

# International Policy Review Puts Cyber at the centre of the UK's Security

- This week's Integrated Review will commit to a new, full spectrum approach to the UK's cyber capability – keeping our people safe, staying ahead of our enemies and improving the lives of the British people
- The PM will announce the establishment of a 'cyber corridor' across the North of England, creating and sustaining thousands of jobs
- The National Cyber Force is transforming the UK's ability to conduct targeted offensive cyber operations to impose real-world costs on our adversaries

Our ability to detect, disrupt and deter our adversaries while taking advantage of the revolution in the use of smart and cyber technology will be dramatically enhanced by commitments in the Integrated Review of security, defence, development and foreign policy, to be published this week.

The review will set out the importance of cyber technology to our way of life – whether it's defeating our enemies on the battlefield, making the internet a safer place or developing cutting-edge tech to improve people's lives.

Cyber Security is the foundation of our cyber power and the UK has been at the cutting edge of the use of intelligence to disrupt threats online and defend against attacks. We established the National Cyber Security Centre in 2016 to help critical organisations, businesses and the general public protect themselves.

In recent years our adversaries have invested in their own capabilities and are constantly finding new ways to exploit our weaknesses and gain advantage in cyberspace. To cement our competitive edge and keep ahead of our enemies a full spectrum approach is therefore needed.

The Integrated Review will announce a new cyber strategy to create a cyber ecosystem fit for the future, with more investment in education, partnerships with industry and integration across our defence and intelligence services.

The Prime Minister said:

Cyber power is revolutionising the way we live our lives and fight our wars, just as air power did 100 years ago. We need to build up our cyber capability so we can grasp the opportunities it presents while ensuring those who seek to use its powers to attack us and our way of life are thwarted at every turn.

Our new, full-spectrum approach to cyber will transform our ability to protect our people, promote our interests around the world and make the lives of British people better every day.

The Prime Minister will announce this week that the home of the new National Cyber Force and the nexus of this strategy will be in the North of England, establishing a 'cyber corridor' across the region.

Opening the HQ of the NCF in the North of England will drive growth in the tech, digital and defence sectors outside of London and help create new partnerships between government, the sector and universities in the region, placing it in the international centre of cutting-edge developments to keep our people safe.

Defence currently sustains more than 35,000 jobs in the North West of England alone. Digital and cyber jobs will build on the region's history of being on the cutting edge of defence technology – 10,000 people are employed in maritime design in Barrow and 12,000 people work in advanced aerospace engineering and manufacturing at Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone, where the UK is producing the fifth generation F-35 stealth aircraft.

The North of England is already home to a GCHQ office in Manchester, which is and is Europe's fastest growing major tech cluster, with more than 15% of Manchester's population employed by the digital, creative and technology sector.

The National Cyber Force was created last year to transform the UK's capacity to conduct targeted offensive cyber operations against terrorists, hostile states and criminal gangs. It draws together personnel from both defence and the intelligence agencies under one unified command for the first time.

The kinds of operations the NCF is able to carry out include:

- Interfering with a mobile phone to prevent a terrorist being able to communicate with their contacts
- Helping to prevent cyberspace from being used as a global platform for serious crimes, including the sexual abuse of children
- Keeping UK military aircraft safe from targeting by weapons systems

Recognising the importance of cyber to defence, in addition to the NCF last year the MoD created the 13th Signals Regiment, the first dedicated cyber regiment, and expanded the Defence Cyber School. These enhanced cyber capabilities bolster our defence and will play a vital part in operations including HMS Queen Elizabeth's first global deployment this year. MoD cyber experts comprise almost half of the NCF's cyber operators.

In addition to national security and defence applications, cyber technology can also be used to improve people's lives through smart technology and helping people use the internet safely. In the last year, GCHQ has partnered with tech start-ups to help them develop and use AI to help train companies ensure more space for passengers during the COVID pandemic, alert haulage companies to stowaways in their containers and prevent the spread of misinformation online.

The Government's new cyber strategy will support companies developing dual-use and consumer technology to ensure the UK is a cyber power in every sense.

It will also be critical to our ambition to establish the UK as a global services, digital and data hub.

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## Health charities back vaccines drive for those at risk

- Charities write open letter to encourage those with underlying health conditions to come forward for the jab
- More than half of cohort 6 have already been vaccinated
- Vaccine drive includes NHS text alert sent to more than two million people in this group

People with underlying conditions including cancer, diabetes and heart disease are being encouraged to come forward for a Covid-19 vaccine by leading UK health charities in an open letter published today.

Frontline charities, including Mencap, Diabetes UK and Lupus UK, have asked those with underlying medical conditions, their carers, and those with learning disabilities on their GP register, to book a vaccination to protect themselves and those around them from coronavirus.

People in cohort 6 have been prioritised for the vaccine because they have conditions that mean they are more likely to become seriously unwell from coronavirus.

More than half of those in cohort 6 have already received their first dose of the vaccine and it's hoped that the charities' letter – alongside text messages from the NHS – will help to increase take up further among those in this at-risk group.

The charities who signed the open letter are among 22 who have joined together in partnership to reassure those they support about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

GP services already have been contacting this cohort but those who have not yet received a letter can get a quick and convenient appointment at a vaccination centre or community pharmacy by using the national booking system or calling 119. The NHS have sent text messages to people in this group with a link so they can book their appointment.

The vaccine is safe and effective and very few people are advised not to have it. However, if you have any concerns, you can discuss these if you book over the phone, or with a health professional at your appointment.

## **Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:**

“The backing of the charities who work every day to support those who are entitled to a jab as part of cohort 6 is a great boost for the vaccine rollout and shows what we can achieve when we pull together.

“This open letter is a hugely important way to reassure those with underlying health conditions, and their carers, about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

“The charities’ support for this national vaccine effort is invaluable in encouraging more people to come forward and helping us to save lives.”

These vital charities support those included in priority vaccination categories, including cohort 6 which covers individuals aged 16 to 64 with certain long-term conditions identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as being at higher clinical risk from Covid-19.

Underlying health conditions faced by people in cohort 6 include chronic respiratory, heart, kidney, liver disease and neurological conditions, including multiple sclerosis (MS) and epilepsy, stroke, vascular disease, diabetes mellitus, immunosuppression due to a health condition or treatment, asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen, morbid obesity, severe mental illness, as well as sickle cell, lupus and those on GP learning disability registers.

Cohort 6 also includes carers who are eligible for a carer’s allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of Covid-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable.

## **Minister for Vaccines Nadhim Zahawi said:**

“We have already given a first dose of the vaccine to more than half of those in cohort 6 and I am grateful to the charities who are encouraging more people in that group to come forward.

“The vaccine is our way out of this pandemic and offers the chance to protect yourself and others – that’s why it’s vital that people get their jab.

“This open letter should help to reassure those with any concerns the vaccine is safe and supported by more than twenty of our most trusted charities.

“I would like to thank them all for backing this life-saving campaign and offering their expertise and assistance to support the largest medical deployment in British history.”

## **Notes to editors**

### **Open letter**

We are writing today to encourage people living with an underlying health condition in cohort 6 to come forward for a Covid-19 vaccine.

People with these conditions, including their carers, and those with learning disabilities on the learning disability register, have been prioritised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation because they are more likely to become seriously unwell from Covid-19.

The vast majority of you should already have been invited for vaccination and more than half of you have already received your first dose.

Some of you may still be waiting for a letter from your GP.

But the good news is, even if you have not received your letter yet, you can now get an appointment at a vaccination centre or community pharmacy, quickly and easily, by using the national booking system or calling 119 in England.

We are proud to support the vaccination roll-out and are here to support you.

The vaccine is safe and effective and very few people are advised not to have it. However, if you have any concerns, you can discuss these when you book, or with a health professional at your appointment.

Over 20 million people in the UK have had their first dose and great progress has been made by the NHS.

We are very pleased to see the Covid-19 vaccination roll-out providing protection for people, like you, who are most at risk from the virus.

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Cohort 6 also includes carers who are eligible for a carer's allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of Covid-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable.

The vaccines that have been approved for use in the UK have met the strict safety standards set by the medicines regulator on safety, quality and effectiveness.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues, you still need to follow the current government guidance on social contact after receiving your vaccine.

Please come forward to have the jab. It will help save lives and offers the best form of protection from this terrible virus.

## **Further notes to editors**

Those using the national booking service can input their NHS number which will identify whether they are eligible according to their health records.

The campaign video is available here –  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJdKpMG54sM&feature=youtu.be>

The organisations within the partnership, 18 of which have also signed the letter, are:

- ACLT (African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust)
- Anthony Nolan
- Asthma UK
- British Heart Foundation
- British Liver Trust
- British Lung Foundation
- Cancer Research UK
- Carers UK
- Diabetes UK
- Epilepsy Action
- Kidney Care UK
- Kidney Research UK
- Lupus UK
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- Mencap
- MS Society
- National Kidney Federation
- Rethink Mental Illness
- Sickle Cell Society
- Stroke Association
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- Versus Arthritis

Unpaid carers are included in cohort 6 providing they:

- are eligible for a carer's allowance
- are identified as a primary carer by their GP
- are receiving support following a carer's assessment by their local council or from a local carer's organisation
- are the sole or primary carer who provides close personal care or face to face support for an elderly or disabled person who is clinically vulnerable to COVID-19

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## **[Foreign Secretary statement on radical changes to Hong Kong's electoral system.](#)**

Press release

The UK now considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration



The Foreign Secretary said:

Beijing's decision to impose radical changes to restrict participation in Hong Kong's electoral system constitutes a further clear breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration.

This is part of a pattern designed to harass and stifle all voices critical of China's policies and is the third breach of the Joint Declaration in less than nine months.

The Chinese authorities' continued action means I must now report that the UK considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Joint Declaration – a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

The UK will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong. China must act in accordance with its legal obligations and respect fundamental rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.

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**[Statement on entry into force of the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the UK and Spain](#)**

# regarding Gibraltar

## News story

An international agreement to improve tax co-operation between the tax authorities of Spain and Gibraltar has now entered into force.



The UK has ratified the International Agreement on Taxation and the Protection of Financial Interests between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Spain regarding Gibraltar.

The agreement entered into force on 4 March 2021 and was published in Spain's Official State Bulletin on 13 March 2021.

This treaty will improve tax co-operation between the tax authorities of Spain and Gibraltar. It provides rules for resolving conflicts over tax residency and enables administrative co-operation, through sharing of information and addressing disputes by means of a Joint Committee.

The treaty was signed on 4 March 2019. It is the first between the UK and Spain regarding Gibraltar explicitly for over 300 years. The treaty fully respects the 2006 Gibraltar Constitution.

The Government of Gibraltar was involved throughout negotiation of the treaty, and has passed the legislation required to ensure ratification.

This tax treaty is in the interest of all parties. It demonstrates the shared commitment of the UK and Gibraltar Governments, together with Spain, to ensure the continued prosperity of Gibraltar and the region as a whole, in the same constructive spirit that marked agreement of a framework on 31st December 2020.

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# 48,000 businesses already registered to offer workplace testing

- Regular, rapid testing will be a crucial tool to prevent outbreaks in the workplace as we cautiously ease restrictions, keeping employees safe and businesses open
- A major expansion of the free programme now means all businesses can access workplace testing, and are encouraged to register their interest by 31 March

Over 48,000 businesses have [registered their interest in the government's free workplace testing programme](#), using rapid lateral flow tests that can give a result in 30 minutes.

Over 9,000 businesses have already completed the sign-up process, and all other businesses are encouraged to register by 31 March to help keep their employees safe, prevent outbreaks and suppress the spread of the virus. Businesses are encouraged to register before 31 March, even if they're not yet open or are not able to start using the tests straight away.

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing. Rapid testing for people without symptoms detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

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.

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 less than one false positive result.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

We have built a huge asymptomatic testing system from scratch, which is an essential part of our plan to reopen cautiously.

Rapid testing has been rolled out at a vast scale across a range of sectors, and it is fantastic that now over 48,000 businesses have signed up to offer rapid testing to employees. This is a huge step forward in getting businesses back on their feet and helping to keep people safe.

With around 1 in 3 people with the virus not having symptoms, regular testing is essential to bearing down on the virus and identify new variants of concern as we work towards restoring normal life. I strongly encourage all businesses to register their interest before the 31 March deadline.

Businesses have until 31 March to register for the government's workplace testing scheme, which will remain free until the end of June. Businesses of any size, including those with fewer than 50 employees, can sign up to offer workplace testing. Those who need to leave home for work can also access regular testing through community testing, which is now offered by all local authorities in England.

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 testing using LFDs for free to all adults in households with nursery, primary, secondary school and college-aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles.

This is in addition to the 2 tests for all secondary and college students and staff per week. Staff at private, voluntary and independent nurseries also have access to rapid testing through their workplace.

## **Case studies**

### **Phillips 66 Humber Refinery**

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery produces up to 14 million litres, with around 20% of all UK petroleum products coming from the Humber Refinery. They are testing over 1,000 staff a week and have almost completed 10,000 tests in total.

Darren Cunningham, Lead Executive UK and General Manager at Humber Refinery, said:

When offered the opportunity to take part in lateral flow testing, we jumped at the opportunity. Why wouldn't we? It is another layer of protection to keep our staff, their families and our communities safer. The operation to set up large-scale testing for 1,000 staff weekly – and it did pose some challenges – we are now running smoothly, and happily sharing what we did to help other key industries set up their own LFT facility.

### **Siemens Mobility**

Siemens Mobility has been a leader in transport solutions for more than 160 years and now employs 36,800 people worldwide, with 4,500 of those in the UK. The organisation's core areas are rolling stock, rail automation and electrification, turnkey systems and intelligent traffic systems. In total, Siemens Mobility operates from around 70 UK locations.

William Wilson, CEO of Siemens Mobility Limited, said:

Our people have played vital roles throughout the pandemic maintaining critical national infrastructure and helping essential

services to operate safely and efficiently. As we move towards the relaxation of lockdown rules, introducing regular COVID-19 testing, with almost instant results, plays a vital role in helping to track and contain virus spread, as well as provide our employees with peace of mind.

## **Unipart Group**

Unipart Group is a leading UK manufacturer, full-service logistics provider and consultant headquartered in Oxford. Unipart operates across a range of market sectors, including automotive, healthcare and the NHS, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology. Around 130 workers are tested every week – 90% of the workforce working from this site.

Debs Astles, Unipart Group HR Director – Corporate Responsibility and Policy, said:

Encouraging our people to get regular tests is an important part of our COVID-safe commitment across our sites, and helps us support our colleagues' safety and wellbeing. This ensures we can continue to provide essential services to customers across key sectors such as healthcare and the NHS, automotive, essential retail and the construction industry.

## **Birchall Foodservice**

Birchall Foodservice is an independent, family-owned business with depots in Burnley, Durham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent. The company employs 150 people. Birchall Foodservice delivers a 'one-stop shop' range of foods, drinks, non-foods and equipment to caterers working in the care, education and hospitality sectors.

Louise Birchall, sales director at Birchall Foodservice, said:

The introduction of rapid testing allows us to quickly identify asymptomatic cases of coronavirus within the business. By isolating these cases, we can stop any potential spread of COVID-19 and help protect our employees, their families and our customers. We are encouraging all local businesses, no matter the size, to introduce frequent, rapid testing amongst their workforce.

## **The Glasdon Group**

The Glasdon Group is a design and manufacture company specialising in litter and recycling bins, road safety products, a diverse range of building systems, shelters, seating products, water safety products and snow-clearing equipment. The company employs over 250 employees and is based in Blackpool, Lancashire. They have been carrying out testing via their local authority,

Blackpool Council, since December 2020, and they now have 5 testing stations where they can process up to 60 tests per hour. The company carries out approximately 400 tests per week.

Gary Butler, Health and Safety Manager at the Glasdon Group, said:

Testing all of our staff and any visiting contractors twice per week is providing us with the confidence that our own control measures are having the desired result of protecting our employees during the pandemic. The rapid test results enable us to isolate any affected staff as quickly as possible, thus reducing the chance of an outbreak on the premises.

The response of the Glasdon employees to the testing programme has been positive and is going a long way to making them feel safe in their place of work during these difficult times. Testing twice per week is also providing a level of assurance to the employees' families that they are not putting their own households at extra risk by coming to work.

## **Background information**

Businesses have until 31 March to [register for the government's workplace testing scheme](#), which will remain free until the end of June.