

International travel from amber list countries and territories

Thank you, Madame Deputy Speaker.

I do not underestimate for a second just how difficult the last 16 months have been for those who have not been able to travel to see their families, and for the travel, tourism and aviation sectors.

No minister – let alone a Transport Secretary – would ever want to curtail our freedom and ask people not to travel.

But protecting public health has rightly been, and will continue to be, our overriding priority of this government and that's why we have introduced some of the toughest border measures in the world.

But we are now, thanks to our brilliant vaccination programme, in a position where we can start to think about how we live with coronavirus, while returning life to a sense of normality. Last week, I said at this dispatch box that the government intended to ease restrictions on fully vaccinated travellers returning from [amber list countries](#).

Well, I am now pleased to be able to provide more detail. As one of the world's most vaccinated countries, we must use these advantages to restore many of the freedoms that have been necessarily lost over recent months.

So I can confirm today that, from 19 July, UK residents who are fully vaccinated through the UK vaccine rollout will no longer have to self-isolate when they return to England.

They will still be required to take a test 3 days before returning, the [pre-departure test](#), demonstrating they are negative before they travel and a [PCR](#) test on or before day 2, but they will no longer be required to take a day 8 test.

In essence this means that for fully vaccinated travellers the requirements for green and amber list countries are the same.

To be clear, a full vaccination means 14 days have passed since your final dose of the vaccine.

It is also important to note that health matters are devolved, so decision-making and implementation may differ across the UK's administrations. We will continue to work with devolved administrations to ensure we achieve our shared objective of a safe, sustainable and robust return to international travel.

Madame Deputy Speaker, the change I am announcing today will prioritise those vaccinated in the UK. However, as I made clear last week, we want to welcome international visitors back to the UK and are working to extend our approach

to vaccinated passengers from important markets and holiday destinations later this summer, such as the USA and the EU. I will update the House in due course on how we approach vaccinated individuals from other countries.

When I highlighted this potential policy to the House last week, I explained that we needed to take some additional time to look at how children and the evidence around children – who will not, of course, have been able to benefit from vaccines, will be treated.

I can tell the House today that children under 18 returning from amber list countries will not have to isolate on their return to the UK, nor take a day 8 test.

Children between ages 5 and 10 will only need to take a day 2 test. As before, children 4 and under will be exempt from all testing and isolation requirements.

I know this was a big concern of families, and after working with the scientists and public health experts, I am delighted to be able to offer that reassurance today.

The success of our vaccine programme has been aided by those selflessly creating the great benefits for society and for the rest of the world by being a part of those clinical trials, without which we wouldn't have this vaccine programme. We committed to ensuring they are not disadvantaged as a result of being part of those trials, and I am delighted to announce that those on approved clinical trials in the UK will also not need to self-isolate or take a day 8 test on arrival from an amber-listed country.

Passengers will need to prove their vaccination status and they will do that either through the [NHS COVID Pass](#) available on the main [NHS App](#) – not the COVID app – or via the accessible [letter](#), which can be obtained by calling 119 for those without access to smartphones.

Passengers returning to England will be asked to include their vaccination status on their [passenger locator form](#), if they wish to benefit from the exemption to self-isolate.

Transport operators and carriers will be required to check a passenger's proof of being fully vaccinated before they are able to get on the form of transport.

The government has been working closely with international partners on restarting international travel safely through certification.

I am pleased to announce to the House today that more than 30 countries and territories are now recognising vaccine certification as part of entry requirements, and either accepting the proof of vaccination letter or the NHS app itself, and we will continue to increase that number so that the NHS app becomes the natural default.

Passengers should, of course, check [Foreign Office travel advice](#) to understand the latest entry requirements and COVID-19 rules at their

destination.

Madame Deputy Speaker, we know that travel is important and that many people have not been able to travel for the last year and a half.

This is not, of course, just about holidays, eager as we are I'm sure for time in the sun. This is also about reuniting families who have been apart throughout the pandemic. It is about helping businesses to trade and grow and it is about supporting our aviation sector which hundreds of thousands of jobs rely on.

An industry which this government has backed through £7 billion of support during this pandemic. As the industry tell me, the support is of course very welcome but the only way to recover the industry is to allow them to fly and for travel to resume again.

Which is why I am pleased to also announce today, that from the 19 July, we will remove the guidance that people should not travel to countries on the amber list. This means people will be able to travel for leisure, business or to see family to amber list countries.

I am sure the House will welcome this development in our approach to international travel. However, I want to be clear that as we begin to ease restrictions, travel will not be the same as it was before, in say 2019.

People should continue to check the [Foreign Office travel advice](#), travel where possible outside busy weekend times and, importantly, they should expect that their experience at the border will of course be different because longer waiting times will be necessitated by risks as we introduce and expand the range of e-gates available to read the passenger locator forms.

I must make clear that public health remains our key priority and that is why we will not make any changes to the requirements applying to those arriving from [countries on the red list](#) – even where they are fully vaccinated.

The measures I have announced today have been designed in close cooperation with my Right Honourable Friend the Health Secretary, along with medical and scientific experts, to ensure we can continue to minimise the risk of new variants.

And, as many of us know from personal travel experience, the government will not hesitate to act if required and the data suggests that needs to happen. In other words, to put this on the record, an amber list country could still turn red, necessitating a change in behaviour when we return to the UK, and indeed if a country goes into red, mandatory hotel quarantine.

The UK has achieved many hard-won gains, through our successful vaccination programme, and through the continued spirit and determination of the British people. We continue to encourage people to take up the vaccine when offered not only to protect themselves but also to restore previous freedoms more safely.

19 July will mark the next step in the cautious reopening of international travel. Thanks to this government's incredible success with the vaccine programme, people in England will be able to travel more easily, visit their family and friends who they have not seen for so long and also get business moving once again.

Kick starting our economy while keeping the UK safe and supporting a wide range of jobs and industries in the process.

Madame Deputy Speaker, I commend this statement to this House.