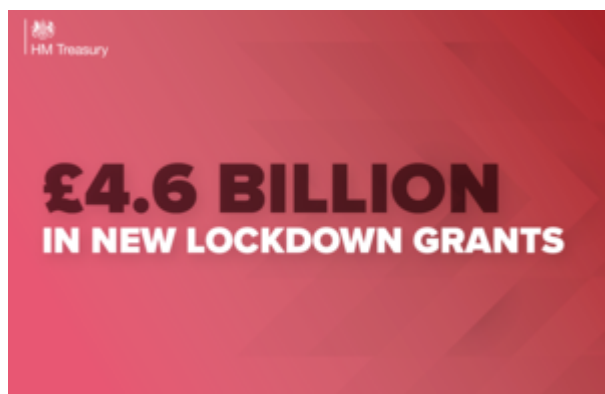


£4.6 billion in new lockdown grants to support businesses and protect jobs

News story

Businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors are to receive a one-off grant worth up to £9,000, the Chancellor has announced.



- Chancellor announces one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring
- £594 million discretionary fund also made available to support other impacted businesses
- comes in addition to £1.1 billion further discretionary grant funding for Local Authorities, Local Restriction Support Grants worth up to £3,000 a month and extension of furlough scheme

This follows the Prime Minister's announcement last night that these businesses will be closed until at least February half-term in order to help control the virus, and, together with the wide range of existing support, provides them with certainty through the Spring period.

The cash is provided on a per-property basis to support businesses through the latest restrictions, and is expected to benefit over 600,000 business properties, worth £4 billion in total across all nations of the UK.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

The new strain of the virus presents us all with a huge challenge – and whilst the vaccine is being rolled out, we have needed to tighten restrictions further.

Throughout the pandemic we've taken swift action to protect lives and livelihoods and today we're announcing a further cash injection to support businesses and jobs until the Spring.

This will help businesses to get through the months ahead – and

crucially it will help sustain jobs, so workers can be ready to return when they are able to reopen.

A further £594 million is also being made available for Local Authorities and the Devolved Administrations to support other businesses not eligible for the grants, that might be affected by the restrictions. Businesses should apply to their Local Authorities.

The new one-off grants come in addition to billions of existing business support, including grants worth up to £3,000 for closed businesses, and up to £2,100 per month for impacted businesses once they reopen.

The government has also provided 100% business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, £1.1 billion existing discretionary funding for Local Authorities, the furlough scheme now extended to April and 100% government backed loans, extended until March.

Further information

- the one-off top-ups will be granted to closed businesses as follows:
- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000
- business support is a devolved policy and therefore the responsibility of the devolved administrations, which will receive additional funding as a result of these announcements in the usual manner:
- the Scottish Government will receive £375 million
- the Welsh Government will receive £227 million
- the Northern Ireland Executive will receive £127 million
- this is on top of the increased funding which has already been guaranteed by the UK Government, to continue to provide the devolved administrations the certainty they need to plan for their COVID-19 response in the months ahead
- small businesses in the devolved administrations should also be able to benefit from other UK-wide measures in the government's unprecedented package of support for business, including the various business lending schemes (where the repayment terms were made easier as part of the Winter Economy Plan), and the extension of the Self Employment Income Support Scheme

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[First ballot of the 2021 Youth](#)

Mobility Scheme for Hong Kong SAR passport holders

The UK/Hong Kong Youth Mobility Scheme allows young people aged between 18 and 30 to live, work or study in the United Kingdom for up to 2 years. The first ballot of the 2021 Youth Mobility Scheme for Hong Kong SAR passport holders will launch in January, and as with last year the selection criteria has changed to a lottery based system managed by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). There will no longer be the requirement to provide a Certificate of Sponsorship.

As before there are a total of 1,000 places available to Hong Kong SAR passport holders for 2021. 800 applicants will be selected in the first ballot in January, while the remainder of the places will be made available in a second ballot in July 2021. If your application is successful you will be able to live, work and study in the UK for up to 2 years.

How to apply

If you would like to apply for the scheme you should send one email per applicant to: HongKong.YMS2021@FCD0.gov.uk between midday (12pm) on Monday 25 January 2021 to midday on Wednesday 27 January 2021 (Hong Kong time).

The header or subject line of your email must contain your name, date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY) and passport number as shown in your passport.

This must be written in English only.

For example: WONG Janet – 31/03/2000 – Passport123456789.

The main body of your email should include the following information, written in English:

- Name:
- Date of birth:
- Passport Number:
- Mobile phone number:

The email account will only be open for 48 hours and all emails received within this timeframe will be sent an automated reply confirming receipt.

Once the ballot closes 800 applicants will be chosen at random by UKVI. If you have been successful a second email will be sent to you by week commencing 22 February 2021 to confirm acceptance and provide further instructions on how to make an appointment, along with documentary evidence required to apply for your entry clearance.

Please note successful applicants must prepare online applications and online credit card payments no later than 22 March 2021. Failure to submit your payment online by this date will automatically remove your name from the list and your allocation will be retracted. After you have paid online you have 90 days to submit your paperwork for consideration.

If you are a Hong Kong SAR passport holders living overseas you can also apply following the instructions above, and if you are chosen to apply you will be able to do so in your country/territory of residence. Applications cannot be submitted for the Youth Mobility Scheme in the UK.

If you are unsuccessful you will receive an email by 26 February and no further action is required. Further information about the scheme can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and any enquiries relating to the application process, online application forms and questions in general should be directed to the [UKVI International Enquiry Line](#).

Additional information

British National (Overseas) passport holders are already eligible to apply for a visa under the Youth Mobility Scheme to the UK and are not subject to any quota or sponsorship requirements.

[The Attorney General appoints Oliver Glasgow QC, as First Senior Treasury Counsel](#)

News story

Oliver Glasgow QC appointed as First Senior Treasury Counsel



Attorney General

The Attorney General, Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, has appointed Oliver Glasgow QC, as First Senior Treasury Counsel to the Crown at the Central Criminal Court with effect from 1 January 2021.

Mr Glasgow was appointed Junior Treasury Counsel in 2009, and Senior Treasury Counsel in 2015. He was made Queen's Counsel in 2016. He takes over from Duncan Penny QC, who was appointed as First Senior in 2018.

The title "Treasury Counsel" derives from the days when all Crown Counsel at the Central Criminal Court were instructed by the Treasury Solicitor. That procedure was changed in 1908, and since then the Director of Public Prosecutions has instructed the permanent counsel there.

Treasury Counsel are appointed by the Attorney General. They are divided into 2 groups: Senior Treasury Counsel and Junior Treasury Counsel.

Note to editors

A full biography for Oliver Glasgow QC is available [here](#)

Published 5 January 2021

Prime Minister announces national lockdown

The Prime Minister has announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

The decision follows a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions and case rates across the country, and our hospitals are now under more pressure than they have been at any other point throughout the pandemic.

This drastic jump in cases has been attributed to the new variant of COVID-19, which our scientists have now confirmed is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible.

On 4 January, there were 26,626 Covid patients in hospital in England, an increase of over 30% in one week, and the April 2020 hospital admissions peak has now been surpassed by 40%.

The case rate in England up to 29 December was 478.5 per 100k, three times higher than on 1 December when the case rate was 151.3.

On 3 Jan, 454 deaths were reported, with 4,228 over the last 7 days – a 24% increase on the previous 7 days.

This afternoon, the four UK Chief Medical Officers have advised that the COVID threat level should move from level four to level five, indicating that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days.

The Prime Minister praised everyone's collective efforts to get this virus under control, emphasising the great national effort to fight Covid. Despite this, the pressure on our NHS, rapidly rising infection rates and hospital admissions due to the new variant mean that another national lockdown is sadly necessary.

From tomorrow, people will only be allowed to leave their homes for the following reasons:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person.
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home.
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one.
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse).
- attend education or childcare – for those eligible.

From tomorrow, all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges will move to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. While children are still very unlikely to be severely affected by COVID-19, the government recognises that schools must be included in the restrictions in order to have the best chance of getting the virus under control as schools can act as vectors of transmission, causing the virus to spread between households when rates are high.

Schools will be required to provide remote education for those learning at home.

Early years settings such as nurseries, alternative provision and special schools will remain open and vulnerable children and children of critical workers can continue to use registered childcare, childminders and other childcare activities.

The government is also advising the clinically extremely vulnerable to begin shielding again, and letters will be sent to individuals with advice on what this means for them.

All non-essential retail, hospitality and personal care services must close, or remain closed. Restaurants can continue delivery, takeaway or click-and-collect of food and non-alcoholic drinks, but venues will no longer be able to serve takeaway or click-and-collect alcohol.

Essential shops and garden centres can remain open. Entertainment venues and animal attractions such as zoos must close, but the outdoor areas of venues

such as heritage homes and botanical gardens can remain open, to be used for exercise. Playgrounds may also remain open.

Places of worship can also remain open, but you may only visit with your household.

Indoor and outdoor sports facilities including sports courts, gyms, golf courses, swimming pools, and riding arenas must also close. Elite sport and disabled sport can continue, as can PE lessons for those children attending school.

The restrictions will come into effect tomorrow, and are expected to last until the middle of February if the situation in hospitals improve. By this point, the NHS hopes to have vaccinated everyone in the top four priority groups identified by the JCVI – including older care home residents and staff, everyone over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

Vaccinating the most vulnerable will protect those at highest risk from COVID-19 and this will remove a significant amount of the pressure currently facing the NHS.

Based on the latest available data, the UK has vaccinated more people than the rest of Europe combined and we will continue to accelerate our vaccination programme at pace.

Everyone should follow the new rules from now, and they will become law from 00.01 on Wednesday. Parliament will sit, largely remotely, on Wednesday to debate and vote on the measures.

The full details on what you can and cannot do are available [here](#).

Prime Minister's address to the nation: 4 January 2021

Since the pandemic began last year, the whole United Kingdom has been engaged in a great national effort to fight Covid.

And there is no doubt that in fighting the old variant of the virus, our collective efforts were working and would have continued to work.

But we now have a new variant of the virus. It has been both frustrating and alarming to see the speed with which the new variant is spreading.

Our scientists have confirmed this new variant is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible – that means you are much, much more likely to catch the virus and to pass it on.

As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from Covid than at any time since the start of the pandemic.

In England alone, the number of Covid patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000.

That number is 40 per cent higher than the first peak in April.

On 29 December, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK – a new record.

The number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week and will sadly rise further. My thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones.

With most of the country already under extreme measures, it is clear that we need to do more, together, to bring this new variant under control while our vaccines are rolled out.

In England, we must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant.

That means the Government is once again instructing you to stay at home.

You may only leave home for limited reasons permitted in law, such as to shop for essentials, to work if you absolutely cannot work from home, to exercise, to seek medical assistance such as getting a Covid test, or to escape domestic abuse.

The full details on what you can and can't do will be available at gov.uk/coronavirus.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, we are advising you to begin shielding again and you will shortly receive a letter about what this means for you.

And because we now have to do everything we possibly can to stop the spread of the disease, primary schools, secondary schools and colleges across England must move to remote provision from tomorrow, except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.

Everyone will still be able to access early years settings such as nurseries.

We recognise that this will mean it is not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal. The Education Secretary will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements.

We will provide extra support to ensure that pupils entitled to free school meals will continue to receive them while schools are closed, and we'll distribute more devices to support remote education.

I completely understand the inconvenience and distress this late change will cause millions of parents and pupils up and down the country.

Parents whose children were in school today may reasonably ask why we did not take this decision sooner.

The answer is simply that we have been doing everything in our power to keep schools open, because we know how important each day in education is to children's life chances.

And I want to stress that the problem is not that schools are unsafe for children – children are still very unlikely to be severely affected by even the new variant of Covid.

The problem is that schools may nonetheless act as vectors for transmission, causing the virus to spread between households.

Today the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers have advised that the country should move to alert level 5, meaning that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days.

Of course, there is one huge difference compared to last year.

We are now rolling out the biggest vaccination programme in our history.

So far, we in the UK have vaccinated more people than the rest of Europe combined.

With the arrival today of the UK's own Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine, the pace of vaccination is accelerating.

I can share with you tonight the NHS's realistic expectations for the vaccination programme in the coming weeks.

By the middle of February, if things go well and with a fair wind in our sails, we expect to have offered the first vaccine dose to everyone in the four top priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

That means vaccinating all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, everyone over the age of 70, all frontline health and social care workers, and everyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

If we succeed in vaccinating all those groups, we will have removed huge numbers of people from the path of the virus.

And of course, that will eventually enable us to lift many of the restrictions we have endured for so long.

I must stress that even if we achieve this goal, there remains a time lag of two to three weeks from getting a jab to receiving immunity.

And there will be a further time lag before the pressure on the NHS is lifted.

So we should remain cautious about the timetable ahead.

But if our understanding of the virus doesn't change dramatically once again...

If the rollout of the vaccine programme continues to be successful...

If deaths start to fall as the vaccine takes effect...

And, critically, if everyone plays their part by following the rules...

Then I hope we can steadily move out of lockdown, reopening schools after the February half term and starting, cautiously, to move regions down the tiers.

I want to say to everyone right across the United Kingdom that I know how tough this is, I know how frustrated you are, I know that you have had more than enough of government guidance about defeating this virus.

But now more than ever, we must pull together.

You should follow the new rules from now, and they will become law in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Parliament will meet – largely remotely – later that day.

I know that the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland share my conviction this is a pivotal moment and they're taking similar steps.

The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet but I really do believe that we are entering the last phase of the struggle.

Because with every jab that goes into our arms, we are tilting the odds against Covid and in favour of the British people.

And, thanks to the miracle of science, not only is the end in sight and we know exactly how we will get there.

But for now, I am afraid, you must once again stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you all very much.