

## **Transport Secretary: continue to follow government guidelines on travel despite warm weather**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
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- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## **Recovery of benefit overpayment suspended**



The change means many claimants will see an increase in the amount of money they receive in benefits during the outbreak.

It will also allow the department to move a significant number of staff to front line roles, so it can focus on getting money to those who need support, following a significant increase in claims over the last two weeks.

Deductions for the recovery of Universal Credit and legacy benefit overpayments, Social Fund loans and Tax Credit debts will be paused.

The majority of deductions will be suspended automatically, however if you currently make repayments through a Bank Standing Order, Bank Giro Credit or through online banking, please contact your bank to cancel your arrangement.

The recovery of advances by deduction from Universal Credit payments will continue.

A significant number of debt recovery staff have been redeployed, with plans to release more in the coming days, as a result and will take up front line roles to focus on getting money to those who are most in need of support.

10,000 existing staff are being moved to front line roles and the department has announced it is recruiting more.

- The recovery of Advances by deduction from Universal Credit payments will continue.
- Local Authorities will suspend referral of Housing Benefit overpayments.
- The transfer of Tax Credit debt from HMRC has already been suspended.
- We are stopping debt recovery activity as soon as possible. This includes all benefit-related overpayments, Social Fund loans and Tax Credit debts. Many activities will cease immediately but others may take longer to implement.
- For citizens who are not on benefits, we have directed private sector debt collection agencies to stop their activity for Debt Management

customers.

- We are also suspending voluntary debt repayments and recovery by Direct Earnings Attachments.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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Published 3 April 2020

Last updated 3 April 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 3 April 2020

First published.

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## [World's largest trial of potential coronavirus treatments rolled out across the UK](#)

The world's largest randomised clinical trial of potential coronavirus treatments is well underway in the UK as part of the race to find a treatment.

A number of promising treatments are being tested and, if the science supports it, will be given to NHS patients as quickly as possible.

Definitive results on whether the treatments are safe and effective are expected within months and, if positive, they could potentially benefit hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

Almost 1,000 patients from 132 different hospitals have been already recruited in just 15 days and thousands more are expected to join the Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy (RECOVERY) trial in the coming weeks, making it the largest randomised controlled trial of potential COVID-19 treatments in the world.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The coronavirus outbreak is the biggest public health emergency in a generation and we are doing everything we can to fight it on all fronts through our evidence-based action plan.

The UK is leading the way on research in the race to find treatments and we have now launched the largest trial in the world, pooling resources with our world-leading life science sector.

As one of three major trials funded by the government, this marks a major milestone in our battle against coronavirus and offers renewed hope that together we can beat this.

The public still has a crucial role to play by staying at home so we can protect the NHS and save lives.

The trial is testing a number of medicines recommended by an expert panel advising the Chief Medical Officer for England. They include:

- Lopinavir-Ritonavir, commonly used to treat HIV
- Dexamethasone, a type of steroid use in a range of conditions to reduce inflammation
- Hydroxychloroquine, a treatment for malaria

The trial is being conducted in over 130 NHS hospitals across the UK. Adult patients who have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19 are being invited to take part. The trial is specially designed so that as further medicines are identified, these can be added to the study within days.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty said:

The UK has world-leading life sciences and research sectors and, because of our joined up healthcare and health research system, we have been able to get hundreds of patients involved in this clinical trial in just 2 weeks.

This marks a significant step in identifying treatments for coronavirus that could benefit patients and underpins our science-backed approach to fighting this virus.

The trial is being coordinated by researchers at the University of Oxford, led by Peter Horby, Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Global Health in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, and Martin Landray, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at the Nuffield Department of Population Health.

To ensure that the healthcare system research resource is directed to benefit the national effort, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has put in place a national process to prioritise COVID-19 research. The RECOVERY trial is one of those prioritised.

The study has received £2.1 million from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Department of Health and Social Care, through the NIHR. It is part of a wider £20 million rapid research response investment by the government to support looking at ways to tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

The move further bolsters the 'research' phase in the government's science-led [coronavirus action plan](#).

It follows decisive action by the UK's medicines regulator to fast-track clinical trials for potential coronavirus treatments, meaning NHS patients could have faster access if medicines are proven to be effective.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has been working hard to put in place procedures to support manufacturers and researchers developing these treatments and approve clinical trial applications in days, rather than weeks. Its experience as a world-renowned regulator means these rapid approvals are based on the latest scientific advice and do not compromise the government's top priority of maintaining patient safety.

Peter Horby, Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Global Health in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, said:

The RECOVERY trial will provide much-needed evidence on the best care for patients with COVID-19. The more patients that are enrolled, the sooner we will know how best to treat this disease.

We are very grateful to those patients who are participating and to the hospital and research staff who are helping us to find the best treatments.

- [See full details on the trial](#)
- Patients with COVID-19 are being offered the opportunity to participate in this trial. If they agree, they will be randomly allocated to standard of care alone, or standard of care plus 1 of 3 additional treatments
- The trial began on 19 March. It was set up in record time: first protocol to first patient in 9 days and 13 days to reach 500 patients. Within the first 2 weeks, nearly 1,000 patients have been enrolled
- The data will be analysed on a rolling basis so that any beneficial treatments can be identified as soon as possible. The faster that patients are recruited, the sooner the reliable results
- The other 2 key national trials are [PRINCIPLE](#) and [REMAP-CAP](#)
- Find out more about the NIHR's [national process to prioritise COVID-19 research](#). See details on the [process and the new single point of entry for prioritising COVID-19 studies](#)

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## [COVID-19 : Contingent liability for](#)

# ventilators

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