

# NHS COVID-19 app updated to notify fewer contacts to isolate

- Fewer contacts will be notified by the app following an update to the 'logic'
- Public urged to continue using NHS COVID-19 App as restrictions lift
- New data shows over 50,000 cases were averted in the first 3 weeks of July – with up to 2,000 cases prevented a day

The public is being urged to continue to use the NHS COVID-19 App as changes made from today (Monday 2 August) will result in fewer contacts being advised to self-isolate following a close contact with a positive case.

As part of a review into the app announced by the Health Secretary, the 'logic' which underpins how close contacts are notified will be updated from today.

Currently, for people who input a positive test but are asymptomatic, the app looks for close contacts five days prior to a positive test. This will be updated based on public health advice to look back at contacts two days prior to a positive test.

The change will mean fewer contacts that took place when the positive case was unlikely to be at the peak of their infectiousness are advised to self-isolate, reducing the overall number of notifications sent by the app.

This update does not impact the sensitivity of the app, or change the risk threshold, and will result in the same number of high-risk contacts being advised to self-isolate.

## **Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:**

We want to reduce the disruption that self-isolation can cause for people and businesses, while ensuring we're protecting those most at risk from this virus. This update to the app will help ensure that we are striking the right balance.

It's so important that people isolate when asked to do so in order to stop the spread of the virus and protect their communities.

This update comes as new analysis shows the NHS COVID-19 App continues to play a crucial role in breaking chains of transmission, preventing hospitalisations and saving lives.

New analysis from leading scientists shows that in the first 3 weeks of July, as cases were exponentially rising, the app averted up to 2,000 cases per day, and over 50,000 cases of COVID-19 including chains of transmission assuming 60% compliance with instructions to self-isolate. This is estimated

to have prevented 1,600 hospitalisations.

It also shows the app reduces the spread of COVID-19 by around 4.3% each week, and for every 200-250 tests entered and shared in the app one person is prevented from being hospitalised from the virus.

Usage remains high, with around 40% of the eligible population regularly using the app and around 50% of all reported tests being inputted.

The government is urging the public to continue using the NHS COVID-19 App. Around one in three people experience this virus without symptoms and, even if you are fully vaccinated, it is possible that you could be unwittingly carrying and spreading the virus, creating a chain of transmission that could have someone vulnerable to the virus at the end of it.

### **Dr Jenny Harries, CEO of UK Health Security Agency, said:**

The NHS COVID-19 App is a really practical example of how technology can be used to fight the biggest challenges we face in protecting and improving our health.

The app is the simplest, easiest, and fastest way to find out whether you have been exposed to the virus, and it has saved thousands of lives over the course of this pandemic.

I strongly encourage everyone, even those fully vaccinated, to continue using the app. It is a lifesaving tool that helps us to stay safe and to protect those closest to us as we return to a more familiar way of life.

The app remains the fastest way to know if you have been at risk, and app users will only be advised to isolate if they have come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

From 16 August, fully vaccinated contacts in England will be exempt from isolation and instead will be advised to take a PCR test. Those who are not fully vaccinated will still be required to isolate, and it will remain a legal obligation to isolate if you test positive for COVID-19.

### **Background information**

- The app works with a team of independent scientific advisors lead by Christophe Fraser from Oxford University's Pathogen Dynamics Group at the Big Data Institute. These recent findings are published on their blog and a paper is expected to follow. This can be found [here](#)
- An explanation of the Risk Algorithm of the NHS COVID-19 App can be found [here](#)
- Regular data published on the NHS COVID-19 App can be found [here](#)

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## [Dame Judith Macgregor DCMG LVO appointed as Interim Chair of the British Tourist Authority](#)

Lord McLoughlin is stepping down as Chair of the British Tourist Authority early to become the new Chair of Airlines UK. Lord McLoughlin, who has had an extensive career at the top of UK politics for more than 30 years, will take up the position on 1 August, replacing Jane Middleton, who has completed her second 3-year term.

Dame Judith joined the British Tourist Authority Board in December 2017 and was reappointed after a first term in December 2020.

Dame Judith was British High Commissioner to South Africa from September 2013 until March 2017, when she retired from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office after a career of some 40 years in the Diplomatic Service. After graduating from Oxford University and following a year in Romania as a British Council scholar, Dame Judith entered the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1976 serving first in the former Yugoslavia, and later as First Secretary in Prague and Paris. In her early years in the FCO, she held various posts dealing with Poland, Western Europe, and as the Secretary of State's speechwriter. After serving as Ambassador to Slovakia from 2004-7, she was appointed FCO Director for Migration from 2007-9 and then Ambassador to Mexico in 2009, for which she was awarded the CMG. In 2013, she became British High Commissioner to South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. She was awarded the DCMG for her services to Diplomacy in January 2016.

Since leaving the Diplomatic Service, and in addition to the BTA, Dame Judith has taken up a number of Board positions, including as Independent Non Executive Director for the UK/Mexican company Fresnillo plc, as Member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and as Vice Chair of Southampton University. In 2020, Dame Judith was appointed Chair of the Strategic Advisory Group to the Global Challenges Research Fund.

This interim appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The time commitment for this role is approximately 2 days per week and is remunerated at £40,000 per annum (pro rata for time in service). The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Dame Judith has not declared any activity.

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# Blue Belt Programme launches Training Programme for UK Overseas Territories

The UK Government's Blue Belt Programme has launched a comprehensive training package to strengthen UK Overseas Territories (UKOT) capability in protecting and managing their marine protected areas.

The training modules have been designed specifically for and are currently only available to the UKOTs within the Blue Belt Programme – St Helena, Ascension Island, and Tristan da Cunha, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, Pitcairn Islands and South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands – however the subject areas are suitable for countries worldwide. They include:

- Five eLearning modules with associated games providing a high-level overview of: Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management, Marine Biosecurity, Surveillance Tools & Technology, Enforcement Processes and Compliance & Enforcement in the UKOTs.
- Complemented by three interactive games to test learners' understanding covering: MPA Management, Marine Biosecurity and Compliance & Enforcement.
- Seven comprehensive training units, which are in turn further broken down into subject-specific modules that cover everything in the eLearning modules, but in much more detail. The material comprises narrated presentations, videos and a raft of supplementary material to support the content of the presentations. From a Compliance & Enforcement perspective there is also, for example, a specialist module for air crews undertaking aerial patrols in British Antarctic Territory and South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands.

UK Minister for the Environment, Lord Goldsmith, said:

"Building capacity within the Overseas Territories is a key priority of the Blue Belt initiative. This platform provides a one-stop shop for comprehensive marine management training in the Territories, ensuring long-term, on island expertise remains at the forefront of marine policy development"

The training modules are easy to access through the Marine Management Organisation's Learning Management System, and are both educational and engaging to complete. The package, which has been in production for 2 years, include effective learning approaches such as animations and interactive games. It also includes dramatised scenarios of the surveillance and monitoring of suspected Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing to enhance understanding and best practice for anyone involved in the protection and sustainable management of the marine environment.

The training package is just one of the many benefits on offer to UKOTs who join the Blue Belt Programme. Created by knowledge experts, produced by training specialists they are easy to access and navigate and – free of charge to anyone within the Blue Belt Programme.

Stephanie Martin, Tristan Da Cunha's Environmental and Conservation Policy Officer, and UKOT Representative on Blue Belt's Steering Group commented:

Whilst the UKOTs are hugely diverse, all share the ambition and commitment to safeguard their precious ecosystems and marine environments for future generations. These training modules will both strengthen their knowledge of how the challenges they face are best tackled and provide the skills and knowledge required to support the successful management of their MPAs.

Not only that, but the training is available to them at a time of their choosing and through the MMO's tried and tested Learning Management System which already supports the development of hundreds of MMO staff.

The training package has been created for the Programme by Virtual College, with support from the Marine Management Organisation's training team, along with key partners on specific modules. These include: award-winning production company Three Wise Monkeys, the British Indian Ocean Territory Administration and the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat.

The Blue Belt Programme is grateful to all those involved in the creation and production of the modules.

## **Notes to editors**

- The Blue Belt Programme is a UK Government initiative to enhance marine protection across over 4 million square kilometres of marine environment in the UK Overseas Territories.
- The UK Overseas Territories are some of the most biologically interesting, and remote, places on Earth. From the vast penguin colonies of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands to the marine turtles of Ascension Island, the UK Overseas Territories are home to globally significant biodiversity.
- This flagship Programme has been central to the UK Government's ambition of leading action to tackle the serious global problems of overfishing, species extinction and climate change. Driven by the 25 Year Action Plan and UN Sustainable Development Goals, and more recently by the UK's commitment to ensure 30% of the world's oceans are protected by the end of the decade in 2030.
- The Blue Belt Programme utilises the skills and expertise of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of the UK Government. They provide the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) with the best support available in applied marine science, management, technology, and

enforcement.

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# Natural England to start work on coast to coast National Trail proposal

Natural England has this week started work on planning for a new National Trail based on the iconic Coast to Coast walk across Northern England.

[The National Disability Strategy](#) was launched last week and will see new initiatives introduced to transform the everyday lives of disabled people. Under the proposals is a new 182-mile accessible Coast to Coast footpath which will help more people from all parts of society access Britain's beautiful landscapes.

The existing trail is maintained by landowners, national parks and local authorities. However, granting the footpath National Trail status would unlock Government funding to not only maintain the trail but also to ensure that it is more accessible to those with disabilities. This could include replacing stiles with gates and ensuring that paths are designed to meet specific needs.

Natural England will complete a full audit of the existing route and will assess any improvements that may be needed to bring it up to National Trail Quality Standards. In the longer term, if the Government approves the proposal the project will aim to realise the full environmental, social and economic benefits that a new National Trail will bring by boosting the number of walkers on the trail and helping to link up villages, towns and cities via footpaths.

The proposals will include a map, detailed information about the route, costs of creation and maintenance, as well as proposals for the provision of accommodation, meals and refreshments across the Coast to Coast trail.

Amanda Craig, Director for People and Nature at Natural England said:

We know now more than ever just how important it is to get outdoors and active in green spaces to help boost our physical health and mental wellbeing.

We are delighted to be working closely with the North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales, Lake District National Parks and other partners to develop a proposal for this exciting new route. It will not only improve accessibility for everyone but will also help to boost our engagement with our beautiful natural landscapes.

The work to develop this proposal will be taking place over the course of this year with a view to presenting a formal proposal early in Spring 2022.

As part of its [Landscapes Review](#), Natural England recently announced that Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge will be considered for status as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), alongside extensions to the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs..

The proposals follow the [independent review](#) led by Julian Glover which called for action to make our protected landscapes greener, more beautiful and open to everyone. The government will respond to the review's recommendations in full later this year.

At 5,000km when completed, the England Coast Path, will be the longest waymarked and maintained coastal walking route in the world and will allow people to walk around the entire English coast. The project will link up the best existing coastal paths and will create entirely new ones for people to enjoy. There will also be new public rights of access to areas of coastal land such as beaches, cliffs and foreshore.

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## [PCA issues Statutory Advice on time limit for non-MRO arbitration referrals](#)

News story

Recent arbitration awards have shown differing interpretations of the time limit for a tied pub tenant to refer a dispute to the PCA for arbitration where it is not about the Market Rent Only option (non-MRO). The PCA is also aware that different interpretations exist amongst the tied pub industry. The PCA has in response provided her view on the non-MRO referral time limit through statutory advice.



The PCA's statutory advice on the timing of referrals for arbitration by tied pub tenants (non-MRO disputes) can be found [here](#).

## **Why has this statutory advice been issued?**

The PCA has over recent months received a number of arbitration awards dealing with a preliminary issue about whether a tied pub tenant made a non-MRO referral for arbitration in time. The arbitrator's decision on the time limit determined whether the dispute about the pub-owning business's compliance with the Code could be arbitrated. The PCA noted there were differing interpretations of the law in relation to this time limit.

Where appropriate, the PCA will seek to publish the arbitration award or an anonymised summary. Awards and summaries are published on the PCA website [here](#). The PCA recognises that while each arbitration will depend on the facts of the case, differing interpretations of the time limit across published awards may cause further uncertainty for the industry.

The PCA considers it beneficial to tied pub tenants and pub-owning businesses to provide her view on the law in this instance, through statutory advice.

## **What does this statutory advice mean?**

The Act of Parliament that set up the PCA – the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 – gave an important power to the PCA to issue advice on any matter relating to the Pubs Code to tied pub tenants and pub-owning businesses (or any organisation representing their interests). Where the PCA issues advice using this power, it is called statutory advice.

Statutory advice is not binding on a regulated pub-owning business or any other person – that is, by law it does not have to be followed. Only the courts of England and Wales can provide a binding interpretation of the Code. This advice provides the PCA's view and indicates how the PCA may approach the matter in her role as regulator.

An arbitrator considering an arbitration case under the Pubs Code is not obliged to follow this statutory advice but may take it into account. Parties to an arbitration may wish to bring this statutory advice to the attention of an arbitrator as appropriate. It is not a substitute for a party to an arbitration (or tied pub tenant thinking about arbitration) taking their own



legal advice about their individual circumstances.

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