

NHS Test and Trace continues to improve as contacts reached exceeds 85%

- The proportion of contacts reached by tracing service increases substantially from 72.6% to 85.7%

NHS Test and Trace is reaching an ever-greater proportion of contacts of people who have tested positive for coronavirus according to the latest weekly Test and Trace statistics, helping to prevent transmission of the virus and save lives.

Recent improvements made by NHS Test and Trace to the contact tracing website to make it faster and easier to provide tracing information, as well as operational changes to the process for contacting household contacts, have led to the latest substantial improvements, with 85.7% of contacts now reached, up from 72.6% in the previous week.

Among other changes, NHS Test and Trace has encouraged greater use of the digital self-service journey so that it is faster and easier for people to provide tracing information. The service has accelerated the roll out of local tracing partnerships – it is now working with over 250 local authorities across the country – and has made operational changes to the process for reaching household contacts to avoid making repeat calls to the same household.

The improvements were made following feedback from the public and from local tracing partners and have been positively received. These latest enhancements to the service have also seen the proportion of contacts reached within 24 hours increase to 95.2%.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

Today's figures represent a milestone for NHS Test and Trace and a breakthrough in terms of the effectiveness of its tracing capability. The service has made a series of improvements to operations over time, informed by listening to partners and the public, and we are now seeing the positive outcome of that work. Testing, tracing and isolating are a vital part of the nation's response to COVID-19 and although there will be challenges ahead, NHS Test and Trace will continue to work to improve the service further still.

Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection Baroness Dido Harding said:

NHS Test and Trace continues to build on partnerships across national and local government, with business and with the public, and we are now seeing some of the fruits of that work. I am determined to make NHS Test and Trace as effective as possible in bearing down on transmission of the virus, as part of the wider government response to COVID-19.

These improvements will help stop transmission of the virus and help protect our communities. This week's figures show that as the number of people who have used NHS Test and Trace continues to increase, so the service is constantly evolving and improving.

Testing

During the week of 26 November to 2 December, 1,850,619 tests were processed for pillars 1 and 2.

More than 43 million tests have been processed in total, more than any other comparable European country. With more than 700 test sites now in operation, the median distance travelled for a test is 2.3 miles.

Testing capacity has increased almost 5-fold in 6 months, from 100,000 a day at the end of April to more than 500,000 a day by the end of October with plans to go even further by the end of the year.

For this reporting period, 90.0% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 84.9% reported in the previous week. 91.0% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, compared with 88.5% the previous week.

Tracing

91,578 positive cases were transferred to contact tracers between 26 November and 2 December, 86% of whom were reached and told to self-isolate.

Between 26 November and 2 December, 195,355 people were identified as recent close contacts with 92.4% reached and told to self-isolate of those who had communication details. Since Test and Trace launched 80.9% of close contacts for whom contact details were provided have been reached.

Over the past few months our teams have been working incredibly hard to make the contact tracing service as effective as possible and NHS Test and Trace has now reached more than 3 million people.

These latest enhancements have meant that 85.7% of contacts were reached last week, up from 72.6% in the previous week, and the proportion of contacts reached within 24 hours increased to 95.2%. The improvements were made following feedback from the public, our colleagues and our local tracing partners, and have been positively received.

Background information

The [weekly statistics](#) from the 27th week of NHS Test and Trace show in the most recent week of operations (26 November to 2 December):

- a total of 1,850,619 were processed for pillars 1 and 2, compared with 2,028,365 the previous week
- the proportion of contacts reached by tracing service increases substantially from 72.6% to 85.7%
- 86.0% (78,729) people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 86.1% (100,183) the previous week
- 92.4% of contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate, compared with 83.9% the previous week
- 90% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 84.9% the previous week
- 91.0% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, compared with 88.5% the previous week
- 64.9% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 54.2% the previous week
- 96.2% of satellite (care home) tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 95.2% the previous week

Since NHS Test and Trace launched, over 3 million contacts have been identified, and 80.9% of all contacts where communication details were given have been reached and told to self-isolate.

Latest figures also show that the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) has been downloaded more than 20 million times since it was launched.

[UK announces travel bans and asset freezes for human rights violators](#)

Press release

UK announces travel bans and asset freezes for 11 Russian, Venezuelan, Gambian and Pakistani human rights violators.



- the UK is placing sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, on 11 politicians, officials and others responsible for gross human rights violations in Russia, Venezuela, The Gambia and Pakistan
- UK is acting alongside the US who are also announcing new designations under their human rights regime today
- on International Human Rights Day, the Foreign Secretary warns those who commit human rights violations that the UK will not hesitate to impose further sanctions

Today (10 December) the UK has announced a third tranche of sanctions under its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime against 11 individuals and one entity from Russia, Venezuela, The Gambia and Pakistan for egregious human rights violations, including torture and murder.

These sanctions, announced on International Human Rights Day, are part of the UK's global human rights regime which gives the UK powers to stop those involved in serious human rights abuses and violations from entering the country, channelling money through UK banks, or profiting from our economy.

This is the third time the UK has sanctioned people or entities for human rights violations and abuses under a UK-only regime, with the first in July and the second in September 2020.

This is also the second time the UK has worked alongside allies to announce sanctions, with the US also announcing their own measures today. In total, the US and the UK designated 31 actors today for their involvement in serious human rights abuses.

- in Russia, the UK is imposing sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against three individuals and the Terek Special Rapid Response Unit responsible for torture and other human rights violations against LGBT people in Chechnya
- in Venezuela, sanctions will be imposed on senior security figures responsible for human rights violations in Maduro's illegitimate regime. These designations are a timely reminder of the crisis in Venezuela, coming as they do so soon after the illegitimate Maduro regime organised deeply flawed National Assembly elections on 6 December

- the former President of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, and Ahmad Anwar Khan, the former Senior Superintendent of Police in Malir District, Pakistan are also facing sanctions for historic human rights violations including extrajudicial killings of protestors and minority groups

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Today's sanctions send a clear message to human rights violators that the UK will hold them to account.

The UK and our allies are shining a light on the severe and systematic human rights violations perpetrated by those sanctioned today. Global Britain will stand up for democracy, human rights and the rule of law as a force for good in the world.

Underlining the UK's position as a global force for good, this regime showcases commitment to the rules-based international system and to standing up for victims of human rights violations and abuses around the world.

The full list of designations:

Venezuela

1. Rafael Bastardo Commander of FAES (Special Action Forces) until 2019
2. Remigio Ceballos Ichaso: Head of the Strategic Command Operations of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (CEOFANB)
3. Fabio Zavarase Pabon: Commander of the National Guard (GNB)

Russian Federation

1. Magomed Daudov: The Spokesperson/Chairperson of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic
2. Aiub Kataev: Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation in Argun
3. Apti Alaudinov: Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic and Major General of the Police
4. Terek Special Rapid Response Unit

The Gambia

1. Yahya Abdul Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh: Former President of The Gambia
2. Yankuba Badjie: Former Director General of the Gambian National Intelligence Agency (NIA)
3. Zineb Jammeh: Former First Lady of The Gambia and wife of Yahya Jammeh

Pakistan

1. Anwar Ahmad Khan: Former Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in Malir District, Karachi

[Consultation seeks views about exam advance information](#)

News story

Extra support for GCSE, AS and A level 2021 exams – consultation on principles for exam topic advance information and support materials.



Ofqual is seeking views about advance information that will be given to students to help them focus their revision before exams next summer.

The consultation, [Advance information about topics to be covered in GCSE, AS and A level exams in 2021 and support materials in exams](#), follows the Department for Education's decision earlier this month to allow students to benefit from exceptional measures to support students given the disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students will be given advance information for many subjects ahead of sitting GCSE, AS and A level exams next summer. The nature of this will vary from subject to subject. Some support materials, such as formulae sheets and equations, will also be provided, for science and maths exams for example.

Exam boards will decide what information will be provided to teachers and students before the exams. This information will be published at the end of January 2021. Before then, Ofqual is seeking views on the broad principles that:

- advance information should not be so detailed that a student is able to memorise answers to write in an exam
- the information provided before an exam should not encourage students to

overly narrow their learning

- the qualifications should differentiate between students on the basis of their performance

Ofqual is also seeking views on any equality related implications of the approach.

Those who wish to respond can fill out a short survey accessible from [the consultation page](#), which is open until 11:45pm on Sunday 20 December.

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[Prosperity Fund Portfolio in Brazil](#)

UK Aid policy and the Prosperity Fund

The UK is committed to spend 0.7% of the GNI (Gross National Income) in Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Prosperity Fund is a £1.2 billion portfolio of programmes over seven years focused on promoting inclusive economic growth and reducing poverty. The Fund also looks to create opportunities for international business including UK companies, as a secondary benefit.

The Fund's focus is on ODA-eligible middle-income countries where around 60% of the world's poor live and where 60% of global growth will come from by 2030 (OECD). The Fund includes a small non-ODA component of £33 million, split over 4 years (2016 to 2020).

The Fund provides expertise and technical assistance in sectors and countries where there is the highest potential for inclusive growth, to:

- promote economic reforms and remove barriers to trade
- strengthen policy capacity and build strong institutions
- reform key sectors such as infrastructure, energy, finance, education and healthcare
- tackle corruption

The Prosperity Fund forms a small but strategic proportion of the UK's total ODA commitment. It focusses on multi-year programmes in middle-income countries, which will help to make the world a more prosperous place.

All development projects and programmes comply with the International Development Act 2002, the International Development (Gender Equality) Act

2014, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria, and UK Government transparency commitments on ODA spend. All UK ODA is untied.

Brazil

Brazil is an eligible country to receive ODA resources, according to OECD DAC. The UK's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) spend in Brazil has increased significantly since 2015, to well over £50 million a year.

Brazil has striking potential, but still counts with high levels of poverty and inequality. Brazil has a track record of economic growth coupled with poverty reduction: 35 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty (<\$1.90 day) since 2005, although approximately 55 million Brazilians still live in poverty. COVID-19 will have a disproportionate effect on the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable groups in the short and medium term, so presents further challenges.

Opportunities for productivity growth in Brazil include: energy needs, especially in renewables to meet ambitious climate targets; additional private financing for essential infrastructure investments; improvements in infrastructure operation; reduction of costs of international trade and unlock export opportunities for many companies, and filling significant skills gaps. Specific strengths include a strong R&D base, a young and digitally savvy population, huge solar and wind potential and world-leading agritech.

The UK will work together to increase Brazil's productivity and develop sustainable, inclusive, low-carbon economic growth.

Prosperity Fund in Brazil

The Brazil Prosperity Fund programme aims to support Brazil's economic modernisation, where increased productivity will facilitate sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. The Fund is also well positioned to bolster Brazil's recovery from COVID-19, helping to create opportunities for green growth and better public services.

This programme encourages economic development in Brazil, and support a range of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 17 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development'. It will also work towards better functioning markets that will drive prosperity in Brazil by creating opportunities and incentives for firms to invest, generate jobs and grow.

The Portfolio in Brazil

The Portfolio has programmes in the following areas for development, which have been chosen because they are likely to lead to the greatest overall opportunities in support of long-term, sustainable inclusive growth. In each of these areas, we are working in close collaboration with Brazilian partners including government at federal, state and municipal levels, and regulatory

agencies. The programmes have a range of delivery models but typically are being implemented by commercial partners following a competitive procurement process, or multilaterals.

Trade

The Trade Portfolio (Bilateral, Global Trade and Global Business Environment Programmes) unlocks additional trade flows from Brazil into the international market and create an easier and more stable business environment, generating job creation, economic growth, women's empowerment and poverty reduction.

Energy

The Energy programme fosters growth in renewable energy by improving regulations and helping to create an enabling environment that supports Brazil's low-carbon energy transition. This will lead to increased energy security, affordability, and increased investment in clean energy and technologies such as smart grids, energy storage, and grid integration.

Green Finance

The Green Finance programme addresses poverty and inequality by improving the availability of private sector finance for high quality 'green' infrastructure investments, both deepening capital markets and supporting the country's journey to a low carbon economy as a result.

Future Cities

The Future Cities Programme advances sustainable urban development in Brazil through the development of smart city technologies in mobility, water and data management. It supports innovations in order to reduce poverty and boost sustainable economic growth, by piloting new technologies with biggest potential to bring change and able to scale up.

Health

The Better Health Programme supports the increase of sustainability and efficiency of the Brazilian Unified Healthcare System, SUS. This work focuses on: a) strengthening primary care; b) improving data and information management and c) translating research into innovation.

Skills for prosperity

The Skills for Prosperity Programme improves the affordability, quality, relevance and equity of Higher Education (HE) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in partner countries. It focuses on improving equity, quality and relevance of education and promote an enabling environment for reform through English Language Teaching (ELT) and transferable skills. The programme equips youth with language skills where poor English is a barrier to access further education and employment. It also creates a model for ELT that elevates language standards in Brazil, supporting social mobility and business opportunities.

Digital access

The Prosperity Fund's Digital Access Programme catalyses affordable, inclusive, safe and secure digital access for underserved and excluded populations. It utilises digital inclusion to support thriving digital ecosystems, create skilled jobs and generate digital solutions to local challenges.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure programme works with the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Infrastructure to support implementation of UK's 5 case business model for development and selection of infrastructure projects and implement Business Intelligence Modelling (BIM) policies.

[One Pager – Prosperity Fund Brazil](#) (PDF, 392KB, 1 page)

For more information about the Prosperity Fund in Brazil, please contact us: Brazil.Prosp erityFund@fcdo.gov.uk

[Sign up for 2021 international deterrence and assurance conference](#)

News story

Dstl partners with U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Naval War College for the 6th annual deterrence and assurance academic alliance event.



Registrations and abstract submissions are open for a fully virtual event being held from 30 March to 1 April 2021, hosted by the University of Nebraska in Omaha, USA.

This year's theme is 'Building a Common Language: Integrating Deterrence and Competition with Allies' and it will feature panel discussions with

participants from around the world, plus an experiential learning event designed to challenge participant understanding of deterrence. The event is free, but you must register.

[Sign up or submit an abstract](#) for the U.S. Strategic Command Academic Alliance Conference and Workshop 2021.

Dstl runs a parallel [Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance](#) in the UK, bringing together students and academics with an interest in deterrence and assurance. This community of interest, made up of academic institutions in partnership with Dstl, conducts new research on deterrence and related topics such as coercion and conflict escalation.

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