

Government announces latest tranche of funding from winter phase of sport survival package

The Government has announced the latest tranche of funding from the winter phase of its Sport Survival Package, which will see £40 million provided to horse racing, rugby league, speedway and drag racing, alongside approximately £10 million in further support for National League football clubs across Steps 1-6.

The horse racing industry will benefit from £21 million in loan support, committed to the Levy Board. The funding will ensure essential race day integrity costs and related health and safety expenditure are safeguarded, enabling the Levy Board to continue their programme of financial support and funding into the industry which has suffered considerably as a result of Covid-19.

Men's professional Rugby League clubs will receive a further £16.7 million in loans, delivered as a top-up to the [existing £16 million emergency loan scheme provided by the Government in May 2020](#), to reflect current circumstances. This is in addition to £1.45 million of grant support from the scheme for the community and women's games which complements £300,000 grassroots financial support through the Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund. It follows the National Lottery announcing it had become an official partner of the Rugby Football League and of Women's and Girls' Rugby League last week.

Motorsports on both two wheels and four will also benefit, with Speedway clubs and Europe's first permanent drag racing venue set to receive funding. Speedway clubs have been offered £300,000 in loan support, while Santa Pod Raceway will receive £843,000 in loan support.

Meanwhile a further 20 clubs across Steps 1 and 2 of the National League system will receive funding of loans and grants worth £6.8 million, bringing the total provided to clubs at these levels through the winter phase of the Sport Survival Package to £11.5 million. It follows the Government announcing [an initial 19 Step 1 and 2 clubs had been offered loan packages worth up to £5.4 million on 19 February](#).

Steps 3-6 of the National League System have also been awarded a further £3.1 million of grant support, following [up to £10 million grant funding for clubs in Steps 3-6 being announced on 27 January](#). This will bring the total support for the 880 clubs at Steps 3-6 of the National League system to up to £13.1 million, with funds again to be distributed to clubs through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund, administered by the Football Foundation.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We promised to stand by and protect our major spectator sports when we had to postpone fans returning.

Through our Sport Survival Package and existing business support schemes, we have helped hundreds of clubs to survive this difficult winter period. As the turnstiles begin to open over the coming weeks, players, staff and fans across the country can now look forward to a full return to action with confidence.

Chair of the independent Board, Sir Ian Cheshire said:

As we look to the conclusion of the Winter phase of the Sport Survival Package, this tranche of £50 million in support funding for rugby league, horse racing, speedway, drag racing, and clubs playing in football's National League will ensure these clubs and organisations are able to sufficiently recover from the financial impact of the pandemic.

Following the government's announcement that a further £300 million of Sport Survival funding has been made available, the Independent Board will now focus on getting this funding to those summer spectator sports in most urgent need.

Today's announcement comes as Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden is set to visit Victoria Park in Warrington, where the Year 8 girls of Cardinal Newman High School will be the first team in the country to get back into organised outdoor team sport through a pre-school training session with the Warrington Wolves Foundation.

It marks the start of a major year for Rugby League. The Culture Secretary will make the draw for the third round of the Challenge Cup today, and the season will culminate with the men's, women's and wheelchair World Cups in October and November, and around 90% of matches being hosted in the North of England. Victoria Park will use a new 3G pitch that has benefited from the Government providing £25 million towards the staging of the Rugby League World Cup, and improving community facilities to help grow the sport at grassroots level.

The £300 million winter phase of the Government's Sport Survival Package is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter and cover essential costs. Over recent weeks funding has also been provided to rugby union, National League and women's football, badminton, basketball, netball and ice hockey. Yesterday the Government announced £88 million in loan support to men's Premiership Rugby Union clubs. Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board, supported by Sport England](#).

The Sport Survival Package is the most generous bespoke support from any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world. It comes as part of

the sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Earlier this month [the Chancellor announced a further £300 million of support](#) via the Sport Survival Package that is expected to benefit major summer spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and horse racing, as the path out of lockdown continues and sports stadia initially open at reduced capacities. Further details, including how cash will be distributed, how organisations can apply and timeframes, will be announced by Sport England in the coming weeks.

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Notes to editors:

- A detailed [factsheet](#) on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been published by Sport England.
- Julie Harrington, Chief Executive of the British Horseracing Authority said: “We are extremely grateful to officials at Sport England, DCMS and the Treasury for their support in agreeing this funding to racing. We are grateful also to the Horserace Betting Levy Board for agreeing to our proposal and borrowing this money to support the central funding of racing. This money will help ensure racing continues behind closed doors despite the absence of spectator revenues. This will benefit our racecourses, our participants and their communities, and the vital role racing plays as an employer and contributor to the rural economy.”
- Ralph Rimmer, Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League, said: “We are very grateful to Government and Sport England for their ongoing practical support to Rugby League. Lockdowns and restrictions have meant a two-season impact in Rugby League with professional and community clubs having had virtually no revenues from spectators for the whole of the 2020 season and the first part of this season. Playing, watching and being involved in the sport will be central to the recovery of our communities. We’re excited to be back at all levels with clubs delivering outstanding sporting entertainment and a huge range of vital activities at the heart of their communities; and fantastic grassroots playing opportunities for girls, boys, women and men including our physical and learning disability offers, Wheelchair RL, Touch, Tag and Masters RL. We were delighted to announce last week the new commercial partnership with The National Lottery which focuses on Women’s Rugby League, helping to ensure that the momentum which has seen Women’s Rugby League grow by 53% since 2017 continues in this special World Cup year and beyond.”
- Mark Bullingham, Chief Executive of the Football Association said: “Clubs across the NLS system play a pivotal role in the heart of their communities and often support many youth teams. Support for them is crucial at this difficult time, so we welcome the Government’s additional funding.”
- Rob Godfrey, Chairman of British Speedway, said: “Government and Sport

England have been very supportive of the needs of British Speedway clubs and the effect the pandemic has had on them. Taking the time to understand our sport, they have worked closely with a number of speedway clubs to understand their needs, and ultimately provided this crucial funding to help them make it to the starting tapes in May. We hope this is the start of support for speedway with our most vulnerable clubs accessing early funding support.”

Government and sports stars urge everyone to get active as outdoor sports reopen

Some of the country’s biggest sports stars have joined up with the Government to urge the country to get out and get active as outdoor sports, clubs and facilities reopen from today.

England men’s World Cup-winning cricket captain Eoin Morgan, British No1 women’s tennis player Johanna Konta and England Rugby Union prop Kyle Sinckler have joined Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden and Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston to support the Government’s rallying cry.

In line with the government’s roadmap, sports facilities including football and cricket pitches, tennis and basketball courts, outdoor swimming pools, golf courses and sailing clubs can now reopen safely, setting the nation on a path of improved physical and mental health.

From today, organised outdoor team sports can also resume meaning that sports competitions of all ages and skill levels can restart ahead of the Easter holiday break.

Parents and guardians are being urged to help their children follow the Chief Medical Officer’s guidance and aim for at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, and adults to aim for at least 150 minutes, or two and a half hours, a week.

Exercise and outdoor sports are well documented to reduce individuals’ risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower risk of early death by up to 30%.

The reopening of the outdoors sports sector will seek to help reduce the impacts of these debilitating diseases and in turn reduce pressure on the NHS.

Physical activity is known to improve health outcomes which can include

improving mental health through better sleep, happier moods, and managing stress and anxiety.

It comes as the 'stay at home' message ends and 'rule of six' is reintroduced, which means that outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households are allowed. Social contact rules will not apply to outdoor, organised team sport.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I know how much people have missed the camaraderie and competition of organised sport, and how difficult it has been to restrict physical activities – especially for children.

So as teams return to outdoor pitches, courts, parks and fields, I hope today will kick-start a Great British summer of sport – with people of all ages reunited with teammates, and able to resume the activities they love.

I know many will welcome the increased social contact, with groups of 6 or two households now also able to meet outdoors.

But we must remain cautious, with cases rising across Europe and new variants threatening our vaccine rollout. Despite today's easements, everyone must continue to stick to the rules, remember hands, face, space, and come forward for a vaccine when called.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The long wait is over. I urge everyone to get their trainers on, get outside and enjoy all of the positive benefits sport can bring.

We want to see children be active 60 minutes a day, and adults two and a half hours a week to help us build back fitter, healthier and happier from this pandemic.

Sport and physical activity will be at the heart of our national recovery and today marks a really important step forward.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

Over the past year we have prioritised the importance of physical activity, permitting basic exercise at all times. Kids have responded to parents becoming PE teachers, and to Sport England's 'Join the Movement' campaign. However the reality is that activity levels have still dropped in lockdown.

That's why outdoor grassroots sport reopening today is so important. Many have waited patiently for this moment and cannot

wait to get back to playing the sports they love. But we want to encourage everyone to get into sport. No matter what age or ability, there will be a sport out there for you.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden is set to visit Victoria Park in Warrington. He will join the Year 8 girls of Cardinal Newman High School, who will be the first team in the country to get back into organised outdoor team sport through a pre-school training session with the Warrington Wolves Foundation.

It comes ahead of a major year for Rugby League. The Culture Secretary will make the draw for the third round of the Challenge Cup today, and the season will culminate with the men's, women's and wheelchair World Cups in October and November, and around 90% of matches being hosted in the North of England.

Victoria Park will use a new 3G pitch that has benefited from the Government providing £25 million towards the staging of the Rugby League World Cup, and improving community facilities to help grow the sport at grassroots level.

The Culture Secretary will also announce an additional £16.7 million in loan support to protect Rugby League, through the winter phase of the Government's Sport Survival Package. This follows the Government stepping in with £16 million in emergency support last year.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston is set to visit the Football Foundation's state of the art Rectory Park Facility in Ealing where he will tour the facilities and talk to a BTEC community training squad.

Eoin Morgan, England ICC Men's Cricket World Cup-winning captain said:

I know how lucky I've been as a sportsperson to play cricket for a living, and to have been able to continue to do so during the ongoing pandemic while so many others have been unable to.

The reason I started playing cricket as a child was because I loved it, but it also helped me keep fit and active, spend time with my friends, make new ones and have fun. I know that so many people, and especially children, have missed out on those vitally important things because of the pandemic so I'm delighted to endorse the #returntoplay campaign.

With summer – and the cricket season – just around the corner, there's no better time for everyone, young and old, to get back to having fun by getting outdoors, being active and playing sport.

Johanna Konta, British No1 women's tennis player, said:

I'm so happy people in England are now able to get back on court and enjoy the mental and physical health benefits of tennis.

It's a great sport for anyone looking to get active outdoors after lockdown at a safe, social distance, and I'd encourage everyone to pick up a racket, no matter whether they're a seasoned player or trying tennis for the first time.

Kyle Sinckler, England Rugby Union player, said:

I can wait to see you guys get out there, and all the kids getting back out there to enjoy themselves.

Because that's what it's about at the end of the day, grassroots rugby, everyone getting back out there and enjoying themselves and hopefully I can get down there and see you guys soon.

Serena Guthrie, England Netball player, said:

It is brilliant to see grassroots sports returning today and in particular netball players the length and breadth of the country getting ready to step back out on courts again.

With outdoor sport unlocking, this is a chance for people to reconnect with teammates in the fresh air, get active and maybe even try something new.

It's been a tough period for everyone, and there's never been a more important time to look after your physical and mental wellbeing, so I'd encourage as many people as possible to grab their trainers and find a netball session near them to get involved with.

Jodie Cunningham, St Helens and England Women Rugby League player, said:

The return of grassroots sport is a fantastic moment for everyone who loves sport, and the positive impact it makes on people's lives.

I know the girls from my old school, Cardinal Newman, will be really excited to use these brilliant new facilities at Victoria Park – and there will be so many others of all ages in our Rugby League communities who can't wait to get back doing what they love.

DJ Locksmith, from Rudimental said:

I'm going to be honest with you, I'm not that great at golf. But

with that said, I love playing it. And I love getting out there with family and friends with all the bants and the laughs that come with it.

With the horrendous shots, mixed with the good ones, and to be honest with you, that's what I'm there for. I'm there for that one good shot. That brings me back time and time again.

Dual Olympic sailing silver medallist Ian Walker said:

Spring is always an exciting time for sailors looking forward to getting back afloat as the weather warms up, but this year there is more excitement than ever. I will be racing at my club at the first opportunity next week!

Sport England Chief Executive, Tim Hollingsworth said:

Today is a vital milestone as many people can get back to the sports and activities they have missed so much.

It also signals a big step on the nation's road to recovery as the nation starts to move out of the winter restrictions. The fact organised sport is one of the first things to reopen underlines its importance to our health and wellbeing and we hope many people feel the confidence to get back out there and enjoy it this week.

I have been so impressed by the resilience and adaptability of sport providers over the past year since the pandemic began. We've all worked together to get to this point and now we must focus on rebuilding activity levels and making sure we do all we can so that everyone can benefit from the joy that being active brings.

Youth sport is a top priority in the Prime Minister's roadmap. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Education are now working with experts from the world of sport, education and business to look at how we can get children fit and fully active over the next few months, both at school and during the holidays.

This comes on top of a £10.1 million investment made by the Department for Education into schools across England, to help open existing school sports and swimming facilities. At the same time, since the outbreak of COVID-19, schools have continued to provide PE to those attending and have provided innovative remote teaching of PE and physical activity. The £320 million per year Primary PE and Sport premium funding can be used to support this.

The sport and leisure sector has benefited from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support made available by the Government, including a bespoke survival package for major spectator sports, the furlough scheme, business

rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive and be able to reopen when safe to do so.

Last week the Government announced that £100 million has now been allocated to 266 local authorities across England, to support the recovery of publicly-owned leisure centres and gyms. Grassroots sports and the physical activity sector are also benefiting from £270 million in emergency funding delivered by Sport England.

Earlier this month, the Chancellor announced that the Government will provide an initial £25 million to support the growth of grassroots football, which will be enough to build around 700 new pitches across the UK.

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[Innovative projects to protect against flooding selected](#)

Press release

Cutting-edge flood forecasting and natural flood management schemes trialled in 25 selected areas receiving a share of £150m to develop new flooding responses.



Apps alerting residents to flooding, permeable road surfaces to improve drainage and schemes to protect vital sand dune beaches are among 25 new flooding and coastal resilience projects across England awarded funding today (Monday 29 March).

The pioneering projects, led by local authorities and delivered over the next six years, will receive a share of £150 million from Defra as part of the government's new Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme and will be managed by the Environment Agency. They are part of the government's long-

term plan on flood and coastal erosion and a renewed effort to develop and test new approaches to tackle these threats.

The schemes will trial a wide range of different approaches to resilience tailored to local communities. These include plans to restore sub-tidal habitats like kelp beds, oyster reefs and sea grass near South Tyneside, as well as the installation of specialised property flood resilience measures and an app for local residents to tackle the threat of groundwater in Buckinghamshire.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

We're investing a record £5.2 billion in 2,000 new flood and coastal defences over the next six years – but with the effects of climate change already being felt it's vital that we combine this with long-term approaches to improve communities' resilience.

These 25 projects will not only help to inform future approaches to prepare communities for flooding and coastal change across the country, but also help reinforce the UK's position as a world leader in innovation and new technology as we build back better.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

The innovation programme is extremely exciting as it begins to put new aspects of the national flood and coastal erosion risk strategy to the test. What we learn will inform our approach to the climate crisis in the coming decades and it's something to tell our international partners about at COP26.

I'm particularly interested in the projects that test the ability of nature-based projects to generate revenue. If successful, these could be scaled up by private finance around the world, helping to prepare for climate shocks, restore nature and create jobs.

The funding is in addition to the government's record £5.2 billion investment in new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027. The 25 areas have been selected following an expressions of interest process managed by Defra and the Environment Agency and assessed by an independent expert panel.

Additional funding will be used to support the development of adaptation pathways in the Thames and Humber Estuaries, Yorkshire and the Severn Valley, to help plan future investment in flood and coastal resilience.

North East, Yorkshire and the Humber

- North East Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire – A project covering Grimsby, Immingham and Doncaster delivering town-wide resilience to surface water flooding. The project seeks to trial different approaches to engage with communities and retrofit sustainable drainage measures, such as water butts and rain gardens.
- York and North Yorkshire – A large strategic project looking at Swale, Ure, Nidd and Ouse catchments covering an area over 3000 km². This project plans to undertake modelling and develop flood storage and natural flood management opportunities across the catchment.
- Northumberland – A project aiming to improve the flood resilience of at least six rural communities using a range of solutions, including testing and developing an enhanced flood warning system. This will be delivered using artificial intelligence and new sensor technology.
- South Tyneside – A project to support coastal adaptation by working along the north-east coastline, to undertake a number of activities including restoration of sub-tidal habitats (such as kelp beds, oyster reefs and sea grass) to protect against coastal erosion and flooding. The project learning will benefit the whole North East coastline.
- Stockton-on-Tees: To bolster resilience to coastal flooding through several activities, including creating new habitats such as saltmarshes and mudflats and trialling a 'habitat bank' to enable developers to invest in nature and resilience. The project will contribute to local economic regeneration by protecting coastal communities.
- County Durham – The council plans to develop a new approach to designing, delivering and monitoring sustainable drainage systems, such as raingardens, smart butts and street trees. This will include inviting UK based SMEs to run competitions to find innovative solutions to community sustainable drainage.
- Gateshead – Historic coal mining has impacted groundwater in urbanised areas of Northumbria. The project will use the latest monitoring technology to measure groundwater levels and trial a groundwater flood warning service. This trial will inform the case for developing a national ground water warning service.

North West

- Cumbria – This project aims to test a range of solutions to improve resilience to flooding, including working with farmers and landowners to deliver natural flood management projects such as leaky dams, tree

planting and flood storage to slow the flow and store floodwaters in a range of locations.

- Rochdale – The project plans to target deprived and hard-to-reach communities in the Roch Valley, with high turnover and rented accommodation. The project is looking to proactively install property flood resilience, such as flood gates, across homes and local small businesses.
- Wyre – The project aims to enhance the coastal resilience of North West coastal communities to the consequences of climate change, such as from erosion and coastal flooding by creating Ecological Community Owned Coastal Buffer Strips (which could include natural wooden barriers to capture sediment, seeding of plants, establishing saltmarshes) that also capture carbon.

Midlands

- Northamptonshire – This project plans to assess how different resilience actions at catchment, community and property levels can be applied. This will include providing emergency response equipment to affected communities, setting up a surface water and groundwater flood warning system and live exercises of community flood plans.
- Lincolnshire – A project with Anglian Water to explore best practice for holistic management of groundwater resources, flooding and drought. This could include groundwater property flood resilience, localised flood warning systems.
- Staffordshire: A project aiming to improve the resilience of flooding in Staffordshire through a variety of activities, including developing new cutting-edge technology to forecast and map flood events as well as CCTV monitoring in high risks areas, helping to boost community resilience through an easier accessible web platform.

East of England

- Southend-on-Sea – The Catchment to Coast project plans to reduce surface water and coastal flooding to communities in Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea using natural flood management techniques, including rainwater harvesting, changing agricultural practices to reduce pollution and establish saltmarshes in the estuary.
- Suffolk and Norfolk – This project will deliver an innovative approach to integrated water management – helping to manage floods and drought.

The project aims to capture surface water runoff during periods of flood and high rainfall, and reusing water for groundwater recharge and agriculture, improving water security in rural communities.

- Central Bedfordshire – This project will use new sensing technologies to help use flood risk infrastructure more effectively, improving the use of existing flood storage areas and investing in a network of telemetry to enable management of reservoirs across the catchment.
- East Suffolk and Norfolk – This project will pilot a coastal adaptation toolkit and a community adaptation masterplan to prepare the coast for a climate resilient future in an area with one of the fastest eroding coastlines in Europe.

London and South East

- Buckinghamshire: Trial for a new approach to groundwater flooding in Chilterns and Berkshire Downs, including plans for property flood resilience measures in up to 200 homes, groundwater monitoring (including innovative technology such as gully sensors) and a Groundwater Flood Alert App for householders and businesses.
- Slough – The project will take the innovative Chinese ‘sponge city’ concept to address the challenges of surface water and river flooding in a heavily urbanised environment. This will include permeable road surfacing, green roofs and natural vegetation that better drains and manages rainwater.
- East Sussex – This project will use a combination of new technologies to tackle surface water flooding, developing an integrated catchment wide model for the Eastbourne catchment. This will include installation of local digital equipment for monitoring water-levels and new boreholes to provide real-time monitoring for flood risk and local surface water flooding.
- Barnet – The London Boroughs of Barnet, Harrow and Brent have some of the fastest housing growth rates in London. The project will examine catchment-wide interventions to manage flood risk along the River Brent and the Silkstream and demonstrate how natural flood management can manage river flooding in urbanised areas.
- Richmond-upon-Thames – This project will modernise flood risk management in the Beverley Brook catchment by delivering property flood resilience, natural flood management and community preparedness.

South West

- Cornwall – Designating and protecting sand dunes on the Cornish Coast to protect coastal settlements and economies from coastal erosion and sea level rise. Six sites will be selected to deliver planting, saltmarsh restoration, protection of community infrastructure and support to SMEs, with learning transferred across the country.
- Devon – This project is focusing on catchments where there are significant risks from localised surface water flooding. The project will take a ‘catchment-wide’ approach to identify and implement nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage to help communities across Devon and Cornwall including collaboration with the Dartmoor and Exmouth National Parks.
- City of Bristol – The Frome Catchment Innovation Programme will use a mix of flood resilience measures that mirror the rural to city nature of the Frome catchment. This project will deliver restoration of the River Frome through the Yate Masterplan and Frome Gateway regeneration initiative.

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[30 million people in UK receive first dose of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine](#)

- More than 33 million jabs administered overall as drive to vaccinate people with second doses accelerates
- Over 95% of people aged 60 and over have been vaccinated with first dose in England
- Everyone over 50 or those who are clinically vulnerable urged to come forward for vaccines as soon as possible

More than 30 million people in the UK have received a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine as the NHS prepares to administer millions of second doses in the coming weeks.

The UK health services vaccinated a total of 30,151,287 people between 8 December and 27 March with first doses – around 57% of all UK adults. In addition, 3,527,481 people have had their second doses, totalling 33,678,768 jabs administered overall.

Around 6% of the adult population have had their second doses so far and there will be a strong push over the coming weeks to give people their second jabs in line with the 12 week dose interval.

The rollout is continuing at pace and the UK is on track to achieve the Prime Minister's target of offering all over-50s and the clinically vulnerable their first vaccine by 15 April, as well as all adults by the end of July.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm absolutely thrilled that more than 30 million people have now had the jab across the UK – including 650,000 vaccinations delivered yesterday.

The vaccine is saving lives and is our route out of this pandemic. I want to say a massive thanks to the team.

When you get the call – get the jab.

The speed of the vaccination programmes means even more people will soon develop strong protection from serious illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, saving countless lives and significantly reducing pressure on the NHS.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Vaccines save lives and are the best way out of this pandemic, so I urge everyone, regardless of race or religion, to come forward for the vaccine when it's your turn.

The NHS, GPs, pharmacists and volunteers will continue to do everything they can to vaccinate people as quickly as possible and I'm immensely proud of their tireless efforts to reach this milestone so quickly.

All vaccines being used in the UK have undergone robust clinical trials and have met the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) strict standards of safety, effectiveness and quality.

The Moderna vaccine has also been approved by the MHRA and will be deployed from the spring. Rolling reviews are underway by the MHRA to assess the Janssen and Novavax vaccines.

Data from the Public Health England (PHE) real-world study shows that both the Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines are highly effective in reducing coronavirus (COVID-19) among older people aged 70 years and over. We are already seeing a significant impact of the vaccination programme on reducing hospitalisations and deaths, with 6,100 deaths prevented in those aged 70 and older in England up to the end of February.

The vaccines are available free of charge and are available from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies, and we want everyone to take up the offer of an appointment when they are invited – all those 50 and over can book a jab now. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England, which includes mosques, Westminster Abbey and football stadiums.

PHE's real-world data on the efficacy of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines [is available](#).

Data on the number of deaths prevented by vaccines [is available](#).

Through the government's Vaccines Taskforce, the UK has secured early access to 457 million doses of 8 of the most promising vaccine candidates, including:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 40 million doses
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
- Moderna for 17 million doses
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses
- Novavax for 60 million doses
- Janssen for 30 million doses
- Valneva for 100 million doses
- CureVac for 50 million doses

To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.

The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is the largest donor to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.

[Workplace testing programme expands to offer free rapid home testing](#)

- Government makes rapid home testing available for all businesses with over 10 employees who cannot offer on-site testing
- Businesses must register interest by 12 April to access free tests
- Over 60,000 businesses already registered for regular and rapid tests for employees

Over 60,000 businesses across the country have already registered their interest to provide rapid tests to key workers. From 6 April, the workplace testing programme will supply home test kits to companies with over 10

workers where it is not possible to set up testing on-site, due to a lack of space or because companies operate across multiple sites.

Businesses across the country will be eligible to order the home test kits online to distribute to their employees. These self-test kits will be picked up by staff from their employer with clear instructions about how to take the test. Staff will then complete the home test in the normal way, before reporting their results to the NHS using the provided gov.uk address.

The workplace testing programme uses lateral flow tests (LFD) to rapidly detect the virus in 30 minutes. Swift detection of cases means those who test positive can isolate immediately and, in doing so, break chains of transmission and suppress the virus.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Rapid testing is a vital part of our roadmap, helping us to cautiously lift restrictions on our economy and society.

Around one in three people with coronavirus do not have any symptoms, so extending employee testing from the workplace to the home will help us identify more cases we otherwise wouldn't find, prevent further transmission and save lives.

60,000 businesses across the country have already registered for free, regular and rapid tests and I encourage many more to take up the offer, helping to keep their employees and their families safe.

Businesses are encouraged to register before 12 April in order to access free tests until the end of June, even if they're not yet open or are not able to start using the tests straight away.

As well as reporting their result directly to the NHS, employees should advise their employer of a positive result and take a confirmatory PCR test. Employers will retain an important role in encouraging their employees to take and report the results of their test.

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director, said:

Mass, rapid workplace testing is an essential pillar of the roadmap for reopening, alongside the vaccine rollout. Having the option for staff to test at home will enable more firms to embrace workplace testing, as not all employers will have the space or facilities to run testing programmes on their premises. The move to home testing reflects ongoing, high quality dialogue between business and government. We'd encourage as many firms as possible to register before the 12 April deadline, as part of their broader efforts to keep staff and customers safe.

Employers with fewer than 10 people can alternatively access regular testing through the community testing programme, which is now offered by all local authorities in England. Work is also underway to allow staff of small businesses to order tests online to be sent to their home.

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium said:

The BRC welcomes the proposal to extend the workplace testing programme to include home testing. This is something we have called for as the next step for smaller businesses and stores where the space for testing at work is limited. It is also supported by employees as a practical approach.

Testing will form a crucial part of everyday life as parts of society reopen. Regular testing could be the difference between a workplace being able to stay open and operational, or needing to close due to a Covid-19 outbreak. For many employers on-site testing has already become an essential part of its employee offer and a routine part of working life.

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus don't have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing.

Regular, rapid testing is already in place for millions of people across the NHS, care homes and schools. The government has also confirmed twice-weekly home testing using lateral flow tests for free to all adults in households with primary, secondary school and college aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles.

This is in addition to the two home tests for all secondary and college students and staff per week. Staff in primary schools, and in private, voluntary and independent nurseries also have access to rapid testing through their workplace.

The announcement comes as a new set of statistics published on Friday, by the Official of National Statistics (ONS), revealed 86% of people testing positive for coronavirus are fully complying with self-isolation guidance for their full isolation period.

Data also showed 90% of the contacts reached by NHS Test and Trace are fully adhering with the rules and that 97% of NHS COVID-19 app users started to self-isolate within 24 hours of receiving a notification. The majority of respondents (68%) also fully understood the self-isolation guidance. Of people who did not fully comply, the most common breaches were to buy food, get medicines or medical appointments.

BT Chief Medical Officer, Dr Richard Caddis said:

BT is pleased to have been supporting this important government trial in England, offering rapid home testing to our field engineers who have done such an incredible job of keeping the

country connected.

Eastwood Park CEO John Thatcher said:

We originally invested in testing kits for all staff and the hundreds of learners returning to our classroom and laboratory-based training. Now to benefit from support from the government providing kits for staff, which on average could mean 120 tests per week, is allowing us to focus on our learners. The additional security and ease presented by the new self-testing operation, sitting alongside all the other day to day measures, has been a big confidence boost for everyone.