

# Recommendations from the Global Travel Taskforce

On 7 October, at the request of the Prime Minister, the government announced the launch of our Global Travel Taskforce. Co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Transport and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the aim of the taskforce was to consider steps that government could take to encourage the safe recovery of domestic and overseas travel and tourism while reducing the risk of imported cases.

The taskforce was to report back to the Prime Minister in November; a commitment we met last week after a period of constructive consultation with the travel sector.

The message we received during those consultations was clear. The global COVID-19 pandemic remains an existential threat to the aviation and maritime sectors, as for all travel and tourism businesses, and we need to act now to help these industries get back on a trajectory towards strong economic growth.

That is precisely what the [Global Travel Taskforce report](#) aims to achieve, making 14 recommendations following 3 broad principles:

First, to ensure that journeys are safe.

Second, to increase demand for travel without compromising safety.

Third, to position the UK so we can take a leading role in driving the global standards required to support recovery.

The most fundamental priority in all this work is safeguarding public health. That is why we are introducing, as the first initiative resulting from the Global Travel Taskforce's work, a new regime 'Test to Release' for international arrivals from countries that are not on the Travel Corridor list.

Following extensive work by officials from the Department for Transport and Department of Health and Social Care, this will be rolled out in England from 15 December in time for Christmas. Travellers will have the option of booking and paying for a test from a list of private sector providers. They can take the test 5 full days after they left a destination not on the travel corridors list, which for most international arrivals will be after 5 full days of self-isolation. If the test result is negative, they will be free to go about their daily lives. A test on day 5 of self isolation provides a strong level of protection for the UK population from transmission of COVID-19 acquired abroad. It also provides much more freedom for people seeking to travel.

Individuals who opt in will be required to self-isolate until they receive a negative test result. Compliance checks are carried out by Public Health

England's Isolation Assurance Service (IAS) who contact randomly sampled international arrivals to ensure that they are self-isolating. Details of those found not to be isolating will be passed to the Home Office, who in turn pass relevant details on to the police for targeted follow-up enforcement activity. Anyone who does not comply with this requirement could be fined £1,000 for the first offence and up to £10,000 for repeat breaches. Only a negative test result from a provider on the GOV.UK list will enable a traveller to cease self-isolating early.

If a traveller tests positive for COVID-19, they will move into the UK's existing system for positive cases, meaning that they will self-isolate for a further 10 days from the day of the test and their contacts will be traced and notified as normal. Minimum standards have been set by clinicians to ensure that the tests give accurate results, but we are not specifying exactly what type of test must be used. This is to allow for innovation in the testing market. Tests will either be taken at a private testing site, or using a privately provided home testing kit, meaning the scheme will be accessible to the widest section of the community and across England.

As we emerge from this latest period of restrictions, the new testing scheme will allow people to see family, go away on business, or book holidays with the option of taking a test to shorten any self-isolation period in the UK and reduce disruption to their lives.

In addition to 'Test to Release for International Travel', we will of course remain open to new testing technologies and other approaches that help people travel overseas in safety. For example, mass testing may help more people to travel with fewer restrictions in the future. As our knowledge and capacity for testing develops, so will our policy.

However, we have always known that testing alone is not a silver bullet, nor a comprehensive solution to the challenges we face. The taskforce has made further recommendations, including:

- to advocate the development of a global framework for the validation of tests and vaccination records
- to assess the feasibility of short stay exemptions for businesses and tour groups
- to publish the criteria for when cruises can restart and implement a phased return for cruising when the public health advice makes clear it is safe to do so
- to boost consumer confidence about inbound and outbound travel through targeted communications and marketing campaigns
- to provide assurance to passengers, we will work with our world-leading aviation regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority, to ensure that the aviation industry is doing everything it can to make air travel as low risk as possible, as well as continuing to work with the maritime sector to ensure that it operates safely and that industry guidance remains in line with best practice

As soon as the time is right, we want to encourage people to travel with confidence. That means British people being able to go abroad safely, and

welcoming back overseas visitors to our country to do business, and enjoy our hospitality, entertainment and world-famous tourist sites.

The recommendations outlined above provide a springboard to ensure the safe and viable recovery of the sector.

However, while the taskforce's work has concluded, ours does not end here. The collapse of the market this year has not just affected airlines but airports, ground handlers and other airport services too. The government has already made available an unprecedented package of economic measures to companies across the aviation industry. This includes schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills, as well as financial support for employees.

We have worked closely with the sector during the course of the pandemic and listened to its concerns. Airports have highlighted specific challenges arising from a lack of passengers, and the relatively high fixed costs they face. Therefore, we will shortly be making available a support scheme providing financial assistance to commercial airports and ground handlers in England to help with business rates.

These businesses will be able to apply from the new year for the equivalent of their business rates costs in this financial year, up to a maximum of £8 million per eligible site, subject to certain conditions which the Department of Transport will take into account when considering applications.

The government is committed to giving people the freedom to travel with confidence and supporting the wider travel industry. I will publish this statement on GOV.UK and will place a copy in the libraries of both Houses.