

Travel ban implemented to protect public health following South Africa COVID-19 outbreak

- passengers travelling from South Africa into England from 9am Thursday 24 December will not be permitted to enter, reflecting increased risk from new strain of coronavirus
- British and Irish Nationals, visa holders and permanent residents arriving from South Africa will be able to enter but are required to self-isolate for 10 days along with their household
- travellers urged to continue to check the latest advice from the FCDO

The government has responded urgently to new evidence which demonstrates the need to temporarily suspend entry for passengers arriving from South Africa to England.

From 9am Thursday 24 December 2020, visitors arriving into England who have been in or transited through South Africa in the previous 10 days will not be permitted entry and direct flights will be banned. This excludes cargo and freight without passengers.

This does not include British and Irish Nationals, visa holders and permanent residents, who will be able to enter but are required to [self-isolate for 10 days](#) along with their household.

The decision follows the release of further information from health authorities in South Africa reporting an outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), with a variant strain spreading in some provinces.

This is different to the UK variant, meaning a travel ban is critical to prevent further domestic infection.

The UK does not currently have a travel corridor with South Africa, and so anyone who has returned from the country recently should already be self-isolating for 10 days and should continue to do so.

Any exemptions usually in place – including for those related to employment – will not apply and passengers arriving in England from South Africa after 9pm on 23 December cannot be released from self-isolation through [Test to Release](#).

People who share a household with anyone self-isolating after returning from South Africa will now also need to self-isolate until 10 days have passed since anyone they live with was last in South Africa.

The UK government is working closely with international partners to

understand the changes in the virus that have been reported in South Africa and we are conducting a programme of further research here in the UK to inform our risk assessments.

British and Irish Nationals, visa holders and permanent residents who are arriving from South Africa will be required to show a complete [passenger locator form](#) on arrival into the UK. This is critical in being able to track the virus in case of any local outbreaks.

The Home Office will step up Border Force presence to ensure that those arriving to England from South Africa are compliant with the new restrictions.

The ban and expanded self-isolation measures will be kept under review.

Decisions on border measures can be changed rapidly if necessary to help stop the spread of the disease. Likewise travel advice is constantly updated with the latest information for British and Irish nationals. Britons in South Africa should continue to check the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice](#) and sign up to email alerts.