

# Fifth round of charter flights from India announced

Press release

The UK has announced seven further charter flights to bring over 2,000 stranded British travellers home from India.



Once these flights are completed, over 15,000 British travellers will have been brought back from India on 59 flights chartered by the Government.

Details of the flights are:

- Amritsar to London Heathrow on 5 May, 6 May, 7 May, 8 May, 9 May, 10 May, 11 May

Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Our charter programme has already helped more than 10,000 British travellers return home from India by ensuring flights to the UK have run every day since 8 April, with thousands more due to depart in the coming days.

These additional flights will help over 2,000 more people get back to their loved ones here in the UK. I would like to thank the Government of India for their help in making it happen.

Jan Thompson, Acting High Commissioner to India, said:

This fifth round of flights brings the total number of planes we have organised from India to 59. There have been daily departures from across the country for weeks, which have helped thousands of people get back to their friends and families in the UK.

My team and I will continue to do all we can to support British people who remain in India.

As with the last round of flights, seats on the planes will be allocated to those who have already registered via the government's online booking portal – CTM.

Staff at the British High Commission in India will continue to provide assistance to those waiting to return to the UK.

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, the UK has worked consistently with governments, air carriers and travel companies to minimise disruption and help British travellers return home safely – supported with £75 million for special charter flights to priority countries like India, focused on helping the most vulnerable people.

## **Background information**

- those who are eligible to fly will be sent information on how to get to airports and flight itineraries directly when their seat is confirmed
- details regarding flights and luggage allowance are available on the [India Travel Advice page](#)
- the UK Government has previously announced 52 charter flights bringing back over 13,000 people from India. Today's announcement brings that total to 59 flights, catering for 15,000 people. To date, over 10,000 of those people have travelled, with the remaining amount due in coming weeks
- the British High Commission continues to provide consular support to any British nationals who remain in India. Consular helpline numbers: New Delhi: +91 (11) 2419 2100; Chennai: +91 (44) 42192151; Mumbai/Goa: +91 (22) 6650 2222

## **Further information**

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## **[Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 30 April 2020](#)**

Good afternoon, welcome everyone again to this Number Ten press conference where I am joined by Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, and Sir Patrick Vallance our Chief Scientific Advisor

And I am sorry not to have been part of this trio for so long

I want to thank everybody who has been doing such a good job in my absence and

I want to thank the NHS for so much

Including getting me back here and I might add for a much happier hospital visit yesterday

In a few minutes I am going to hand over to Patrick to update you on the epidemic

But first I am going to set out today's latest data

901,905 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 81,611 tests yesterday

171,253 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 6,032 cases since yesterday

15,043 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus, compared to 15,359 people yesterday

And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 26,711 have now died. That's an increase of 674 fatalities since yesterday across all settings.

This figure of course includes deaths not just in hospitals.

Across this country, therefore, families every day are continuing to lose loved ones before their time

We grieve for them and with them

But as we grieve we are strengthened in our resolve to defeat this virus

To get this whole country back to health, back on its feet

And we are determined urgently and in particular to overcome those challenges that in the last few weeks have been so knotty and so infuriating

I'm not going to minimise the logistical problems we have faced in getting the right protective gear to the right people at the right time, both in the NHS and in care homes

Or the frustrations that we have experienced in expanding the numbers of tests

But what I can tell you is that everyone responsible for tackling these problems whether in

Government or the NHS, or Public Health England, local authorities

We are throwing everything at it, heart and soul, night and day

To get it right – and we will get it right and we are making huge progress

And I will not underrate the work and the achievement of those who are dealing with global shortages, in a global pandemic

They are rising to a challenge we have never seen in our lifetimes

And the same can be said of the entire people of this country Staying in enforced confinement

Not seeing family, not seeing friends or grandchildren

Worrying about their jobs and the future

And so my message to everyone again today is your effort and your sacrifice is working and has been proved to work

Today the number of Covid hospital admissions is falling

The number of patients in ICU is falling

We have so far succeeded in the first and most important task we set ourselves as a nation

To avoid the tragedy that engulfed other parts of the world

Because at no stage has our NHS been overwhelmed

No patient went without a ventilator

No patient was deprived of intensive care

We have five of the seven projected Nightingale wards

And it is thanks to that massive collective effort to shield the NHS that we avoided an uncontrollable and catastrophic epidemic where the reasonable worst case scenario was 500,000 deaths

And so I can confirm today for the first time that we are past the peak of this disease

We are past the peak and we are on the downward slope

And we have so many reasons to be hopeful for the long term

The UK is leading international efforts to find a vaccine

Today Oxford university has announced a partnership with Astrazeneca to develop what they believe could soon be a means of inoculating ourselves against this disease

But until this day comes – and I am afraid we cannot say exactly when it may be

We will have to beat this disease by our growing resolve and ingenuity

So I will be setting out a comprehensive plan next week

To explain how we can get our economy moving, one,

How we can get our children back to school, back into childcare, second, and third how we can travel to work and how we can make life in the workplace safer

And in short how we can continue to suppress the disease and at the same time re-start the economy.

A huge amount of work has been going on on that that plan and as we produce it we are being guided by the science, and we will try to build the maximum political consensus as we produce it across all parties and across the UK

But there will be five key tests that we must satisfy before we can put that plan into action

We must be sure that we can continue to protect the NHS and its ability to cope

We must see a sustained fall in deaths

We must be sure that the infection rate is falling

We must overcome the operational and logistical challenges on testing and PPE

Fifth, and this is the most important, we must all make sure that the measures we take do not risk a second spike that would overwhelm the NHS

We have come through the peak

Or rather we've come under what could have been a vast peak

as though we've been going through some huge alpine tunnel

And we can now see the sunlight and pasture ahead of us

And so it is vital that we do not now lose control and run slap into a second and even bigger mountain

And so to avoid that disaster our fifth and final test is that nothing as I say we do should lift the R or the reproduction rate of that disease back above one

And before I hand over to Patrick I am going to ask for a short explanatory clip about the one

And before we come to that clip, let me just emphasise that keeping the R down is going to be absolutely vital to our recovery, keeping the reproduction rate of the disease down, and we can only do it by our collective discipline and working together

I know we can do it, because we did it, we've shown we can do it, in phase one of this disease

This country came together in a way few of us have seen in our lifetimes

To protect the NHS and to save lives and that's why I am absolutely convinced we can do it in phase two as well

Can we play the video now.

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## [Sellafield Ltd takes important first steps to prepare for phased restart of highest priority work](#)

Having successfully 'ramped down' operations at the Sellafield site by pausing reprocessing work and construction work on major projects to focus on the key services to keep the site safe and secure, the business has built confidence in its ability for key workers to begin some of the most important high hazard and risk reduction work again.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic escalated, the number of people working on the Sellafield site has been less than a fifth of 'normal' operations, with approximately 1,500 key workers still going to work on site.

By agreeing a small number of packages of work which can start again, it will add approximately 120 people to this number, with a further circa 120 people starting to attend off-site offices mainly in Warrington to access specialist equipment and software.

It will be a cautious, limited, phased restart of work over the coming weeks using 'lead and learn' principles on specific work packages to build understanding on helping people safely return to work.

Detailed risk assessments have determined how many people can safely work in every location being used, taking into account factors such as social distancing, PPE requirements, operational procedures and a huge range of other considerations around people being able to get to work safely and stay safe and comfortable once there.

Reprocessing operations are still paused, but we are preparing to start work on reducing some of our highest hazards.

A small amount of construction work will be beginning on BEPPS-DIF, a new facility needed to accept waste from one of our highest hazard legacy waste silos.

All of the work can also all be stopped quickly if necessary, for example if a second wave of Covid-19 impacts on the availability of key workers.

The decision has been taken to begin phasing in new work while the national lockdown continues because on the balance of risk, it's the safest thing to do. Thousands of other Sellafield Ltd employees will continue with their existing arrangements of working remotely where possible.

We have always said we will only progressively restart certain operations when safe to do so. The excellent preparation and risk analysis work we have done so far has given us the confidence to be able to restart the most important work which is of national interest. Safety is in our DNA. If any organisation can work safely around Covid-19, we can," said Sellafield Ltd's Chief Executive Martin Chown.

We've thought long and hard about the questions 'Can we? Should we? Will we?' before restarting any piece of work. But we also have to be aware of the risks involved in not restarting more work – every day of delay caused by the pandemic is another day further in the future where a nuclear incident could in theory happen.

I am incredibly proud of every single individual in our organisation and our supply chain, who has kept the site safe and secure through this crisis. Our key workers are doing a vital job and it's a major step forward to be able to start cautiously building up the number of people delivering our critical mission," said Martin.

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## **COVID-19: mitigating impacts on Gypsy and Traveller communities**

Lord Greenhalgh, Communities Minister, has written to local authority chief executives to highlight that some members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are likely to be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, and may need support in accessing basic facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal, to enable them to adhere to public health guidelines around self-isolation and social distancing during the outbreak.

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# GAD's clients share their views of our service

News story

Clients have responded positively to the work and projects undertaken by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD).



## **Client survey findings out now**

Clients have responded positively to the work and projects undertaken by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). The findings are set out in the newly published [annual client feedback survey 2019 to 2020](#).

GAD's role is to meet the UK public sector's needs for actuarial advice, supporting effective decision-making and robust financial reporting.

## **Survey results**

GAD received survey responses from 61 of our clients. We asked how we rated for being highly valued and 85% of respondents gave us a score of at least 8 out of 10. Respondents provided further feedback on all aspects of our service and our wider engagement.

A sample of comments from survey recipients refer to GAD as 'interesting', 'innovative' and 'considered'.

## **Recent changes**

We have invested in our technology to continue meeting evolving client needs and to modernise the way we work.

Over the past year we have:

- improved efficiency, consistency and quality assurance by transferring calculation processes to our central actuarial services team
- embraced new technology for data visualisation to help us communicate insights in a more engaging and interactive way

- updated our communications approach including creating and posting on our new blog site [Actuaries in government](#)

## **Looking ahead**

The Government Actuary Martin Clarke said: “These results show we are well received by clients who responded. The survey also reflects the hard work and commitment of colleagues who continue to work closely with clients and to develop effective and engaging ways of delivering work and projects.”

The survey results and pointers for improvements mean we’ll continue to focus on delivering high-quality actuarial expertise to our clients, providing them value for money.

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