

Lateral flow tests to be introduced for vaccinated international arrivals

- From 24 October fully vaccinated passengers and most under 18s arriving in England from countries not on the red list can take a cheaper lateral flow test, instead of a PCR test, on or before Day 2 of their arrival into the UK. These can be booked from 22 October
- Change will come into effect for those returning from half term breaks with lateral flow tests available to book through private providers listed on gov.uk
- Passengers must upload a photo of their test to verify results as soon as possible, with free confirmatory NHS PCRs for any positive cases

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers arriving in England from countries not on the red list can take a lateral flow test on or before day 2 of their arrival from October 24, rather than PCR tests – cutting the cost of tests in time for travellers returning from half term breaks. These can be booked from 22 October.

Eligible travellers will be able to order cheaper lateral flow tests from private testing providers as an alternative to a PCR, offering faster results. The list of approved private providers will go live on GOV.UK on the 22nd October.

Passengers will need to take a photo of their lateral flow test and booking reference supplied by the private provider and send it back to them to verify the result. Passengers are also able to book to have a test which they can take on their arrival into the UK at testing centres located in some airports.

Those that have already bought a PCR do not need to buy another test. The arrival test must be taken as soon as possible on or before the second day of a passenger's arrival in the UK. Lateral flow tests for international travel must be purchased from a private provider as NHS Test and Trace tests cannot be used for international travel.

The government is able to make this change thanks to the success of the vaccination programme both in the UK and around the world which has protected millions of people and reduced the risks of opening up international travel.

Anyone who tests positive will need to self-isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test. [PCR tests can be accessed free of charge by ordering in the usual way through NHS Test and Trace – via \[nhs.uk/coronavirus\]\(https://nhs.uk/coronavirus\) or by calling 119.](#) Providers will be expected to advise people to self-isolate and direct people towards the NHS Test and Trace booking page.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We want to make going abroad easier and cheaper, whether you're

travelling for work or visiting friends and family.

Lateral flow tests will be available later this month for those returning from half term holidays.

This change to testing is only possible thanks to the incredible progress of our vaccination programme, which means we can safely open up travel as we learn to live with the virus.

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport said:

Today's rule changes will make testing on arrival simpler and cheaper for people across the country who are looking forward to well-earned breaks for this October half term.

Taking away expensive mandatory PCR testing will boost the travel industry and is a major step forward in normalising international travel and encouraging people to book holidays with confidence.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said:

Testing, along with vaccines, remains one of our first lines of defence against COVID-19. Getting a test as early as possible on arrival and isolation when necessary, can help control the spread of the virus and protect one another.

The government will extend regulations and publish protocol to allow some tests supplied to the private testing market that are pending validation to remain on the market in the short term. This is to address any potential shortage of supply while work continues at pace to ensure only high performing tests are ultimately approved to remain on the UK market. The government will continue to publish a list of private testing providers who meet the minimum standards for the public to choose from, with PCR test options available as well.

All travellers must complete their Passenger Locator Form prior to travel, including a test booking reference number supplied by a testing provider. Travellers will be able to upload their test booking reference to the Passenger Locator Form from 22 October for arrival in the UK from 24 October.

Eligible travellers vaccinated in over 100 countries and territories including Brazil, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, South Africa and Turkey, will be treated the same as returning fully vaccinated UK residents.

This means they will be eligible for the quarantine exemption and reduced testing measures, including taking just a lateral flow test on arrival. This is as long as they have not visited a red list country or territory in the 10

days before arriving in England. Eligible under 18s from these countries will also be treated as if fully vaccinated. The government continues to work with the Devolved Administrations to ensure there continues to be robust border measures in place to protect the UK.

Passengers who are not fully vaccinated with an authorised vaccine returning from a non-red destination must still take a pre-departure test, a PCR test on day 2 and day 8 test and complete 10 days self-isolation (with the option of Test to Release on day 5).