

Coronavirus Plan B rules to be reviewed before the new end date of 26th January 2022. According to Number 10, Mr Johnson told his team that "next few weeks would be very challenging, particularly for the NHS where the number of people going into hospital because of Omicron will increase". He also said the "UK's balanced approach, together with new evidence that Omicron is less severe than Delta, meant it was right to maintain the Plan B measures". Downing Street added: "Cabinet agreed this approach and put on record its thanks and appreciation for the incredible efforts of NHS staff who are once again rising to the challenge of the global pandemic." The regulations will be reviewed once more before they are set to expire on 26 January.

Asymptomatic people in England and Scotland will not need to have follow-up PCR if they have a positive lateral flow test. Under the new rules from 11th January in England and 6th January in Scotland, people without symptoms can start their isolation from the day of their positive lateral flow test and will not need a follow-up PCR to confirm. The aim is to prevent prolonging isolation for workers who may have been waiting for a confirmatory PCR result. (For self-isolation see fig 1 below)

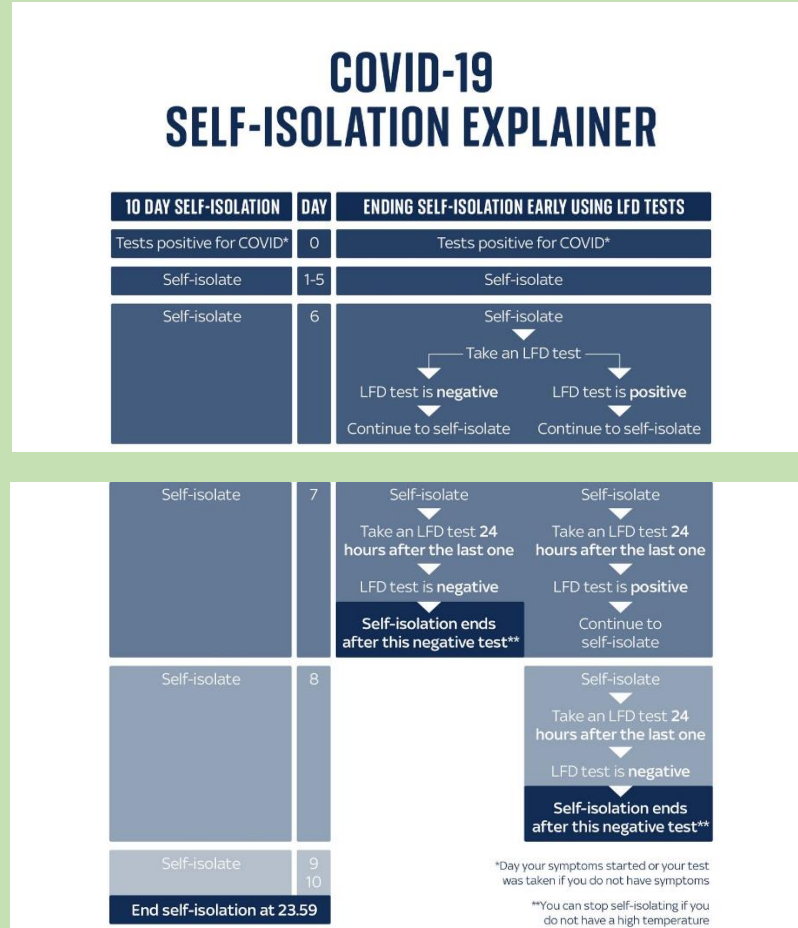
Pre-departure testing for UK arrivals to be scrapped from 4am Friday 7th January 2022. Pre-departure testing will no longer be required for travellers returning to England and arrivals will not have to isolate until they get a negative PCR test but will instead have to take a lateral flow test at the end of day two after arriving. If that is positive, they will then have to take a confirmatory PCR test to help identify any new variants.

Summer exams likely to go ahead as usual, says education secretary Nadhim Zahawi. Students have faced severe disruption since the pandemic struck in March 2020, with exams cancelled and schooling moved online for months. While updating MPs on how coronavirus is hitting schools, Mr Zahawi also admitted that staff absences are likely to rise. He added that children wearing face coverings in classrooms will "help reduce transmission."

Daily tests for frontline workers. At a Downing Street news briefing, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that from 10th January 100,000 workers "from food processing to transport to Border Force" would be tested every day at work. These lateral flow tests will be sent directly to workplaces, with the government helping organise logistics, he added.

Lateral flow tests for unvaccinated contacts in Wales. Previously in Wales, unvaccinated contacts of a positive COVID cases were expected to isolate and do PCR tests on Day 2 and 8. From 5 January they are being swapped with lateral flow tests to "help increase PCR testing capacity".

Fig 1



<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://fortel.co.uk/covid-19>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://mhfaengland.org/>

<https://www.lighthouseclub.org/>