

### **Rapid testing for employees starts with key workers**

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy has written to the BVRLA confirming that those working in England who cannot work from home will soon be able to access rapid testing to ensure vital public and economic services can continue.

Those working for businesses that provide critical services, including vehicle rental firms, are first to be eligible and can now register interest by emailing [employee.testing@beis.gov.uk](mailto:employee.testing@beis.gov.uk).

BEIS will be hosting a series of introductory webinars every day this week, so members are encouraged to register interest as soon as possible.

The Government has also updated its [Guidance on the different types of tests](#) available, including asymptomatic testing.

### **Testing requirements for HGV drivers going overseas**

Several countries have [introduced Covid-19 testing requirements](#) for hauliers. The guidelines are different in each country and operators and drivers are advised to [check the rules](#) and list of available test sites before travelling.

HGV drivers must now have a negative test before driving to France, Denmark and the Netherlands.

### **Latest transport usage figures**

The Department for Transport has published its [latest weekly transport usage figures](#) showing that motor vehicle usage has dropped by around 50% over the weekend, with midweek usage peaked at 63% of pre-pandemic levels.

Public transport usage remains low with national rail and London Underground usage both peaking at 16% over the past week, and Underground usage falling as low as 12% at the weekend.

### **Tax rules on employers paying for tests for staff**

[Guidance](#) on how to treat taxable expenses and benefits when they are paid to employees because of coronavirus has been updated. It also explains how to report them to HMRC.

Coronavirus tests provided by the Government, as part of its national testing scheme, are not treated as a benefit-in-kind for tax purposes.

If you're providing testing kits to employees outside of the Government's national testing scheme, either directly or by purchasing tests that are carried out by a third party, no Income Tax or Class 1A National Insurance contributions will be due.

Similarly, employers and their employees will not be liable to any Income Tax or National Insurance contributions, where an employee receives money from their employer for obtaining a test.

### **Those isolating have 28 days to claim £500 support**

[Guidance has been updated](#) to include that those who are eligible to make a claim for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme or a discretionary payment, can do so up to 28 days after the first day of their period of self-isolation. The scheme is currently due to end on 31 January 2021.

Those eligible for either the Test and Trace Support Payment or a discretionary payment, will receive the £500 payment on top of any benefits and Statutory Sick Pay received.

### **Vaccine update**

The [Government has reported](#) that NHS has vaccinated over 4m people between 8 December and 17 January, including more than half of those aged 80 and over more than half in elderly care homes.

[Letters](#) have been sent to those aged 70 and over and the clinically extremely vulnerable in England inviting them to get their vaccinations as the NHS begins roll out to the next 2 priority groups.

The British Army is establishing [80 new Covid-19 vaccine centres for NHS Scotland](#) from 18 January as part of the largest peacetime resilience operation ever undertaken by the UK Armed Forces.