

# Further expansion of access to coronavirus testing helps protect the most vulnerable

- Everyone in England aged 65 and over with coronavirus symptoms can now get tested, along with symptomatic members of their household
- Symptomatic workers who are unable to work from home also eligible for testing
- Testing of all asymptomatic NHS and social care staff and care home residents also being rolled out
- New expansion of testing made possible due to rapidly increasing testing capacity

Anyone in England with symptoms of coronavirus who has to leave home to go to work, and all symptomatic members of the public aged 65 and over, will now be able to get tested, the government has announced today.

This will mean people who cannot work from home and those aged 65 and over can know for sure whether they have coronavirus and need to continue isolating.

Members of their households with symptoms – a new continuous cough or high temperature – will also be eligible for testing.

Anyone eligible can book a test using an [online portal](#).

The government also announced that NHS staff, care home staff and care home residents will be eligible for testing whether or not they have symptoms.

Working with Public Health England, the Care Quality Commission and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the government is piloting sending packages of 'satellite' test kits directly to care homes across England to enable testing of residents.

So far, 4,760 tests have been delivered to more than 4,300 locations. In addition, over 25,000 care staff have already been tested.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Expansion of our testing programme protects our most vulnerable and keeps people safe.

Testing is now available to all over 65s and members of their households, if they have symptoms.

Any worker who needs to leave their home in order to go to work, and their households, if any of them have symptoms can also get a test. This means construction workers to emergency plumbers,

research scientists to those in manufacturing – can now be tested.

All they need to do is go on the internet and apply for a test.

Testing for coronavirus helps the government and scientists understand its current spread and plan how to manage the pandemic.

As capacity has increased, testing has been offered to different groups in a phased approach, prioritising NHS workers. However, the ultimate aim is that anyone who needs a test will be able to have one.

Today's announcement marks a further step towards that goal. It follows the announcement last week that all essential workers with symptoms can now book a coronavirus test, or order a home testing kit, using the new online portal.

There are now more than 40 drive-through testing sites across the country, and, by the end of the week, 25,000 home testing kits will be available for ordering every day.

A network of mobile testing units is also travelling the country to reach care homes, police stations, prisons and other sites where there is demand for testing. The network is expected to reach over 70 units by the weekend.

Since the beginning of April, the government has significantly increased the UK's coronavirus testing capacity, which currently stands at 73,400 tests per day and is on track to reach 100,000 tests daily by the end of the month.

The response to coronavirus is a national effort. Each of the devolved administrations will have their own eligibility criteria and testing priorities, however the government is working closely to align approaches.

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## [Update on the Ventilator Challenge](#)

Following a review by an expert panel of clinicians, including NHS clinicians and the regulator, the MHRA, the Government will be ending support for four devices in the Ventilator Challenge. Recognising the Government's need to create effective ventilators at pace, the panel concluded that other designs could better meet the clinical needs of the NHS at this time.

Government efforts to increase ventilator capacity have already seen an additional 2,400 mechanical ventilators made available to the NHS since the start of the pandemic, with over 250 coming from the Ventilator Challenge so far. The number of extra ventilators rises to 6,745 in total, when you include both mechanical and non-invasive ventilators

The UK now has 10,900 mechanical invasive ventilators available to the NHS, as well as 4,300 non-invasive devices.

During the coronavirus pandemic, everyone who has required a ventilator has had access to one, but the Government will continue to increase capacity through its three pillar strategy: procuring more ventilators from overseas, scaling up the production of existing or modified designs and working to design and manufacture new devices.

The Government recently announced that 15,000 Penlon Prima ES02 ventilators have been ordered, the first newly-adapted device to receive regulatory approval in the Ventilator Challenge, with production set to ramp up in the coming weeks. Smiths paraPAC ventilators, an existing device, are also being manufactured at speed and at scale as part of the Ventilator Challenge.

Devices that have been selected to continue as part of the Ventilator Challenge have been selected based upon expert clinical and technical advice. This includes feedback from rigorous testing of the ventilators by clinical experts to ensure that they meet the necessary standards for patient safety and effectiveness of treatment, which is of vital importance for any new ventilator design. This selection criteria also takes into account projections for ventilator demand, the availability of other devices which already have regulatory approval, the performance and clinical usefulness of each device and the progress to date on each device's overall development.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

The innovation, teamwork and commitment shown by manufacturers involved in the Ventilator Challenge has been inspirational.

While the Government will be ending support for four of the devices in the Ventilator Challenge today, I want to put on record my sincere thanks to everyone involved.

They are heroes of our national effort and their contribution to protecting our NHS and saving lives will not be forgotten.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Since we launched the Ventilator Challenge the ingenuity and innovation shown by so many companies has been truly awe-inspiring and has helped us continue to get ventilators to the frontline and keep capacity ahead of demand.

Technology and innovation, operating hand-in-hand with the care and dedication of our fantastic health and social care staff, will help us overcome this virus.

I want to thank every company, and their staff, for their phenomenal achievements in going forward to the next stage.

Following the recommendations of the expert panel, the Government will

continue to provide support to four devices, as well the Penlon and paraPAC. We are scaling up production of existing Breas Medical devices, the Nippy 4+ & Vivo65, with the first units expected next month. In addition, two devices are subject to ongoing review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the NHS:

- Zephyr Plus, made by Babcock
- Gemini, made by OES Medical

Five other devices will continue to be eligible for support before being reassessed by a further clinical panel next week:

- Piran Vent, made by Swagelok
- Veloci-Vent, made by Cambridge Consultants Ltd and MetLase
- Sagentia Ventilator, made by Sagentia
- CoVent, made by TTP and Dyson
- AirCare, made by BAE Systems

From the start of the challenge we have been clear that not all designs would necessarily be taken forward and so today the Cabinet Office is ceasing support for four ventilator designs. These are:

- EVA, made by TEAM and Cogent Technology
- Helix, made by Diamedica and Plexus
- OxVent, made by KCL, Oxford University and Smith+Nephew
- InVicto, made by JFD

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## [Government confirms allocations of £1.6 billion funding boost for councils](#)

Individual councils in England have had their [funding allocations](#) confirmed today (Tuesday 28 April) following Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick's announcement of £1.6 billion in additional funding.

The £1.6 billion funding, recently announced, means councils in England will be provided with over £3.2 billion to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus.

During the pandemic, councils are playing a crucial role and this extra funding will help them to continue to deliver frontline services and support to those who need it most, as well as meeting new pressures.

Their work includes getting rough sleepers off the streets, supporting clinically vulnerable people and providing assistance for our public health

workforce.

The funding will be distributed to councils across England based on their population and the latest assessment on the challenges they are facing.

The split of funding between county and district councils also reflects the financial pressure being felt by councils as a result of residents doing the right thing and staying at home, rather than using services including car parks and leisure facilities. A clear majority of district councils will now receive more than £1m of additional funding to ensure they are fully supported.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Councils are playing a central role in our national fight against coronavirus and the government continues to back them at this challenging time.

That's why I announced an extra £3.2 billion of support for councils to help them to continue their extraordinary efforts.

Today I'm setting out how the latest £1.6 billion of this will be allocated to councils in the fairest way possible, recognising the latest and best assessment of the pressures they face.

We are backing local district councils and the vast majority will receive at least £1m in additional funding.

The government has confirmed the funding will not be ringfenced, recognising councils are best placed to decide how to meet pressures in their local area.

The split between county and district authorities will be 65:35. Where there are separate fire authorities, a specific tier split for fire of 3% will be used.

This funding is part of comprehensive package of support that has also included allowing councils to defer £2.6 billion in business rates payments to central government and brought forward £850 million in social care grants paid to councils from this month.

The Government has today also confirmed that the Review of Relative Needs and Resource and 75% business rates retention will no longer be implemented in 2021-22. This will allow councils to focus on meeting the immediate public health challenge posed by the pandemic.

The Government will continue to work with councils on the best approach to the next financial year, including how to treat accumulated business rates growth and the approach to the 2021-22 local government finance settlement.

- The allocations of this £1.6 billion have been published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

- On 19 March we announced an initial £1.6 billion for local councils. These funding allocations were based on a mixture of Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formulas and Settlement Funding Assessment.
  - On 18 April we announced a further £1.6 billion funding for local councils. These funding allocations are based on a per capita basis, and there will be a 65:35 split between county and district authorities. Where there are separate fire authorities a specific tier split for fire of 3% will be used.
  - In total we have provided over £3.2 billion to local councils to reflect expenditure pressures and potential loss in income.
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## [Update on COVID-19 in prisons](#)

This follows new modelling by Public Health England (PHE) and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that indicates jails are successfully limiting deaths and the transmission of the virus within the estate.

The new modelling predicts a drastic reduction in the spread rates of the infection compared to previous forecasts, with each case being passed on to less than one person –and monitoring suggests overall infection rates are falling.

This means that as a result of the strong measures introduced by HMPPS, lives should be saved and the NHS is being protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks.

HMPPS is containing the spread of COVID-19 within jails using an approach known as ‘compartmentalisation’. Through this approach, staff have isolated those with symptoms, and many prisons have been able to shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals.

Separating those with symptoms has been ongoing since early February and coupled with the wider action taken, this has limited the spread of confirmed Coronavirus cases in jails. The majority of those infected have now made a successful recovery.

HMPPS took decisive action in March to minimise movements between jails to avoid thousands of prisoners and staff becoming infected with the virus. Strong further measures were introduced to ease pressure on prisons with the early release of [low-risk offenders](#), [temporary expansion of the estate](#), and work to reduce the number of those held on remand.

The new modelling shows that reducing the prison population by 5,000 could be

effective in limiting the spread of the virus. Thanks to wide measures taken, the population has already reduced by almost 3,000 over a seven-week period. Combining a reduction in the prison population, creating additional headroom in the estate, and managing prisoners through 'compartmentalisation', HMPPS can continue to protect life.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

This Government has taken unprecedented action during this difficult period to save lives and protect the NHS. I cannot express sufficient gratitude to the hard-working prison and healthcare staff, and prisoners, who have allowed this to take place. My thoughts are with all of those affected by this terrible virus.

We know further progress is needed if we are to continue to strike a balance between limiting the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the public. We appreciate that unusual measures will need to remain in place for some time and significant challenges remain.

But there are positive signs that our carefully implemented approach is limiting the impact of this initial phase of the pandemic – actual cases and deaths so far are much lower than originally predicted. We will continue to do everything possible to make sure this remains the case.

Prison staff have continued to ensure the effective running of jails and many hundreds are returning to work after periods of absence to comply with public health guidance.

This is being helped by an increase in staff testing, with over a thousand referred for testing in the past fortnight. Personal protective equipment is also being provided to prison officers and all jails have the soap and cleaning materials they need.

Work to create the additional space in the prison estate will continue at pace, with the installation of hundreds of temporary, single occupancy cells alongside the scheme to release low-risk offenders. Efforts to expedite sentencing hearings for those on remand are ongoing.

All our actions have been informed by the advice of experts from PHE and will be kept under constant review. The [revised model](#) on transmission of COVID-19 in prisons is available.

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# Trade Remedies Authority Chief Executive Designate steps down

News story

The Director of the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) and Chief Executive Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has stepped down.



Claire Bassett, Director of the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) and Chief Executive Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has announced her resignation from the post and is set to take up a new role at the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

Simon Walker CBE, Chair Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority will continue to head up the organisation while a new Chief Executive Designate is appointed.

The Reading-based Trade Remedies Authority will be the UK-wide body responsible for investigating claims of harmful and unfair trading practices, such as the dumping of foreign products on the UK market at below fair market rates.

It will come into effect once the Trade Bill is passed. As the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate, it has already begun operations and is carrying out transition reviews into current EU measures to make sure that they are fit for purpose for UK industry.

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