

Tiering decisions to be made through national command structure

The Health Secretary will today set out in Parliament the tier which each local authority in England will fall under, in line with the measures set out in the COVID-19 Winter Plan published on Monday.

As announced earlier this week, the tiers have been toughened and many more areas will be placed into the higher tiers in order to safeguard the gains made during the period of national restrictions.

The first review point for the current tier allocations will take place by Wednesday 16 December.

This allows for the possibility of areas which continue to make progress in slowing the spread of the disease to be moved down a tier in advance of Christmas.

Decisions on tiers are made by ministers based on public health recommendations informed by the following factors:

- Case detection rate (in all age groups and, in particular, amongst the over 60s);
- How quickly case rates are rising or falling;
- Positivity in the general population;
- Pressure on the NHS – including current and projected (3-4 weeks out) NHS capacity – including admissions, general/acute/ICU bed occupancy, staff absences; and
- Local context and exceptional circumstances such as a local but contained outbreak.

If these indicators are not improving, an area may be moved up a tier and if the trajectory improves, the area may move to a lower tier.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Thanks to the hard work and sacrifice made by people up and down the country, we are able to move out of national lockdown and into more targeted local, tiered restrictions.

I know for those of you faced with tier 3 restrictions this will be a particularly difficult time but I want to reassure you that we'll be supporting your areas with mass community testing and extra funding.

By following the rules together we can get out of these tough measures.

The Contain Outbreak Management Fund will be extended so that it can provide monthly payments to Local Authorities facing higher restrictions until the end of the financial year, in recognition of the ongoing public health and outbreak management costs of tackling COVID-19. For those authorities in Tier 3, this funding will amount to £4 per head of population per month, and for those in Tier 2, it will amount to £2 per head of population per month.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre works closely with PHE, the NHS and across government to monitor the number of new infections, positivity rates, and pressures on the NHS.

These factors form their public health advice to the Chief Medical Officer and Ministers through the Local Action Committee and the COVID Operations Committee.

Final decisions on tiering are made by the Prime Minister at the COVID Operations Committee.

The government will also publish an analysis of the health, economic and social impacts of the tiered approach.

Local authorities that fall into tier 3 will be offered support from NHS Test and Trace and the Armed Forces to deliver a six-week rapid community testing programme.

Community testing will make use of rapid Lateral Flow Tests which give results within an hour, and will focus on locating and suppressing asymptomatic transmission. The more cases identified and self-isolating, the quicker the control of virus transmission which is essential to help areas move down a tier.

With some individuals with coronavirus showing no symptoms increased community testing will help identify those who are infected and infectious, but asymptomatic and unaware that they might be spreading the disease, so that they can isolate and protect others.

Local authorities will be able to decide whether to use lateral flow test kits for targeted testing for high-risk workplaces and industries, or for wider asymptomatic community testing, to find positive cases more quickly and break chains of transmission.

Anyone who tests positive, using either a lateral flow test or an existing swab test, must self-isolate along with their household immediately and their contacts will be traced.

Rapid community testing will expand on existing testing programmes within the NHS, care homes, universities and schools to protect those most at risk, and builds on the pilots of community testing which are taking place in Liverpool and Merthyr Tydfil.

Notes to editors

- Guidance on what is allowed in each tier can be found on GOV UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>
- All available data has been assessed by the government, including the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Office. Data assessed includes incidence, test positivity and the growth rate of the virus.
- A Watchlist will be published every Thursday detailing the latest data at a regional level providing the rationale and data behind these decisions.

Karina C report published

News story

Fatal accident during cargo operations on Karina C while in Seville, Spain.



Our accident investigation report into a fatal crush incident on the general cargo vessel Karina C on 24 May 2019, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

Statement from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

Ship's decks are dangerous places and this accident could have been avoided if personnel operating Karina C's deck that day had adhered to established safe working practices. The limited space available and ambient noise on deck mean that travelling gantry cranes, common on many operators' vessels, can be particularly hazardous. Recently they have been involved in a number of fatal accidents and the MAIB is currently investigating another tragic death in similar circumstances. The accident on Karina C is a further case where excess alcohol consumption almost certainly contributed to the death of a seafarer.

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National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 national winners unveiled

- Over 1100 applications received from across England
- 28 employer, apprentice and individual national winners and highly commended announced
- Winners from 24 English towns and cities

The best of England's apprentice employers, apprentices, rising stars and individuals who champion apprenticeships have been announced during the 17th annual National Apprenticeship Awards.

Apprentices, at all levels and from sectors including construction, engineering and business, alongside employers from the health, leisure and ICT sectors were announced as winners during the online broadcast, today 25 November 2020. Ten winners and 18 highly commended finalists were recognised from across all nine English regions.

BBC's Dan Walker, host of the 17th annual National Apprenticeship Awards

The National Apprenticeship Awards shine the spotlight on business and individual success in apprenticeships, particularly poignant, given the many challenges employers and apprentices have faced this year during the pandemic. The national ceremony showcased examples of where apprentices have gone above and beyond in their apprenticeship to make a real difference.

Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

Huge congratulations to all of the winners. It's fantastic to see

so many excellent examples of employers of all sizes continuing to embrace the benefits apprenticeships have to offer, and all the apprentices who have gone above and beyond.

The National Apprenticeships Awards are a brilliant opportunity to showcase the power of apprenticeships to transform lives and businesses, while helping people of all ages and backgrounds to get ahead.

Apprenticeships will continue to play a vital role helping us to build back better from coronavirus. I wish all the winners all the best for the future.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

With such strong competition in businesses right across the country, the winners of this year's National Apprenticeship Awards should hold their heads up high.

There's a reason why so many apprentices stay in a job or do further training afterwards – it's because apprenticeships work. That's why we're doing everything we can to make sure people can continue learning while expanding their job prospects – much like today's winners – and why this week we announced cash incentives to hire apprentices, meaning businesses can benefit from their talents.

Each and every apprentice is vital to the national effort to recover from the pandemic and build back better.

Apprenticeships are a cornerstone of the [Chancellor's Plan for Jobs](#) to help the UK's recovery from the pandemic. Through the Plan for Jobs a total of £1.6 billion will be invested in scaling up employment support schemes, training and apprenticeships to help people looking for a job.

This includes:

- The [Incentive Payment for Hiring a New Apprentice](#), where businesses will be given £2,000 for each new apprentice they hire under the age of 25, and £1,500 for each apprentice aged 25 and over.
- A £111 million investment to triple the scale of traineeships in 2020-21 ensuring more young people have access to high quality training.

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners and two highly commended in each category are:

Employer categories:

| Award | Category | Employer |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Winner | The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Award for SME Employer of the Year | Troup Bywaters + Anders |
| Highly Commended | The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Award for SME Employer of the Year | Snow-Camp Charity & Crimson Limited |
| Winner | The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year | WEC Group Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year | MTR Elizabeth Line & Home Group Ltd |
| Winner | The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year | BAE Systems plc |
| Highly Commended | The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year | Royal Air Force |
| Winner | The Accenture Award for Recruitment Excellence | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service & United Utilities |
| Highly Commended | The Accenture Award for Recruitment Excellence | Mitchells & Butlers & MTR Elizabeth Line |

Individual categories winners and highly commended:

| Award | Category | Name | Employer |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Winner | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Maisey Hammond | Stroud District Council |
| Highly Commended | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Aron Marshall | COOP |
| Highly Commended | The AstraZeneca Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year | Joshua Foord | Sunbelt Rentals |
| Winner | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Chris Jones | J.C. Bamford Excavators Limited |
| Highly Commended | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Scott Murton | Ministry of Defence – Submarine Delivery Agency |
| Highly Commended | The BT Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year | Emma Sisman | Niftylift |
| Winner | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year | Laurie Weatherall | GlaxoSmithKline |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentices of the Year | Harriet Willsher | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Navy Award for Higher or Degree Apprentices of the Year | Manoj Vadher | Royal Mail |

| Award | Category | Name | Employer |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Winner | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Howard Jackson | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Nihal Dhillon | J C Bamford Excavators Limited |
| Highly Commended | The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year | Jordan Brosnan | Coca-Cola European Partners |
| Winner | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Jenny Taylor | IBM UK Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Paula McMahon | Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd |
| Highly Commended | The Royal Air Force Award for Apprentice Champion of the Year | Alison Galvin | Invotra |

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 also recognised apprentices and their employers as they continued through the challenge of COVID-19, showcasing the most inspiring stories from across the country.

Employer submitted stories were accepted as entries for this years' **Special Recognition Award**, in association with The Armed Forces (Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force) – with the winner announced as Great Ormond Street Hospital apprentice healthcare support worker Amber James, who worked on the frontline in the Nightingale Hospital in Excel London as a clinical support worker. Amber worked on the frontline during the height of the pandemic; committing to and learning during a new and challenging nursing experience. Amber is now due to start her degree apprenticeship in registered nursing.

Peter Mucklow, Director, Apprenticeships, Education and Skills Funding Agency said:

We are delighted to reveal the National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners today, recognising the employers, apprentices and champions of apprenticeships, as well as the rising stars of our future workforce. Amber is a wonderful example of how apprentices have contributed during the pandemic and she thoroughly deserves her special recognition award.

The number and quality of entries this year was outstanding, demonstrating the importance of apprenticeships for employers and individuals alike. I thank all entrants for taking time to share their apprenticeship journey, whilst congratulating those who have won, or were highly commended.

The support from our ambassadors and sponsors has been magnificent. In such difficult times their commitment means we could still celebrate the very best apprentices and apprenticeships in 2020.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service was crowned The Accenture Award winner for Recruitment Excellence.

Katherine Metcalfe, Head of People and Organisational Development from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service said:

We are absolutely delighted to have been recognised through the National Apprenticeship Awards for our commitment to apprenticeships across our organisation. We are proud we can offer excellent training and development opportunities for our current workforce and those joining our Service through accredited programmes.

We firmly believe in growing and nurturing our own talent and apprenticeships offer us an alternative route for our staff to learn on the job and gain meaningful qualifications. Being the first Fire and Rescue Service in the country to offer Firefighter apprenticeships and to see our programme be successful make us feel extremely proud. As we embark onto our 4th cohort our commitment to our apprenticeship programme couldn't be higher.

Find out more about the apprentices recognised for going above and beyond by visiting: <https://apprenticesonthefrontline.co.uk/>.

Watch Amber's story on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/aDMZHbUCbtA>

More information on National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 winners can be found by visiting: <https://appawards.co.uk/>

Follow [@Apprenticeships](#) on Twitter and the National Apprenticeship Service page on LinkedIn to keep up to date with all the latest awards information.

[Addressing a Syrian-led political transition and the humanitarian crisis in Syria](#)

Many thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to Deputy Special Envoy Matar and Deputy

Emergency Coordinator Rajasingham for their briefings and for their continued tireless efforts to resolve the conflict and help Syrians in need.

Unfortunately, both the process for achieving peace and the situation across the country, as we've heard today, remain in a precarious state. We welcome the news of the formal plans for the fourth and fifth rounds of Constitutional Committee talks. However, it is now well over a year since the Council expressed its determination that this should be the beginning of a political process to end the conflict. And we remain concerned at the lack of substantive progress made by the committee.

While talks to resolve an almost 10 year conflict will be difficult and potentially lengthy, there is no excuse for the regime's obstructivism that has artificially prevented the talks from discussing matters of substance.

Madam President, resolution 2254 was explicit on the order of steps towards a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict, designed to allow the Syrian people to decide the future of their country. Only once agreement has been reached on a new constitution can free and fair elections, as part of the political process envisaged in resolution 2254, take place. Elections that do not meet these requirements, that are not held pursuant to the new constitution, that are not administered under supervision of the UN to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including the diaspora eligible to participate, would only serve to delegitimise and subvert the political process agreed by this Council and the wider international community. Surely a Syrian government confident in its prospects in a free and fair election would not want elections to happen on these terms.

The United Kingdom also calls for substantial progress to be made on the other facets of 2254. Confidence-building measures are sorely needed in order to contribute to the viability of the political process. And progress on the release of those arbitrarily detained should be moving swiftly, but instead it remains stuck.

We once again highlight the continuing shocking human rights violations in Syria, including the treatment of prisoners by all parties outlined in the Commission of Inquiry's September report. Particularly harrowing are accounts of detainees being beaten with sticks and cables and bound around tires by the regime.

Madam Chair, the humanitarian situation across the country remains dire and is worsening, as we've heard today. 3.1 million people require additional support to get through a harsh winter and inclement weather is already having an impact. Only a few weeks ago, 10 IDP sites in northwest Syria suffered flooding, which destroyed 345 tents, impacting 1,733 individuals. As we heard today, when this happens, everything washes away: people's possessions, people's lives.

9.3 million people are food insecure, with a further 2.2 million at risk. As Ramesh says, this is 1.4 million more people than a year ago. And more than at any point during the crisis. Reports of three hour queues for bread are

deeply concerning. Consumption of bread exceeds production by around one million metric tons. And there are some 25,000 cases confirmed of COVID-19 across the country. This number has doubled since this Council last met on this item in October. Given that 92 percent of cases are not traceable to a known case, the actual number of cases is undoubtedly much higher.

To address all of these acute needs, it is essential that the UN and other humanitarian actors are given unimpeded access. The granting of access permissions in a timely manner is essential. And we reiterate the importance of a holistic humanitarian response.

Cross-border access, which was unnecessarily cut by other members of this Council earlier this year, remains of prime importance to Syrians faced with another harsh winter. And we need to see the issue of refugee returns in the context of these continuing dire conditions: a food crisis, a COVID crisis, an access crisis for humanitarians and the complete disregard of the regime for the rights of detainees. So while the need to build the conditions for a safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons remains, it is clear that these conditions are not even close to being achieved.

All this illustrates what a sham the recent Russian-hosted refugee conference in Damascus was: motivated by a desire to promote normalisation of the Syrian regime over the interests of Syrian refugees and Syrian people.

The issue of refugee returns is of the highest priority, but it must be discussed in a neutral location under the auspices of the UN. As resolution 2254 makes clear, the process needs to take into account the interests of those countries hosting refugees, and they also need to take into account the views and interests of refugees and internally displaced persons themselves.

Indeed, if the regime and Russia were genuinely serious about facilitating returns, they would make genuine efforts to address the conditions in Syria of their making, that make such returns unrealistic at present. And in parallel, if they were serious about resolving the crisis that causes these conditions, they would have engaged in the discussions in Geneva over the last year in a more constructive and meaningful way.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Foreign Secretary statement following a meeting with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister

Following a discussion about the conflict in Ethiopia with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has made the below statement.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I met today with the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen to discuss the deeply concerning situation in the Tigray region. I made clear that there should be an immediate end to violence by both sides, civilians who remain in the region must be protected, and I expressed particular concern about the impact on civilians of the planned siege of Tigray's capital, Mekelle.

The government needs to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access and the restoration of basic services in Tigray. All parties to this conflict need to want to find a political solution and accept regional offers of mediation, to avoid a looming humanitarian crisis and the spread of fighting and suffering to other countries in the region.

The UK has been a longstanding supporter of Ethiopia, which has established itself as a beacon of reform in Africa. This conflict is putting all of those reform efforts at risk.

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