

Festive travel tips for people considering overseas travel

People considering going abroad over the festive period should do their research before booking a trip, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has advised.

As the travel and wider restrictions that were in place between 5 November and 2 December throughout England are replaced by regional tiers, the FCDO is urging people to inform themselves of their local rules and the possible disruption they may face if they choose to go overseas. Those resident in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should consult the regulations that apply to them.

The FCDO has issued five festive travel tips that people should read before deciding to go abroad:

1. Check the travel restrictions that apply to you. If you live in the UK, there are different restrictions in place in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).
2. Read the [FCDO's foreign travel checklist](#), which includes information on preparing for an overseas trip.
3. Check the [travel advice for the destination you are planning to go to](#). These pages include information on entry, screening and quarantine requirements that could affect your journey.
4. Sign up for [travel advice email alerts](#), so you automatically receive the latest travel advice updates for the destinations you want to know about.
5. Get a [travel insurance](#) policy and make sure you are happy with the level of cover it provides.

Nigel Adams, Minister responsible for FCDO Travel Advice, said:

Coronavirus has fundamentally changed the way we travel, meaning it's more important than ever to consider the need for a trip abroad and to be prepared. Our staff will do all they can to help British people in difficulty, but travellers must take responsibility as well.

Different destinations may introduce new rules and restrictions with little notice as they respond to the pandemic, so it's vital that people plan their travel and understand that disruption is possible.

In England from 2 December, people are permitted to travel abroad, subject to any restrictions in place at their destination. However, those in Tier 3 should avoid leaving the area other than for reasons such as work, education or caring responsibilities.

Inbound international travel will continue to be governed by the travel corridor approach. Individuals will need to self-isolate for 14 days if arriving from or having travelled through a non-travel corridor country or territory. All arrivals will need to abide by the regional restrictions in place when in the UK.

From 15 December 2020, passengers arriving into England from countries not featured on the government's travel corridor list will have the option to take a private Covid test after 5 days of self-isolation, with a negative result releasing them from the need to isolate.

Passengers will be able to book a test from a provider on a GOV.UK list before arriving in England. If they choose to book a test, they will need to state this on their passenger locator form prior to arriving and then go straight into self-isolation at home as usual. If they choose to opt in after arrival, they will need to resubmit their passenger locator form.

The FCD0 continues to advise against cruise ship travel at this time. This is due to the ongoing pandemic and is based on the latest medical advice. This advice is kept under constant review.

Home sought for UK's ground-breaking prototype fusion power plant

- UK government has called on local communities across the country to put forward proposals to host the UK's prototype fusion energy power plant
- when complete, the plant will pave the way to a limitless supply of low carbon, clean energy to the UK
- follows Prime Minister's [ten-point-plan for a green industrial revolution](#) and the UK's ambition to be the first country in the world to commercialise fusion energy technology

Local communities across the UK are being asked to step forward with proposals to house a prototype fusion power plant in a move that could propel them on to the global stage in a world first. The successful bidder could be

first in line for thousands of new local highly-skilled jobs, putting them at the heart of the government's green industrial revolution.

Fusion offers a virtually limitless source of clean electricity by copying the processes that power the sun.

The UK government has today (Wednesday 2 December) invited UK regions and communities to put forward proposals to become the home of STEP – the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production – the UK's ambitious programme to design and build a prototype fusion plant.

Communities will have until the end of March 2021 to submit their nominations and will need to demonstrate that their local area has just the right mix of social, commercial and technical conditions to host the new plant – such as adequate land conditions, grid connection and water supply.

The successful site will be home to the construction of the plant, targeted for completion by 2040, and will become a global hub for fusion energy and associated industries. This could create thousands of local highly skilled jobs during the construction and operation of the plant, as well as for the local supply chain, while attracting a new science and technology hub for the UK.

This follows the Prime Minister's 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution set out earlier this month which committed to doubling down on the UK's ambition to be the first country in the world to commercialise fusion energy technology, with £222 million allocated to begin the STEP design work.

Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma said:

We want the UK to be a trailblazer in developing fusion energy by capitalising on its incredible potential as a limitless clean energy source that could last for generations to come.

Communities across the country have an incredible opportunity to secure their place in the history books as the home of STEP, helping the UK to be the first country in the world to commercialise fusion and creating thousands of highly skilled jobs to drive our green industrial revolution.

STEP will be delivered through the UK Atomic Energy Authority which carries out fusion energy research on behalf of the government.

In addition to its £222 million commitment to STEP, the government has also invested £184 million by 2025 in new fusion facilities, infrastructure and apprenticeships at the Culham Science Centre in Oxfordshire, providing further support to this important centre of fusion and innovation.

UK Atomic Energy Authority CEO Professor Ian Chapman said:

STEP is about moving from research and development to delivery.

It will prove that fusion is not a far-off dream, but a dawning reality with the UK leading the commercial development of fusion power and positioning itself as a pioneer in sustainable fusion energy.

To achieve this ambitious goal will require all the ingenuity and application of the UK's science and engineering industry and we look forward to working with industrial partners in the years ahead, not just to invest, but also to support the technical evolution of the programme.

We are confident that working together with partners in the UK and around the world will enable the UK to bring a revolutionary technology to market.

A recent independent study by London Economics found that the UK economy has gained £1.4 billion from the government's direct investment in fusion energy over the past decade.

UK Atomic Energy Authority

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) carries out fusion energy research on behalf of the UK government at Culham Science Centre near Oxford. UKAEA oversees Britain's fusion programme, headed by the MAST Upgrade (Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak) experiment. It also hosts the world's largest fusion research facility, JET (Joint European Torus), which it operates for European scientists under a contract with the European Commission.

Fusion research at Culham is funded by the [Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) and by the European Union under the EURATOM treaty.

More information is available on the [UKAEA website](#) and the [UKAEA Twitter account @UKAEAofficial](#).

What is fusion energy?

Fusion research aims to copy the process which powers the sun for a new large-scale source of clean energy here on earth. When light atomic nuclei fuse together to form heavier ones, a large amount of energy is released. To do this, fuel is heated to extreme temperatures, 10 times hotter than the centre of the sun, forming a plasma in which fusion reactions take place. A commercial power station will use the energy produced by fusion reactions to generate electricity.

Fusion has a huge potential to be a long-term energy source that is environmentally responsible (with no carbon emissions). It is inherently safe with abundant and widespread fuel resources (the raw materials are found in seawater and the earth's crust).

What is STEP?

STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) is an ambitious programme to design and construct a fusion energy prototype plant, targeting 2040 for completion. It is a UKAEA programme with an initial £222 million funding from the UK government to produce a concept design by 2024. The STEP prototype will be used to research and develop the technology and enable a fleet of commercial plants to follow in the years after 2040. The aim for this first phase of work is to produce a 'concept design' by 2024. This means an outline of the power plant, with a clear view on how we will design each of the major systems. The next phase of work will include detailed engineering design, while all relevant permissions and consents to build the prototype are sought. The final phase is construction, with operations targeted to begin around 2040. The aim is to have a fully evolved design and approval to build by 2032, enabling construction to begin.

Nominations for the STEP siting will likely be coordinated by local authorities with input from a range of partners including landowners, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local businesses and others.

Communities have until the end of March 2021 to submit their initial nominations and assessment of sites will be based on a set of social, commercial and technical criteria, taking around 2 years to complete. On conclusion of this assessment UKAEA will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with the successful site announced around the end of 2022.

[The Secretary of State has reappointed Paul Roberts as a Member of Arts Council England](#)

News story

Paul Roberts has been reappointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as a Member of the ACE for four years from 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2024.



Paul held Director of Education posts in Nottingham and London, was a Director of Capita Strategic Education Services before joining the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government where he was Director of Strategy and subsequently Managing Director.

Paul was adviser to UK government Ministers on the development of cultural education for young people and author of the DfE/DCMS-commissioned report “Nurturing Creativity in Young People”.

He has served on a range of committees at NESTA, been Chair of the Nottingham Music Education Hub and vice-Chair at Mountview Academy and Nottingham Contemporary.

He was a commissioner for the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value, the ABRSM Commission on Music Education and the Durham Commission on Creativity in Education.

He is currently Chair of the Innovation Unit and a member of the National Council of Arts Council England, where he also chairs the Performance and Audit Committee.

Paul’s writing includes contribution to “Organisational Innovation in Public Services” and joint authorship of “The Virtuous Circle – why creativity and cultural education count.”

Paul is a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and was awarded an OBE in 2008 for services to Education and the Creative Industries.

This role is not remunerated. This reappointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments](#).

The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government’s Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared.

This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Paul Roberts has not declared any activity.

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman's speech on a new direction for trustee stewardship

I am grateful to David Weeks and to Janice Turner, co-chairs of the Association of Member-Nominated Trustees for inviting me to speak with you again.

The last time I spoke at an AMNT event was in the October of 2019. Clearly a lot has happened since then. I was delighted to be reappointed as Pensions Minister after the December election. It is a job I asked to do at the start and it remains a job I really enjoy and believe in doing. I believe it is very, very important to do this job and I'm honoured and privileged that it is me taking it forward.

I also believe we've managed to do a great deal, not least of which is almost completing the Pension Schemes Bill, which I believe will make our pensions safer, better and greener. And it is definitely the case we have managed to progress legislation notwithstanding the impact of Covid-19.

I realise for all of us things are much less certain, and this is causing great uncertainty and much difficulty for many people. I experience it as a constituency MP, as every constituency MP does. So government is doing whatever it can to get us through this crisis and we are starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. But none of us are under any illusion that there are still several months of slog ahead, and I wish to thank all of you individually, and collectively.

I also want to wish AMNT many happy returns and thank all of you, the leaders of the organisation, but all of you, for offering a genuinely innovative and vital and independent voice in pensions governance.

This has unquestionably raised the standards of trusteeship with independent training and awareness sessions. I genuinely believe that the AMNT is very well placed for identifying problems and potential solutions, on key problems whether that is collective DC, ESG, or pooled fund voting as we're going to talk about today.

So the Bill itself, I believe has taken things forward in a safer, better, greener way. David mentioned the work with the Work and Pensions Select Committee, who I am working hand-in-glove with to ensure that we are combating scams and giving occupational pension scheme measures to ensure transfers of pensions savings are made in a safe way and not to fraudulent schemes. There is a whole host of measures that derive from section 125 of the Bill that we feel will make pensions a great deal safer.

Clearly I think pensions will be better, and it is a combination of the huge amount of work by the team at DWP, and I'm speaking from Caxton House at the moment, and I'm very, very grateful for all the Bill team, all the policy teams, whether it is developing Collective Defined Contributions, a new product I think will be of fantastic assistance to many going forward, whether it is delivering on our legislation for pension dashboards to make savers better informed on how their money is growing and understand what they have, or the work on the DB white paper and all the reforms that flow from that.

And finally I think it is a greener bill, because for the first time, obviously we were the first government of the G7 to legislate to put net zero on the statute book by 2050. There's no question on my mind, having spoken in Europe with European colleagues, that we lead the way on ESG. And we now have a situation where we are the first country in the world to put TCFD onto the statute book. I genuinely believe that we are putting climate change at the heart of pensions going forward and that is a very good thing and it will be something we build upon going forward.

I'll touch upon another couple of clauses in the Bill before I get onto the substance of the report which we are going to talk about today.

On clause 107 – I know that some trustees have some concerns about this – let me reassure once again that there is no intention to frustrate legitimate business activities where they are conducted in good faith.

The Bill itself makes it clear, that offences are only committed if the person did not have a reasonable excuse for doing the act or engaging in the course of conduct.

And on clause 123, the measures in the Bill seek to support trustees and employers. It builds upon the work we have done for some considerable period of time and I will be bringing forward secondary legislation which will work in such a way that it does not prevent appropriate open schemes from investing in riskier investments, where there are potentially higher returns, as long as the risks being taken can be supported, and members' benefits and the PPF are effectively protected.

There is, I repeat, no desire to see open schemes close unnecessarily.

Now I will turn to the Association of Member Nominated Trustees' report on Bringing Shareholder Voting into the 21st century.

It is something I genuinely believe is an extremely important piece of work. I first spoke on this issue of trustees' voting policies in February 2018 at the TUC Pensions Conference. I think I've spoken more at the TUC Conference than anyone else, maybe because people think I'm one of the most left-wing Tories around but whether I'm invited back in the Spring we will see.

At the time I remarked on the fact that when many schemes – especially defined contribution schemes – invest in equities, they invest alongside others – ultimately in pooled funds. Many defined benefit schemes invest in

the same way too. I queried why it was a pre-condition, when schemes invest in this way, that they surrender voting rights. They get to choose the manager and the fund and with it the investment manager, but they don't get to choose how to vote at annual general meetings for the companies' shares they hold.

So at the time I posed three questions and I think it's worth contextualising what we're doing today.

First, I asked, if this was a technology problem, why fund managers or others couldn't fix the technology.

Secondly, I queried why, if this was all about asset managers thinking it was better to speak with one voice, what was so wrong with communicating that your investors have a diversity of views.

Thirdly, I wondered why, if this practice was in some way legally questionable, why some investment managers are letting some clients vote their shares in pooled funds.

On the question of technology, I do have a FinTech guide published earlier this year by the Investment Association, the trade body for fund managers, which remarks that historically investment and wealth management is a sector that has been slow to adopt emergent technology. That certainly does appear to be the case.

On the importance of speaking with one voice – I also have the Law Commission's report on intermediated securities published last month, which quotes the fund industry line on pooled fund and voting but remarks drily that "this approach assumes that the decision on whether to exercise voting rights to influence a company is one solely for the asset manager, and does not consider the wishes or objectives of an ultimate investor."

Which is certainly an interesting conclusion when principle 6 of the excellent updated version of the Financial Reporting Council's Stewardship Code, which managers are expected to sign up to on a Comply or Explain basis, requires that signatory fund managers must explain "how they have sought and received clients' views" and "how assets have been managed in alignment with clients' stewardship and investment policies". In some cases, not at all, appears to be the answer to both questions.

And on the legalities – the asset managers who allow trustees to set their own voting policies remain at large, committing no greater crime than empowering pension scheme trustees and delivering better outcomes. Indeed, I understand that more are set to come forward with innovative offerings. I strongly welcome that.

So I'm grateful to the AMNT for this excellent new report, written by Professor Iain Clacher, who is on the call I know, which sets out proposals for a new working group to examine:

- the overly complex and archaic voting infrastructure,
- underinvestment in the stewardship function in fund management.

- transparency of voting policies and outcomes.
- scheme-specific reporting requirements.

And I am pleased to announce the establishment of that group today – the Taskforce on Pension Scheme Voting Implementation. This will be a task and finish group, with a focused remit to look at:

- how we facilitate the delivery of solutions to voting system issues which overcome the present obstacles to trustees implementing their own policies
- secondly how we increase the number of asset managers who are prepared to engage with their clients' preferences and follow or as a minimum "align or explain" on trustee voting policies, including via pooled arrangements.
- thirdly, recommending regulatory and non-regulatory measures to ensure the convergence of asset managers' approaches to voting policy and execution with trustees' policies and preferences, especially in pooled funds.

I am also able to announce today the appointment of Simon Howard, until very recently the CEO of the UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association as Chair, and Sarah Wilson, the CEO of Minerva Analytics as the vice-chair.

Both come with a long pedigree, and many of you will be familiar with their work. Simon and his organisation have done sterling work in promoting the importance of ESG and responsible investment more broadly, and have done excellent work on pensions, including their report Changing Course earlier this year.

As a result, I am taking forward their recommendations of a central directory of Statements of Investment Principles supported by TPR (The Pensions Regulator) and the DWP.

We need a long-standing champion of the asset owner voice in voting, and I cannot improve on Sarah Wilson, who is the Chief Executive, Minerva Analytics. She was awarded the Excellence in Corporate Governance Award from the International Corporate Governance Network, for her efforts to improve the essential infrastructure that underpins effective corporate governance and investor stewardship.

The group will also include representatives of the AMNT, with the rest of the membership to be announced in due course.

The group will be supported by the DWP, but independent of the DWP. I have also asked the group to support and advise on the development of voting policies for occupational pension schemes, and further proposals for better disclosure of votes in a standardised and comparable way, which allows trustees and ultimately savers to see the quality of the service they are getting.

I want genuinely for this to be a standardised approach across the board.

In the final minutes of my remarks let me explain why I think this step is so

important. It's very simple. The investment chain is very long and very tangled, but ultimately you, as trustees of pension schemes are the asset owners at the end of that chain. And when you act, the ownership chain is tighter.

That means better governance of firms in the real economy, more sustainable value creation and better outcomes for your savers.

When trustees invest, too often they are being asked to select funds in advance on vague or sometimes non-committal voting policies and historic voting records which are opaque, inconsistent and sometimes incomplete. That's why I've spoken a few times about a mixed economy in voting. The ability for trustees to set their own granular voting policy where they wish, and to expect to be able to find a manager who is willing to implement it at a fair price.

Trustee voting policies more generally do need to improve – we urgently need to call time on SIP statements like “We leave it all to our fund managers”. But I see no reason why trustees shouldn't be able to determine a high level policy, find an asset manager whose policy reflects it, and appoint that manager to implement their own policy.

But we will get more engagement, better stewardship, better outcomes, and a stronger economy where asset owners who want to have a voice are able to speak up – however they invest, including in pooled funds – rather than be suppressed. It should not necessarily be the case that they need to switch to segregated mandates to set such a policy.

For many schemes, such as defined contribution schemes investing via platforms, this will be impractical. I'm determined that this does work and I believe that it will. I realise that we could all sit back and do nothing, and one firm could emerge with some great innovation to make voting in pooled funds a really practical reality. But I don't think it is right to sit back.

Longer term we need more than one or two firms to come forward. I accept that the market will provide innovative solutions. But if we are to make that happen, trustees need to use their buying power NOW.

Tell your adviser – remember, they are just an adviser, and you are the decision-maker – that you're switching to a fund manager that will honour your policy unless similar flexibility is granted, at pace, by your current manager. I've invite you not to take no for an answer. Don't tell me that the consultants won't sign off unless you've paid them handsomely to certify that a more effective voting policy is in your members' interests. Actually, do tell me, and I will tell the whole world.

This system, a network of computers saying no to one another, a long system of blocked pipework, needs to be unblocked to allow trustees' votes – and maybe eventually their beneficiaries' votes – to be those that are counted by the companies they own.

I rule nothing out in making this work properly.

To my mind, doing this will make pensions safer – because if we give trustees a voice in voting, we can expect tougher action on pay for failure. The current tangled investment chain means that signals are far too often too weak, with sadly only 50 UK-listed votes on remuneration scoring dissent of above 20%, and only 5 defeated. I think it'll make pensions better – because pension scheme memberships are more representative of the population than the fund management industry. And because trustees are ultimately accountable to their savers, they are going to be much better at pressing for boards who are more representative of the people who invest with them. In contrast, AMNT research last year found that 30% of fund managers had no voting policy on gender diversity and 75% had no policy on ethnic diversity. Trustees can do better than this.

And I believe it will make pensions Greener – because for however much progress we have made, we have further to go. A survey from Edelman found that 69 per cent of institutional investors wanted companies to tie executive pay to sustainability. And yet almost no company does. Why is that? Sir Christopher Hohn of The Children's Investment Fund Foundation has described asset managers as sheep, and highlighted that "a lot of them will say 'we will vote for someone's else's resolution', but why aren't they filing their own resolutions?" I think that is a fair question. Engaged trustees can table their own resolutions and genuinely make a change on returns of voting.

The Investment Association paper on FinTech I quoted earlier said that "for tech adoption to succeed there must be a clear specific business problem to solve, together with an organisational culture and multi-level sponsorship that supports innovation."

I believe this is a specific business problem crying out for a solution – that will allow asset owners to take ownership of their assets, however they invest.

Thank you very much indeed.

Care home residents to be reunited with families by Christmas

- Visits out to family homes or outdoor spaces like parks may also be possible for some care home residents under 65
- Safe care home visits to be supported by the provision of over a million rapid tests and free personal protective equipment (PPE)

Care home residents in all tiers will be able to see their families again this Christmas period as over a million tests are to be sent out providers over the next month, with visits to begin in the first homes tomorrow (Wednesday 2 December).

A significant increase in testing capacity, paired with new testing technology, will allow friends and family to visit relatives in care homes if they receive a negative result prior to the visit.

The move will enable care homes to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the health and wellbeing of residents.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I know how difficult it has been for people in care homes and their families to be apart for so long. The separation has been painful but has protected residents and staff from this deadly virus.

I'm so pleased we are now able to help reunite families and more safely allow people to have meaningful contact with their loved ones by Christmas.

This news has been made possible by the unprecedented strides made in testing technology and capacity, as well as extra PPE supplies.

It will still be critical for visitors to wear appropriate PPE and follow other infection-control measures within the care home to keep their loved ones, other residents and staff safe.

An extra 46 million items of free PPE will be sent to CQC-registered care home providers through the government portal in addition to PPE already available. Over 220 million items of PPE have been provided to adult care homes since April.

The number of tests kits being supplied has been modelled to allow up to 2 visitors per resident, visiting twice a week. Care homes will manage the number of visits to ensure they can enable safe visiting and the programme will be continuously reviewed as it is rolled out. Visitors will still be expected to follow infection prevention and control procedures. Visitors should minimise contact as much as possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

COVID-19 is a cruel virus that has torn families apart and denied so many the simple human pleasure of contact with a loved one, which means everything to so many living in care homes.

My focus is on making sure good quality care can still be provided to everyone who needs it, while keeping carers and the people they look after safe.

It is impossible to eliminate risk entirely, but now thanks to an enormous expansion of testing capacity and a huge delivery of free

PPE we can help to more safely reunite families throughout December.

More than a million lateral flow tests have already been sent out to the 385 biggest care homes as the first tranche of a phased approach to make visits safer.

The government is also publishing [new guidance allowing some residents under 65 to spend time with their families at Christmas outside of care homes](#).

Working-age residents may be able to join their families in their homes subject to an individual risk assessment, a negative test before leaving and a period of self-isolation upon return. However, they may only form a bubble with one other household and should not form a 3-household Christmas bubble at any point.

If anyone planning to visit a care home develops symptoms they must of course cancel the visit, self-isolate and [get a test](#).

The adult social care sector has been prioritised for the roll-out of testing, and care homes have been one of the first groups to be given access to repeat asymptomatic testing, with 120,000 tests a day ring-fenced for regular care home testing. Following this one-off push of test kits throughout December, care homes will be able to order more rapid tests in a similar way to the current ordering process.

In addition, the government is expanding regular COVID-19 testing to all CQC inspectors to help support their ongoing work.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive, Care England, said:

As the largest representative body for independent providers of adult social care, Care England is pleased that the government has responded to the needs of the sector. In order for these promising plans to land successfully, the sector must now be adequately supported by the government. Care England has always supported meaningful contact between families and residents, whilst recognising that the balance between freedom and safety needs to be explored at the most granular level possible.

We appreciate the continued risks associated with visits, but this represents a positive step forwards. The most important relationships in most people's lives are with their families or other people, where love and trust are shared.

Ian Trenholm, Chief Executive at the Care Quality Commission (CQC), said:

Today's announcement from the Department of Health and Social Care will be welcomed by many families who will now be able to see their

loved ones over Christmas, and to care providers who will be secure in the knowledge they are keeping their residents safe.

Person-centred care has never been more important and recognising that part of people's identity and wellbeing comes from their relationships is key. Being able to visit friends and family in person wherever possible is at the heart of this and that is why we have encouraged care providers to support visiting as best they can whilst keeping people safe.

We are also delighted to be able to offer the additional assurance to care providers that our inspectors will be getting weekly testing for COVID-19, following the Department for Health and Social Care's decision to offer testing to key workers.

It is vital we continue to work together to meet the continued challenges of the pandemic and keep people safe.

[Updated care home visiting guidance](#)

All care homes currently registered on the PPE portal will be sent a one-off push totalling 11.5 million aprons, 23 million gloves and 11.7 million masks, with the first care homes having received them this week.

Social care providers can currently access free COVID-19 PPE supplies by accessing the government's [PPE portal](#).

The order limits will be raised in due course to accommodate the extra demand that visitors will bring.

In the event of an outbreak in a care home, or evidence of community hotspots or outbreaks, care homes should rapidly impose visiting restrictions to protect vulnerable individuals.