

Tougher border controls to protect public health

News story

Further action to minimise travel across international borders.



Photo: Getty Images

The government has announced further action for outbound and inbound passengers to minimise travel across international borders and reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

While the focus is on protecting the UK's world-leading vaccination programme, this action will reduce the risk of a new variant of the virus being transmitted from someone coming into the UK.

The measures announced today include:

For those wishing to travel out of the UK

- Declaring reason for travel: anyone who does not have a valid reason for travel will be directed to return home and may face a fine. The reason for travel will be checked.
- Increased police enforcement: there will be an increased police presence at ports and airports, fining those in breach of the stay at home regulations. Anyone without valid reason for travel will be directed to return home and may face a fine.
- Reviewing travel exemptions: the list of travel exemptions will be urgently reviewed so that only the most important and exceptional reasons are included.

For those seeking to enter the UK

- Managed isolation in hotels: this will be for those arriving from countries where we have imposed international travel bans and who cannot be refused entry. They will be required to isolate for ten days without

exception and more details will be provided in due course.

- Police checks: police are carrying out more physical checks at addresses to make sure people are self-isolating.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

There are still too many people coming in and out of our country each day. The rules are clear – people should be staying at home unless they have a valid reason to leave. Going on holiday is not a valid reason.

As we have done throughout this global health emergency, we will continue to take all steps necessary to protect the public and help prevent the spread of the virus.

These new measures are on top of the restrictions already in place, all of which help reduce the risk of importing a new variant.

- Refusing entry: we will continue to refuse entry to non-UK residents from red list countries which are already subject to a UK travel ban.
- Entering the UK: passengers arriving in the UK need to provide evidence of a negative pre-departure Covid test. There is also the requirement for people arriving from abroad to self-isolate on arrival, and the requirement to complete a passenger locator form, with fines for those who fail to comply.
- Detecting new variants: we will help other countries to access to the UK's world-leading gene sequencing capabilities to help with early identification of any new and dangerous variants of the virus.

All measures will be kept under review and further action will be taken to protect the public if needed.

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