

Botswana and Saudi Arabia added to travel corridor list of exempt countries

- Botswana and Saudi Arabia added to the list of travel corridors for the UK having been assessed by the Joint Biosecurity Centre as posing a lower infection risk
- Canary Islands removed from the list of travel corridors for the UK
- travellers urged to check the latest advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) before travelling and will be required to fill in a passenger locator form before returning home

People arriving in the UK from the Canary Islands from 4am Saturday 12 December 2020 will need to [self-isolate](#) for 2 weeks as the islands are removed from the travel exemptions list.

Ministers' decision to remove the Canary Islands from the list of travel corridors has been based on a sharp increase in test positivity, currently at 7.1% for the Canaries collectively and 8.8% for the island of Tenerife.

The government has made consistently clear it will take decisive action if necessary to contain the virus, including removing countries from the [travel corridors](#) list rapidly if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

From 15 December, passengers arriving into England from countries not featured on the government's travel corridor list – including the Canary Islands – will have the option to [take a test from a private provider after 5 days of self-isolation](#), with a negative test result releasing them from the need to self-isolate.

A range of factors are taken into account when deciding to remove a country from the travel corridor list, including the continued increase of coronavirus (COVID-19) within a country, the numbers of new cases, imported cases, information on a country's testing capacity, testing regime and test positivity rate.

[Saudi Arabia](#) and [Botswana](#) have been added to the government's travel corridor list following in-depth analysis of the coronavirus epidemic in these countries.

From 4am on Saturday 12 December 2020, passengers arriving to England from these destinations will no longer need to self-isolate so long as they haven't been in or transited through any other non-exempt countries in the 14 days preceding their arrival.

People currently in the Canary Islands are encouraged to follow the local rules and check [FCDO travel advice](#) for further information. The government is

urging employers to be understanding of those returning from these destinations who now will need to self-isolate.

COVID-19 has profoundly changed the nature of international travel. Travellers should always check the latest advice, given the potential for changing coronavirus infection rates to affect both the advice about travelling to other countries and rules about self-isolation on return.

All travellers, including those from exempt destinations, will still be required to show a complete [passenger locator form](#) on arrival into the UK unless they fall into a small group of exemptions.

Penalties for those breaching the [self-isolation rules](#) when returning from non-exempt countries are £1,000 for first offences, rising to up to £10,000 for subsequent offences, mirroring penalties for those breaching self-isolation following a positive COVID test or contact from Test and Trace.

[PM meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi: 10 December 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson hosted the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi for a working lunch at Downing Street today.



The Prime Minister hosted the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for a working lunch at Downing Street today.

The leaders expressed their continued commitment to the relationship between the UK and the UAE and to strengthening our countries' shared prosperity. The Prime Minister welcomed the significant investments made by the UAE across the UK.

They agreed to step up ties in a range of areas including green technology, infrastructure and defence.

Ahead of the UK hosting COP26 next year, the PM and Crown Prince agreed on the importance of tackling climate change and discussed how to work more closely together to boost renewable energy production.

The leaders also spoke about regional security and foreign policy issues and the Prime Minister reiterated his support for the UAE's recent agreement with Israel to normalise relations.

The Prime Minister invited the Crown Prince to visit the UK again next year to build on our partnership further.

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Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea: UK statement

Thank you Mr Chair. We share the concerns expressed today by the EU and other international partners on Russia's continued violation of OSCE principles and commitments in illegally annexed Crimea and in eastern Ukraine. Following the anniversary yesterday of the Normandy Four leaders' Summit held in Paris, my statement will focus on two key commitments made at the summit: prisoner exchanges and the opening of new Entry Exit Checkpoints.

However, I would like to start by thanking the Albanian chairpersonship for rightly keeping a high focus on the conflict instigated and fuelled by Russia at this year's Ministerial Council. The UK welcomed the opportunity to join international partners for a discussion, hosted by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba, on Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. We were also proud to join 34 other co-sponsors in putting forward a draft decision on strengthening OSCE monitoring at the uncontrolled segment of the Ukraine-Russia border; we regret that Russia refused to engage constructively on the text.

The UK continues to welcome the significant reduction of violence since the strengthened ceasefire came into effect on the 27th July, which was a key commitment of the Paris Summit. However, we were concerned to see that the SMM's weekly report of 8th December registered a two-fold increase in the weekly total of ceasefire violations, compared with the previous week, and more than a three-fold increase in the number of explosions. We were also saddened to read in the SMM's recent reporting, for the first time since the 27th July, of two civilians who have sustained injuries due to shelling, as

well as of the first damage to civilian property recorded by the Mission. We must not be complacent.

Less progress has been made on other key commitments. As the holiday season approaches, we cannot forget those who remain in detention, separated from their families. At the Paris Summit, all sides agreed to promote the release and exchange of detained persons associated with the conflict. The prisoner exchanges in December 2019 and in April of this year clearly demonstrated what is possible when there is political will; however, there have been no further exchanges since and progress appears stalled. We remind Russia of its commitment and urgently call on it to match the political will Ukraine has shown on this issue.

We would also like to highlight the urgent need to make progress on another key Paris Summit commitment to open new Entry Exit Checkpoints. EECPs are essential for Ukrainian civilians to access jobs, education, pensions, medical care and to see their families. It is entirely unacceptable that a month after the agreed opening date, the Russia-backed armed formations are blocking the opening of the two new checkpoints at Shchastia and Zolote. We call again on Russia to use its influence to ensure that there is a simultaneous and coordinated opening without any further delay.

We are also deeply concerned by reporting of international organisations that the majority of entry-exit checkpoints remain closed on the non-government controlled side under the pretext of COVID-19 measures. As a result, the number of people crossing the line of contact continues to fall, with only around 21,000 crossings recorded by the UNHCR in October, compared to over 1.4m crossing during the same period last year. While reasonable precautions should be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the pandemic should not be used as a pretext for unnecessary limitations on freedom of movement.

The UK reiterates our support for the Minsk agreements and our firm commitment to see the peaceful resolution of the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We welcome the work of the Normandy Four and the Trilateral Contact Group in this regard, and we thank Ambassador Grau and her team for their efforts to make progress on the issues I have addressed today. We call on Russia to engage productively, and match the political will demonstrated by Ukraine, so that real progress can be made.

We repeat our call on Russia to withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine; to cease its support for the armed formations it backs; to stop access restrictions and intimidation of the SMM in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations and to reverse all unilateral measures that undermine the Minsk agreements.

The UK strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The UK has consistently stood with Ukraine in opposing all instances of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and we will continue to do so, including through sanctions with our international partners.

Highways England – helping you this Christmas

Some 778 miles of roadworks on England's motorways and major A-roads will be removed from the road network from 6am on Sunday 20 December to 12:01am on Monday 4 January 2021.

Where essential roadworks must continue, speed limits will be set at 60mph where possible.

To make journeys better for everyone, plan your route, check traffic conditions before setting out, make sure your vehicle is ready for the drive ahead and allow plenty of time for your trip.

As well as keeping roadworks to an absolute minimum, Highways England's traffic officers will help you stay on the move by changing their working hours to meet peaks in traffic volumes.

Highways England's customer service director, Melanie Clarke, said: "We want to help you see loved ones this Christmas, so we'll be doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible and to minimise any disruption.

"We'll remove roadworks wherever possible and to help reduce the chance of breaking down, we're reminding drivers to carry out simple vehicle checks before setting off on journeys."

Before setting off remember to:

Check fuel: make sure you have enough fuel to get to your destination.

Check tyres: check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit.

Check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey and top up if needed. Take your car to a garage if you're topping up more than usual.

Check water: make sure you always have good visibility by keeping your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen.

Check lights: check your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights and brake lights. If they're not functioning properly, you're putting yourself at risk. Also, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT.

As well as checking your vehicle, if you're:

- towing: make sure you have the correct licence and insurance to tow the weight of your load and it's correctly connected and secured.
- driving on the motorway: follow the motorway signage, including the red X signals. Lanes are closed for a reason and drivers ignoring red X signs put themselves and others at risk.

Highways England will step up works to ensure the roads are prepared for bad weather, putting over 400 patrols on duty to rapidly respond to disruption.

Over 200 Highways England staff will also be working over Christmas to provide 24/7 cover in Highways England's seven regional operations centres to keep traffic flowing.

Information about [traffic conditions](#) is on our website and on Twitter. We can also be contacted on 0300 123 5000.

Get [journey planning advice](#), including making sure vehicles are ready for the road.

Get information about [how to avoid tailgating](#) by giving fellow road users enough space.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Company fined for illegally depositing waste in Teesside](#)

Appearing at Teesside Magistrates' Court on Monday, 7 December, haulage and waste management company Scott Bros Ltd pleaded guilty to offences relating to the illegal deposit of waste on the site of a former landfill outside Thorpe Thewles, Stockton-on-Tees.

In 2017 a landowner approached Scott Bros Ltd to raise and level a 2.5 hectare field off Durham Road with inert soil and stone to improve its use for grazing.

However, after obtaining conditional planning approval from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in May 2018, the company failed to apply to the Environment Agency for an environmental permit, which is designed to protect people and the environment, before starting the work.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Chris Bunting told the court that the land's previous use as a landfill meant that a specific environmental permit

application needed to be made so that the site's intended use could be monitored.

Almost 4,000 tonnes of waste illegally deposited

When responding to a report from a member of the public in November 2018, Environment Officers discovered that almost 4,000 tonnes of material had already been illegally deposited on the land.

Photographs showed that waste contaminated with plastic and metal had been deposited along with bricks and disused road planings, which had to be tested to ensure they were not hazardous.

Scott Bros Ltd were immediately told to cease operations at the site so it could be investigated. The company produced paperwork showing the origin and details of the waste that had been deposited, but enquiries with other companies revealed that considerably more lorry loads of material had been transported there.

The type of environmental permit which was required is the type already held by Scott Bros Ltd for five other sites in the North East. The court agreed the company had acted recklessly, and had stood to gain a significant advantage over a lawfully operated site.

John Cowl, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

This case demonstrates how seriously we take waste crime and the tough penalties in place if operators do not abide by the law. Not only does waste crime damage the environment and have a negative impact on communities, but it undermines those operating legitimately.

As an experienced company which already has a number of environmental permits, Scot Bros Ltd knows the process involved in applying for a permit and the reason why it's so important to protect the environment.

In mitigation, the court heard that Scot Bros Ltd had a previously unblemished regulatory history. During interview a director had said that the failure to apply for a permit had been an oversight, and that the company had "jumped the gun". But the court was told that the company mistakenly didn't think it actually needed a permit for this particular site.

Magistrates fined the company £36,000 and ordered them to pay prosecution costs of £6,720.63.