

Significant milestone reached as extra 2 million scans, tests and checks delivered to bust the Covid backlogs

- Community diagnostic centres across the country have now delivered over two million vital tests, checks and scans since July 2021, helping to bust the Covid backlogs and speed up access to services for patients
- Landmark milestone comes as Health and Social Care Secretary approves 10 new sites which will deliver CT scans, MRIs and x-rays across England
- This forms part of the government's ambition to roll out up to 160 centres across the country by 2025 to deliver millions more vital checks

Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) have delivered more than two million vital tests, checks and scans for patients, with a further 10 centres now approved, the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced today October 11. These centres are busting the Covid backlogs by speeding up access to lifesaving tests.

The one-stop shops, backed by £2.3 billion in government funding, offer a range of services in the heart of communities, making tests more accessible for patients.

Based in community settings such as shopping centres and football stadiums the hubs house a range of cutting-edge equipment, including MRI, CT, X-ray and ultrasound scanners and offer services including blood tests or heart rhythm and blood pressure monitoring. They are designed to speed up diagnosis of conditions from cancer to heart or lung disease.

As set out in 'Our Plan for Patients' published in September, the government will prioritise rolling out up to 160 of these centres across England by 2025 to help bust the Covid backlogs and enable the health service to deliver up to nine million additional tests, checks and scans a year.

Later today, the Health and Social Care Secretary, Thérèse Coffey will officially open a new community diagnostic centre in a shopping centre in North London. It will be open for seven days a week and deliver an additional 40,000 tests by spring 2023.

Health and Social Care Secretary Thérèse Coffey said:

My number one priority is delivering for patients and we're getting on with the job of tackling the issues that affect people most – ambulances, backlogs, care, doctors and dentists.

Today I'm announcing the approval of 10 new community diagnostic centres which are helping to bust the Covid backlogs by delivering vital tests, checks and scans in local areas.

They have delivered over two million checks over the past year, diagnosing conditions from cancer to lung disease – and we're on track to open up to 160 centres across the country by 2025, delivering an additional 17 million checks.

NHS medical director for transformation, Vin Diwakar, said:

It is testament to the hard work of staff across the NHS that we have now delivered more than two millions tests and checks at our one stop shops and latest figures show we have the lowest number of patients waiting for tests and checks since we published our elective recovery plan in February.

We know that rapid diagnosis saves lives, and it is great news that more of these centres have been approved to provide checks and scans in the heart of local communities, making services more accessible and convenient while also helping to improve outcomes for patients with cancer and other serious conditions.

The 10 approved new centres will be rolled out across the country, including in the Isle of Wight, Burnley and Medway in Kent. Once referred by a GP, pharmacist or hospital, patients can access CDCs in their local area and get any concerning symptoms checked out.

Thanks to these innovative approaches, significant progress has already been made on tackling waiting lists, with the NHS virtually eliminating waits of over two years for routine treatment as part of the first milestone in the Elective Recovery Plan. The NHS plans to go further, including eliminating waits of over 18 months by April 2023, over 15 months by March 2024, and over a year by March 2025.

Background

The full list of approved new CDCs is as follows:

- Island CDC (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS)
- Burnley General Hospital spoke (Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS)
- Southport and Ormskirk CDC (Cheshire and Merseyside ICS)
- Newmarket CDC (Suffolk and North East Essex ICS)
- Merry Hill Health Centre (Black Country and West Birmingham ICS)
- Castle Hill Institute of Technology (Black Country and West Birmingham ICS)
- Rotherham Spoke CDC (South Yorkshire ICB)
- Warrington and Halton CDC (Cheshire and Merseyside ICS)
- Medway CDC Hub (Kent and Medway ICS)
- Swale CDC Spoke (Kent and Medway ICS)

The total number of tests carried out per region in England is below.

Region	Total tests
London	260,043
South West	293,015
South East	396,757
Midlands	370,543
East of England	198,196
North West	300,885
North East and Yorkshire	200,422
Total	2,019,861

[Tony Blair backs fusion for energy security and climate change](#)

Former prime minister, Sir Tony Blair, underlined his continued support for fusion energy and its role in addressing energy security and climate change for generations to come.

During a recent visit to UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) in Oxfordshire, Sir Tony was briefed by fusion leaders on the progress of STEP – the UK’s prototype fusion plant being built at West Burton, Nottinghamshire, to demonstrate the ability to put net electricity on the grid.

Sir Tony said: “Fusion promises to be a safe, low carbon and sustainable part of the world’s future energy supply and it is critical that we keep striving forwards to tackle one of the greatest scientific and engineering challenges of our time.

“It was fantastic to see and hear about the progress being made by UKAEA today and to meet the people who are working towards making fusion energy an environmentally responsible part of the world’s future energy mix.”

Fusion energy has the potential to provide ‘baseload’ power, complementing renewable and other low carbon energy sources as a share of many countries’ energy portfolios.

[Tony Blair Institute For Global Change](#) has previously championed pivot-support-programmes to harness the technology transfer from fusion to adjacent sectors.

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, said: “The UK has a huge opportunity to become a global exporter of fusion technology, which promises to be a part of the low carbon energy mix in the second half of the century.

“Sir Tony was very interested in discussing the work we are doing at UKAEA, which will help address global challenges as well as create jobs and drive

economic growth in fusion-focused and adjacent fields.”

As part of the visit, Sir Tony experienced a close-up of UKAEA’s Joint European Torus (JET) facility which produced landmark results announced earlier this year.

He also met with scientists and engineers for a behind-the-scenes tour of materials science and robotics facilities.

Agreement to progress development of new UK small modular reactors

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cwmni Eginio to support their development of a new small scale nuclear project in North Wales.

The MoU enables the NDA to share information and expertise around the characteristics of its land at Trawsfynydd, to align the decommissioning plans and site activities with the new nuclear project, and to support Cwmni Eginio with stakeholder engagement and developing socio-economic plans.

This follows the announcement earlier this year from BEIS that the NDA would work alongside stakeholders, including Cwmni Eginio, to enable engagement on potential future nuclear developments in the UK.

The British energy security strategy published in April this year made several new commitments to secure, clean, and affordable British energy for the long term, including delivering new and advanced nuclear power.

Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, Lord Callanan, said:

This new working relationship announced today has the potential to greatly benefit our country’s economy and energy security. It would ensure more homegrown energy as part of our wider mix, and contribute to our ambition to be generating 24GW of nuclear capacity by 2030.

But this will also be of huge benefit to the people living around Trawsfynydd, who are set to benefit from the skilled jobs this could create in the coming years.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, said:

We are engaging with several stakeholders to explore potential uses of our estate, using our capability and expertise to support the Government in delivering its energy security strategy.

This is an important step, formalising our support to Cwmni Eginio, and enabling the NDA to deliver its mission to safely decommission our sites and free up the land for future use.

The success of the project at Trawsfynydd will also benefit the community neighbouring our North Wales site.

The NDA is charged, on behalf of government, with cleaning up the UK's earliest nuclear sites safely, securely, and cost-effectively, with the aim of benefiting local communities and the environment.

It has a history of engagement and land transfer across its estate, and currently owns 950 hectares of designated land across 17 nuclear licensed sites.

Cwmni Eginio Chief Executive, Alan Raymant, said:

Our relationship with the NDA is critical to the successful delivery of our vision for the development of new nuclear at Trawsfynydd.

We're very pleased that the MoU is now formally in place. We look forward to working with the NDA as we continue to develop our proposals which will bring significant benefits to local communities, as well as help achieve energy security and net zero targets.

Cwmni Eginio is the development company established by Welsh Government in 2021 to drive future development at the Trawsfynydd site and to promote regional economic and social regeneration.

Economy Minister Vaughan Gething said:

The MOU between Cwmni Eginio and the NDA is very good news. We established Cwmni Eginio to maximise the potential of the Trawsfynydd site to benefit the economy of the surrounding area. I'm pleased to see this further step forward in the project.

The NDA site at Trawsfynydd is home to a Magnox station which is being decommissioned by Magnox Ltd, a subsidiary of the NDA. The NDA also owns land outside the Magnox site boundary which could be used for a new nuclear development.

Cwmni Eginio is currently developing a business proposition for the development in Trawsfynydd, with a target for construction to start in 2027.

Any formal commitment of NDA land, or other support, would require government approval via NDA's sponsoring department BEIS.

Ukraine's civilians are paying the price for Russia's barbaric actions: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you. In our statement to this Council last week, we highlighted evidence of war crimes and instances of the unspeakable suffering and devastation Russia has inflicted on Ukraine's civilians. Evidence this Council is sadly all too familiar with, following the findings of two Moscow Mechanism reports.

Now we gather here again, not a week later, to condemn Russia's intense barrage of missile attacks on Kyiv and across Ukraine, including Lviv, Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia. We are reminded once again, that Ukraine's civilians are paying the terrible price for Russia's barbaric actions.

In Kyiv for the last two mornings, residents were woken to the sound of air raids, forced to take shelter for nearly six hours in fear of their lives. But even before the horrific attacks of yesterday, October is proving to be a deadly month for Ukraine. From 1 to 9 October 2022, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 373 civilian casualties, including 97 killed.

In Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia, more civilian infrastructure has been severely impacted in the these latest attacks. There have been multiple power blackouts, with areas cut off from water supply and communications. A playground, a pedestrian bridge and the National Philharmonic have been hit. Either the missiles missed their targets, or the Russian military were intentionally targeting cultural sites and areas where children may have been present.

Sadly, these are just the reports that have emerged so far. Over the coming days, as the destruction left by these missile strikes becomes clearer, we will not allow the casualties of this senseless violence to be forgotten.

Let us be clear: Russia has taken these actions in full knowledge of what would ensue: destruction, injuries and death. This is a pattern we have seen repeatedly from the Russian government and Russian military following their premeditated, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are not only abhorrent, they are war crimes and a blatant violation of international law. Russia's behaviour continues to directly contravene the OSCE principles we have all committed to, including refraining from the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Once again, we call on Russia to cease the indiscriminate use of weapons against the civilian population in civilian areas and to withdraw all Russian troops from Ukraine now.

There can be no justification for Russia's behaviour. We will continue to work with Ukraine and international partners to hold those responsible to account. Such egregious violations of international law will not go unanswered for.

The UK remains deeply concerned by the safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which must be able to operate safely. It is alarming that on Saturday the IAEA Director General, Rafael Grossi, reported that the security situation had deteriorated further after overnight shelling temporarily cut all external power. Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is on Ukrainian sovereign territory. Russia must immediately return any and all seized Ukrainian nuclear facilities to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

Mr Chair, as my Foreign Secretary stated: Russia's recent missile attacks are a demonstration of weakness by Putin, not strength. The Ukrainian people have shown their courage and conviction will not be suppressed. Nor will the determination of its partners. The UK's commitment to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people is unwavering. Putin must end this illegal war and withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine's sovereign territory now.

[Environment Secretary commits to sustainable horticulture growth](#)

Plans to boost home grown fruit and vegetable production and drive the growth of high-tech horticulture have been set out today by Environment Secretary Ranil Jayawardena, as part of HM Government's work to unleash the potential of British farming.

Glasshouse growing, a form of Controlled Environment Horticulture, has multiple economic, food security and sustainability benefits, but the sector currently represents only 10% of English horticultural businesses. It means the United Kingdom only grows 25% of the cucumbers and 17% of the tomatoes supplied domestically, however businesses operating with this model are already reaping benefits – from extended growing seasons, efficient water usage and higher yields per square metre.

To kickstart efforts to grow the horticulture sector and boost domestic production, the Environment Secretary today committed a further £12.5m investment in automation and robotics through the Farming Innovation Programme on top of more than £70 million spent so far on industry-led research and development.

The fund opens in January with 'UK Research and Innovation' (UKRI) and will match-fund projects that will drive economic growth, food security and deliver on environmental commitments. Previous funded projects have included fruit scouting robots, automated vegetable harvesters and new types of fertiliser.

Environment Secretary Ranil Jayawardena said:

We all rely on farmers and growers every day to produce high-quality food, and to look after our environment.

Whilst we have a high degree of food security, we can boost it further. We can increase home-grown fruit and vegetable production, which is why I am bringing in expert advice and match-funding robotics and automation projects.

Technology offers huge opportunities to make farming greener and more productive, so we should harness it to help grow the economy, create jobs and improve food security too.

Last week, the Environment Secretary visited the Netherlands to learn more about high-tech greenhouse and vertical growing approaches, touring a robotics institute and a glasshouse business which uses artificial intelligence, robotics, renewable energy and water neutral systems to grow produce.

He also announced he will appoint an industry expert to work with him and colleagues across the edible and ornamental sectors to build a clearer picture of the barriers and opportunities in Controlled Environment Horticulture. They will provide a set of recommendations and policy interventions that the government can implement both immediately and longer term.

Furthermore, the Environment Secretary has written to a number of major Controlled Environment Horticulture growers to seek the industry's views on how HM Government can best support its expansion and ensure government policies best reflect industry needs.

To create a positive investment environment for the horticulture sector, HM Government has [already signalled](#) its commitment to including industrial horticulture in decisions on industrial energy policy and reviewing the planning permission process to support new developments. Plans to incentivise the sector to make use of surplus heat and CO2 from industrial processes, and renewable sources of energy are also being considered.

As set out in the Growth Plan, HM Government will be looking at the frameworks for regulation, innovation and investment that impact farmers and

land managers to make sure that policies are best placed to both boost food production and protect the environment. Later this year, the Environment Secretary will put forward details of plans on how we will increase food security whilst strengthening the resilience and role of farmers as stewards of the British countryside.

- Defra will announce the individual appointed as the Secretary of State's industry expert on Controlled Environment Horticulture later this year.