 143 are listed as 'under threat' under the International Union for Conservation of Nature – with different species ranging from 'vulnerable' to 'critically endangered'. The presence and variety of sharks in marine areas acts as a key indicator for ocean health while the animals also play a vital role in marine ecosystems by helping to maintain healthy levels of fish below them in the food chain.

Demand for shark fin products is a significant driver for these pressures, alongside over-fishing. Banning detached fins from being brought into the UK will help to protect wild populations of shark species, such as the endangered short fin mako shark and overfished blue shark, which have both declined rapidly as a result of unsustainable fishing practices.

The ban will maintain the UK's position as a world leader in protecting animal welfare restricting the import of and export of detached shark fins as well as products which contain shark fins including soup and other products.

Animal Welfare minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Shark finning is indescribably cruel and causes thousands of shark to die terrible deaths. It is also unforgivably wasteful. The practice is rightly banned in UK waters, but the trade continues, with serious implications for the future of these magnificent creatures.

That is why we are now banning the import both of detached shark fins and shark fin products. Our action will not only help boost shark numbers, it will send a clear message that we do not support

an industry that is forcing many species to the brink of extinction

The UK is a global leader in marine protection, with our 'blue belt' programme protecting an area of ocean around British Overseas Territories the size of India, as well as plans to pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas in our domestic waters. The UK is also leading a global campaign, supported by over 80 countries, for at least 30% of the world's land and ocean to be protected by 2030.

Ali Hood, Director of Conservation for the Shark Trust said:

The Shark Trust welcomes the prohibition in trade in detached fins as the next action in a history of proactive moves by the UK Government, which supported leaving fins naturally attached as best practice years before adoption of the policy by the EU in 2013.

It is encouraging to see the UK addressing the fin trade as an element of overfishing: the principal threat to sharks and rays. And we're noting that the UK is ramping up its engagement in domestic and international shark conservation issues, currently championing the science-based advice for a prohibition on mako in North Atlantic high-seas fisheries.

Shark Conservationist James Glancy said:

New measures from the UK Government to protect sharks from the cruel shark fin trade are welcomed by conservationists.

The unsustainable rate at which sharks are caught by global fishing fleets, as bycatch or deliberately for their fins and meat, has caused a significant decline in worldwide shark populations.

Sharks have been around for millions of years and play a crucial role for the health of our oceans yet, as a consequence of human activity, many shark species are critically endangered and face extinction in some regions.

We will continue to champion conservation measures for sharks through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (the international organisations which regulate fishing activities on the High Seas) and under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which prohibits or requires trades to be carefully regulated. This ban represents another important step in our journey to delivering better shark conservation globally.

Today's announcement is part of the Government's plan to eradicate cruel practices and improve standards both domestically and overseas as set out in

our [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#).

All young people aged 16 and 17 in England to be offered vaccine by next week

- Health and Social Care Secretary announces new target to offer first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to all 16 and 17 year olds in England by Monday 23 August
- Walk-in centres now open across the country and thousands of young people already vaccinated
- New walk-in site finder launched online to help young people locate nearest vaccination centre

All young people aged 16 to 17 in England are to be offered a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by Monday 23 August to give them the vital protection provided by the vaccine before returning to school in September, the Health and Social Secretary Sajid Javid has announced today (15 August).

Tens of thousands of people in this age group have already been vaccinated at local vaccination sites and walk-in centres across the country and the drive to offer a first jab by the new date will allow those teenagers in that age bracket the two weeks necessary to build maximum immunity.

NHS England has launched a new online walk-in site finder to help 16 and 17 year olds locate the nearest available centre. Further sites will come online over the coming days and weeks.

People aged 16 and 17 will be able to get vaccinated at one of more than 800 GP-led local vaccination sites. Thousands will be invited including by text and letter to book their appointments through GPs or via walk-in centres to help keep them, their families and friends safe from the virus.

The vaccines have already saved around 84,600 lives and prevented 23.4 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations in England up to 6 August, according to the latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It is brilliant to see tens of thousands of young people have already received their vaccine – thank you for helping to further build our wall of defence against COVID-19 across the country.

I have asked the NHS in England to ensure they offer a first dose of the vaccine to everyone aged 16 and 17 by next Monday 23 August, this will make sure everybody has the opportunity to get vital protection before returning to college or sixth form.

Please don't delay – get your jabs as soon as you can so we can continue to safely live with this virus and enjoy our freedoms by giving yourself, your family and your community the protection they need.

Teenagers within three months of turning 18 can book their vaccine appointment online through the National Booking Service or by calling 119. Around 100,000 texts are being sent to those eligible inviting them to book their jabs.

Children aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 or who live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus are also being contacted by the NHS and invited for their vaccine by 23 August, ahead of the new school year.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Young people have shown great enthusiasm to get their vaccines and this has allowed us to safely enjoy the things we have missed, such as going to the pub or seeing family and friends.

Thank you to the NHS and volunteers for your continued dedication to protect people from this virus. I urge everybody else to get their vaccines as soon as possible.

Data from Public Health England (PHE) shows COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant, the dominant strain in the UK. The analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

A total of 87,421,381 doses have been administered in the UK, with 47,215,352 people receiving a first dose (89.3%) and 40,206,029 people receiving both doses (76%). More than 70% of people aged 18-29 have already received their first 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.

NHS medical director of primary care and deputy lead for vaccination programme in England, Dr Nikki Kanani, said:

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of NHS staff, well over 39 million people in England have already had their first, including more than a quarter of a million young people under the age of 18.

Now as teenagers prepare to head back to school or college or into their first full-time jobs, once again NHS staff are doing everything they can to offer young people the lifesaving vaccine as quickly as possible to protect themselves and others. Those who are eligible should check their nearest walk-in centre on the site finder today or book through their GP team once invited to do so.

YouGov polling also shows the UK continues to be one of the top nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated. ONS data published on 9 August shows that more than 9 in 10 (96%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine, and vaccine hesitancy for those aged 18 to 21 has almost halved from 9% to 5%. The statistics also showed hesitancy has decreased for those aged 16 and 17 from 14% to 11%.

Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

- People aged 16 and 17 can find their nearest walk-in vaccination centre on the [NHS website](#).
- People with three months of their 18th birthday and all over-18s can [book an appointment](#) on the NHS website.
- The latest UK-wide vaccination statistics are published [here](#) and NHS England publishes vaccine statistics for England [here](#).
- The latest PHE analysis on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines is available [here](#). Their latest study on the number of cases prevented and lives saved by vaccines is [here](#).
- The ONS survey on 'Barriers to COVID-19 vaccination' can be found [here](#).
- Further ONS stats on vaccine hesitancy can be found [here](#).
- The YouGov data comparing uptake rates in countries around the world is available [here](#)

Nicaragua: UK Statement on Elections

News story

Foreign Office Minister Lord Goldsmith has issued a statement on the elections in Nicaragua.



Lord Goldsmith said:

The steps taken by President Ortega and Vice President Murillo, to prevent free and fair elections in Nicaragua, are a clear abuse of power. The regime's attempts to stifle opposition, including banning all opposition parties, will deny Nicaraguans their right to vote for a candidate of their choosing.

With opposition figures detained, including seven potential presidential candidates, and a crackdown of fundamental rights and freedoms, November's elections will lack credibility.

This increasing authoritarianism must end. The rule of law and the rights of the Nicaraguan people must be respected with free and fair elections restored. The UK will continue to work with its partners to encourage a peaceful and democratic outcome.

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Cost of NHS travel tests to be reduced and private provider list reviewed

- Cost of travel tests from NHS Test & Trace will be reduced from £88 to £68 for one test and from £170 to £136 for two.
- List of private testing providers to be reviewed to ensure pricing is accurate and transparent.
- Any misleading pricing will be clamped down on swiftly and we will urgently remove listings found to have misleading prices.
- Wider Competition and Markets Authority review ongoing following urgent request from Health and Social Care Secretary.

UK holidaymakers will benefit from cheaper travel testing packages, with the price of some tests to fall by a fifth from today.

The cost of NHS Test and Trace tests for international arrivals will now be reduced from £88 to £68 for green or fully vaccinated amber arrivals, and from £170 to £136 for two tests for amber arrivals who are not fully vaccinated.

The Health Secretary has also announced there will be a rapid internal review of the pricing and service standards of all providers of day 2 and 8 tests. Any misleading pricing will be clamped down on swiftly and we will urgently remove listings found to have misleading prices. The review will start this weekend and last 10 days, and providers failing to meet necessary standards will be urgently removed.

The price of travel testing has fallen significantly. This is the second time pricing of NHS tests has been reduced, following a review in May which reduced the cost of a day 2 and 8 package from £210 to £170.

NHS Test and Trace advertises these tests alongside private companies' testing packages and they are available to purchase to fulfil the UK government's testing requirements for international travel.

The Health and Social Care Secretary has also commissioned a rapid review of the private testing providers list on gov.uk to ensure the prices advertised align with what is genuinely available.

This follows a request on Friday 6 August from the Health and Social Care Secretary for an urgent high-level review from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to address exploitative behaviour in the private testing market and crack down on excessive pricing or misleading claims. While the CMA carries out this review it will provide ongoing support to DHSC.

PCR testing remains completely free for people with symptoms of COVID-19, and – from 16 August – for people who are double jabbed or under 18 and have been identified as a close contact of someone with the virus.

People can continue to book free PCR tests, or order home PCR tests online or

by calling 119, but as has always been the case, all tests used for travel must be purchased.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I know how much people have looked forward to their summer holidays and that the cost of PCR testing can be a barrier to that. That is why I am determined to protect consumers and hardworking families from exploitative practices and ensure high quality tests are available at a reasonable price.

I am pleased to announce that with immediate effect we're slashing the price of day 2 and 8 tests from NHS Test and Trace by a fifth – this will benefit people right across the UK. And I look forward to reviewing initial advice from the Competition and Markets Authority over the coming days. I've also ordered my department to urgently review the list of private providers on gov.uk to ensure pricing is clearer and transparent. Any provider found to be misleading the public will be kicked off.

Too many providers are acting like cowboys and that needs to stop. The public should be allowed to enjoy their summer holidays without having to face excessive costs or anxiety.

Top quality clinical standards are fundamental to a successful testing programme. Test providers must use laboratories that are either accredited or undergoing accreditation by the independent United Kingdom Accreditation Service. Companies using laboratories that fail to meet the high standards required will be removed from the list of approved suppliers without hesitation.