

Bespoke testing regime unveiled for exempt international arrivals

- Government publishes details of tailored testing system for professions exempt from quarantine rules
- New regime will commence on 6 April and use lateral flow tests to rapidly identify cases coming into the UK
- Limited number of professions will be exempt from quarantining in order to keep freight and other crucial industries moving freely

Earlier this year the government strengthened its border regime, putting new controls in place to protect the UK from the spread of COVID-19 and new variants entering. From 6 April bespoke testing will be made available to certain professions to enable them to carry out their roles whilst providing an additional layer of protection to help ensure positive cases are detected.

Under this new bespoke testing regime international arrivals who are in the country for longer than two days will be required to take a test before the end of day two. People will be able to access these tests through several routes, including home tests and community testing sites. Those remaining in the UK for any longer than 2 days will then be required to take a further test every 3 days – typically on days 5 and 8.

If people working in these sectors are staying for two days or fewer you are not required to take tests. You may be required to complete a pre-departure test, even if you have an exemption from quarantine. International arrivals travelling outside the Common Travel Area daily must complete and submit a lateral flow test at least once every 3 days.

The professions exempt from quarantining and able to access bespoke testing are:

- Hauliers
- Border security duties (UK officials and contractors)
- International prison escorts
- Aircraft crew and pilots
- Aerospace engineers
- Channel tunnel system workers
- International rail crew, passenger and freight operations (Eurostar, Eurotunnel, Network Rail and high-speed rail workers)
- Seafarers and masters
- Essential defence activity (in scope are defence personnel, both military and civilian; visiting forces; and defence contractors)
- Persons transporting human blood, blood components, organs, tissues or cells
- Seasonal agricultural workers

These tests will be available through a number of routes including:

- workplace testing programmes available to employers
- community testing programmes offered by all local authorities in England
- at home, by collecting lateral flow self-test kits at community sites, ordering test kits online or by dialling 119
- for hauliers, at the network of dedicated testing sites across the strategic road network (as well as the methods outlined above)

If an individual tests positive with a lateral flow test, they will be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. A subsequent positive PCR test will be sent for genomic sequencing, to detect variants of concern. The individual will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after the test was taken.

Swift detection of cases means those who test positive can quickly isolate and, in doing so, break chains of transmission and suppress the virus.

Some exempt professions are required to still do day 2 and day 8 PCR tests if their travel is intermittent but will not have to quarantine.

These professions are:

- Border Security Duties (non-UK officials and contractors)
- Regular work abroad
- Civil aviation inspectors
- Bus and coach drivers
- Crown Servants and Government Contractors that meet the required criteria as persons undertaking or facilitating essential government work/essential state business
- Elite sportspeople – international and domestic
- Representatives of a foreign country or territory or British Overseas Territories
- Oil and gas workers
- Nuclear personnel
- Specialist technical workers, postal workers and telecoms workers
- Sponsors of clinical trials

All international arrivals not employed in these professions, fishers or diplomats will be required to quarantine for 10 days – either at home or in a managed quarantine hotel – and follow the mandatory testing regime of taking a Covid-19 test on or before [day 2 and on or after day 8 of quarantining](#).

Anyone coming into the UK and found to not be complying with the new testing requirements could face fines of up to £2,000.

From 6 April, new testing requirements will be introduced for hauliers entering England from abroad, to help reduce the risk of new COVID-19 variants entering the UK.

All hauliers staying in the country for longer than two days will be required to take a lateral flow test before the end of day two. Hauliers remaining in the country will then be required to take a further test every three days – so typically on days 2, 5 and 8.

Hauliers will be able to access testing at one of the many government information and advice sites – which provide hauliers with free coronavirus tests – or use workplace or community testing centres.

New legal requirements to limit contact between the community and international hauliers are also set to be introduced alongside inbound haulier testing. All hauliers arriving in the country will now be required to self-isolate in their cabs for the duration of their time in England, leaving only for specific reasons such as to buy food, use a toilet or undertake limited exercise, or get a COVID-19 test, among other reasons.

These requirements on hauliers will apply for the 10 days after arrival. Hauliers found not to be complying with the new self-isolation requirements could face fines of up to £1,000.

Hauliers that test positive at any point throughout their journey in England, and that cannot secure a safe environment in which to self-isolate, will immediately be re-directed to self-isolate in hotel accommodation set up by the Government at a number of locations in the country. If they are able to safely self-isolate at home or with family or friends in the UK, there are expected to do so.

Hauliers will be subject to regular monitoring on arrival in England.

The government is confident new inbound testing requirements for hauliers won't negatively impact trade, given the successful roll out of the outbound testing regime did not markedly impact on trade flows

Background

- The testing requirements will apply equally to UK-resident hauliers, who will in addition be able to make use of home testing kits or workplace testing facilities to satisfy the new requirements.
- Hauliers will also continue to need to provide evidence of a negative coronavirus test result before travelling from England to the Netherlands, Germany or Denmark. A similar requirement for hauliers travelling to France was recently removed.
- A full list of the [government's information and advice sites](#).
- Hauliers will be able to use evidence of the same negative test result to satisfy both the new UK requirement for regular testing and the pre-departure requirements of other countries.
- Hauliers have been highly compliant with the current testing requirements, with over 360,000 having already been successfully tested for COVID-19 since December so far.