

## 9 in 10 pharmacies now offering free, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) tests

- Regular, rapid testing can detect COVID-19 in 30 minutes, helping break the chains of transmission
- Pharmacy Collect service provides an additional route to twice-weekly, rapid testing for everyone without symptoms

Nine in ten pharmacies across England are now distributing free rapid lateral flow tests for people to collect and use at home.

Rapid, regular testing is now available to everyone in England and the new 'Pharmacy Collect' service provides an additional route to regular testing, making it as easy as possible for people without COVID-19 symptoms to access testing twice a week.

The Pharmacy Collect service is available to people aged over 18 without symptoms, who are able to visit a participating local pharmacy and collect a box of 7 rapid tests to use twice a week at home.

Alongside the rollout of the vaccine, testing will form a crucial part of everyday life as parts of society reopen. Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus don't have symptoms, which means they can spread the virus without knowing it. Regular testing continues to play a critical role in stopping the spread of the virus and breaking the chains of transmission.

An [online checker](#) has launched so people can find their nearest pharmacy offering free rapid test kits.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Pharmacies make an invaluable contribution our health service – they have gone above and beyond in response to COVID-19 to serve their communities. Now, they will play a key role in our rapid testing programme, which is a vital tool in reopening society in the months ahead.

I have been delighted at the level of interest and how fast the response has been from pharmacies to take part, with 9 in 10 registering to offer rapid test kits within 10 days.

This new service will make it even easier for people to access rapid testing twice a week. The testing only takes 30 minutes and will help people stop the spread of the virus – protecting families and communities and saving lives.

New analysis by NHS Test and Trace shows lateral flow (LFD) tests to have a specificity of at least 99.9%. This means that for every 1,000 lateral flow

tests carried out, there is fewer than one false positive result. All positive results from LFD tests must be followed up with a confirmatory PCR test within 72 hours. Confirmatory PCR testing will also mean variants of concern are detected more quickly.

If testing at home, individuals will need to register their results online or by calling 119, even if they get a negative result. They should self-isolate if they get a positive result and order a confirmatory PCR test online or by calling 119.

The test kits will be provided free of charge to anyone requesting them with one box of test kits per person.

All pharmacies that sign up to deliver the service will receive a set-up fee and a transaction fee every time a member of the public collects a kit.

Each box contains 7 LFDs. This allows the person to test themselves twice weekly within a 3-week timeframe. This number of tests in the box factors in the potential for a void test.

The majority of pharmacies have test kits available but we are aware that some pharmacies are unable to immediately order test kits. Stock is being replenished to wholesalers on a daily basis with deliveries being made to pharmacies within a matter of days in order to meet demand.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 – a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – should [book a PCR test online](#) or by calling 119.

Getting a rapid test is quick and convenient. Rapid tests are available through:

- a home ordering service, which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- community testing, offered by all local authorities
- collection at a local PCR test site during specific test collection time windows
- testing on site at schools and colleges

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## [India added to red list as cases of new variant rise](#)

- travel ban implemented for visitors from India from 4am on Friday 23 April
- British, Irish and third-country nationals with residence rights (including long-term visa holders) arriving from India will be required

to self-isolate in a government-approved hotel quarantine facility for 10 days

- move follows new data showing an increased risk of importation of new variant

India has been added to [England's red list](#) to protect the country against a new variant of coronavirus (COVID-19) and against other existing variants.

The situation in India has deteriorated with an extremely rapid rise in cases detected throughout April, which is accelerating. Over the last week, local rates have almost doubled, increasing to 111 cases detected per 100,000 per week – higher than any other point in the outbreak. Despite the current travel measures, there is a high volume of travel between India and the UK, and we have already seen 103 cases of the variant under Investigation (VUI) in the UK.

From 4am on Friday 23 April, international visitors who have departed from or transited through India in the previous 10 days will be refused entry into England. Only British and Irish citizens, or those with residence rights in the UK (including long-term visa holders), will be allowed to enter and they must [stay in a government-approved quarantine facility for 10 days](#). They will also be required to arrive into a designated port. Direct flights from India will continue to be permitted, but passengers are advised to check their travel plans before departing for England.

During their managed quarantine stay, passengers will be required to [take a coronavirus test on or before day 2 and on or after day 8](#), and they will not be allowed to shorten their quarantine period on receipt of a negative test result or through the Test to Release scheme.

With over 42 million vaccinations delivered in the UK so far, the move will help to reduce the risk of new variants entering England.

Decisions on travel restrictions are taken by ministers and are informed by evidence including [Joint Biosecurity Centre](#) (JBC) analysis as well as other wider public health considerations. The JBC risk assessments cover a range of factors for each country, including:

- assessment of surveillance and sequencing capability
- available surveillance and genome sequencing data
- evidence of in-country community transmission of COVID-19 variants
- evidence of exportation of new variants to the UK or other countries
- travel connectivity with the UK

British nationals currently in the countries on the red list should make use of the commercial options available if they wish to return to England. Commercial routes that will enable British and Irish nationals and residents to return to England continue to operate.

British nationals in these countries should check [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\) travel advice](#) and follow local guidance. The FCDO will continue to offer tailored consular assistance to British nationals in

need of support overseas on a 24/7 basis.

Border Force will continue to carry out thorough checks at the border to keep the public safe.

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## Statement by Oliver Dowden on the European Super League

Madam Deputy Speaker,

Football is in our national DNA.

We invented it, we helped export it around the world, and it has been a central part of British life for over a century.

Football clubs aren't just businesses; they define communities across the country.

So along with almost every member of this House I suspect, I was appalled by the announcement made late last night that a handful of clubs are proposing to form their own breakaway European league.

These six clubs announced this decision without any consultation with football authorities, or with the government. But worst of all, they announced it without any dialogue whatsoever with their own fans.

It was a tone-deaf proposal, but the owners of those clubs won't have been able to ignore the near universal roar of outrage from all parts of the football community over the past 24 hours.

This move goes against the very spirit of the game.

This is a sport where a team like Leicester City can ascend from League One to the Premier League title in under a decade, earning the right to go toe-to-toe against European heavyweights in the Champions League.

Instead, a small handful of owners want to create a closed shop of elite clubs at the top of the game – a league based on wealth and brand recognition rather than upon merit.

We will not stand by and watch football be cravenly stripped of the things that make millions across the country love it.

As a Conservative I believe passionately in defending our nation's institutions and rich heritage. They are central to our identity and help build a sense of solidarity between people from every generation and every background.

Just as the Government wouldn't hesitate to act when other treasured areas of our national life are under threat, nor will we hesitate to protect one of our greatest national institutions: football.

This is for football authorities to handle first, and today I have met with the Premier League, the Football Association and the president of UEFA, while the Sports Minister has had a further meeting with the Football Supporters' Association.

The football authorities have robust rules in place to deal with this, and I know from my conversations today that they are rightfully considering a wide range of sanctions and measures to stop this move in its tracks. My message to them was clear: they have our full backing.

But be in no doubt: if they can't act, we will.

We will put everything on the table to prevent this from happening.

We are examining every option, from governance reform, to competition law, and the mechanisms that allow football to take place. Put simply, we will be reviewing everything the Government does to support these clubs to play.

I discussed our options with the Prime Minister this morning, and we are working at pace across government and with the football authorities.

I want to reassure this House of a very robust response. We will do whatever it takes to protect our national game.

But it's clearer than ever that we need a proper examination of the long-term future of football.

To many fans in this country, the game is now almost unrecognisable from a few decades ago.

Season after season, year after year, football fans demonstrate unwavering loyalty and passion by sticking by their clubs.

But their loyalty is being abused by a small number of individuals who wield an incredible amount of power and influence.

If the past year has taught us anything, it's that football is nothing without its fans. These owners should remember that they are only temporary custodians of their clubs, and they forget fans at their peril.

That's why over the past few months I have been meeting with fans and representative organisations to develop our proposals for a fan-led review. I had always been clear that I didn't want to launch this until football had returned to normal following the pandemic.

Sadly, these clubs have made it clear that I have no choice. They have decided to put money before fans. So today I have been left with no choice but to formally trigger the launch of our fan-led review of football.

The review will be chaired by the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford and will be a root-and-branch examination of football in this country.

It will cover the financial sustainability of the men's and women's game, financial flows through the pyramid, governance regulation and the merits of an independent regulator.

Crucially, in light of this weekend's proposal, it will also consider how fans can have an even greater say in the oversight of the game, and the models which might best achieve that.

We are the people's Government. We are unequivocally on the side of fans – and their voices have to be heard when it comes to the future of our national game. It starts with fans, and it ends with fans.

But in the meantime we have thrown our full weight behind the football authorities and stand ready to do whatever is necessary to represent fans and protect their interests.

I commend this statement to the House.

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## [UK project contributes to strengthening Guatemala's NDC ahead of COP26](#)

The project worked with Municipalities of La Blanca, Ocos, Retalhuelu, Champerico and Coatepeque, in the Guatemalan Pacific coast. By collaborating with communities, civil society, the private sector and government agencies, the study determined the contributions to fight climate change of this specific landscape.

The parameters evaluated included the rate of deforestation in the area, the rational use of land for agriculture and the dependency of communities on the landscape to obtain sustainable livelihoods. Despite all these pressures, the landscape continues neutralizing Co2 and further preservation will help mitigate more emissions.

The project also proposed goals and actions to reduce the degradation and restoration of natural ecosystems and the establishment of sustainable practices in the management of agricultural crops, actions that are directly linked to the goals set out in the Nationally Determined Contribution of Guatemala (NDC).

Developed by the National Council of Sustainable Forest Management Standards of Guatemala (CONESFORGUA), the conclusions are endorsed by the Ministry of

Environment of Guatemala, who is currently updating the country's NDCs. Follow up actions from the Guatemalan Government will also comply with the project's recommendations.

Antonio Urrutia, Director of Climate Change at the Guatemalan Ministry of Environment, said:

It is very important for us at the Government to have this kind of tools to take strategic decisions. Guatemalan mangroves prove to be resilient landscapes and we would like to replicate this methodology in other areas of the country.

Rita Mishaan, Climate Change Ambassador at the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said:

We would like this project to have sustainability and continue working with several partners to achieve more objectives. This will be critical ahead of COP26 to show Guatemala's commitment towards tackling climate change.

Nick Whittingham, British Ambassador to Guatemala, said:

NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement goal, set at COP21 in 2015, to hold the global temperature rise to well below two degrees and pursue best efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. We want to work with closely with Guatemala in achieving these goals.

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## **Changes to the Basic Payment Scheme in the New Forest**

Press release

The results of the public consultation on the operation of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on the New Forest common have now been published.



After careful consideration of the responses, the Rural Payments Agency is changing the way BPS payments are allocated to New Forest commoners.

At present, New Forest commoners can apply for BPS and be allocated a nominal share of the Forest's eligible agricultural area. The allocated area is based on the number of marking fees they paid for animals turned out to graze in the previous year. Marking fees are a fee that commoners must pay to the Verderers (a body which regulates and protects the interests of the New Forest commoners) in order to have their animals marked before being turned out to graze in the forest, so they can be identified and traced back to the keeper in the case of need.

This method has recently been challenged as having the effect of encouraging commoners to keep more animals in order to be paid more subsidies, and therefore impacting the environment.

The RPA is now going to allocate to each commoner who has claimed BPS in the New Forest a reference amount based on the maximum number of marking fees they declared in any year between 2015 and 2020. This will be taken as an expression of their grazing rights and used annually to perform the area allocation calculation for BPS, entirely divorced from the number of animals each commoner chooses to turn out to graze in the New Forest that year. There will also no longer be a requirement for New Forest commoners to provide copies of Marking Fee receipts to support their BPS claims.

This option was supported by over 87% of respondents to the RPA's consultation.

The RPA is writing directly to all commoners who claim BPS in the New Forest and [the consultation response is published on GOV.UK](#).

New farmers in the New Forest who started commoning in 2020 and won't yet have declared any marking fees to the RPA, may still be able to claim BPS in 2021. The updated BPS 2021 guidance provides further information on completing the 2021 application form in these circumstances.

The Government has separately publicised its plans to change the way all farmers are paid and in November published the '[Path to Sustainable Farming](#)'. One of the key changes is the reduction in Direct Payments, which commences this year. The document also includes a wide-range of support measures that will help farmers adapt to a new agricultural system.



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