

# Uruguay, Namibia and US Virgin Islands removed from travel corridor list of exempt countries.

- Uruguay, Namibia and US Virgin Islands removed from list of UK travel corridors following data showing a significant increase in confirmed cases
- two-week pause for any changes to the Travel Corridors list until 7 January when the regular process resumes, unless data from a country shows a significant increase in risk and requires urgent action
- travellers urged to continue to check the latest advice from the FCDO over the Christmas break

People arriving into the UK from Uruguay, Namibia and the US Virgin Islands from 4am Saturday 19 December will need to [self-isolate for 10 days](#) as the countries are removed from the [travel corridors list](#).

There has been a consistent increase in COVID-19 cases per 100,000 of the population in Namibia, Uruguay and the US Virgin Islands since late November, leading ministers to remove these from the current list of travel corridors.

In Namibia, new cases per week have increased by 334% over this time period. In Uruguay, new cases per week have increased by 295% over the same time period. In the US Virgin Islands, new cases per week have increased by 108% over the same time period.

At the same time, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has updated its [travel advice](#) to advise against all but essential travel to Uruguay, Namibia and the US Virgin Islands. These changes reflect the latest assessments by Public Health England of the risk to travellers in each of these destinations.

Passengers arriving into the UK from countries not featured on the government's travel corridor list are now able to opt-in and pay for a COVID-19 test from a private provider 5 days after they were last in a non-travel corridor location, with a negative test result releasing them from the need to self-isolate. With the [Test to Release for International Travel scheme](#) now live, several thousand tests have been sold so far across the [13 providers on the GOV.UK list](#), which is being updated regularly.

Ministers have agreed a two-week pause to the travel corridor review process, to provide certainty for passengers and industry around travel plans over the festive break. The move will ensure that those who are planning to travel over the Christmas period do not face last minute disruption unless absolutely necessary due to increasing infection rates. There are no planned removals or additions until 7 January when the regular process will resume.

However, the government has made consistently clear it will take decisive

action to contain the virus, including removing countries from the travel corridors list rapidly if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high. This remains the case over the festive period, and we will continue to monitor the data on levels of imported infection and take urgent action if the data indicates the need to.

COVID-19 has profoundly changed the nature of international travel. Travellers should always [check the latest advice from the FCDO](#) over the festive break, given the potential for changing coronavirus infection rates to affect both the advice about travelling to other countries and rules about self-isolation on return.

All travellers, including those from exempt destinations, will still be required to show a complete [passenger locator form](#) on arrival into the UK unless they fall into a small group of exemptions.

Penalties for those breaching the self-isolation rules when returning from non-exempt countries are £1,000 for first offence, rising to up to £10,000 for subsequent offences, mirroring penalties for those breaching self-isolation following a positive COVID test or contact from Test and Trace.

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## [Humanitarian access to Tigray: Minister for Africa statement](#)

Press release

Minister for Africa James Duddridge has called for unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray.



Minister for Africa James Duddridge said:

The UK remains deeply concerned about the situation in Tigray,

following reports of continued violence, ethnic discrimination and dire shortages of food, water, fuel and cash.

People across the region will face further suffering, if the ongoing challenges humanitarian agencies have accessing Tigray do not improve.

We have repeatedly called on all parties involved to urgently allow unfettered access and for the independent investigation of alleged violations of human rights.

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## [Technology drives forward new network for search and rescue](#)

Press release

State-of-the-art technology is bringing a new edge to the search and rescue work of HM Coastguard.



Old copper-based cables are being replaced with fibre-based technology across 165 remote radio sites across the United Kingdom, starting with Weymouth on Wednesday 16 December.

Each radio site receives distress calls from UK waters and the replacement technology will bring improvements such as security and bandwidth.

Damien Oliver, Commercial and Programmes Director for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, said: "We are investing £175 million into this new national radio network, which is central in preventing the loss of life on the coast and at sea.

“At a time when getting outdoors is pivotal to people’s mental health and wellbeing, it is essential that we can provide reassurance that we are here to respond to any emergency they may find themselves in, and this new network will enhance our ability to do that.”

The new network is being built and maintained by Telent Technology Services Ltd. Peter Moir, Managing Director of Network Services at Telent, said: “This network may not be seen by many people, but it’s literally a lifeline for someone in distress at sea. It’s important that this network’s capability continues to support Her Majesty’s Coastguard in the vital lifesaving search and rescue work that it does.”

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## [Supervision of terrorists reinforced with new powers and closer collaboration](#)

- new laws to give police powers to search terrorism-risk offenders on licence
- doubling of specialist probation officers tackling terrorism
- better intelligence sharing between police, prisons, probation and security services

The monitoring of convicted terrorists and others who pose a terror risk will be strengthened under plans laid out today by the government, in response to an independent review by Jonathan Hall QC.

While Jonathan Hall found well-established processes were already in place between police, probation and other agencies to manage terrorism-risk offenders, he made a series of recommendations to improve them.

Many of the suggested changes are already underway as part of the government’s Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill. This includes plans to require terrorists under probation supervision to undergo polygraph testing and giving judges more discretion to decide a crime is terror-related, so that they can impose a tougher sentence.

The National Probation Service has also created a new National Security Division which will double the number of specialist officers dedicated to supervising terrorism-risk offenders and strengthen its work with police, prisons and the security services.

The government has also confirmed it will bring forward new legislation to

give police the powers to search terrorist offenders on licence and obtain warrants to check they are complying with the terms of their release, for example by searching their home or seizing electronic devices. The legislation will also ensure offenders who pose a terror risk but were not convicted of a terrorist offence can be supervised like those who were.

Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC MP said:

Keeping our communities safe is the Government's first priority and recent atrocities in France and Austria have shown us that continued vigilance is needed.

Our security services, police, prison and probation officers epitomise public duty and these new powers and the Government's considerable investment will help them improve the tremendous, challenging work they do.

Home Secretary Priti Patel MP said:

This year we have witnessed horrific terrorist attacks at home and abroad, which is why we have taken significant steps to amend our powers and strengthen our tools to tackle the threats our country faces.

The British public should be in no doubt that we will take the strongest possible action to keep them safe, and these new powers will further bolster the improvements already being made by the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill.

Last month's Spending Review committed over £900 million for Counter-Terrorism Police next year, following this year's 10% increase. It also unveiled plans for a world-leading Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre which will bring staff from the security services, counter-terror police and HM Prison and Probation Service together into one location enhancing their ability to discover and prevent attacks.

Jonathan Hall examined how police, prison and probation staff, the security services and others work together through Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to reduce the risk that terrorists pose to the public.

Other changes outlined in the government response to his report include:

- The creation of a new category of MAPPA, specifically for terrorism-risk offenders.
- Clarifying data protection laws to reinforce that any organisation involved in the supervision of offenders through MAPPA can share information.
- Every terrorism-risk offender will now spend up to 12 months in an Approved Premises when released from prison on licence.

The [government's full response](#) can be found on GOV,UK.

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## School funding boost confirmed for every local authority in England

In another step towards delivering on the government's pledge to invest a total of £14 billion over three years, the Department for Education has today (17 December) published school funding allocations going to every local authority in England.

This is the second of a three-year cumulative £14 billion funding boost, compared to 2019-20, that gives school budgets their biggest increase in a decade.

Every pupil in England will benefit from a funding boost. The [allocations](#) to local authorities, based on the most up to date numbers of pupils in each school, mean that the majority of local authorities will see increases of more than three per cent in the funding allocated per pupil.

Delivering on the Prime Minister's pledge, every school will get more money for every child – “levelling up” funding and helping to spread equality of opportunity for all. Every school is set to receive the new minima of £5,150 per-pupil funding for secondary schools next year, and £4,000 for primaries, up from the £5,000 and £3,750 which schools are receiving this year in the first year of the funding settlement.

Funding to cover increases to teacher pay and pensions worth £2 billion will also be included from 2021 rather than paid separately, reassuring schools that the funding will continue to be provided in their core budgets.

Extra funding for small and remote schools is increasing by more than 60% next year through the national funding formula, reflecting the financial challenges that these schools can face, and the unique role they play in local communities.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

Every pupil, no matter what their background, deserves an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential.

This three-year school boost is part of our commitment to level up outcomes and opportunities, giving the biggest increases to schools that have historically received lower levels of funding.

It builds on the significant support we have introduced to help the most disadvantaged pupils, including our £1 billion Covid catch up

fund to tackle the impact of lost teaching time as a result of the pandemic.

The three-year funding settlement is helping make sure all children and young people receive an excellent education, regardless of where they grow up or go to school.

Alongside this, funding for the pupil premium will continue in 2021-22 with per pupil rates protected to remain the same as this year. This means schools will benefit from £1,345 per eligible primary pupil, and £955 for every eligible secondary pupil.

High needs funding to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is also increasing by £730 million next year, a 10% increase that will bring the total high needs budget to more than £8 billion.

The government's £1 billion Covid catch up fund is also helping tackle the impact of lost teaching time as a result of the pandemic, including a £650 million catch up premium for this academic year and a £350 million National Tutoring Programme which is on the way to reaching hundreds of thousands of pupils by the summer.

Further, £44 million is being invested in early years in 2021-22, to increase the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers.

Also announced today is the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021-22, providing councils a complete picture of their funding streams for next year.