

# Action taken to halt sales of fingerprick coronavirus (COVID-19) antibody testing kits

News story

Anyone supplying these types of tests should temporarily stop this service.



The MHRA is asking providers of laboratory-based COVID-19 antibody testing services using capillary blood collected by a fingerprick, to temporarily stop providing this service until home collection of this sample type has been properly assessed and validated for use with these laboratory tests.

This does not affect rapid, point of care tests or laboratory tests performed using blood taken from the vein.

The Agency has [recently updated its guidance on home antibody testing kits](#), to ensure that the public and industry have the latest information on the reliability of test results and what they mean.

Graeme Tunbridge, MHRA Interim Director of Devices, comments:

Patient safety and public health are our main priorities and it is in the interests of everyone for antibody tests to be as reliable and meaningful as they can be.

There are several UK providers of testing services who offer COVID-19 antibody testing using a fingerprick sample of capillary blood collected in a small container.

We are asking all providers of laboratory-based COVID-19 antibody testing services using capillary blood collected by a fingerprick

to temporarily stop providing this service until home collection of this sample type has been properly assessed and validated for use with these laboratory tests.

Use of unvalidated sample types may lead to unreliable results and as such we are working closely with the service providers, laboratories and test manufacturers to resolve the regulatory and patient safety issues.

People who have purchased one of these sampling kits, and received an antibody test result, should not consider the result to be reliable and should not take any action based on it.

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## [Crime news: advocacy assistance now claimable on intensive paper reviews](#)



Providers of criminal legal aid services will now be able to claim advocacy assistance fees for intensive paper reviews.

The changes have been made by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) following on from the Parole Board's [recent announcement](#) that face-to-face oral hearings will be postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

As a result of this decision, cases directed or listed for an oral hearing will continue either as a remote hearing or be dealt with under a new intensive paper review process.

## Amendments

We have amended the 2017 standard crime contract relating to prison law following consultation with representative bodies. Once a case is directed or listed for an oral hearing then the case will be claimable as advocacy assistance.

This also includes when a decision is taken under the new intensive paper review process.

We have also amended contracted work and administration (CWA) codes guidance for reporting crime lower work.

The new contract and reporting amendments are effective from 26 June 2020.

## Further information

[Standard Crime Contract 2017](#) – to view amended contract specification effective from 26 June 2020

[CWA codes guidance](#) – to view ‘updated guidance for reporting crime lower work’

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Last updated 26 June 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

### 1. 26 June 2020

We have added additional information on guidance for reporting crime lower work in contracted work and administration (CWA).

### 2. 29 May 2020

First published.

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## [UK provides further support in Pakistan's fight against Coronavirus](#)

The United Kingdom is providing further assistance to Pakistan in the fight to stop the spread of the coronavirus and mitigate its impacts, by providing aid for the most vulnerable, and boosting wider public health communications.

This latest £4.39m package of support includes:

**Being the first donor to contribute to Pakistan's Humanitarian Pooled Fund**

## **(PHPF)**

UK aid support for PPHF will help provide comprehensive support to fight the coronavirus and help those impacted indirectly by the crisis. This includes supporting emergency response systems and providing assistance towards food security, sanitation and hygiene, mental health and psychological support.

### **Supporting Aawaz II, which aims to empower and protect women and children**

This joint programme from UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women will provide support to nearly 10,000 women and children who face violence in their own home through, the Aawaz helplines staffed by men and women trained in the provision of psychosocial support and referral services. The Aawaz programme will also reach nearly 2 million people with messages fighting against stigma and discrimination as a result of coronavirus;

### **Supporting the Khairkhwah information campaign**

The Khairkhwah campaign – which means Well Wisher – on TV and radio will reach up to 80 million people with messages on how to taking appropriate safety measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus in communities, as well as tackling coronavirus misinformation. This campaign will reach those living in rural and semi-urban areas who may otherwise struggle to get the latest information.

Lord Ahmad, UK Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth said:

By supporting the poorest and most vulnerable people, especially those facing discrimination and by spreading information on how to protect against coronavirus, we can save lives. The UK is proud to support Pakistan, and through our investment in international vaccine research and the Global Vaccine Alliance, we will help end this pandemic sooner and prevent future waves of infection.

The UK stands with you in these difficult times.

The British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner CMG said:

Pakistan has shown international leadership in its response, balancing the need to keep healthy, with growing the economy and protecting the poorest. Friends must stand together at difficult times.

Although we are socially distancing, we are not apart.

Head of Office for the UK's Department for International Development in Pakistan, Annabel Gerry, said:

It is increasingly important that we work together to help those

who are the most vulnerable. This is why I am proud that UK aid will be there for the women and children who face increased threats of violence and stigma in their own home and need access to these support services.

The UK is playing a leading role in the global effort to tackle coronavirus, including on vaccine development, strengthening health systems and support for the global economy. On 4 June the UK will host the Global Vaccine Summit, to raise money to ensure Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, can vaccinate 300 million more children against infectious diseases including in Pakistan. By working together as international partners to defeat this pandemic, we are all safer.

### **Note to editors:**

- High Commissioner's [video message](#) to mark the announcement;
- The UK is repurposing its Department for International Development (DFID) aid programme to focus on coronavirus. This includes providing immediate health and humanitarian assistance to detect the virus, boost local health systems, and protect communities.
- The PHPF funding of £2.5m is linked to strategic objectives outlined in the Pakistan Preparedness and Response Plan and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Pakistan.
- In partnership with the UN Joint Programs team £888,337 is being provided to fund psychosocial support services for women and girls who face violence in the home, as well as raising awareness for precautionary measures against coronavirus and its symptoms.
- The Khairkhwah campaign has been delivered by Icarus for radio and M&C Saatchi for TV.
- UK aid helps to tackle the global challenges of our time and is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world.
- The UK has so far pledged £764 million of UK aid to end the coronavirus pandemic as quickly as possible. By preventing the virus from spreading in vulnerable countries, we will save millions of lives around the world and reduce the risk of future waves of infection.
- The UK is leading international efforts to develop a coronavirus vaccine. We have provided £250 million of UK aid to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to rapidly develop a coronavirus vaccine, the biggest donation of any country.
- The UK has pledged £200 million to help global organisations and charities tackle coronavirus in vulnerable countries. This includes £130 million for UN appeals, including £65 million for the World Health Organization (WHO); £50 million for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appeals; and £20 million for international NGOs, including UK charities, to tackle the virus.
- The UK has allocated £150 million to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust (CCRT) to help developing countries meet their debt repayments so that they can focus their available resources on tackling coronavirus.

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## [UK establishes voting rights treaty with Poland](#)

The UK and Poland have signed a treaty that secures the right of British and Polish citizens to stand and vote in local elections in each other's countries following the UK's exit from the EU. This ensures that British people living in Poland and Polish citizens living in the UK have the right to choose who represents them in local government in the country where they reside.

The treaty was signed by the UK's Ambassador to Poland, Jonathan Knott and the Polish Secretary of State for Legal and Treaty Affairs, Piotr Wawrzyk, today (Friday 29 May) in Warsaw.

Foreign Office Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton, said:

We have protected the rights of nearly a million British and Polish citizens who live and work in each other's countries. This treaty underlines our countries' shared commitment to democracy and is a testament to the close ties between the UK and Poland, and our people. These ties have never been more important, as our countries work in partnership to overcome the global challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

British Ambassador to Poland, Jonathan Knott said:

We have been determined that the difficult working environments we are all operating in due to the coronavirus pandemic should be no barrier to ensuring the rights of UK nationals living in Poland to elect their local representatives for many years to come, rights that will also be protected for Polish nationals living in the UK. I'm delighted we have reached this agreement – a sign of the depth

of our bilateral relationship and the respect our countries have for each other.

Secretary of State for Legal and Treaty Affairs at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Piotr Wawrzyk, said:

Today's ceremony of the signing of the Polish-British agreement on the electoral rights in the local elections in Poland and the United Kingdom bears a special, symbolic character. It is a proof that ties between Poland and the United Kingdom remain strong and resistant, also in the adverse circumstances of the global pandemic. Our relations have never been closer than they are today. Poland and Britain co-operate closely in many important areas, we are linked by many formats of bilateral co-operation, the most important of which being the annual Intergovernmental Consultations. The agreement signed today proves that both countries want to maintain the closest relations possible, also following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

This document, however, has – first and foremost – a human and civic dimension. It strengthens the ties between our countries by building a sense of the Polish-British community on the local level, both here in Poland, and in Britain. The effect of our joint efforts is confirmation of the full electoral rights at the local level for Poles living in the United Kingdom, as well as for the British people who chose Poland as their home.

I am convinced that the agreement will serve to further strengthen our strategic relations, which will continue to grow also after the end of the transitional period.

Poland's Ambassador to the UK, Arkady Rzegocki said:

On behalf of Poles living and working in the United Kingdom, I would like to express great satisfaction at the fact that they will be able to continue to take an active part in the political life of their local communities. The ability for Poles to choose their representatives in local authorities, but also to apply for the positions of councillors and mayors, is of great significance not only for increasing the visibility of our compatriots in the United Kingdom – who have lived here for generations and have contributed significantly to the British cultural, economic and social life – but it also gives practical tools to implement their important demands.

This is another proof of how the Polish government is determined that the rights of Poles are not weakened after the UK exits the EU.

Poland is the fourth country to sign a voting rights treaty with the UK, following treaties signed with Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg last year.

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## Meet RWM's Chief Scientific Adviser

News story

In her own words: a blog by Prof Cherry Tweed



Professor Cherry Tweed

In RWM's latest blog, Chief Scientific Adviser Cherry Tweed reflects on her career, how ways of working have changed, and on our progress towards delivering a safe, long-term solution for higher activity radioactive waste.

In her blog, Cherry says:

Being involved in a project that's going to make a difference has been really important to me. Nuclear waste exists, and we need to manage it for ourselves and for future generations. It's a complex problem, which involves thinking about things on the microscopic scale and understanding how entire geological regions will change over hundreds of thousands of years. That's what makes the job so interesting.

Dr Cherry Tweed on a technical visit to Cigar Lake, Saskatchewan, May 1991

You can read the blog in full [here](#).

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