

# CMA launches next wave of action in PCR testing market



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CMA opens investigation into one of the largest PCR test providers.

A further 19 individual firms told to stop misleading prices or risk legal action.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has opened a formal investigation following complaints alleging that one private firm, Expert Medicals, has not provided tests and results in a timely manner or at all; has failed to respond to customer complaints; and has refused to issue refunds when due.

The firm, one of the largest providers of PCR travel tests in the UK this summer, has been the subject of a high number of complaints, both to Citizens Advice and more recently to the CMA. It now no longer appears on the list of testing providers who self-declare that they meet the Government's minimum standards for COVID-19 testing.

The CMA has also written to a further 19 test providers warning them to improve their pricing information or risk action in the future. The CMA is concerned that the 19 firms continue to falsely advertise tests at very low prices when they are either not available at that price or include hidden conditions, such as where the tests must be collected from.

This action comes after the CMA last week sent an open letter to PCR test providers warning that a range of harmful practices in the sector could breach consumer protection law.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive at the CMA, said:

Millions of people have to buy PCR tests in order to travel. If we find that firms have been misleading customers and failing

to provide the service that people have paid for, we stand ready to take action.

Our actions today are the next steps in our work to ensure the PCR testing market works for consumers and we are preparing to take further action in this sector.

Further information can be found on the CMA rapid review of PCR testing for travel web page and the PCR travel tests enforcement action web page.

## Notes to Editors

On 12 August the CMA provided an update on the areas it is exploring as part of its work on the PCR testing market. On 25 August the CMA published an open letter warning PCR test providers against breaking consumer law.

Today's announcement marks the start of the CMA's investigation into a possible breach of consumer law by Expert Medicals. No decision has yet been made on whether Expert Medicals is breaking the law.

Expert Medicals is a private PCR testing firm whose address is 12 New John Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 2QY and whose website is at [www.expert-medicals.co.uk](http://www.expert-medicals.co.uk).

In the CMA Chief Executive's letter to the Health Secretary, dated 10 August, we committed to providing the advice on the PCR testing market 'within a month'. An update will be provided shortly.

For media queries, please contact the press office via [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or on 020 3738 6460.

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