

Croatia, Trinidad and Tobago and Austria to be removed from travel corridors list

- Croatia, Trinidad and Tobago and Austria to be removed from list of travel corridors for England following data showing a significant increase in confirmed cases
- passengers required to self-isolate when returning from these countries from 4am on Saturday 22 August
- Portugal added to exemptions list from 4am Saturday 22 August

People arriving into England from Croatia, Trinidad and Tobago and Austria from 4am Saturday 22 August 2020 will need to [self-isolate for 2 weeks](#) as the countries are removed from the travel corridors list.

Data from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and Public Health England has indicated a significant change in both the level and pace of confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in all 3 destinations, leading to ministers removing these destinations from the current [list of travel corridors](#).

The weekly incidence (cases) per 100,000 for Croatia has increased from 10.4 on 12 August to 27.4 on 19 August (164% increase). There has been a consistent increase in the weekly incidence rate of COVID-19 in Trinidad and Tobago over the past 4 weeks, with a 232% increase in weekly incidence (cases) per 100,000 between 12 and 19 August. In Austria, the weekly incidence (cases) per 100,000 of the population has increased from 10.5 on 13 August to 20.3 on 20 August (93% increase).

Portugal has been added to the government's travel corridor list following a decrease in confirmed cases of coronavirus. Passengers arriving in England from Portugal at or after 4am on Saturday 22 August will not 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.

At the same time, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has [updated its travel advice](#) to advise against all but essential travel to Croatia, Trinidad and Tobago and Austria. Additionally, Portugal has been added to the list of destinations that are exempted from the FCO's global advisory against non-essential travel.

Infections from COVID-19 are on the rise across Europe. The government has made consistently clear it will take decisive action if necessary to contain the virus, which includes 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. This means holidaymakers may find they need to [self isolate on return to the UK](#) and are advised to consider the implications of self-isolation on them and their families before making travel plans.

People currently in [Croatia](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#) and [Austria](#) are encouraged to follow the local rules and check the FCO travel advice pages 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 from the FCO](#), 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 destinations on the travel corridors list, will still be required to show a completed [passenger locator form](#) on arrival into the UK unless they fall into a small group of exemptions.

[Dairy Farmers across the South West set for major boost from new trade deals](#)

Farmers across the South West are set to benefit from future Free Trade Agreements with the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, which will open up new opportunities to sell local produce overseas.

The International Trade Minister, Ranil Jayawardena visited a number of farms across the South West today including Quicke's Farm and The Black Farmer, to see first-hand the agricultural exporting potential of the region and discuss future opportunities for growth.

Government analysis shows that a future trade deal with the US could deliver a £284 million boost to the South West economy, including for the South West's specialist dairy producers and agricultural industry. The deal will help to create new jobs and boost wages nationwide by £800 million a year in the long run.

The US is already the South West's largest export market, accounting for almost one fifth of all South West's goods exports. A UK-US trade deal could eliminate tariffs of up to 25% on South West dairy products and cheese sold in the US.

One business already taking advantage of the US market is Quicke's farm. The Exeter-based farm specialises in the production of award-winning cheeses and currently exports 25% of their cheese to the US.

International Trade Minister, Ranil Jayawardena said:

A future free trade agreement with the US will help lower barriers and bring benefits to thousands of farmers and small businesses across the South West by reducing costs and cutting red tape on agricultural exports.

I am delighted to be visiting farms across the South West today to highlight the opportunities such a deal would provide for our farmers and hear first-hand the export success already being enjoyed.

We want to work hand in hand with farmers across the UK to make sure they have the tools and support they need to take advantage of new global markets like the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Managing Director of Quicke's, Mary Quicke said:

Exporting is very important to Quicke's with 40% of our cheeses going abroad. A Free Trade Agreement is essential for us to thrive.

We strongly support all the efforts UK Government is making to set up Free Trade Agreements.

During his trip to the South West, Mr Jayawardena also visited Popham's Dairy Farm and The Black Farmer to discuss the benefits of future trade deals for the agricultural sector and new opportunities for farmers across the region. Last week he also visited Duchy Home farms to see the benefits of organic and sustainable farming systems and discuss the increased global demand for organic products.

The UK's negotiating objectives make clear that any future agreement must protect and uphold our high standards on food safety and animal welfare.

The Department for International Trade recently established the Independent Trade and Agriculture Commission to protect and advance interests of consumers and industry. The Commission includes agriculture representatives from every nation of the UK.

UEFA Champions League Finals: travel advice



All matches will be held behind closed doors.

Match **Date**
Final 23 August

Venue: Estádio Sport Lisboa e Benfica, Lisbon

Kick off time: 8pm (local time)

As well as this advice, check out our [travel advice for Portugal](#)

Travel insurance

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to get travel insurance and check it provides sufficient cover.

Coronavirus: entry to Portugal

- you will be subject to health screening on arrival at the airport
- your temperature will be checked and if it is 38°C or over or you show signs of being unwell, you will be referred to the health authorities at the airport
- you may be required to take a COVID-19 test and to self-isolate until you receive your test result

Coronavirus: other measures

You must observe the rules on social distancing and hygiene.

- maintain 2m social distancing

- use a face mask in all enclosed spaces
 - wash your hands frequently
 - respect maximum capacity rules in shops and services
-
- drinking alcohol in public places is banned, except for on pavement cafés and restaurants. Last orders are at midnight. Establishments close at 1am.
-
- gatherings of more than 10 people are banned
-
- beaches are subject to measures on social distancing and capacity. Check details and occupancy levels on the [Portuguese Environment Agency website](#) or download the “Info Praia” app
-
- you can be fined up to €500 if you breach the regulations

Passports and visas

- you don't need a visa to travel to Portugal, but your passport should be valid for the period of your stay
- you must show some form of identification if asked by the police or judicial authorities; in most cases, it should be sufficient to carry a photocopy of the data page of your passport, but you can be asked to produce the original document
- if you lose your passport, you can apply for an [emergency travel document](#) online; you will have to collect the document from the Consulate in Lisbon or Portimão
- remember to bring your [European Health Insurance Card](#) (EHIC) but also take out travel insurance even if you're only going for a short period, it could save you a lot of money if you get into difficulties.

Getting around Lisbon

- local and inter-regional travel is permitted in Portugal.
- taxis are beige-coloured or black and green; they're available at the airport and at taxi ranks around the city; you can flag down taxis in Portugal
- if you use taxis or private hire, sit in the back and respect the rules on maximum capacity
- if you use public transport, avoid travelling at peak times and ensure

you disinfect your hands before and after your journey. Maintain your distance from other passengers as much as possible

- facemasks are mandatory on public transport, in taxis and private hire for everyone over the age of 10
- if you're driving, you should carry your passport, valid UK driving licence, car logbook or rental contract and insurance; the police can fine you on-the-spot if you don't have these documents
- there are tolls on Portuguese motorways; you can get a fine if you don't pay toll fees so remember to carry enough cash with you; don't use the green lanes (VV – Via Verde) at toll pay points; these are for motorists who subscribe to the automatic pay system; some roads in the north of Portugal and in the Algarve have [electronic tolls](#) (SCUTs); check [how to pay](#) these before you travel

Tips

- look out for establishments that have been certified "[Clean and Safe](#)" by the Portuguese Tourism Board
- as in any other city beware of pickpockets and bag snatchers at airports, railway stations, around the town centre and when using public transport; only carry what you need and leave spare cash and valuables in hotel safety deposit box or split it up and carry it in different places
- there's no time difference between the UK and Portugal

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Rua de São Bernardo, 33
1249-082 Lisbon

Telephone: +351 21 392 4000 (also for out of hours emergencies)

For more information, please visit [British Embassy Lisbon website](#)

Emergency services numbers

- If you are feeling unwell and need advice, call the health authority's helpline on: (+351) 808 24 24 24, press 9 for English
- For emergency assistance, dial 112

Further information

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1. 20 August 2020

Change to travel advice. Portugal now on exemption list.

2. 10 August 2020

First published.

Futuristic 'village' concept launches at Worthy Down Station

Constantly evolving its defence services to meet the needs of today's military, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), supported by their partner Sodexo, has launched 'Village' – a new concept that incorporates one stop catering, retail and leisure facilities at Worthy Down Station in Hampshire.

Designed to build community, create connections and foster morale among the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force personnel who live at Worthy Down, the new facility was officially opened by Group Captain Nicholas Brittain on Thursday 30 July.

Group Captain Brittain said:

This wonderful facility is a result of a true partnership between Sodexo and the Worthy Down Station. By working together, we can provide tremendous improvements to the quality of life for our military and civil service personnel. Sodexo personnel, at all levels, are key enablers of our defence output.

The 'Village' in full swing at Worthy Down. Crown copyright.

Transforming the tri-services amenity and with a strong focus on the wellbeing of military and civil service personnel, 'Village' will feature 3 main zones; a social and meeting lounge, a micro theatre and a gaming area. Each zone is specifically designed to bring people together, encourage engagement, collaboration and boost camaraderie among defence personnel.

A combination of a restaurant, café, bar and leisure services, provide a relaxed social environment as well as a place to unwind after the working day, meeting the unique and varied needs of defence personnel, their families and visitors.

Driven by a dedicated manager and using the latest technologies, 'Village' offers something for everyone with a unique calendar of events and activities, to meet the requirements of local users.

Paul Anstey, CEO, Government & Agencies, Sodexo UK & Ireland said:

We designed 'Village' based on insight from the DIO and research that we commissioned with IPOS Mori and Kings College London to provide us with in-depth insight into understanding the most pressing needs of today's forces personnel, the wider defence community and the MOD.

The integrated approach considers all aspects of military life and focuses on reducing isolation, low morale and boredom to improve recruitment, retention, wellbeing and the creation of a focused, agile workforce. It also brings a more positive quality of life for those living and working at the base.

The military is a small, close knit community, so it was essential that 'Village' design reflected this concept.

Andy Honnor, DIO's Regional Head for the South East said:

Group Captain Brittain had a vision which DIO supported and Sodexo built upon using recent experience in other areas; 'Village' is the manifestation of this vision.

Fantastic collaboration between DIO and Sodexo meant that this project was delivered on time and within budget. It wasn't easy and it is a testament to what can be achieved when there is a thirst to find solutions at every stage.

The results are breath taking; there is nothing else this 'futuristic' on the MOD estate.

The interior of the futuristic 'Village' at Worthy Down. Crown copyright.

Having been opened only a matter of days, 'Village' is already proving to be a popular meeting spot with personnel on base commenting that the hub is 'a modern and bright area to relax and socialise after a long day', a 'very good multi-use facility' and would 'highly recommend this place to new recruits'.

'Village' is part of the new Defence College of Logistics, Policing and

Administration, a £300-million tri-service facility that DIO is building at Worthy Down. It forms part of the MOD's strategy to rationalise its estate and improve training provision and living quarters for service personnel.

Speech to ICAEW Virtual Conference

Introduction

Thank you very much indeed, Frank and I also thank Anita, Daniel and all of your team and the team that set up this amazing event. I have to say when you told me it was three days of online streaming and dozens of speakers and thousands of watchers, I thought this was nothing less than the Glastonbury of tax. I congratulate you on pulling that off. I think it's an extraordinary achievement.

Of course I am not really surprised, that this conference is going ahead, because the tax community is always ready, willing and able to embrace digitisation, and I'm going to come on to that a little later in my remarks.

Frank, you've done that very brilliant chairman thing of roping in fifteen different topics that I'm going to talk to you about, and I'm happy to take questions any of those in questions, but the three areas I'm going to focus on are:

- HMRC's response to Covid-19 and the pandemic
- the core question of how HMRC focusses on its main business – that is collecting tax
- and then, something I care very deeply about, and I'm thrilled that we have been able to make massive progress on in the last few months, which is the 10 year plan we've for HMRC to create a trusted, modern tax administration system

Let me start by saying that, of course I am absolutely proud of what HMRC has done in relation to Covid. I think it's been an astonishing set of outcomes for them. But I also think that HMRC, and it's one of the lessons we've learnt is this, can't operate in a vacuum. It needs trusted stakeholders, it needs a tax system that's working, it needs many, many organisations and people around it to be as effective as it is and would like to be.

The ICAEW make an enormous difference, and its members too. So whether they are identifying areas for improvement, or helping us to consult, or improve schemes – thank you, and thank you ICAEW members very much indeed.

I should also say, that we are coming to this, as you will appreciate, in a very specific economic context, certainly unlike any other in recent experience. We've now formally entered recession for the first time in eleven years. This is a highly unwelcome development although, alas, not surprising

given the wider situation.

The Chancellor has made perfectly clear his view that there will be hard times ahead, and last week's figures confirm the truth of that statement.

And of course, it's true that hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, despite the incredibly valid efforts that HMRC and my Treasury officials have been engaged in, trying to protect the economy and protect businesses and protect employment.

It's sobering to reflect that many more people will almost certainly face redundancy or unemployment in the next few months.

Having said that, I do think the work HMRC does can play an absolutely vital role in trying to mitigate the damage the pandemic is doing, and HMRC is at the centre of this activity too, as we're going to discuss.

You will appreciate that none of our public services will be doable if it wasn't for the funding that comes through tax revenue, and that's of course the core of HMRC's responsibilities

HMRC at the forefront

You don't often hear HMRC ministers talking about them being at the forefront of delivering huge and successful new programmes, in record time and at the centre of the government's response to a crisis, but that is what HMRC has done. As I say, I think it's a tremendous achievement.

Let me say also, we are acutely aware that by no means every aspect of every scheme is perfect. This process has been done at a blistering pace. We have been pulling together schemes as quickly as we can, and officials have been working around the clock to make sure that we deliver programmes that deliver the maximum good for the maximum number of people as quickly as possible, with the minimum of fraud.

It might be worth just touching briefly on the results. The furlough scheme so far has helped 1.2 million employers claim just under £36 billion. HMRC also helped around 2.7 million self-employed people claim nearly £8 billion in grants, and helped employers by reimbursing some of the costs of statutory sick pay for COVID-related absences.

In the case of Eat Out to Help Out, some 85,000 restaurants have now registered and the total amount claimed is £180 million, from 35 million covers claimed.

So these are huge numbers, and to put that all in place at such speed is a considerable achievement.

What I think is less noticed, but to me at least, and to you as tax connoisseurs, no less important, is that HMRC has also implemented more than 60 policy changes and easements, and they include things like:

- the deferral of tax payments through the VAT system and deferral of

Income Tax Self-Assessment payments due in July 2020

- introducing a temporary relief for customs duty and import VAT on PPE and other medical supplies used to help combat Covid-19
- assisting in the production of millions of additional litres of alcohol hand sanitiser. HMRC set up a specialist team who moved very quickly to increase production of denatured (undrinkable) alcohol which has proved very important in fighting the virus

It's very interesting how brewers and distillers have also moved very quickly into that market and have created new markets for themselves. I'm not going to pass by this issue without singling out the Black Mountain Botanicals distillery in my constituency – who have done exactly that to great effect.

So that's the wider context, but of course that in itself, raises the question of where do we go from here. Is there going to be a 'new normal' for HMRC, and what does that new normal look like? For HMRC that does mean a refocussing and a reconsideration of the key principles by which they operate, again focussing wherever possible on supporting individuals, supporting businesses, protecting the taxpayer and ensuring the money comes in to fund public services.

Where we go from here

So what are those key principles?

1. The first one will be that HMRC will continue to collect the tax due, but do so, as far as possible, in a way which supports taxpayers in the work they are doing and in particular, supports businesses that are supporting their employees. We want businesses to be doing the right thing and we want to do everything we can to support them in the way they do that.
2. HMRC should communicate transparently and openly. That is very important. The consent on which a tax authority exists, and the consent of the wider tax system requires open and transparent communication.
3. It's of course always vital, for similar reasons, that HMRC should continue to be professional, fair and even-handed in their dealings with taxpayers.
4. Where HMRC introduced temporary arrangements that have improved taxpayers' experiences or created operational improvements, they need to, where possible, to build on these changes to deliver long-term sustainable solutions.
5. Finally, HMRC must continue to collect the money that pays for the UK's public services, and that means continuing to prioritise tackling serious fraud and criminal attacks on the tax system, while making it as easy as it can be for individuals and businesses pay the right tax at the right time, without difficulty.

So those principles really remain unchanged, but I think extended in some key areas. Let's talk a little bit about how that might work.

Of course, HMRC will still issue penalty notices, they should take a sympathetic approach to those who are struggling to pay their tax or file

their returns. HMRC will accept the impacts of COVID-19 as a reasonable excuse, if properly evidenced, and will offer longer periods to request a review or appeal a decision.

Similarly, HMRC has restarted debt collection activities and it's absolutely right that it should do so. Of course they recognise, and I recognise that I some individuals and businesses remain in uncertain financial circumstances.

So HMRC will initially focus on collecting debts from taxpayers who are least affected by COVID-19 and most able pay their tax debts. Having said if you or any of your members' clients have concerns about their ability to meet tax obligations, to get in touch with HMRC now, to see how they can be supported though deferrals or Time to Pay or any of the other measures that we've introduced to make sure they have adopted every measure to which they are entitled.

So that is the full picture, but that in itself yields to consideration of what the future will bring, and there you get into the issue of HMRC's 10-year strategy and all the work we've been doing on the tax administration system.

HMRC's 10 year strategy

You and your members will have seen that last month we published the 10 year Tax Administration Strategy. I am delighted about that, it is fantastic to be able to put a 10 year process out there, so people have a proper sense of the direction in which we're heading and can plan accordingly. Software providers can, I hope, flood into the market with new databases, platforms and apps which assist people to pay tax effectively and have the best possible interaction with the tax system.

That whole plan, as your members will know, having probably read it and costed it closely, is a strategy of focus and collaborative improvement. I think has the potential to yield huge benefits. If you read it, you will see that collecting tax, while an important function, is by no means the only aspect of that plan. It's also very important to support HMRC's ability to act to improve our national resilience. It's been able to do that with the furlough scheme, and that's surely a very important function for it evolving over time.

I also think the process of nudging people into digitisation isn't just good for them, and many people have voluntarily adopted MTD for VAT already, but also has a tremendous potential productivity benefit for the economy as a whole. We have a long tail of businesses in the UK which are quite low on productivity, so this has a much wider potential economic benefit.

So those three areas, tax, resilience and productivity are all at the centre of this plan. What does this involve? Well it means greater flexibility, resilience and responsiveness in the tax system. It means improvements to businesses' digital skills, and it means a series of measures focussed on reforming the tax administration in a way that reflects the modern economy, so that it is working in real time, it is allowing people and businesses to pay the right tax, without tax becoming a burden or too intrusive or

difficult. And of course, it does enable the government to continue to support the economy and businesses and individuals at times of crisis.

So that does that mean in practice. In the first case, it means extend Making Tax Digital (MTD) and pressing on with digitisation as they have done in countries like Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Australia and many others. That's very important.

Having successfully introduced a new, digital VAT service for business We will be:

- extending MTD for VAT to VAT-registered businesses with turnover below the £85,000 VAT threshold from April 2022
- introducing MTD for Income Tax Self Assessment for businesses and landlords with business and property income over £10,000 from April 2023
- consulting on the detail of MTD for Corporation Tax in Autumn 2020

So we are giving businesses, individuals and the software industry a long lead-in time to ensure people have time to prepare for this change. And for Income Tax Self Assessment taxpayers we'll have the threshold so that those earning under that sum can opt out if they wish, though one of the fascinating things has been that many businesses have chosen to opt in to MTD despite not being covered by it as they fall below the threshold.

We think this is the start of a really interesting process as we continue to embrace technology,

And what do we want to see from that? Well we obviously want to see greater use of real-time information. That's a vital component – it's currently very hard for the taxpayer to have an immediate picture in real time of tax liabilities. It's a big change, but it does help the government. Let's be clear that if we had a more up to date picture of taxpayers' financial positions would have enabled SEISS support to be better targeted for those who needed it. Quarterly reports submitted before the introduction of SEISS would have given us almost a further full year's data, and this would have enabled us to pay SEISS grants based on self-employed workers most recent trading levels. There will be a very concrete improvements to people's lives and the resilience of their businesses coming out of these potential changes.

We also want to explore options for timely payment of taxes, and I realise different sectors face different challenges in this regard. The delays in the UK system can make it hard for people to manage cashflow, particularly for the newly self-employed, whose first tax bill could be up to 22 months after they start trading. We want to open a debate, a wider discussion, about the pros and cons of bringing tax payment more into line with the increasingly real-time nature of tax reporting and other taxpayer services. Of course that also has the effect of helping people to avoid a cashflow crisis at their end and stops them falling into debt, so that has some benefit. We also want to push ahead towards a secure, easily accessible single digital account. We want taxpayers to have one complete financial picture which draws on different sources of information and enables HMRC to provide a more tailored service to their needs.

Alongside that, but very importantly for the ICAEW and your members, we want HMRC to improve services for agents / representatives, who we regard as an integral part of the wider tax system, and we want to support them and help them do what they can to support their clients, and of course we want to raise standards in that area.

And the final thing, the bit that often gets forgotten. I know none of this is big box office in political terms...but even in this bit, the thing which tends to get forgotten the importance of modernising the Tax Administration Framework. Our current framework is somewhat complex and somewhat out of date. It needs to be simplified and it needs to be brought up to date. And the goal of that is to allow HMRC and taxpayers to benefit from advances in the use of technology and data, for example by simplifying processes so that businesses need only register once with HMRC for all taxes, and to stop this current system where people have to go around navigating different rules, processes and deadlines for different taxes, and having to sign up with the tax authority on several occasions.

Wrapping up

So this, taken together, is I think quite a significant and important moment. Actually, I think it's important for the country, not just the tax work. I think it forms a coherent package of change, and a long term package of change. Therefore I am very excited about it.

I want to reiterate my sincere thanks to the ICAEW for their collaboration already – both with officials and with me personally – in taking this strategy forward. I am absolutely committed to working very closely with you and with the industry and agents tax profession to understand and improve the tax administration system over the next few years.

I am now very happy to take questions and thank you everyone again for inviting me to this conference.