

UK warns COVID travel test providers over pricing

August 23 2021



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The British government said on Monday it had warned dozens of domestic private medical testing companies over "misleading prices" for coronavirus travel tests, following a review of costs and standards.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) said more than 80 firms would be issued a "two-strike warning" and could be removed from the government's online database of test providers if they fail to accurately advertise their prices.

It added that the companies would now also face regular spot checks to ensure prices are accurate and providers are legitimate.

As many as 82 firms—around 18 percent of the database—were identified as displaying lower [prices](#) on the list than are actually available on their website at the point of checkout, according to the ministry.

It launched the review amid a public backlash over the cost of compulsory COVID-19 tests after returning to the UK from abroad.

The government currently requires a range of tests depending on where the traveller has come from, with even fully vaccinated UK residents required to take at least one [test](#) two days after their return.

"It is absolutely unacceptable for any private testing [company](#) to be taking advantage of holidaymakers and today's action clamps down on this cowboy behaviour," said Health Secretary Sajid Javid.

"We are also introducing regular spot checks this week to make sure all private providers follow the rules and meet our high standards of transparency."

Companies will be removed from the government's database if they fail to take action within three days of receiving a "strike one" warning, the DHSC said.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulator is also carrying out a review of the market amid the concerns about the high

cost of PCR tests for travel.

Earlier this month, the DHSC said the cost of tests supplied by the state-run health service for international arrivals would be reduced from £88 to £68 for fully vaccinated travellers or those not required to quarantine under the travel rules.

Meanwhile the cost for people arriving from certain countries while not fully jabbed was reduced from £170 to £136 for two tests.

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Citation: UK warns COVID travel test providers over pricing (2021, August 23) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-08-uk-covid-pricing.html>

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