

# Taskforce for safe return to global travel launched

- work to begin with industry on how to safely reduce self-isolation period with testing
- taskforce will also consider a wide range of other measures to support the travel sector including developing a global framework to make travelling easier
- government will protect NHS testing capacity while supporting the development of privately funded alternatives

A new [Global Travel Taskforce](#) to support the travel industry and the safe recovery of international travel has been launched by the government today (7 October 2020).

The Department for Transport and the Department of Health and Social Care have been working extensively with clinicians, health experts and the private testing sector on the practicalities of testing international arrivals.

The next step is to develop an operationalised approach, which is why the government is creating the Global Travel Taskforce to work at pace with industry on implementation and to identify options to reduce the self-isolation period while protecting public health.

The taskforce will accelerate work to inform proposals on a future testing regime and develop options for how this could be introduced.

This will include looking at the feasibility of proposals based on a single test taken after a period of self-isolation, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger. The taskforce will work with medical experts to better understand when a test should be taken based on the progression of the disease. The taskforce will also work closely with the private testing sector to ensure that testing for international arrivals does not impact on NHS capacity.

It will also explore alternative testing models, including pilots with partner countries to ascertain whether self-isolation could be undertaken pre-departure.

The taskforce, which will be jointly chaired by the Secretaries of State for Transport and Health and Social Care, will also consider other options to boost safe and sustainable tourism and business travel, supporting the sector in its recovery from the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The current measures at the border have saved lives. Our understanding of the science now means we can intensify efforts to

develop options for a testing regime and help reinvigorate our world-leading travel sector.

This new taskforce will not only help us move towards safer, smoother international travel as we continue to battle this virus but will also support global connectivity – helping facilitate more covid secure travel whilst protecting the population from imported cases.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

It is vital we do everything we can to control the spread of the virus and our measures at the borders are designed to help keep the country safe, by preventing imported cases of COVID-19.

We know how these measures have a significant impact on people's lives and on the travel and tourism industries, so we are working hard across government to explore ways to open up international travel in a safe way.

The group will consult closely with partners from the aviation, travel, healthcare and testing sectors as well as the devolved administrations to implement measures to support the recovery of the travel sector. The taskforce is expected to put forward their initial recommendations next month.

The taskforce will consider:

- how a testing regime for international arrivals could be implemented to boost safe travel to and from the UK
- what steps can be taken to facilitate business and tourist travel through innovative testing models and other non-testing means
- more broadly, what steps can be taken to increase consumer confidence to support the recovery of international travel

The current rules around the 14-day self-isolation policy remain in place.