

Government to set out way forward on the Northern Ireland Protocol to Parliament

Press release

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Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost, and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SoSNI), Brandon Lewis, have today spoken at the Policy Exchange think tank about the way forward on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Both Lord Frost and SoSNI reaffirmed the Government's commitment to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions. They said that the Protocol was failing in its objectives to minimise impact on everyday lives in Northern Ireland and facilitate trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Lord Frost announced that the Government is considering its next steps and will set out its approach on the Protocol to Parliament before summer recess.

Lord Frost said:

The current situation is not consistent with the careful balance in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and is not how the Protocol should be working. That political reality must be acknowledged and dealt with. This Government cannot simply ignore that reality and stand by as things become more tense and more difficult.

We will always prefer a consensual approach to resolving this situation. We are confident, given everything we have been through in the last few years, that there are ways of finding the balance and finding the necessary adjustments. Working in this way is the responsible thing to do and it's the best way to meet the

Government's obligations to everyone in Northern Ireland. But obviously all options remain on the table.

So we are considering our next steps, we are discussing with all those with an interest, and I can say today that we will set out our approach to Parliament in a considered way before the summer recess.

The prize on offer for us all, if we can re-establish a new balance in a way that works for us all, is that we can set relations between the UK and the EU onto a new trajectory, one that moves beyond the current tensions, one that moves beyond the challenges of the last few years, and realises the real, genuine potential for friendly cooperation.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

The impact of how the Protocol is being operated is being felt across communities going about their daily lives. This is distracting from the important task of realising Northern Ireland's huge economic potential.

Northern Ireland has real economic strengths and we should be focusing on how we can drive up innovation, close the skills gap, increase exports and seize the opportunities of the green industrial revolution.

My vision for Northern Ireland is about building a shared and stable future for all people in Northern Ireland, harnessing the positive links between peace, security and prosperity.

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Quarantine-free travel to resume on 19 July for fully vaccinated passengers returning from amber list countries

- from 19 July, arrivals who have been fully vaccinated with an NHS administered vaccine in the UK (plus 14 days), or are on a formally approved UK vaccine clinical trial, returning to England from amber list countries will no longer need to quarantine – passengers will need to provide proof of their vaccination status to carriers in advance of

travel

- pre-departure testing and day 2 testing measures to remain
- children under the age of 18 to be exempt from quarantine on returning to England from amber countries
- the recommendation for people to not travel to amber countries will also be removed from 19 July – people should continue to check FCD0 travel advice before booking travel
- news marks the next step in the cautious reopening of international travel, following the Prime Minister setting out plans earlier this week to ease COVID-19 restrictions in England from step 4 of the roadmap

The government has today (8 July 2021) [set out the details](#) to enable people who have been fully vaccinated with an NHS administered vaccine, plus 14 days, to travel to [amber list](#) countries without having to quarantine on their return to England, from Monday 19 July. The recommendation for people not to travel to amber list countries will also be removed from 19 July.

The changes will come into force from Monday 19 July at 4am. Those who have been fully vaccinated with an NHS administered vaccine in the UK and are returning from amber countries will still be required to complete a [pre-departure test](#) before arrival into England, alongside a [PCR test](#) on or before day 2 after arrival. They will not have to take a day 8 test or self-isolate. Any positive results will be genomically sequenced to continue to manage the risk from importing variants.

Children under the age of 18 will not have to isolate when returning to England. While the recommendation that people should not travel to amber countries is being removed, children aged 4 and under will continue to be exempt from any travel testing. Children aged 5 to 10 will only need to do a day 2 PCR and 11 to 18 year olds will need to take both a pre-departure test and a day 2 PCR – as is the case for arrivals from [green list](#) countries.

The success of our vaccine programme has been aided by those selflessly taking part in clinical trials and those who are part of approved COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials in the UK will therefore be treated as vaccinated.

At this stage, there will be no changes to requirements for those returning from green or [red list](#) countries – even when they are fully vaccinated, nor for unvaccinated passengers travelling from amber countries who do not have a valid exemption.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

Thanks to our successful vaccine rollout, we're now able to widen quarantine-free travel to NHS administered fully vaccinated adults and children under the age of 18, and take another step towards fully reopening international travel.

As we continue with the domestic unlocking, it's only right we get people travelling again – whether that's for business to help create jobs, overdue holidays or reconnecting family and friends.

However, protecting public health still remains our priority and we will act swiftly if action is needed.

Health Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

Vaccinations have severely weakened the link between COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths, building a wall of protection across the country.

As we learn to live with this virus, due to the tremendous progress of the vaccine programme – with more than 3 in 5 people now double jabbed – we can safely take steps to ease restrictions on travel, as we are doing at home. Allowing quarantine-free travel for fully vaccinated people means they can be reunited with loved ones overseas and we can return to normality as quickly as possible.

The government is taking a phased approach to amending requirements and is already exploring plans to remove quarantine for vaccinated non-UK residents arriving from amber countries later this summer where it is safe to do so. The [Test to Release scheme](#) remains an option for non-fully vaccinated travellers returning from amber countries to shorten their quarantine period, by paying for a private test and being released early if they receive a negative COVID-19 test result.

Travel continues to be different from usual, and while some restrictions remain in place passengers should expect their experience to be different and may face longer wait times than they are used to – although the government is making every effort to speed up queues safely. We will continue to rollout e-gates over the summer, with many already in operation across airports and more to be added over the coming months.

Carriers will have a critical role in carrying out primary checks on all passengers before boarding, checking people have the right COVID-19 certification documents to ensure we can continue to safeguard against new variants. Anyone not complying with health measures could face a fine, and carriers will be required to ensure proper checks are carried out.

Airlines UK CEO Tim Alderslade said:

This is a positive move towards the genuine reopening the sector has been looking for. Opening up the market for the rest of the summer, this announcement will provide far greater opportunities to travel, do business and see family and friends, and enable many more of our customers to book with certainty. The summer season essentially starts here.

Airlines look forward to working with government to continue this momentum and further open up the market.

All passengers will still need to complete their [passenger locator form](#), which will include the requirement to declare vaccination status and provide proof of their pre-departure test. Amber arrivals will be required to [prove their full vaccination status](#) to carriers before departing, either via the [NHS app](#) or via an [NHS COVID Pass letter](#) which can be obtained by calling 119 for travelling overseas (which could take 5 days to arrive by post).

Airport Operators Association Chief Executive Karen Dee said:

This is a significant step forward that will be a boost to airports and the local economies that rely on them. Many airports staff will be able to get back to what they do best: supporting businesses to reach customers abroad, enabling people to visit friends and relatives and help people take a well-deserved holiday abroad after a difficult period.

If travelling abroad, you need to take steps to keep safe and prepare in case things change before you go or while you are there. Check the booking terms and conditions on flexibility and refunds because the situation remains fluid. Many travel firms have changed their terms to be fully flexible. Check and subscribe to [FCDO travel advice](#) updates to understand the latest entry requirements and COVID-19 rules at their destination – and passengers are advised to check all entry requirements and FCDO travel advice before they book any foreign travel.

Age of child Self-isolation Pre-departure test Day 2 test

4 and under	no	no	no
5 to 10	no	no	yes
11 to 17	no	yes	yes

[International travel from amber list countries and territories](#)

Thank you, Madame Deputy Speaker.

I do not underestimate for a second just how difficult the last 16 months have been for those who have not been able to travel to see their families, and for the travel, tourism and aviation sectors.

No minister – let alone a Transport Secretary – would ever want to curtail our freedom and ask people not to travel.

But protecting public health has rightly been, and will continue to be, our overriding priority of this government and that's why we have introduced some

of the toughest border measures in the world.

But we are now, thanks to our brilliant vaccination programme, in a position where we can start to think about how we live with coronavirus, while returning life to a sense of normality. Last week, I said at this dispatch box that the government intended to ease restrictions on fully vaccinated travellers returning from [amber list countries](#).

Well, I am now pleased to be able to provide more detail. As one of the world's most vaccinated countries, we must use these advantages to restore many of the freedoms that have been necessarily lost over recent months.

So I can confirm today that, from 19 July, UK residents who are fully vaccinated through the UK vaccine rollout will no longer have to self-isolate when they return to England.

They will still be required to take a test 3 days before returning, the [pre-departure test](#), demonstrating they are negative before they travel and a [PCR](#) test on or before day 2, but they will no longer be required to take a day 8 test.

In essence this means that for fully vaccinated travellers the requirements for green and amber list countries are the same.

To be clear, a full vaccination means 14 days have passed since your final dose of the vaccine.

It is also important to note that health matters are devolved, so decision-making and implementation may differ across the UK's administrations. We will continue to work with devolved administrations to ensure we achieve our shared objective of a safe, sustainable and robust return to international travel.

Madame Deputy Speaker, the change I am announcing today will prioritise those vaccinated in the UK. However, as I made clear last week, we want to welcome international visitors back to the UK and are working to extend our approach to vaccinated passengers from important markets and holiday destinations later this summer, such as the USA and the EU. I will update the House in due course on how we approach vaccinated individuals from other countries.

When I highlighted this potential policy to the House last week, I explained that we needed to take some additional time to look at how children and the evidence around children – who will not, of course, have been able to benefit from vaccines, will be treated.

I can tell the House today that children under 18 returning from amber list countries will not have to isolate on their return to the UK, nor take a day 8 test.

Children between ages 5 and 10 will only need to take a day 2 test. As before, children 4 and under will be exempt from all testing and isolation requirements.

I know this was a big concern of families, and after working with the scientists and public health experts, I am delighted to be able to offer that reassurance today.

The success of our vaccine programme has been aided by those selflessly creating the great benefits for society and for the rest of the world by being a part of those clinical trials, without which we wouldn't have this vaccine programme. We committed to ensuring they are not disadvantaged as a result of being part of those trials, and I am delighted to announce that those on approved clinical trials in the UK will also not need to self-isolate or take a day 8 test on arrival from an amber-listed country.

Passengers will need to prove their vaccination status and they will do that either through the [NHS COVID Pass](#) available on the main [NHS App](#) – not the COVID app – or via the accessible [letter](#), which can be obtained by calling 119 for those without access to smartphones.

Passengers returning to England will be asked to include their vaccination status on their [passenger locator form](#), if they wish to benefit from the exemption to self-isolate.

Transport operators and carriers will be required to check a passenger's proof of being fully vaccinated before they are able to get on the form of transport.

The government has been working closely with international partners on restarting international travel safely through certification.

I am pleased to announce to the House today that more than 30 countries and territories are now recognising vaccine certification as part of entry requirements, and either accepting the proof of vaccination letter or the NHS app itself, and we will continue to increase that number so that the NHS app becomes the natural default.

Passengers should, of course, check [Foreign Office travel advice](#) to understand the latest entry requirements and COVID-19 rules at their destination.

Madame Deputy Speaker, we know that travel is important and that many people have not been able to travel for the last year and a half.

This is not, of course, just about holidays, eager as we are I'm sure for time in the sun. This is also about reuniting families who have been apart throughout the pandemic. It is about helping businesses to trade and grow and it is about supporting our aviation sector which hundreds of thousands of jobs rely on.

An industry which this government has backed through £7 billion of support during this pandemic. As the industry tell me, the support is of course very welcome but the only way to recover the industry is to allow them to fly and for travel to resume again.

Which is why I am pleased to also announce today, that from the 19 July, we

will remove the guidance that people should not travel to countries on the amber list. This means people will be able to travel for leisure, business or to see family to amber list countries.

I am sure the House will welcome this development in our approach to international travel. However, I want to be clear that as we begin to ease restrictions, travel will not be the same as it was before, in say 2019.

People should continue to check the [Foreign Office travel advice](#), travel where possible outside busy weekend times and, importantly, they should expect that their experience at the border will of course be different because longer waiting times will be necessitated by risks as we introduce and expand the range of e-gates available to read the passenger locator forms.

I must make clear that public health remains our key priority and that is why we will not make any changes to the requirements applying to those arriving from [countries on the red list](#) – even where they are fully vaccinated.

The measures I have announced today have been designed in close cooperation with my Right Honourable Friend the Health Secretary, along with medical and scientific experts, to ensure we can continue to minimise the risk of new variants.

And, as many of us know from personal travel experience, the government will not hesitate to act if required and the data suggests that needs to happen. In other words, to put this on the record, an amber list country could still turn red, necessitating a change in behaviour when we return to the UK, and indeed if a country goes into red, mandatory hotel quarantine.

The UK has achieved many hard-won gains, through our successful vaccination programme, and through the continued spirit and determination of the British people. We continue to encourage people to take up the vaccine when offered not only to protect themselves but also to restore previous freedoms more safely.

19 July will mark the next step in the cautious reopening of international travel. Thanks to this government's incredible success with the vaccine programme, people in England will be able to travel more easily, visit their family and friends who they have not seen for so long and also get business moving once again.

Kick starting our economy while keeping the UK safe and supporting a wide range of jobs and industries in the process.

Madame Deputy Speaker, I commend this statement to this House.

South Sudan 10 years of independence: Troika Statement

The Troika (United Kingdom, Norway and United States) congratulates the people of South Sudan on 10 years of independence. On 9 July 2011, all South Sudanese joined together in unity to celebrate the country's birth. It was a joyous occasion, filled with hope and possibility.

The first ten years of this young country's history have seen much suffering, due to conflict-related abuses, famine, flooding and disease. Yet through it all, the South Sudanese people have shown resilience. We commend the commitment many have shown in working together to build a brighter future, so it is deeply saddening that the promise of peace and prosperity that independence represented remains unfulfilled.

The Troika has stood with the people of Sudan and South Sudan through decades of struggle and whilst we join those celebrating today, we grieve for those who have suffered and lost loved ones. Today, millions do not have enough food to feed themselves or their family. The Troika urges immediate action to ensure access for humanitarian aid and to end violence against South Sudanese and the aid workers who serve them.

Due to the immense suffering caused by the outbreak of war our aid is now primarily humanitarian, but we want to see South Sudan get back on the road to economic and social development. After all, South Sudan is rich. Its riches do not just reside in the oil beneath its land or the lumber in its forests. South Sudan is rich because of the diverse communities of people that make up this young country. It is on their behalf that we have been a constant supporter of the implementation of the peace agreement. However, nearly three years since we commended the signing of the agreement, many tasks remain undelivered. Few of the tangible benefits of peace are seen by ordinary citizens. The Troika welcomes the progress that has been made but, urges the signatories to accept accountability for their commitments and go much further, much faster.

The great challenge now facing South Sudan is to recapture the sense of unity, strength, and hope that prevailed on this day ten years ago. With reconciliation through compromise and accelerated implementation of the peace agreement South Sudan can become a peaceful, democratic country, where human rights and the rule of law are respected. A country where all people have food on their table, where businesses prosper, and where the Government truly serves its people. To realise that vision both the politically-manipulated and localised communal conflict that tears at the fabric of society itself, needs to stop. Preparations for peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections must begin in earnest; unified forces must be created; transitional justice mechanisms must be fully established; and key financial reforms need to happen as quickly as possible.

The Troika remains eager to work in close partnership with the transitional

government to implement fully the 2018 peace agreement. We are committed to standing with the South Sudanese people as they work toward their aspirations of peace and prosperity. We urge the political leadership of South Sudan to take the actions needed to build the country the jubilant crowds of 2011 dreamed was possible.

Helping businesses to prepare for full Customs Control in January 2022

More than 160,000 businesses will be receiving a [letter from HMRC](#) over the next week, explaining the steps they should take to ensure they can continue trading with the EU.

These include:

- making supplementary declarations
- appointing a customs intermediary
- Export Health Certificate requirements

Making supplementary declarations

Businesses already importing goods using delayed declarations should get ready now to have everything in place [to make supplementary declarations on time](#). Traders need to decide whether to make their own declarations or get a customs intermediary to do it for them.

Traders using the delayed declarations process have 175 calendar days from the date of import from the EU, to make the supplementary declaration. They need to apply for a duty deferment account (DDA) and authorisation to use simplified declaration procedures now, if they have not already.

Businesses can find information online about [how to get an expert to deal with customs paperwork for them](#), as well as an up-to-date [list of customs intermediaries](#) that can help them.

Export Health Certificate requirements

From 1 October 2021, all products of animal origin, certain animal by-products and high-risk food not of animal origin will require pre-notification. Also, from this date, if traders haven't made a full customs declaration for an exports consignment, their haulier or carrier will need to submit a standalone [exit summary declaration](#) providing safety and security information.

Further support and guidance

HMRC will also be contacting customers over the coming months with further details on what they need to do to prepare for the introduction of full customs declarations, from 1 January 2022.

Sophie Dean and Katherine Green, Directors General, Borders and Trade, HMRC, said:

We know how challenging it is to get used to so many changes, and we appreciate how much that UK businesses have done already.

HMRC is here to help people adapt to the adjustments, and over the next few months we will carry on reaching out to businesses to help them get the right support and guidance to continue trading with the EU.

Customers can read step-by-step guidance on:

There is also [extra online support on importing and exporting](#), including live webinars and YouTube videos.

Customer service advisers are also available, from 8am to 10pm Monday to Friday and from 8am to 4pm at weekends, on 0300 329434.