

Whisky gets into the spirit of building back greener

- UK distilleries raise a toast to government's green industrial revolution in first phase of funding to cut carbon emissions and support new green jobs
- £10 million fund to help UK's world-famous distilleries go green by switching to low carbon fuels such as hydrogen
- funding to enable distilleries to cut emissions by almost a million tonnes of CO₂ every year – equivalent to taking 200,000 cars off the road

Whisky and spirit lovers are raising a glass to the delivery of new government funding that will ensure they can enjoy their favourite tipple without it costing the earth.

Producers in one of the UK's most iconic industries will be playing their part in reducing carbon emissions, with 17 distilleries today receiving the first phase of £10 million government funding to go green.

Eleven distilleries across Scotland and a further 6 in England will be able to kick-start green innovations thanks to the government backing, helping them harness energy sources such as low-carbon hydrogen, biomass and repurposed waste to power their operations.

The successful distilleries will receive between £44,000 and £75,000 in the first phase of funding, helping them boost decarbonisation research and development, with schemes including the use of hydrogen and biofuel boilers and geothermal energy in their production processes.

The funding will help prevent pollution equivalent to taking 200,000 cars off the road.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister, Kwasi Kwarteng, said:

Building back greener from the pandemic is something we can all raise a toast to.

Every business can play a part in the green industrial revolution and this funding will allow UK distilleries to lead the way by making their production cleaner while also creating jobs.

In 2019, the UK distilleries industry grew by 20%, highlighting the opportunity for the sector to be at the heart of the UK's green and resilient recovery from coronavirus.

The Scotch whisky industry supports 40,000 jobs across the UK, with more than 10,000 people directly employed in Scotland.

With 7,000 of these jobs in rural Scottish areas, today's funding will drive forward support for net-zero innovation in some geographically remote parts of the UK, creating more jobs and skills and providing opportunities for distilleries to develop their fuel transportation and storage technologies.

The announcement is another example of government commitment to build back greener and work towards the UK's goal of reaching net zero by 2050 and comes in addition to the ambitious green targets announced in the [Ten Point Plan](#) and [Energy White Paper](#).

UK government Scotland Minister, Iain Stewart said:

It is fantastic to see so many Scottish distilleries awarded this UK government funding. Scotland is world famous for its whisky and gin, with the spirits industry one of our greatest success stories.

This new funding will help the industry continue to build on its great work in tackling climate change.

From Aberdeen and Glasgow to Orkney and South Uist, this funding will help create jobs, support local businesses and communities and build back greener ahead of COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

Dagmar Droogsma, Director of Industry at the [Scotch Whisky Association](#), said:

The Green Distilleries Fund is an important step on the industry's journey towards net-zero. It will help the industry test new technologies, like hydrogen, which can be rolled out at scale in future years and enable Scotch Whisky to further drive down emissions and protect the natural environment.

With COP26 taking place in Glasgow this year, the Scotch whisky industry has ambitious plans to build on the success of the last decade when distilleries cut greenhouse gas emissions by 34%. There is more to do, but with continued support from government the Scotch whisky industry can continue to work towards a more sustainable future.

- The Green Distilleries competition supports the government's approach for a clean, resilient recovery across the UK to support the creation of new jobs in the distillery sector
- in the 2020 Budget, £10 million was allocated to R&D to help decarbonise UK distilleries
- find more information about [the Green Distilleries Competition](#)
- the funding for the Green Distilleries competition is part of the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and processes in the power, buildings and industrial sectors

Successful phase 1 distilleries

Name	Funding	Location	Detail
Protium Green Solutions Limited	£73,818	Lead in London with a distillery partner in Islay	Using a low emission hydrogen boiler.
Locogen Ltd	£43,325	Edinburgh	Switching a distillery from fuel oil to hydrogen burners.
Protium Energy Limited	£57,464	Aberdeen	A high temperature heat store.
Cornish Geothermal Distillery Company	£75,000	Truro	Creating a geothermal distillery.
European Marine Energy Centre	£58,781	Orkney Islands	Assessing technology pathways to facilitate green hydrogen.
Supercritical Solutions Ltd	£53,000	Lead in Horsham with a distillery partner in Glasgow	Electrolysers to enable fuel switching to zero emission sources.
The Uist Distilling Company Ltd	£44,572	The Isle of South Uist	Combination of a hydrogen burner and indirect heating of a thermal oil rather than steam.
Colorado Construction and Engineering Ltd	£73,636.80	Edinburgh	Hydrogen and dual hydrogen/biofuel burners for distilleries.
Vytok Ltd	£57,688.00	London	Heat pumps with water as the working fluid.
The Uist Distilling Company Ltd	£40,539.23	The Isle of South Uist	A high temperature heat store that would allow a distillery to be run purely on electricity.
John Fergus & Co Ltd	£71,812.55	Glenrothes	The use of hydrogen on site to decarbonise process heat.
The Edrington Group Ltd	£56,930.00	Glasgow	An innovative stillhouse Condenser Hot Water Recovery System.
St Andrews Brewers Limited	£51,547.00	Glasgow	A combination of heat pumps, green hydrogen and biomass.
Bennamann Ltd	£46,620.11	Cornwall	Use of fugitive methane as fuel.
Sunamp Ltd	£61,412.50	Edinburgh	A large-scale phase change material thermal store.
Environmental Resources Management Limited	£68,951.00	London	Liquid organic hydrogen carriers.
Colorado Construction and Engineering Ltd	£74,768.10	Edinburgh	The conversion of waste distillery draff and pot ale into a gasification-gas.

Mandatory COVID-19 testing introduced to bolster border measures

- all international arrivals to England, including UK nationals, required to present a negative COVID-19 test taken up to 72 hours prior to departure
- passengers will be subject to an immediate fine of £500 if they fail to comply with the new regulations on pre-departure testing
- all passengers arriving from countries not on the government's travel corridor list will still be required to self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of test result
- passengers will still be required to fill in a passenger locator form and be subject to national lockdown restrictions

Passengers arriving from all international destinations will be [required to present a negative COVID-19 test result before departing for England](#) to help protect against new strains of coronavirus circulating internationally.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced that from next week inbound passengers arriving by boat, plane or train will have to take a test up to 72 hours before departing the country they are in, to help protect against the new strains of coronavirus such as those seen in Denmark and South Africa.

Today's (8 January 2021) decisive action is in response to the changes seen in the transmission of the virus both domestically and across the globe. Pre-departure testing will protect travel and will provide an additional layer of safety from imported cases of coronavirus on top of the mandatory 10 day self-isolation for arrivals, helping identify people who may currently be infectious and preventing them from travelling to England.

A negative pre-departure test reduces the risk of someone travelling whilst infectious, acting as another safeguard to prevent imported infections. Passengers arriving from countries not on the government's [travel corridor list](#) must self-isolate for 10 days regardless of their pre-departure test result to provide further robust protection from those travelling from high-risk countries.

Prior to departure passengers will need to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result to carriers, as well as their [passenger locator form](#). The UK Border Force will conduct spot checks on arrival into England to ensure that passengers are fully compliant.

The move further bolsters existing protective measures which helped to safely enable international travel last year, with self-isolation for new arrivals and travel corridors remaining critical in reducing the risk of imported cases from high-risk countries.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

We already have significant measures in place to prevent imported cases of COVID-19, but with new strains of the virus developing internationally we must take further precautions.

Taken together with the existing mandatory self-isolation period for passengers returning from high-risk countries, pre-departure tests will provide a further line of defence – helping us control the virus as we roll out the vaccine at pace over the coming weeks.

[National lockdown restrictions](#) which came into force on 6 January 2021 remain in place meaning everyone must stay at home unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons, including for work.

Permitted travellers will need to take their test up to 72 hours before departure, and this will apply irrespective of whether a country is on the travel corridor list. The government will set out the standards that these tests will need to meet and what proof passengers will need to present.

Passengers arriving into England who have successfully demonstrated a negative result prior to departure from a country not on the travel corridor list will still have the option to reduce the self-isolation period from 10 to as little as 5 days by paying for a test through the [Test to Release scheme](#). The scheme requires a test to be taken on or after the fifth full day since leaving a country not on the travel corridor list.

Passengers will be required to show their negative test result before boarding, and transport operators will deny boarding if necessary. On arrival back into the UK, Border Force will check passengers test results through the current spot check regime, to ensure that individuals are compliant with the new rules, and passengers will be subject to an immediate fine of £500.

There will be a limited number of exemptions, including for hauliers, children under 11, crews and for those who travelling from countries without the infrastructure available to deliver the tests. Further exemptions will be set out on GOV.UK.

This follows the [recent decision to temporarily suspend direct travel from South Africa to England](#) after new evidence emerged from health authorities reporting an outbreak of a variant strain of coronavirus spreading to some local communities.

Those who travel indirectly from South Africa must self-isolate for 10 days.

All travellers will still be required to complete a passenger locator form before arrival into England. This is critical in being able to track the virus in case of any local outbreaks, and those who fail to complete a passenger locator form will be subject to an increased fine of £500.

Coronavirus testing for hauliers to continue following decision by French government

- testing requirement for hauliers crossing the Channel to continue
- hauliers must continue to have proof of an authorised negative test, conducted within 72 hours of travelling to the border to cross over
- government urges all hauliers to seek tests at one of 34 [information and advice](#) sites before travelling to Kent to help smooth traffic management

Current testing arrangements for hauliers crossing the Channel – where they must have had a negative coronavirus test within 72 hours of crossing – are set to continue following a decision by the French Government today (Thursday 7 January 2021).

The continuation means that hauliers – including drivers and crew of HGVs, drivers of LGVs and van drivers – planning to cross the Channel should get a negative test before travelling to Kent or other Channel Crossing points.

Following the French Government's original decision to close the border to the UK, and the subsequent reopening of the border to hauliers on the condition of a negative Covid test on the 23 December (2020), it was agreed the arrangements would be reviewed regularly.

Having met to discuss the situation, the French Government has made the decision to keep current measures in place until further notice.

While the government acted swiftly during December to help hauliers move across the border steadily, drafting in the military to deliver tests in Kent, hauliers are now being urged to get a negative COVID-19 test before travelling to the border, to help further with avoiding backlog or traffic management issues.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

After the decision by the French Government back in December, we acted swiftly to find a solution to the border closures, so hauliers could continue to travel and people continued to get their deliveries.

Following the French Government's decision today to extend the current arrangements, I continue to urge all hauliers to get tested before getting to the border, and only travel if they test negative.

To help make this possible we are offering support to businesses to set-up testing facilities at their own premises, assisting the smooth passage of trucks and goods across the border, as well as setting up testing at information and advice sites around the country.

To help hauliers get tested before travelling to Kent, 34 [information and advice sites](#) have been set up across the country, linked to key haulier stopping spots on their journeys, so they can get their negative test before heading to the border. Further sites are in the process of being set up.

In addition, the government is offering to help any business to set up a testing centre at its own premises to ensure trucks heading for France depart 'COVID ready'. This includes the provision of testing kits entirely free of charge.

As with the previous arrangements agreed on the 23 December, hauliers must continue to have proof of an authorised negative test, conducted within 72 hours of travelling to the border to cross over.

If they do not meet these requirements, they will be stopped from travelling.

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 7 January 2021

Good afternoon, today I'm joined by Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England

and Brigadier Phil Prosser, who is Commander of Military Support to the Vaccine Delivery Programme across our United Kingdom.

Because I know there is now one question at the very top of your minds

and that is how fast and how effectively we can get these millions of new vaccines into the arms of the most vulnerable and those who need them most.

And you want to know that we in government,

the NHS, the Armed Forces, local and regional government, government at every level

are truly throwing everything at it

round the clock if necessary.

And I believe that with the country once again in lockdown

and all the difficulties that means for you, for your family, for students, for education, for your businesses,

and of course with the tragic number of deaths that we're seeing and that we've seen today,

you have a right to understand exactly how we are cracking this problem and how the national vaccine effort is progressing.

And you rightly want to know how we are going to reach the target that I set out earlier this week

of offering a slot for vaccination by 15th of February for everyone in those key groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

That's over 12 million people in England, and 15 million in the UK

including older care home residents and staff

everyone 70 or over

all frontline NHS and care staff

and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

And just to remind you of the importance of these groups for fighting the disease

they account for 88 per cent of all those who have sadly lost their lives.

And so our tactics are

first to use the immense natural capacity of the NHS

and by the end of next week there will be

over 1,000 GP-led sites providing vaccines

223 hospital sites

seven giant vaccination centres

and a first wave of 200 community pharmacies

If all goes well these together should have the capacity to deliver hundreds of thousands of vaccines per day by Jan 15th

and it is our plan that everyone should have a vaccination available within a radius of ten miles.

And it follows from that that the limits will not be on our distributional power but on the supply of vaccines.

And I have no doubt that we have enough supply to vaccinate these four groups

by the Feb 15th deadline and we also have the distributional network to do it and to continue an expanding programme down that priority list.

Yes, let's be clear this is a national challenge on a scale like nothing we have seen before

and it will require an unprecedented national effort.

And, of course there will be difficulties

appointments will be changed

but as Brigadier Prosser will shortly explain

the army is working hand in glove with the NHS and local councils to set up our vaccine network

and using battle preparation techniques to help us keep up the pace.

We will publish our full vaccine deployment plan on Monday

along with daily updates on the progress we are making.

We have now vaccinated 1.26 million people in England,

113,000 in Scotland,

49,000 in Wales,

and 46,000 in Northern Ireland.

So altogether, nearly 1.5 million people across the UK have now received their first dose

and within 2-3 weeks all of them will have a very considerable degree of immunity.

And it is thanks to the arrival of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine which can be stored at room temperature,

that we can accelerate the pace of vaccination in care homes.

We are using that vaccine in care homes for the first time today

and by the end of the month we hope to have offered every elderly care home resident a vaccine.

Our new National Booking Service will also make it easier to book and access appointments

So I urge everyone to come forwards

because it's absolutely vital that we should have confidence in these vaccines.

And I want to thank everyone involved in this extraordinary national effort
all the GPs, nurses, pharmacists and all the staff behind the scenes
our armed forces
local councils

our scientists who have not only developed the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine,
the first ever life-saving treatment of Covid in the form of dexamethasone –
but I am pleased to tell you today, British scientific research has now
contributed to the creation of more new lifesaving treatments that have just
passed rigorous clinical trials.

In particular, Tocilizumab, sorry I'll say it again, Tocilizumab
and Sarilumab, they'll shortly be on everybody's lips
which have been found to reduce the risk of death for critically ill patients
by almost a quarter
and they've cut time spent in intensive care by as much as ten days
and these lifesaving drugs will be available through the NHS with immediate
effect,
potentially saving thousands of lives.

And finally again I want to thank you – the British public – for coming
forward to be vaccinated

in the numbers that you have – still greater than all the countries of Europe
put together.

And yes of course, we are in a race against time

but I can assure you we're doing everything we can to vaccinate as many
people as possible across our whole United Kingdom.

And in the meantime

please stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

And now I'll hand over to Sir Simon Stevens

[Travel restrictions update: South](#)

Africa ban extended, Israel (and Jerusalem) removed from Travel Corridors list

- travel restrictions extended to southern African countries from 4am Saturday 9 January (2021) to protect against the spread of a new COVID-19 variant initially detected in South Africa
- British and Irish Nationals, longer-term visa holders and permanent residents who have travelled to all countries in southern Africa, Seychelles and Mauritius in the last 10 days will have to self-isolate along with their household
- the measures will be in place for an initial period of 2 weeks while we review the scientific data and alternative ways to protect the UK and our partners in Africa
- Israel (and Jerusalem) to be removed from list of travel corridors for England following data showing a significant increase in confirmed cases
- Mauritius, Seychelles and Botswana also removed from travel corridor list as part of tighter restrictions to slow the spread of the variant prevalent in South Africa

The government has responded swiftly to new evidence showing an urgent need to halt travel from all southern African countries to help prevent the spread of a new coronavirus (COVID-19) variant identified in South Africa.

Entry into England will be banned to those who have travelled from or through any southern African country in the last 10 days, including Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Eswatini, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique and Angola – as well as Seychelles and Mauritius. This does not include British and Irish Nationals, longer-term visa holders and permanent residents, who will be able to enter but are required to [self-isolate for 10 days on arrival along with their household](#).

The government has therefore also removed Botswana, Seychelles and Mauritius from the [travel corridor list](#), with the changes coming into place from 4am on Saturday 9 January 2021.

The move, in addition to the [travel ban imposed on South Africa](#) on 23 December 2020, follows new data on the steep rise in incidence of the new variant, that has vastly increased the risk of community transmission between 9 other southern African countries as well as the Seychelles and Mauritius, which both have strong travel links with South Africa. Urgent restrictions are therefore now needed to prevent the spread of this strain in the UK.

The measures will be in place for an initial period of 2 weeks while the scientific data and alternative ways to protect the UK and our partners in Africa are reviewed.

Any exemptions usually in place – including for those related to employment –

will not apply and those British nationals arriving into England from the other southern African countries, Seychelles and Mauritius after 4am on Saturday 9 January cannot be released from self-isolation through [Test to Release](#). People sharing a household with anyone self-isolating from these countries will also have to self-isolate for 10 days.

Ministers have also removed Israel (and Jerusalem) from the government's travel corridor list, as data from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and Public Health England has indicated a significant change in both the level and pace of confirmed cases of coronavirus. The decision to remove Israel (and Jerusalem) has been made following a sustained and accelerating increase in COVID-19 cases per 100,000 of the population, similar in trajectory to the UK.

[National restrictions for England](#) introduced on 6 January 2021 remain in place meaning everyone must stay at home unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons, including for work. This means people can no longer travel to take holidays or travel internationally unless for work or other legally permitted reasons. Those in breach of the rules face penalties starting at £200, rising to a maximum of £6,400.

People in all countries affected by the travel ban are encouraged to follow the local rules and check [FCDO travel advice](#) for further information. All travellers, including those from exempt destinations, will still be required to show a complete [passenger locator form](#) on arrival into the UK unless they fall into a small group of exemptions.