

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.

The Global Travel Taskforce

I committed to keep the House updated on proposals for testing international arrivals to safely reduce the 14-day self-isolation period in my statement on 7 September 2020; this statement provides an update on next steps.

The introduction of travel corridors in July was a major step forward in safely re-starting international travel whilst retaining the government's

ability to act quickly if public health was at risk, with international passenger numbers handled at UK airports up by around 400% between June and July to 3.1 million passengers.

However, many of our major markets remain or have become high risk, and therefore are not eligible for our [travel corridor list](#). A potential solution that has been widely debated is the use of testing to reduce or replace the need for self-isolation.

As I made clear in my [statement to the House on 7 September](#), based on scientific evidence, the government does not support the use of a single test on arrival as an alternative to self-isolation. However, a combination of self-isolation and testing is promising.

Since then, my department 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 such a regime. My ministerial colleagues and I have agreed that a regime, based on a single test, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger after a period of self-isolation, could achieve our objectives.

The next step is to further develop how this approach could be implemented. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that, at the request of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and I are standing up the [Global Travel Taskforce](#).

The overall aim of the Taskforce will be to consider what steps the government can take, both domestically and on the international stage, to enable the safe and sustainable recovery of international travel. To do this, the taskforce will work at pace to consider:

- how a testing regime for international arrivals could be implemented to boost safe travel to and from the UK
- what steps we can take to facilitate business and tourist travel on a bilateral and global basis, through innovative testing models and other non-testing means
- more broadly, what steps we can take to increase consumer confidence and reduce the barriers to a safe and sustainable recovery of international travel

The taskforce will further consider what day that testing should be taken on, informed by public health analysis of when this would be effective, but taking into account economic and other factors, as well as finalising a delivery plan. However, testing is not the only solution and so the taskforce will also consider steps to support the recovery of international travel more broadly, including non-testing based interventions.

Facilitating safe international travel is not a task that can be undertaken by the government alone, so this taskforce will operate in collaboration with the transport industry, the tourism and local business sectors and the private testing sector. It will also engage with partners from governments across the globe, including on the development of bilateral testing pilots.

Each country has understandably implemented its own measures, but these are confusing and complex for the consumer and for operators, so we will show global leadership by developing a framework for international travel to provide that global consistency, while protecting public health.

The taskforce will be chaired by myself and the and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It will include collaboration between officials from departments across government, and will liaise with the travel sector in order to work on the operationalisation of testing approaches designed to safely reduce self-isolation.

The taskforce will operate at pace for a time limited period, and will formally report back to the Prime Minister no later than early November 2020. I will update the House on its conclusions and outputs. I have published [terms of reference](#) alongside this statement on GOV.UK and will place a copy in the libraries of both Houses.

[PM call with President of the European Council Charles Michel: 7 October 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the President of the European Council Charles Michel.



The UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, spoke today to take stock of negotiations on the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

The Prime Minister outlined our clear commitment to trying to reach an agreement, underlining that a deal was better for both sides. He also underlined that, nevertheless, the UK was prepared to end the transition period on Australia-style terms if an agreement could not be found.

Although some progress had been made in recent discussions, they acknowledged that significant areas of difference remain, particularly on fisheries. Chief Negotiators should continue to work intensively in the coming days to try to bridge the gaps.

The Prime Minister reiterated that any deal must reflect what the British people voted for and that businesses and citizens needed certainty very soon on the terms of our future relationship.

They agreed to remain in touch on this issue.

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[Work begins on £3.7million flood scheme in Stokesley, North Yorks](#)

Once complete in spring 2021, the scheme will improve protection to 509 properties in the town, and provide £46 million of economic benefits over the next 50 years.

The Stokesley Flood Alleviation Scheme is part of the current 6 year capital investment programme which sees government funding of £2.6bn to better protect 300,000 homes from flooding and coastal erosion between 2015 and 2021.

Beyond 2021 a record government investment of £5.2bn has been announced. This will better protect 336,000 properties, through the creation of around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences, in England by 2027.

The Environment Agency also published its [Flood and Coast Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#), a blueprint setting out how it will work with communities to deliver the government's long term plan.

One of the initial elements of the works is the temporary closure of a footpath located across the A173 starting on Monday 12th October. This action, agreed with North Yorkshire County Council, will be in place until the end of the programme next spring. The contractors will only close footpaths if it is strictly necessary for certain stages of the work.

Also back in July, Richmond MP Rishi Sunak was given a guided tour of the flood scheme in Stokesley.

Leila Huntington, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Manager for the North East, said:

We are delighted that work will begin on the Stokesley Flood Alleviation Scheme. This is a project that will benefit residents, businesses, the local economy and local wildlife.

With the impacts of climate change we are seeing changes in weather patterns and an increase in flood risk. The improved flood defence at Stokesley, which is part of the government's current flood risk capital investment programme, plays a crucial role in better protecting the wider community from the risk of flooding into the future.

The contractor working on the project is BMMJV, a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald.

The first part of the programme will see the removal of the 'downstream flow control structure', to enable construction of the new structure in the same location.

The River Leven flow will be closely managed to ensure the watercourse flows normally downstream during the work and flood risk is not increased.

All contractors working on the site will be wearing appropriate PPE and adhering to any social distancing requirements. The work is expected to be complete by the end of spring 2021.

To find out if you are living in a flood risk area and for information on how to sign up for flood alerts please visit the [Environment Agency website](#)

Any questions about the scheme should be sent to stokesleyfloodscheme@environment-agency.gov.uk

[Welcome to ODP Engage 2020 – it's all about you!](#)

News story

Operational Delivery Profession launches their very first virtual event; find out how you can get involved.



ODP Engage is our new and exclusive online event; a week packed with inspiring and useful content that celebrates all things ODP. We'll show you what being a part of the Operational Delivery Profession has to offer you along with stories from colleagues that illustrate why you can be #ProudToBeODP.

During the week we'll share a wealth of exciting online content including video stories, social media posts, colleague blogs, tips for career development success and more. You can get involved too, by taking part in interactive Q and A sessions!

Monday kicks off with a special introductory message from Peter Schofield, Operational Delivery Head of Profession and Permanent Secretary for the Department of Work and Pensions.

Day One's highlights also include another chance to experience our highly praised session at this year's virtual Civil Service Live event, and a useful 'Getting to Know ODP' session.

From Tuesday to Friday we'll focus on each of the four ODP offers, respectively: Development, Community, Progression and Response. Over these four days our line-up of special guest speakers will present personal stories, information and tips to help you with everything from legal awareness to developing your own career.

You can be among the first to hear about the launch of a brand-new Learning and Development tool. And you can also discover the fascinating work of HM Revenue and Customs' Surge and Rapid Response Team and learn how ODP colleagues across government have risen to the challenge of the coronavirus pandemic.

Oh, and one last thing; during the week we'll be making a very special announcement about something super-exciting that we have in the pipeline. Stay tuned...

None of ODP's remarkable achievements would be possible without you, so come and be a part of ODP Engage 2020 – we promise you won't want to miss it!

[Register here](#)

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