

International travel update, 11 January 2021

Last week the Prime Minister announced that the Government had made the difficult but necessary decision to introduce a new national lockdown.

Both globally and domestically we are seeing significant increases in levels of coronavirus, including the emergence of worrying new strains. It is therefore imperative that we ensure we are doing all we can to protect travel, reduce the risk of imported infections, including from new variants, and protect our NHS while national lockdown and vaccinations take effect.

We already have strong safeguards in place, including a requirement for mandatory 10-day self-isolation for the vast majority of arrivals and our Travel Corridors system remains critical in managing the risk of imported cases from high-risk countries. We also successfully launched the test to release scheme last month, which provides passengers with the option to reduce self-isolation, through isolating for five days after they have left a destination not on the Travel Corridors list and then taking a test. Pre-departure testing does not remove the public health need for international arrivals travelling from non-exempt countries to isolate for 10 days or opt into test to release.

However, as a result of increasing instances of COVID-19 around the world, including the emergence of new variants, we are now taking additional steps to add a further layer of protection to safeguard public health. From 04:00am on 15 January, we will be introducing pre-departure testing requirements for all inbound passengers to England. Passengers arriving by ship, plane or train will have to take a test up to 3 days before departure and provide evidence of a negative result before they travel.

This will be an additional requirement that applies to all passengers, including those travelling from a Travel Corridor country, other than those on a very short list of exemptions. This extra layer of protection is in addition to existing self-isolation requirements.

We will establish the standards that tests must meet in regulations. This will include that the test must be of a diagnostic-standard test such as a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, and could in some cases include LAMP and Lateral Flow tests within set limits. We will provide clear guidance and advice to passengers regarding testing standards and capacity.

Guidance will be available to passengers and carriers on what to look for to assure tests and the results provided meet the standards required.

We will keep test standards and innovative testing technologies under review.

In addition, we will also set out the information passengers will need to have with them at check-in and the UK border to show they have had a

qualifying negative test. This will include set data fields which test result certificates must include. All information on test requirements will be made available to passengers and transport operators through guidance on gov.uk.

The current advice for those across the UK remains that you must stay at home and not travel abroad unless it is for a permitted exempt reason. The requirements apply equally to visitors from other states and British Nationals, and carriers may deny boarding if passengers are not in receipt of a qualifying negative test. British Nationals that need consular assistance should contact the nearest consulate, embassy or high commission.

If British Nationals test positive for Covid-19 while abroad they should not travel and should follow the local relevant guidance on self-isolation. Transport operators will be required to check that a passenger has proof of a negative test result before they board their flight, train or ferry, and may deny boarding where appropriate to reduce numbers of non-compliant individuals arriving in England. Border Force will also conduct further checks upon arrival.

If a passenger arrives in England without a pre-departure negative test result they will be fined. We will amend the International Travel Regulations so that fines, starting at £500, can be levied on non-compliant passengers. Operators will also be fined for transporting non-compliant passengers.

Passengers travelling to England from the Common Travel Area (the United Kingdom, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey), will not be in scope of the regulations.

Children under the age of 11 will also not be required to complete pre-departure testing.

There will be a very restricted number of exemptions, including hauliers to allow the free flow of freight, and air, international rail and maritime crew.

Certain limited reasonable excuses for not undergoing testing will also be permitted, for example, lack of testing infrastructure in the departure country. This will apply to three overseas territories – St Helena, Ascension Island and the Falklands.

Arrivals from three additional countries will be considered to have a reasonable excuse not to comply due to lack of testing infrastructure. However, for these countries this will only apply for a specific, time limited window. This includes:

- Antigua and Barbuda – until Thursday 21 January 04.00
- St Lucia – until Thursday 21 January 04.00
- Barbados – until Thursday 21 January 04.00

If passengers are arriving from one of the above three countries after the time limited window has ended, they will be required to meet all pre-departure testing requirements.

Further details on exemptions and reasonable excuses will be set out in regulations and in guidance. We will keep exemptions and reasonable excuses under regular review.

We will be making detailed guidance available to both passengers and transport operators to support the implementation of these changes.

Measures are likely to be in place until the end of the current lockdown, although a review will take place before the end of that period.

The Government recognises the continued challenges that the pandemic poses, both for individuals and for businesses.

We have worked closely with the international travel sector during the course of the pandemic and will continue to do so as we emerge from lockdown and are able to encourage people to travel again with confidence. We are also continuing to implement recommendations set out in the Global Travel Taskforce Report to support the safe recovery of international travel.

The delivery of a safe, effective vaccine is also the best way to protect the most vulnerable, save thousands of lives and support the removal of many of the restrictions and return to international travel. We are already making great progress, including having currently vaccinated more people than the rest of Europe combined.

In the immediate term our priority has to be on safeguarding public health and the NHS. With the addition of pre-departure testing requirements, our already robust system to protect against imported cases of coronavirus is further strengthened and will provide the greatest overall protection against the risk of transmission during travel to England and after arrival.

[PM call with UN Secretary-General: 11 January 2021](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres today.



The Prime Minister spoke to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres today, to mark the 75th anniversary of the first UN General Assembly in London.

He reiterated the UK's long-standing commitment to multilateralism and the rules-based international order, remembering the long service of renowned British diplomat Brian Urquhart to the United Nations as a model for the UK's global outlook.

They discussed the leadership of the UN and UK in driving action on tackling climate change and committed to working together to deliver a successful COP26 Summit in Glasgow in November.

The PM and Secretary-General welcomed progress on the COVAX vaccines procurement pool, but shared concerns about the fractured approach the international community has taken to dealing with Covid-19 and agreed on the need for greater coordination.

They also discussed the crises in Yemen and Libya and the prospects for peaceful resolution, noting ongoing challenges and opportunities for progress.

The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to run for a second term and congratulated him on a successful first term.

He invited Secretary-General Guterres to attend the G7 leaders' summit hosted by the UK later this year, as well as the Global Partnership for Education replenishment event.

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Developing a holistic response to humanitarian challenges in the Sahel

and West Africa

Thank you Mr President. I would like to thank Special Representative Chambas for his briefing today and for his ongoing work over the past six months, during the terrible security and humanitarian challenges across the region. The United Kingdom will continue to work with UNOWAS and the countries in the region to form a well-calibrated and holistic response.

Mr President, the United Kingdom also welcomes the largely peaceful elections and strong voter turnout last year in Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana. And we remain concerned by the violence and tension which have marked some elections in the region. And we encourage all parties to continue to use dialogue to resolve their political differences. We're grateful to you, SRSR Chambas for your personal, quiet diplomacy, which, while not always in the public eye, has a significant impact across the region.

Mr President, regarding the situation in Mali, the United Kingdom believes that the transition period is an opportunity not only to prepare for free and fair elections, but to make progress on key issues such as the peace process and tackling corruption. The authorities in Mali should focus on these issues as a matter of urgency. Resuming the regular meetings of the Comité de Suivi de l'Accord is a positive first step, and we welcome the inclusion of women for the first time.

We remain deeply concerned by the continuing deteriorating humanitarian situation across much of the region, and we are concerned by the growing instances of forced displacement in central Sahel and north east Nigeria. Last year, the UK provided an additional \$21 million humanitarian funding to the Sahel, taking our funding there since 2019 to over \$200 million. This assistance has supported over seven million people in the hardest hit areas. But the assistance needs to reach those who need it. And we urge all parties to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to allow the delivery of goods and services. Without this, food insecurity and protection needs will continue to rise.

Mr President, the UK is concerned by the rise in human rights violations across West Africa and the Sahel, and we call for strengthened accountability from governments and improved compliance with international human rights standards. We are committed to supporting action on this. For example, with our contribution to international humanitarian law training for Malian armed forces and the support for the implementation of the Human Rights Compliance Framework for the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

We also, in these meetings, colleagues will recall, frequently advocate for the protection of children, educators and schools across the region and encourage all governments to follow the Safe Schools Declaration in these meetings. We welcome the release of over 300 boys abducted in north west Nigeria late last year. This event reinforces the importance of this initiative.

Finally, Mr President, on climate, it is good to hear many Council members talk about the impact of climate change on security in this region, regardless of your views on the causes of climate change. The UK's views on this are quite clear. We know that the climate is changing and that it is negatively impacting security, as Ambassador Kimani set out very clearly. We have a responsibility as this Council to consider the impact of climate change more fully and factor it into the UN system response to ensure that we do what we can to prevent further risks to peace and security from the challenges posed by climate change.

Mr President, with these interconnected challenges facing this region, we welcome the continued implementation of the UN integrated strategy for the Sahel and UNOWAS's close engagement with the region and with regional bodies. As Ambassador Kimani says, we need a holistic approach with the security efforts that the G5, Sahel, Tacuba, Barkhane, but also national security efforts being joined up with the efforts of wider development partners to address the root causes of violence because the region is not going to make real progress unless security gains are underpinned by quick and effective development activity.

So I hope, Mr Chambas, that you can continue to champion this approach within the UN system to the region and beyond.

Thank you very much.

[United Arab Emirates removed from travel corridor list](#)

- United Arab Emirates (UAE) to be removed from list of travel corridors following a concerning increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases
- from 4am on 12 January 2021, travellers arriving into England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland from the UAE will need to self-isolate
- current national restrictions do not permit international travel, unless for a limited set of reasons

Following a significant increase in both the level and pace of change in confirmed cases, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been removed from the UK list of [travel corridors](#).

From 4am on 12 January 2021, people returning to the UK from the UAE (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Fujairah, Umm Al-Quwain, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah) will need to self-isolate for 10 days, as the country has been removed from the [travel corridor list](#).

The decision has been made following a significant acceleration in the number

of imported cases, along with the number of reported new cases over the past 7 days, which have risen in the UAE by 52%.

People currently in the UAE are encouraged to follow the local rules, return home as normal and check [FCDO travel advice](#) for further information.

Passengers arriving from all international destinations, including the UAE, will be [required to present a negative COVID-19 test result taken up to 3 days before departing for England or Scotland](#) to help protect against new strains of coronavirus circulating internationally.

Passengers will need to present this proof to carriers, along with their [passenger locator form](#). The UK Border Force will conduct spot checks on arrival into England to ensure that passengers are fully compliant.

At the same time, the FCDO has updated its [travel advice](#) to advise against all but essential travel to UAE.

The government has made consistently clear it will take decisive action if necessary to contain the virus, including if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

The devolved administrations have all taken the same decision today, so travellers arriving from the UAE into all parts of the UK will need to self-isolate.

[National restrictions for England](#) introduced on 6 January 2021 remain in place, meaning everyone must stay at home unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons, including for work. This means people can no longer travel to take holidays or travel internationally unless for work or other [legally permitted reasons](#). Those in breach of the rules face penalties starting at £200, rising to a maximum of £6,400.

[Opening statement on Global Britain debate](#)

I am delighted to open this debate on Global Britain, when for the first time in forty-eight years we now have full control of our trade policy.

Back in 1846, Richard Cobden inspired people in Manchester with his belief that free trade would be

“the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world’s history...drawing men together, thrusting aside antagonism...and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace.”

That revolution continues today, as for the first time in nearly half a

century, we are a sovereign trading nation free to pursue British interests while promoting British values.

Our newly independent trade policy will create jobs, grow our slice of the global pie and unlock great swathes of the world to the best of Britain.

As we recover from Covid-19, we need to think radically about how we generate economic growth...

...about how we are going to use our new global platform in 2021 to promote free and fair trade...

And how we are going to take on those countries who try to cheat and undermine free enterprise.

In 2020, we negotiated trade agreements covering 63 nations and the European Union.

In 2021, we will use this year, including our Presidency of the G7, to champion free and fair trade in an era rife with pernicious practices...

We will promote modern rules that are relevant to people's lives for digital and data trade... We will champion high environmental and animal welfare standards in a science-led approach...

And we will push for modernisation of the World Trade Organisation and trade agreements to reflect our values of free enterprise and fair play.

We will also be build an advanced network of trade deals, from the Americas to the Indo-Pacific...

...with the UK at its heart as a global services and technology hub.

We have already reached deals covering 63 per cent of UK trade – well on our way to our manifesto target of 80 per cent in three years.

We want to hit that target...and deepen our existing relationships in areas like services and technology.

Exports are equivalent to nearly a third of our national income.

Trade equals jobs.

A job means independence and security... the realisation of our dreams... funding public services and the future prospects of our country.

The deals we have done with the EU and our partners across the world, from South Africa to South Korea, mean that our traders continue to enjoy preferential access to world markets.

We have secured arrangements with Turkey which mean that Ford in Dagenham can continue to export their engines tariff-free...

We have secured access to the Canadian market for our beef producers like the

Foyle Food Group in Northern Ireland...

And we have secured tariff-free access into Mexico for our car exporters like Jaguar Land Rover...

While Scotch whisky – one of our biggest exports – continues to enter markets like Singapore tariff-free and stays recognised.

All in all, this adds up to £885 billion worth of trade that we have secured.

And in addition, we have been able to go further and faster in our deal with Japan

- protecting the free flow of data which benefits industries like fintech and computer gaming
- regulatory dialogue on financial services and improved mobility provisions including allowing spouses to travel with businesspeople
- we have secured additional protections for our fantastic creative industries from music to TV
- and recognition for geographical indications across the United Kingdom from Welsh Lamb, Scotch Beef, Armagh Bramley apples to English Sparkling Wine, subject to Japanese domestic processes.

This platform allows us to step up this year to show our full potential as president of the G7 and as an independent trading nation.

At the G7, we will work to reform the WTO, make progress on data and digital trade, and promote greener trade.

Our new UK Global Tariff will see around 57% per cent of our imports entering our market tariff-free, more than the 44% we had under the EU.

It will eliminate tariffs, in particular, on over a hundred green goods.

In short, our new tariff regime is lower, simpler and greener.

Furthermore, we are going to be working with our friends and family across the world to drive forward free and fair trade... setting the global standard for trade in the 21st century.

We are already in deep negotiations with the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

And this year, we will apply to one of the most dynamic trading areas on Earth, the Comprehensive and Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Joining is part of our plan to grow our economy by making it far easier for British goods to reach our friends in Asia and the Americas.

This high-standards agreement would align the UK with some of the world's fastest-growing economies in a free trade area covering nearly £9 trillion of GDP.

We are also going to be deepening our relationships with countries such as Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Israel.

As well as this, we are working closely with India – the world’s largest democracy – on an enhanced trade partnership, reflecting our mutual interest in technology and innovation.

We are also in talks with Brazil and our allies in the Gulf.

But I want to reassure the House, we are going to ensure that no country is left behind without the benefits of free and fair trade with the United Kingdom.

Later this year we are launching an emerging markets trade scheme, which will offer the lowest income countries a better deal when they are trading with the UK.

It will be more generous than the EU scheme and help those countries onto the ladder towards prosperity through the enterprise and ingenuity of their people.

We want to encourage British business to take advantage of all these opportunities that we have either negotiated or are negotiating.

Therefore, we will be loudly and proudly championing exports in our key industries, from our food and drink, to services and technology trade.

We have a network of trade advisers across the country, ready to help our businesses go global.

They can be proud to put the Union Jack on their pack, which is one of the most recognised symbols around the world.

With our GREAT campaign, we are showing partners worldwide that Britain is “ready to trade”. In December, the Prime Minister launched our new Office for Investment, under the leadership of Lord Grimstone.

It will work tirelessly to secure investment in every nation and region across Britain, backing jobs and livelihoods.

More than 56,000 new jobs were created last year through foreign investment in the UK, with over 9,000 others secured.

We will also be founding our first new Freeports, which will drive enterprise and growth in port cities and towns across the country as we turbocharge trade around the world.

Of course, many are sceptical about globalisation and the benefits of trade.

And the reason is that too many unfair practices, and cheating, have been allowed to undermine real free trade.

That is why we are establishing the Trade Remedies Authority, headed by

Oliver Griffiths, to protect UK industries from unfair practices.

It is not right that ceramics manufacturers in Stoke on Trent can be undercut by goods subsidised by state-owned enterprises.

...And our innovators can have the fruits of their work taken under forced technology transfer. Or that goods can come into this country that have been produced through forced labour in abhorrent conditions

That is why we are pushing the World Trade Organisation for greater transparency and reform of the rules.

And joining CPTPP, with its ambitious digital and data provisions and clear rules, we will pile further pressure on the WTO to reform.

As an independent trading nation, we are setting our own path... and rejecting the twin errors of values-free globalisation and protectionism.

Instead, as a United Kingdom we are rooting our approach in our fundamental values of sovereignty, democracy, the rule of law and a fierce commitment to high standards.

That is why we are bringing together a coalition of like-minded nations to advance high standards worldwide, from food and animal welfare to the environment and data.

With fellow democracies like Japan and Canada, we are championing innovation, a cleaner planet, women's economic empowerment...and much more.

We have demonstrated this through the fantastic deal we have struck with the EU to ensure we can keep trading freely with zero tariffs and zero quotas, alongside deals covering 63 countries.

No other nation has ever negotiated so many trade deals simultaneously, and I am proud of the results we have achieved.

At this tough time, we need to embrace our future as a confident, optimistic, and outward-looking Global Britain: delivering jobs and prosperity at home while helping lead the fight for free and fair trade abroad.

My hope is that all sides of the House can join me in celebrating how far we have come and the huge opportunity we have in 2021...

...Striking deal after deal with our friends and family worldwide to support our values and full economic potential...

This is Global Britain in action.