

# Tests required before travel to UK and Nigeria added to red list

- Nigeria to be added to the travel red list from 4am Monday 6 December following 21 cases of Omicron reported in England which are linked to travel from this country, with 134 UK cases now reported in total
- In light of emerging evidence on the Omicron variant, from 4am on Tuesday 7 December anyone aged 12 and above wishing to travel to the UK will need to show a negative pre-departure test (LFD or PCR) as close as possible to departure and not more than 48 hours before to slow the importation of the new variant
- Government working at pace to expand Managed Quarantine Service capacity, but passengers are advised that hotel bookings may be limited as new hotels are onboarded
- These are temporary measures that have been introduced to prevent further Omicron cases from entering the UK, and will be examined at the three-week review point on 20 December

From 4am on Monday 6 December, UK and Irish citizens and residents arriving from Nigeria must isolate in a government-approved managed quarantine facility for 10 days, and receive two negative PCR tests, as further precautionary action is taken against the Omicron variant.

Currently, the vast majority of cases in the UK have clear links to overseas travel from South Africa and Nigeria, and over the past week, 21 Omicron cases reported in England originate from Nigeria.

A temporary travel ban will therefore be introduced for all non-UK and non-Irish citizens and residents who have been in Nigeria in the last 10 days, meaning they will be refused entry into the UK. This does not apply to those who have stayed airside and only transited through Nigeria while changing flights.

Last weekend, 10 countries were added to the red list and it was announced that all vaccinated passengers arriving in the UK must take a day two PCR tests and self-isolate until they receive a negative result. Since then, the geographical spread of Omicron has increased considerably, with 37 countries around the world now reporting Omicron cases and over 134 cases identified in the UK.

New analysis conducted by the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) indicates that the window between infection and infectiousness may be shorter for the

Omicron variant, which increases the efficacy of pre-departure testing as it is more likely to identify positive cases before travel.

In light of this emerging evidence and the changing global picture with regards to the spread of Omicron, from 4am on Tuesday, anyone wishing to travel to the UK from countries and territories not on the red list must also show proof of a negative PCR or lateral flow (LFD) pre-departure test, taken no earlier than 48 hours before departure. This applies to vaccinated passengers and children aged 12 and above.

Airlines will be required to check for pre-departure tests alongside a completed passenger locator form, and passengers will not be allowed to board a flight without providing evidence of a negative test result. Given the reduced incubation period of the Omicron variant, passengers are advised to take the pre-departure test as close as possible to their scheduled departure to the UK and no earlier than 48 hours before travelling.

These additional measures are vital to delaying the import of additional cases and slow the rise in cases within the UK. However, as the Prime Minister set out on 27 November, all temporary measures will be reviewed after three weeks to ensure that they remain necessary and proportionate, and this will take place on 20 December.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, said:

We knew this winter would be challenging but the arrival of a new variant means we must further strengthen our defences.

As our world-leading scientists continue to understand more about the Omicron variant we are taking decisive action to protect public health and the progress of our COVID-19 vaccination programme.

I urge everyone to do their bit to slow the spread by following the new travel rules, wearing masks where mandatory and most importantly getting the booster jab when called.

Anyone arriving from Nigeria before 4am Monday [6 December] will be advised and strongly encouraged to isolate at home, and their household should also self-isolate for 10 days starting with their arrival in England.

Affected individuals will be contacted and offered free PCR tests to be taken on day 8 after their arrival.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said:

Following developments in the past week, the science shows that we must be cautious in guarding against this new variant and so, while

we appreciate this will be difficult for the travel sector, it's important we prioritise public health.

As we learn more about the Omicron variant, we will review these temporary measures to ensure they continue to be proportionate and necessary to protect public health.

Analysis by the UKHSA suggests there is strong indication of Omicron presence in Nigeria, and several cases identified in the UK are linked to travel from Nigeria. The country also has very strong travel links with South Africa, for example Nigeria is the second most popular flight destination from Johannesburg.

The UKHSA continues to monitor the situation closely, in partnership with scientific and public health organisations across the world, and government is working collaboratively with the WHO and countries around the world to better understand the new variant and possible mitigations.

Travellers should not attempt to travel to the UK from a red list country without a Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) booking, as they will not be able to board a flight and could be subject to a fixed penalty notice at the UK border. The government's advice is to keep checking the CTM website as there are significant number of cancellations happening which will free up rooms.

The MQS has contracted several new hotels to enter service this week, in response to the likely numbers of UK residents who will want to travel from Nigeria before Christmas.

British nationals in Nigeria should check Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice and follow local guidance. The FCDO will continue to offer tailored consular assistance to British nationals in country in need of support overseas on a 24/7.

The government is clear it will take further decisive action if necessary to contain the virus and new variant.

## Background

- British and Irish citizens, or those with residence rights, arriving to England from countries on the red list must book a managed quarantine hotel in advance. The quarantine package will include a managed quarantine hotel, quarantine transport and a travel test package for COVID-19 tests on day 2 and day 8 of quarantine. Read more about booking and staying in a quarantine hotel
- Further information on international travel requirements can be found elsewhere on GOV.UK, including advice on transiting through red list countries.

- Arrivals to the UK will need to meet the UK's health and border requirements and comply with the relevant quarantine restrictions if coming from a red country or if not fully vaccinated. If you do not have the correct documentation ready to meet UK health and border requirements, you may delay yourself and others, be denied boarding, or face a fine.
- Today's announcement comes as countries around the world continue to strengthen their travel restrictions in response to the Omicron variant, with the US, France and Ireland all requiring passengers to take pre-departure tests.

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## [Downing Street Christmas card to land on doorsteps next week](#)

News story

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson has sent his season's greetings to world leaders and embassies around the world, as well as parliamentarians, influential civil society groups, charity sector leaders, and individuals who were key to the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Over 7000 cards have been issued in total.

This year's card features the Prime Minister's dog Dilyn playing in the snow in the Downing Street garden.

The reverse of the card showcases a design by student Tejinder Virdee from Uxbridge College. This was chosen from 15 designs submitted by the students who are age 16-20 years, and studying Level 1 Art, Design & Media and Level 3

Extended Diploma in Art & Design, after they were commissioned by the Prime Minister within his capacity as local MP to create a festive panel for the card.

Tejinder's design is hand-drawn and painted watercolour and acrylic.

Students taking part at Uxbridge College used a wide variety of traditional and digital techniques, including images created using graphic industry standard programmes such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Traditional methods such as painting, drawing and papercut or laser-cut stencils, and traditional printmaking processes including hand-printed Linocut imagery and screen-printed text, were also used. The designs aimed to reflect the college's wide diversity and commitment to British values.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Many thanks to the students at Uxbridge College for their brilliant art work for the Downing Street Christmas card. I want to say thank you to Tejinder and all the students who participated for their wonderful designs.

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## [Armed Forces support Storm Arwen response in Scotland and northern England](#)

Military personnel have deployed at pace in response to urgent requests for assistance from civil authorities in Scotland and northern England.

297 personnel from the British Army and Royal Marines are supporting civil authorities in areas impacted by the storm. Those on task are conducting door-to-door checks on vulnerable people in their homes and providing reassurance to local communities.

Today (4 December), 80 soldiers of 4 Royal Artillery based at Alan Brook Barracks in Topcliffe have deployed to Northumberland to check on vulnerable people and identify where additional support is required. Yesterday, 83 personnel from The Royal Lancers deployed from Catterick Garrison to aid Durham County Council, working with remote and isolated communities.

In Aberdeenshire, [134 soldiers and marines from 3 SCOTS, 39 Engineer Regiment and 45 Commando began on task on 2 December.](#)

Soldiers deployed to northern England are part of the UK Standby Battalion North, ready to deploy at extremely short notice to respond to emergencies and crisis events. The military remain on standby to provide further support, including delivering of vital supplies, if requested.

**UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:**

My thoughts are with all those who are still affected by the terrible damage from Storm Arwen. I want to thank the emergency responders and engineers who have been working tirelessly this week to try and restore power.

I also want to thank our brilliant Armed Forces who have been deployed rapidly to support those communities which are worst affected.'

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

Our dedicated Armed Forces personnel are working side by side with civil authorities to provide essential support to communities impacted by Storm Arwen.

The ability to deploy quickly to wherever in the UK assistance is requested makes us all safer and ensures we are able to look protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Thousands of military personnel are on standby to support resilience tasks across the UK, including the response to the coronavirus.

Support to the storm response is provided through [Military Aid to the Civilian Authorities \(MACA\) requests](#), the official process for Defence to provide assistance to other government departments and civil authorities for responding to emergencies, maintaining supplies and essential services during a crisis. The Ministry of Defence will continue to engage with civil authorities and other government departments to support where appropriate.

Over the past seven days, emergency teams have been working tirelessly to restore power in affected areas. Around 1 million people have been affected in total and power has now been restored to 99% of those affected.

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**[Unvaccinated mothers urge pregnant](#)**

## women to get jabbed

- Pregnant women are being urged to get the vaccine by unvaccinated mothers
- Powerful new video shows their experiences of severe COVID-19 during pregnancy
- 98% of pregnant women in hospital with symptomatic COVID-19 are unvaccinated
- Vaccines continue to provide tens of thousands of pregnant women and their babies with vital protection from the virus

Unvaccinated women who suffered with COVID-19 during their pregnancies have told their harrowing stories of battling the virus, from being hospitalised to having emergency c-sections, as part of a new campaign encouraging expectant mothers to get the vaccine.

The video features three women who experienced serious complications after contracting COVID-19 before they'd been vaccinated, as well as the doctors and frontline staff who treated them, to warn of the dangers of the virus for pregnant women and their babies.

Medical expert Professor Asma Khalil from Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is also interviewed as part of the powerful new film and provides further reassurance on the importance of the vaccine.

Data published last week by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows the vaccines are safe for mothers and their babies, with good birth outcomes for vaccinated women who had their babies up to August this year. There were no consistent differences between vaccinated women and all women in the figures for stillbirths, low baby birthweights and premature births.

Nearly 1 in 5 COVID-19 patients who are most critically ill are pregnant women who have not been vaccinated. Of those pregnant women in hospital with symptomatic COVID-19, 98% are unvaccinated, and no fully vaccinated pregnant women were admitted to intensive care with COVID-19 in England between February and the end of September 2021. Around 1 in 5 women who are hospitalised with the virus need to be delivered preterm to help them recover and 1 in 5 of their babies need care in the neonatal unit.

The women who feature in the new, short film have issued an urgent plea calling on expectant mothers to take up the vaccine as soon as possible to protect themselves and their babies.

Christina, a mental health therapist from Guildford who was hospitalised with COVID-19 in her third trimester and had to give birth via emergency c-section, said:

I went into hospital in my third trimester, and I thought I was going to deliver a baby but the next thing I know, I was being told I had COVID-19. Symptoms started to arise and I quickly

deteriorated. I was rushed in for a CT scan because the doctors feared I was having a pulmonary embolism.

I had to give birth via emergency c-section because there was concern that I could have a stillbirth. It was terrifying.

I don't know what the future holds for me and my baby; I'm still suffering with symptoms now along with the anxiety of not knowing how or when I'll recover. I would urge pregnant women to get vaccinated because I don't want anyone to experience what I went through.

Tanviha, who works in anaesthesiology and research in Manchester, spent two months in hospital with COVID-19 following an emergency c-section, said:

I caught COVID-19 during my second pregnancy in February earlier this year. At the time, the vaccine wasn't available to me and I quickly took a turn for the worse. I was rushed into hospital and went straight into intensive care where my condition deteriorated and my son was delivered by emergency c-section.

I was put to sleep and intubated, and my family were told it was unlikely I'd survive and to prepare for the worst. The day after I was intubated, the nurse told them they were going to switch the machine off, but instead I was transferred to an Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machine, which is a last resort for patients with severe heart and lung failure, and it saved my life.

The first time I saw my son he was two months old. It's the scariest experience of mine and my family's life but I'm just grateful that me and my son are alive. If you're unsure about getting vaccinated please come forward and get your jab, not everyone's as lucky as I am.

Joanne, a makeup advisor from Lincolnshire suffered complications with her pregnancy after catching COVID-19, she said:

I had been unsure what was the right thing to do about getting vaccinated while pregnant. I was planning on having the jab after my daughter was born but I caught COVID-19 when I was 35 weeks pregnant and became seriously ill, I couldn't get out of bed for a week.

I had nearly recovered but something just didn't feel right. I couldn't feel my baby kicking so I made an urgent appointment to see my midwife. The team at the hospital quickly spotted the baby's growth had dropped and her fluid was low.

Her heartbeat was going down and down so the consultant rushed me



off for an emergency caesarean when Mollie-Ann was born. I'm so grateful to the maternity team for keeping me and my baby safe and I just wish I'd been vaccinated sooner.

The vaccines are safe for pregnant women and have no impact on fertility, which has been made extremely clear by the government, its senior clinicians and a range of independent experts from stakeholder groups such as RCOG, the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the British Fertility Society.

Since April 2021, around 84,000 pregnant women have received one dose and over 80,000 have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Out of all women between the ages of 16 and 49 on ECMO – a form of life support for the sickest of patients – in intensive care, pregnant women make up almost a third (32%) – up from just 6% at the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

Professor Lucy Chappell, Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care and Honorary Consultant Obstetrician, said:

The stories shared as part of this film are heartbreaking and provide invaluable, first-hand insight into why accepting the offer of a COVID-19 vaccine is so important for mothers and their babies.

Getting the vaccine is one of the most vital ways in which you can protect yourself and your baby from COVID-19, which can be really dangerous for pregnant women – of those pregnant women in hospital with symptomatic COVID-19, 98% are unvaccinated.

Watch the film, speak to your clinician or midwife if you have any questions or concerns, and book in your vaccine without delay.

Professor Asma Khalil, spokesperson for Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said:

We are very concerned about the number of pregnant women who haven't been vaccinated against COVID-19.

We know that the COVID-19 can cause severe illness in pregnant women with a disproportionate number of unvaccinated pregnant women in intensive care. If a woman contracts COVID-19, evidence shows they are more likely to have a preterm birth or stillbirth.

Our message is clear, COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy is safe, it is not linked to an increased risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, and it's the best way of protecting you and your baby from the virus. We are recommending all pregnant women have their COVID-19 vaccines, including their third dose booster vaccine when they are offered it.''

The proportion of women who gave birth and were vaccinated during pregnancy has been steadily increasing since 16 April 2021, when the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised all pregnant women should be offered two vaccine doses at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.

Pregnant women aged 40 and over who are health or social care workers, or are in an at-risk group, are now also eligible for booster vaccines three months after their second dose and will soon be able to book an appointment. Younger age groups will be invited by the NHS in order of age in due course.

The government is working closely with RCOG, RCM and other key stakeholders on engaging with women who are either pregnant or thinking about pregnancy and providing them with the latest advice and information at every possible opportunity. It's also working with faith and community leaders to increase vaccine uptake, holding regular meetings to discuss the best ways to provide information to their communities.

The Chief Midwifery Officer for England, Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, has also written to fellow midwives and GP practices across the country stressing the need to encourage pregnant women to get the jab.

Liz, head of maternity at Epsom and St Helier Hospital Trust who features in the film, said:

We are treating more and more unvaccinated pregnant women with COVID-19. The vaccine is safe for pregnant women and is the best way to keep you and your baby, safe and out of hospital. Getting vaccinated works: across England, no pregnant woman that has had two vaccinations has been admitted to hospital due to COVID-19.

You can receive vaccination at any time in pregnancy, but the risks that unvaccinated pregnant women face of becoming severely unwell if they catch COVID-19 show exactly why we advise you to do so as soon as possible. This film is another stark reminder of the devastating impact COVID-19 can have on women and their babies.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

Nearly 1 in 5 COVID-19 patients who are most critically ill are pregnant women who have not been vaccinated, which shows just how important it is that expectant mothers get the vaccine to keep themselves and their babies safe.

Over 81,000 pregnant women have so far received their first dose, with 65,000 being double-jabbed, which is fantastic, but there's still more to be done.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for pregnant women and I urge everyone to get their vaccines as soon as they can to secure

this significant protection”.

Gill Walton, chief executive of the Royal College of Midwives, said:

Having COVID-19 can double the chance of stillbirth and triples the chance of a preterm birth, which can have long-term health impact for the baby.

We know that the vaccine is a safe and effective way of preventing this, with hundreds of thousands of pregnant women worldwide having been vaccinated with no adverse effects.

### **Background:**

You can watch the film here:

The UKHSA safety data can be found [here](#)

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## **Government levels playing field for SMEs on Small Business Saturday**

This government is intent on giving smaller businesses better access to the £50 billion worth of public contracts, which can include anything from supplying hospital equipment to providing public sector pensions, which are tendered each year.

The guide includes advice on where business owners can look online for Government contract opportunities and also includes tips on how SMEs can make sure they are showcasing their strengths during the bidding process. This will be backed up by online webinar sessions for small businesses.

The guide also gives guidance on how businesses can secure work through supply chains by working with larger companies to help deliver things such as long-running IT or catering projects.

It also goes a step further, advising how the government considers Social Value when choosing suppliers. This will then allow agile, smaller enterprises to highlight the work they do in their communities and ultimately offer them a better chance of winning government contracts.

Cabinet Office Minister Lord Agnew said:

In the most recent figures, SMEs won more than £15 billion in

government contracts.

But we want it to be easier for them to work with government and this guide, published in support of Small Business Saturday, will help small businesses navigate what can be a complex world of public procurement.

That's why we're also bringing in sweeping procurement rules changes, to make it easier and more flexible for SMEs to win government work.

The Cabinet Office has previously announced other measures which aim to level the playing field for SMEs in the Transforming Public Procurement green paper. The changes contained in the paper will completely overhaul the current EU rules, removing barriers for smaller suppliers by getting rid of unnecessarily complicated regulations. Bureaucratic rules can put SMEs off bidding for contracts so the new reforms will open the door to public procurement for small and medium-sized companies.

We are simplifying the bidding process to make it easier for SMEs to secure contracts by creating one single central platform which suppliers have to register on, so they only have to submit their data once to qualify for any public sector procurement.

Small Business Crown Representative, Martin Traynor OBE said:

Smaller organisations can offer excellent value for money and a rich source of innovation, as well as a more agile business model than larger suppliers. They play a vital role in helping government to deliver efficient, effective public services that meet the needs of our citizens.

We are fully committed to breaking down barriers for SMEs who want to supply to the Government either directly or in the supply chain. I welcome the publication of this guide as part of the support on offer.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully added:

From the pubs, restaurants and shops that make our high streets tick to personal care services like hairdresser, small businesses are at the heart of our way of life.

I urge everyone to back their local businesses on Small Business Saturday. The Government is leading the way, supporting firms with this new handbook as well as ground-breaking schemes like Help to Grow: Digital which will help businesses to level up with discounted software and free tech support.

As well as the £352 billion in support provided to firms to help them through the pandemic, the government is also helping small businesses to level up through the Help to Grow schemes.

Help to Grow: Digital will provide business leaders with the advice and funding they need to embrace digital technology and help their business grow through discounted software and free advice and support, while Help to Grow: Management offers business leaders management and leadership training. Designed to be manageable alongside full-time work, businesses receive 50 hours of training across 12-weeks as part of the Help to Grow: Management course provided at participating business schools.