Welcome to the BEIS Bulletin from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Here's the latest news from BEIS:

COVID UPDATES

Support grants

Businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in England that have been impacted by Omicron are now able to access grants of up to £6,000 as a one-off support payment from their Local Authority. Grants will be awarded per premises depending on rateable value.

In addition, other businesses that have been affected, such as those that supply the hospitality and leisure sectors as well as personal care services, are also able to apply for grants from their local council. More than £100m is being made available to the Additional Restrictions Grant fund, which councils can give out at their discretion to businesses in need.

Businesses are encouraged to apply to their council for grant funding which will be administered over the coming weeks. Find your local authority on GOV.UK.

Suspension of confirmatory PCR tests

From 11 January in England people who receive a positive lateral flow test will be required to self-isolate immediately but won't need to take a confirmatory PCR test. With COVID-19 rates so high, the government is confident that someone with a positive lateral flow result has Covid and can act on that test result without needing a PCR test too.

People who wish to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment and those who receive a positive Day 2 lateral flow result after arriving into the UK will still be required to take a PCR test.

People with any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 are still strongly advised to take a PCR test, not a lateral flow test.

Tests for critical workers

The Government will provide free lateral flow tests for critical workers to help keep essential services running. Critical workers are those working in the operation or delivery of key infrastructure where any loss or compromise could result in significant loss of life or casualties, or those that would have a significant impact on national security, national defence, or the functioning of the state.

Any other worker who is required to attend their workplace in order to carry out their job is also strongly recommended to take a precautionary test before coming into contact with others either at work or on public transport. Lateral flow tests remain available through GOV.UK, pharmacies and Targeted Community Testing.

National Security and Investment Act comes into force

The National Security and Investment Act came into force this week. Under the Act, the government is able to scrutinise and intervene in certain acquisitions made by anyone, including businesses and investors, that could harm the UK's national security.

Under the new regime, businesses and investors must notify the government of certain acquisitions across 17 sensitive areas of the economy, including Artificial Intelligence and Civil Nuclear. We have published comprehensive guidance to help businesses understand their obligations under the new rules, including how to assess whether the government must be notified of an acquisition, and what to expect when going through the NSI notification and assessment process.

Sign up for webinars on using the UKCA mark

The new UKCA marking rules – replacing the CE mark – will come into force from 1 January 2023, and BEIS is running a series of webinars to help businesses understand the process of adopting UKCA safety markings.

The next webinar is on 18 January and focuses on businesses who have a role or involvement in the manufacturing or supply of CE / UKCA marked goods

on the GB market. The webinar will explain the roles and responsibilities of businesses involved in the supply of goods requiring the UKCA marking and how roles may have changed following the UK's exit from the European Union.

To sign up or to find out more information about the full programme of webinars, visit GOV.UK.

Other news:

- **Get Boosted Now** – vaccinations remain the best way to protect against Covid. Book an appointment on the NHS booking service or visit a COVID-19 walk-in vaccination site.
- Defra has announced the next two stages of the £100 million UK Seafood Fund designed to level up coastal communities across the UK and is hosting two webinars in January to explain how the funding works and how to navigate the application process:
    - Infrastructure fund webinar, Wednesday 12 January, 10.30am-12pm
    - Skills & training fund webinar, Wednesday 19 January, 10am-12pm
- New Acas guidance for employers – responsibilities when making changes to employment contracts
- The Office for the Internal Market has launched a digital reporting service to report issues and concerns about how the UK internal market is operating, including problems with buying or selling goods or services different parts of the UK, or difficulties using a professional qualification awarded in one part of the UK.

Useful links:

- Latest BEIS news and announcements
- Covid-19 Autumn/Winter Plan for England - guidance for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
- Find out how to make your workplace COVID-secure
- See all coronavirus guidance on GOV.UK