



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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21 September 2021

Dear Huw,

International Travel Update

Following the conclusion of the third Global Travel Taskforce's checkpoint review, I am writing to update you on the UK Government's plans to further ease restrictions on international travel in England.

Future Travel:

Following the success of the UK's vaccination rollout, the UK Government will be making changes to the international travel framework to instil more certainty and simplicity to international travel, and reduce the cost of testing to consumers. These changes are:

- From Monday 4 October, the traffic light system will be replaced by a single red list of countries and territories and simplified travel measures for arrivals from the rest of the world. The rules for travel from countries and territories not on the red list will depend on your vaccination status.
- Fully vaccinated passengers arriving from certain non-red list countries will no longer be required to take a pre-departure test before their arrival into England from Monday 4 October. This comes alongside an expansion of the policy to make travel more seamless for fully vaccinated passengers.
- Later in October, we will move away from day 2 PCR testing to a new system of cheaper lateral flow device tests for fully vaccinated passengers arriving from non-red countries. If passengers test positive, they will then be required to take a confirmatory PCR test, at no additional cost to the traveller. This will allow us to continue to genome sequence results in order to detect Variants of Concern.

Unvaccinated passengers arriving from non-red list countries will be required to take a pre-departure test, day 2 PCR test and day 8 PCR test, and will have to self-isolate upon their return to England.

The table below provides an overview of the new international travel framework that will be in place from the end of October in England:

	Baseline travel requirements	Red list
Vaccinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 2 Lateral Flow Test • If positive, confirmatory PCR test for sequencing and 10-day home quarantine if the PCR result is positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Departure Test • Managed quarantine for 10 days • No Test to Release • Day 2 and 8 PCR tests
Unvaccinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Departure Testing • Home quarantine for 10 days • Test To Release on Day 5 • Day 2 & 8 PCR tests 	

Expansion of the Inbound Vaccination Policy:

Since July 2021, we have piloted a policy whereby those vaccinated with an approved vaccine in the US and Europe do not need to quarantine or take a day 8 PCR test on arrival, if arriving from an amber list country. The results of this pilot have been a success, boosting international travel during the summer and helping us to balance the need to open up international travel whilst also protecting public health. Building on the success of the pilot, we will expand the policy to include fully vaccinated passengers (who can demonstrate their vaccine status) to the following 17 countries and territories from 4 October:

- Australia
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Barbados
- Bahrain
- Brunei
- Canada
- Dominica
- Israel
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan

This will lead to over 50 countries and territories now being covered by the policy across the world.

Further, people who have been vaccinated with two different doses of approved vaccines will now be eligible for the policy, providing they are able to demonstrate that they are fully vaccinated in one or more of the countries/territories in scope of the policy. As an example, a person with one dose of Oxford/AstraZeneca in the UK and one dose of Moderna in the US will be treated as fully vaccinated for the purposes of international travel, subject to presenting sufficient proof.

All under 18s ordinarily resident in the countries/territories in scope of the vaccines policy will continue to be exempt from quarantine requirements, regardless of their vaccination status. From 4 October, in line with the change for vaccinated arrivals 18+, they will also no longer be required to undertake a Pre-Departure Test. From later in October, over 5s will just need a Day 2 lateral flow test with confirmatory PCR if they test positive. Under 5s have always been exempt from testing.

The Government will also recognise people as being fully vaccinated under a formally approved COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial in the US, Canada and Australia with proof of participation (digital or paper-based) from a public health body.

The Government will explore further expansion of the countries within the inbound vaccination policy on a regular basis.

I also welcome the news that the United States have announced that they will allow fully vaccinated UK travellers to travel to America from early November this year. This is testament to the hard work and progress made through our joint expert working group to restart transatlantic travel.

International Transit:

Following updated public health advice, UK Government will also be changing the rules for those transiting as part of their journey to England. This change will ensure that by the end of October, passengers who transit securely airside and via international rail services will be required to follow the measures associated to their country of departure, rather than any countries they have transited through as part of their journey.

Red List Changes:

The final review of country allocations under the traffic light system before the switch to the new international travel system on 4 October has been undertaken by Ministers. From 4am on Wednesday 22 September, Kenya, Oman, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, The Maldives, Sri Lanka and Egypt will be removed from the red list.

Our new system will enable us to ease restrictions further, bringing our international travel framework more in line with our international competitors, whilst safeguarding public health to provide confidence to travellers. However, it is certainly not the end of the story. We will further review these measures early in the new year, when we hope to be in a different context that will allow us to go that step further ahead of booking windows for the spring and the summer of 2022.

As health matters are devolved, the Devolved Administrations will confirm their respective positions.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT