Department for Transport

Report of the Global Travel Taskforce
The Safe Return of International Travel

Presented to the Prime Minister by the Secretary of State for Transport

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Contents

Foreword

In February, the Prime Minister asked me to develop the framework for a safe and sustainable return to non-essential international travel when the time is right. This report, produced by the Global Travel Taskforce, which brings together the UK government and industry, sets out how we can achieve that goal.

Over the past year, the COVID 19 pandemic has forced upon us many changes in daily life, not least restrictions on domestic and international movement. Now, as we in the United Kingdom reap the rewards of our hugely successful vaccination programme, with substantial reductions in hospitalisations and deaths, we can look forward to the time when travel abroad for holidays and family events is again viable.

But as we restart non-essential flights, voyages and railway journeys we must not lose sight of the moving target that is COVID-19. This deadly virus, with its potential to mutate into more infectious and virulent variants which may threaten the efficacy of our current vaccines, is a constant threat. Our policy on non-essential international travel must therefore be guided by one overwhelming priority – public health. We cannot allow mass international travel to become a major vector for the introduction into the UK of dangerous COVID-19 variants.

The recent surge in infection rates in Europe has highlighted the challenges we continue to face. Even as we seek to re-open international travel, we cannot rule out future restrictions, should they prove necessary. Be in no doubt: this government will act swiftly if the need arises.

The measures contained in this report balance that priority with the desire shared by many of us to once again embark on foreign travel, be it for business, holidays or reunions with those we love – let us not forget that one in seven people living in this country were born abroad.

We in the UK government understand the enormous strain travel restrictions have placed upon our aviation and tourism industries. Hugely successful in the good times, these sectors have been nursed through the last year with some £7 billion in UK government help. But what they most need is a reliable roadmap for the future – a regime that categorises destinations by risk and clearly sets out the conditions applying to people travelling to and from them. Travel operators need some warning if country risk assessments – based on the "traffic light" system – are likely to change. The system being introduced today seeks to provide this warning – but it is subject to the strict condition that if this government needs to act swiftly in response to a sudden change in circumstances it will not hesitate to do so.

A robust system of controls at our borders is essential, not only to protect public health but to safeguard the wider economy. The last year has taught us that high domestic infection rates inevitably inflict damage on business and employment.

The Taskforce has engaged closely with the aviation, maritime and international rail industries, and foreign governments, to develop this framework. It is based on robust scientific and clinical evidence, with a clear view to progressing from where we are now to a future where travel is less restricted. This country is already a leader in establishing a framework for sustained safe international travel, and we will continue to work with other governments to realise this goal.

We will confirm in advance if non-essential international travel can resume on 17 May. The measures introduced will be reviewed regularly and modifications made if and when necessary.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to partners in the Taskforce, both at home and internationally, who have helped to move this vital work forward. We all want the same thing: a time when international travel will again be simple and carefree, uniting us with people and places we hold dear.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport

1 Executive summary

1. In November 2020, the first Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) produced 14 recommendations to support a return to international travel.[1] Many of the recommendations, such as the Test to Release scheme, have been instrumental in supporting safe travel and will remain crucial in the months to come.

2. In February 2021, the UK government published the roadmap out of lockdown in England.[2] At the time, the UK had delivered 15 million first vaccination doses, covering the first four priority groups. Now, less than two months later, the UK as a whole has surpassed 30 million first doses.[3]

3. Given our successful vaccination programme, the roadmap included a commitment to relaunching the GTT to consider a safe return of international travel. We have worked with industry and international partners to develop a risk-based framework that can facilitate the return of international travel while managing Variants of Concern.

4. The economic context is stark. 2020 saw the largest year-on-year decline in global air passenger traffic in aviation history and a 76% decline in inbound tourism.[4] Cruise has remained entirely unable to restart. Despite comprehensive support packages, continued challenges will make it progressively harder to recover and renew. Other areas reliant on international travel have been hit hard, such as visitor economy, culture, creative industries and hospitality. Many people rely on international travel to connect with family and friends, and many international-facing businesses have been unable to thrive. It is crucial to ensure that people, communities and businesses can recover and be in a strong position to support the levelling up agenda.[5]

5. The success of the most ambitious vaccination programme in history is at the heart of the UK government's strategy to manage COVID-19, paving the way for a safe, sustainable and robust lifting of restrictions. In this context, the GTT has produced a set of recommendations for a return to non-essential international travel. Importantly, the UK government is prepared to put the emergency brakes on reopening international travel if we perceive a risk to the COVID-19 roadmap's four tests.

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

1   Department for Transport. *Report of the Global Travel Taskforce*. 24 November 2020.
2   Cabinet Office. *COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021*. 22 February 2021.
3   Department of Health and Social Care. *Press Release: 30 million people in UK receive first dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine*. 28 March 2021.
4   VisitBritain. *2021 tourism forecast*. 28 January 2021.
5   HM Treasury. *Build Back Better: our plan for growth*. 3 March 2021.

Recommendations

7. **Progressing a risk-based reopening of international travel**, making use of existing and new measures to ensure that this is safe, sustainable and robust.

   • **Recommendation:** Remove measures limiting outbound travel by 17 May at the earliest and implement a "traffic light" country system, to which different restrictions are applied depending on risk.

   • **Recommendation:** Introduce a "Green Watchlist" to support outbound travellers identify countries most at risk of moving from green to amber.

   • **Recommendation:** Hold three "checkpoints" on 28 June, 31 July and 1 October to review measures.

   • **Recommendation:** Enable residents to prove their COVID-19 status for tests and, if necessary, vaccines for outbound travel to a third country.

   • **Recommendation:** Restart international cruises alongside the wider restart of international travel, in line with the country "traffic light" system.

8. **Ensuring readiness for international travel restart**, building on ongoing work to minimise border pressures as passenger flows rise, whilst keeping staff safe.

   • **Recommendation:** Improve the Passenger Locator Form, with full e-gates integration across all ports of entry by autumn 2021.

   • **Recommendation:** Establish a joint UK government and industry working group to ensure border readiness.

   • **Recommendation:** Ensure comprehensive measures are in place to assess and assure safety readiness across all modes.

   • **Recommendation:** Use feedback from industry and CAA expertise to make targeted interventions to ensure operational safety.

9. **Building consumer clarity and confidence** through enhanced advice and communications of safety measures and consumer protection when booking travel.

   • **Recommendation:** Improve operator(s) and passenger guidance to provide more clarity on health and passenger requirements including, where relevant, how this interacts with travel advice.

   • **Recommendation:** Introduce a passenger COVID-19 charter by 17 May setting out consumer rights and responsibilities whilst measures remain. Later this year consult on additional, flexible and modern tools to enforce consumer rights.

10. **Supporting a transition to future travel**, taking the first steps towards co-existing with an endemic COVID-19, in collaboration with global partners.

- **Recommendation:** Maintain leadership role within multilateral organisations including the ICAO, IMO and OECD, and work with like-minded states including the G7, G20 and Five Eyes group to develop strategies for reopening international travel.

- **Recommendation:** Continue close coordination with industry to ensure third party apps can be integrated with a national digital certification system that is interoperable, safe and secure.

- **Recommendation:** Explore the feasibility of bilateral pilots for testing initiatives such as digital solutions on particular routes, or with other countries.

11. **Next steps:** We will implement the recommendations in a way that is based on science while supporting the economy and allowing families and friends to reunite. We will work with the Devolved Administrations to align arrangements wherever possible across the UK. However, we cannot yet confirm resumption of international travel from 17 May. We will provide further details by early May.

2 The safe return of international travel

12. As part of the national lockdown in January 2021, the UK government took the difficult but necessary decision to introduce additional health measures to safeguard public health, including the emergence of new Variants of Concern. We introduced pre-departure testing requirements and required those returning from 'red list' countries to self-isolate in an approved facility for 10 days. International travel is currently the most restricted it has been at any time during the pandemic.

13. All viruses regularly mutate as they replicate to create new variants. Most mutations have no effect and are not a cause for any concern. However, some pose an increased risk to public health due to changes in transmissibility, infection severity, ability to evade immune responses, or the virus's susceptibility to therapeutic treatments. The UK is a global leader in genome sequencing, which in positive cases allows the identification of Variants of Concern. Mutation-specific PCR testing prior to whole genome sequencing allows Variants of Concern to be detected more quickly once known. Despite this progress, the risks posed by Variants of Concern remain significant, and this is recognised in this framework through the risk-based system for countries alongside continued use of robust health and testing measures.

14. Nevertheless, the resumption of international travel is vital for the economy and the general public, and for allowing families and friends to reconnect and reunite. Many businesses hit hardest by the pandemic directly relate to international travel, such as hospitality, culture, tourism and international carriers. Global air passenger traffic fell by 66% in 2020 compared to 2019, the largest year-on-year decline in aviation history. VisitBritain's latest figures show a 76% decline in inbound tourism in 2020 compared to 2019.[6] Business aviation has been significantly lower in 2020.[7] International rail operators through the Channel Tunnel (who transported more than 20 million passengers per year pre-COVID-19) have seen a substantial fall in demand.[8] 2020 international ferry passenger numbers with Europe fell by 63% from 2019.[9] The cruise industry has remained unable to restart since the outbreak. In 2019 before the pandemic, the sector saw 2.2 million cruise passengers travel through ports, which was a 63% increase when compared to 2009.[10]

15. Our travel and tourism sectors continue to face unprecedented challenges because of the pandemic. Comprehensive support packages were extended to protect jobs, skills and businesses survival, but until people can travel again with confidence, they will continue to face challenges. On top of wider plans to build back better[11], future recovery and renewal of the tourism and international travel sectors will be addressed in the Tourism Recovery Plan in May, a strategic framework for aviation later this year, and the Maritime COVID-19 Recovery Plan later this year.

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6   VisitBritain. *2021 tourism forecast*. 28 January 2021.
7   Civil Aviation Authority. *UK airport data*. 19 February 2021.
8   Department for Transport. *Channel Tunnel: traffic to and from Europe, annual from 1994*. 8 December 2020.
9   Department for Transport. *Sea Passenger Statistics 2020: Short Sea Routes*. 24 February 2021.
10 Department for Transport. *Sea Passenger Statistics, All Routes: 2019*. 11 November 2020.
11 HM Treasury. *Build Back Better: our plan for growth*. 3 March 2021.

16. There is evidence of demand for overseas travel, as outlined in Annex C. However, despite some demand for travel abroad, there is also evidence that passengers want to see measures to ensure that travel abroad is safe. Focus groups show that passengers are keen to see the implementation of as many simultaneous interventions as possible to feel safe when travelling abroad.[12] Passengers taking part in more recent focus groups indicated that they expect wider travel measures to remain for the duration of the vaccine programme, as outlined in Annex D.

17. The GTT advocates a clear and consistent evidence-based approach to facilitate the safe, sustainable and robust return of international travel. As such, the UK government has developed an analytical framework to support this work. The Department for Transport has developed the capability to determine the relative effectiveness of policy options using a COVID-19 arrivals simulation model. This tracks a cohort of travellers, from pre-departure, to arrival, and eventually into the community. The outputs measure effectiveness of policies in stopping infected individuals from entering the community where they would otherwise risk infecting others. These results provide important metrics for comparing the risk of imported cases leading to further transmissions. The model has been developed using scientific assumptions and inputs agreed with the UK Health Security Agency and informed by engagement with industry modelling. This will be vital for supporting border readiness.

12 Department for Transport. *Confidence using transport during COVID-19*. 25 February 2021.

3 A risk-based approach to reopening international travel

Towards a risk-based framework

18. To determine the approach to reopening international travel in a safe, sustainable and robust way, the GTT bases recommendations on the latest evidence and has sought toidentify consensus on what that evidence suggests about different policy options. Engagement with industry and policy and public health experts has been, and will continue to be, crucial for our approach.

19. The overarching principle is for a clear and evidence-based approach to facilitate the safe, sustainable and robust return of international travel while managing the risks from imported cases and Variants of Concern. The health risk posed by arrivals from different countries varies considerably and is likely to change over time as infection rates fluctuate, Variants of Concern are identified, and vaccine programmes are rolled out, so the principle of a risk-based approach has received consistent support throughout the GTT's engagement across government, and with the transport industry, academics and trade unions.

20. The current approach to managing health risk in England relies on assessing the risk posed by arrivals from different countries using a methodology to inform Ministerial decisions on "red list" of countries presenting significant risk due to Variants of Concern. This approach has protected public health and ensured that action is taken to minimise any risks from Variants of Concern. Arrivals are subject to stringent travel health measures and outbound international travel without a reasonable excuse is prohibited as the vaccine roll-out progresses and the domestic roadmap beds in.

21. The position on outbound travel will be re-assessed in advance of 17 May and, if safe to do so, legal restrictions on outbound international travel for non-essential purposes will be removed on 17 May at the earliest.

A risk-based approach

22. To respond to the new context, we will launch a new approach for England from 17 May at the earliest, for all countries, to which different restrictions are applied depending on risk. This risk will likely be based on factors such as the level of community transmission of Variants of Concern, levels of testing, genomic sequencing and reporting. This will allow the UK government the flexibility to adapt to the evolving health situation around the world whilst keeping borders open.

- **Red countries:** High-risk countries (currently known as "red list").
- **Amber countries:** Moderate-risk countries.
- **Green countries:** Low-risk countries.

23. The allocation of countries will be kept under review and respond to emerging evidence, with a particular focus on Variants of Concern. The Joint Biosecurity Centre will publish data and analysis to support the process of allocating countries. Allocations will inevitably change, and to give travellers more certainty we will also introduce a "Green Watchlist". This public list will support travellers as they book travel to help identify the countries risk of moving from green to amber, meaning the traveller would need to self-isolate on arrival. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice will continue to provide guidance on individual risks for travellers in third countries and COVID-19 public health and border measures.

24. At this point, it is too early to say which countries will be in the green category this summer. These decisions will be driven by the data and evidence at the time. The UK government will set out an assessment of which countries will fall into each category ahead of reopening international travel. People are of course free to book holidays abroad in the summer but for the moment the government must advise that until the picture is clearer there is a continuing risk of disappointment.

Health measures for arrivals

25. This system will be in place from 17 May at the earliest. Associated measures applied to each category will be as follows:

Measure	Green Country	Amber Country	Red Country
Passenger Locator Form	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pre-departure Test	Yes	Yes	Yes
Managed Quarantine at Hotel	No	No	10 days
Self-isolation	No	10 days	N/A
Test to Release	N/A	On day 5	No
PCR Testing	On or before day 2	On or before day 2	On or before day 2
Further PCR Testing	No	Day 8	Day 8

26. Importantly, a safe, sustainable and robust reopening from 17 May at the earliest does not mark a "return to normal" for international travel. Monitoring and compliance activity will remain, such as the consistent requirement of a Passenger Locator Form (which will be improved by 17 May, as discussed in chapter 4) and proof of pre-departure test. NHS tests at no cost for those with symptoms will not be permitted for use in international travel. Travellers must source tests[13] from the approved list of providers and at the appropriate times as outlined in the table above.

27. Equally, the UK government recognises that the cost of these tests can be high. We will work with the travel industry and private testing providers ahead of international travel reopening to see how we can further reduce the cost of travel for the British public while ensuring travel is as safe as possible. This could include cheaper tests being used when holidaymakers return home, as well as whether the government would be able to provide pre-departure tests.

13 Department of Health and Social Care. *Private providers of coronavirus testing: what you need to know*. 1 April 2021.

Checkpoints and transition to future travel

28. The UK government will hold three "checkpoints" to review measures, taking account of the emerging evidence and domestic and international health picture. This could include, for example, considerations around the self-isolation, the Managed Quarantine Service, and options at which differing measures or restrictions may apply for those with proof of vaccination. The checkpoints will also consider the efficacy of measures in progressing to a safe, sustainable and robust international travel system in the longer term, both for people, families and businesses, and for the wider transport and tourism industry. The checkpoints will take place as follows:

   • **Checkpoint 1:** no later than 28 June 2021

   • **Checkpoint 2**: no later than 31 July 2021

   • **Checkpoint 3:** no later than 1 October 2021

29. These reviews will also take account of a range of different evidence. This will include considerations of the four tests as set out in the roadmap:

   • The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.

   • Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.

   • Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

   • Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

30. At every stage, decisions will also take account of impacts on border operations and testing capacity. The Passenger Locator Form is essential in ensuring that people understand and meet the requirements of entry, such as the work of the Isolation Assurance and Compliance Service in checking quarantine compliance. The GTT recommends the requirement for a Passenger Locator Form for arrivals from all countries, to ensure information gathering and compliance.

31. Some countries will require proof of vaccination status a condition of travel. The UK government will aim to support residents of England who wish to travel by providing verification that meets international requirements, in line with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's COVID-status Certification Review.[14]

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14 Cabinet Office. *Terms of Reference: COVID-status Certification Review*. 16 March 2021.

Restart of the cruise sector

32. The first GTT report recognised the significant progress made by the cruise sector over the last year to develop COVID-19 operating procedures. The Department for Transport subsequently published a phased risk-based approach to restarting the cruise sector. Since then, much has changed, including our knowledge, understanding and response to mitigating risks of the virus. The UK government has confirmed that domestic cruises will restart in England no earlier than 17 May. This report sets out a framework for a risk-based approach to managing a safe restart of international travel, underpinned by analytical evidence. Therefore, the UK government will restart international cruises alongside the wider restart of international travel, in line with the "traffic light" system. This will be subject to continued satisfactory evidence from domestic restart as well as successful cruise operations elsewhere in the world. This will be considered at each of the Checkpoint reviews. This is also subject to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the UK government and industry covering the cost and liabilities of repatriation.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** Remove measures limiting outbound travel by 17 May at the earliest and implement a "traffic light" country system, to which different restrictions are applied depending on risk.

- **Recommendation:** Introduce a "Green Watchlist" to support outbound travellers identify countries most at risk of moving from green to amber.

- **Recommendation:** Hold three "checkpoints" on 28 June, 31 July and 1 October to review measures.

- **Recommendation:** Enable residents to prove their COVID-19 status for tests and, if necessary, vaccines for outbound travel to a third country.

- **Recommendation:** Restart international cruises alongside the wider restart of international travel, in line with the country "traffic light" system.

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4 Readiness for international travel restart

Border readiness

33. Border Force, and border systems generally, have faced significant pressures due to manual checks to ensure compliance with public health measures. Lengthy checks at the border are creating excess queues, posing a risk to social distancing, passenger welfare and the overall border experience. It is therefore important to address border readiness ahead of increased passenger numbers and to strike the right balance between increased passengers and assurance with health requirements.

34. The Passenger Locator Form is key to providing assurance to UK government and ensuring passenger compliance with quarantine and testing requirements for arrivals. As such, we will develop automatic validation of the Passenger Locator Form so that it cannot be submitted unless passenger can show that they have fulfilled requirements. This will reduce time spent processing non-compliant passengers at the border, although passengers should still expect extended waiting times whilst COVID-19 travel requirements are in place. We will also seek to translate the form into other languages in the longer term, following such improvements.

35. The use of e-gates is currently restricted due to reliance on manual compliance checks. However, in the longer-term e-gates will be used to check completion of the Passenger Locator Form, both to provide strong assurance that arrivals are complying with requirements and to support passenger flows. Carrier checks also continue to be in place to bolster assurance on passenger compliance. Border Force will roll out e-gates integration across the largest airports by summer 2021 and all e-gate ports of entry by autumn 2021. We will continue to review capacity of the Managed Quarantine Service, NHS Test and Trace, and private testing.

36. UK government will continue close coordination with industry to ensure readiness and address potential issues linked to passenger numbers. A new UK government and industry working group will recommend appropriate action where necessary.

Safety

37. There is a complex and layered set of requirements at the border for passengers and operators. Clear and simplified guidance to operators and passengers will be instrumental in ensuring border readiness. Further, comprehensive measures to provide safety assurance across all travel modes will be important as routes reopen and numbers increase. We will closely liaise with industry to minimise restart risks and thereby bolster public confidence in safety to travel, including work to ensure that staff are prepared with any required training, and that airports and ports are ready.

38. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has developed a scenario-based understanding of how the aviation industry is likely to perform under a range of restart scenarios. The CAA has developed a comprehensive risk profile of likely issues. This has allowed targeted action such as:

- Video training to embed COVID-19, or other new protocols.
- Jump seat flights for crews for re-familiarisation.

- Conference sessions to keep crews updated on situational changes.

- Feedback from current crews to returning crews through various forums.

39. The CAA will also launch a pilot performance programme to support pilots' skills, awareness and resilience, which will be designed to address known factors issues likely to have been exacerbated by the period of disruption. This will ensure a safe return to flying and long-term operational resilience. The programme will ensure that pilots have the right skills, knowledge and experience to support technical innovations and environmental changes to drive growth in the sector whilst protecting public safety. Throughout preparations for restart, the CAA has been working closely to target its interventions at areas flagged as having the potential to cause operational disruption. This is not limited to commercial aviation, and has included business and general aviation as well, with common challenges identified and addressed, for example through General Aviation safety seminars.

40. Cruise operators will operate in accordance with UK Chamber of Shipping's COVID-19 Framework for Cruise. They will be verified by a qualified, independent third party to ensure their COVID-19 Management Plans meet the standards in the framework documents. In addition, prior to industry recommencing passenger operations, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will complete a full Expanded Inspection of cruise ships operating from domestic ports, regardless of previous inspection history. Cruise operators will be required to work closely with Port Operators, Port Health Authorities and wider health protection boards within local authorities to agree arrangements for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers. Operators will align with the rules of the domestic roadmap, including capacity limits. Port calls with embarkation and disembarkation will be managed through controlled tour excursions, supporting passengers to remain in 'bubbles' to minimise risk to communities.

41. Ferry operations have continued throughout the pandemic. In August 2020, the UK Chamber of Shipping issued guidance for domestic passenger ferry operations during COVID-19, aimed specifically at ferry ports and terminals, as well as the operators of scheduled ferry services that run on both domestic and international routes. It aims to keep passengers safe, including advice on social distancing, food service and crew procedures. The MCA will work with industry to account for any changes and to ensure that ferry operations continue to operate safely.

42. The Office for Rail and Road is working closely with officials and international rail operators to ensure that they are prepared for potential passenger flow increases.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** Improve the Passenger Locator Form, with full e-gates integration across all ports of entry by autumn 2021.

- **Recommendation:** Establish a joint UK government and industry working group to ensure border readiness.

- **Recommendation:** Ensure comprehensive measures are in place to assess and assure safety readiness across all modes.

- **Recommendation:** Use feedback from industry and CAA expertise to make targeted interventions to ensure operational safety.

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5 Consumer clarity and confidence

Communications and confidence

43. Consumer confidence to book and to travel safely, responsibly and smoothly will be crucial once international travel reopens. This will require high levels of trust, flexibility and clarity in the system with clear and consistent communications and commitments from the travel industry and the UK government. Consumers need to feel reassured that their health will be safeguarded when they travel and that their money is protected. Consumers must also be aware that there is inherent uncertainty, and that plans can change.

44. The UK government will help build confidence and clarity for consumers by clearly and simply explaining the rules and requirements for international travel, and the actions being taken to safeguard public health. Travellers must take responsibility for managing personal risks of travel during the pandemic, ensuring that they comply with local public health measures. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice is available as a guide and is kept under continuous review.

45. To give travellers confidence about the likelihood of changes, the UK government will introduce a "Green Watchlist". This public list will help people identify countries most at risk of moving from green to amber. This will support outbound travellers as they book travel, to help understand whether they must self-isolate on return if a destination moves from green to amber.

46. More broadly, the UK government has committed to publishing a Tourism Recovery Plan in May, including plans for a world class marketing campaign to welcome back visitors to the UK as soon as it is safe to do so and lead-in times for key parts of the sector such as business events and school trips. The UK government has already taken important steps to allow businesses to demonstrate confidence in their safety measures, such as VisitBritain's "We're Good to Go" industry standard scheme, and "We're Good to Go" businesses are now automatically issued with a "Safe Travels" stamp from the World Travel and Tourism Council.[15]

47. This will be supplemented by targeted UK government communications activity in the lead up to, and following, reopening to ensure that both outbound and inbound travellers understand the system put in place and what they can do to travel safely and reduce disruption.

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15 VisitBritain. *Press Release: UK businesses registered 'We're Good to Go' get global 'Safe Travels' stamp*. 26 February 2021.

Consumer protections

48. Clarity to consumers will be cemented through a new passenger COVID-19 charter that clearly sets out consumer rights and responsibilities when booking travel while COVID-19 measures remain in place. We will also outline these rights and responsibilities to the travel industry. We expect the industry to be flexible in recognition of the impact the pandemic has on consumers' bookings.

49. The UK government will also build consumer confidence and develop trust in booking travel by putting further measures in place to ensure their money is safe in case bookings are cancelled wherever possible. Government will put in place additional, flexible and modern tools and work with regulators across all modes of transport to ensure consumer rights are enforced. For instance, for aviation this will include reforming the enforcement powers that the CAA has on airlines that breach consumer rights, which will be detailed in the strategic framework for the aviation sector to be published later this year. Government will also review the need to modernise the powers of other transport mode regulators so that all passenger rights, domestic and international, are protected. This will build on the Competition and Markets Authority investigations on the practices of travel agents and airlines in issuing refunds to customers affected by the travel restrictions during COVID-19. Latest data suggests that airlines are now paying the vast majority of refunds in a timely manner, within 14 days.

50. Government will continue to protect consumers' rights to a refund for ATOL-protected bookings, if the issuing business fails. Government has extended its backing for the whole of the Air Travel Trust Fund (ATTF) until 30 September 2022 so that ATOL bookings continue to be fully protected. If a travel business with an ATOL ceases trading, the ATOL scheme will continue to protect consumers who had booked ATOL-protected holidays with that business. It will also continue to support consumers that are abroad when this happens. Consumers will be able to claim financial reimbursement for the cost of replacing parts of an ATOL protected package. The scheme is designed to reassure consumers and will provide assistance in the event of a travel business failure.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** Improve operator(s) and passenger guidance to provide more clarity on health and passenger requirements including, where relevant, how this interacts with travel advice.

- **Recommendation:** Introduce a passenger COVID-19 charter by 17 May setting out consumer rights and responsibilities whilst measures remain. Later this year consult on additional, flexible and modern tools to enforce consumer rights.

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6 Transition to future travel

Working together towards common global standards

51. A safe, sustainable and robust reopening requires cooperation with the devolved administrations, industry and international partners. The GTT advocates continued international engagement to develop a seamless future travel system based on global standards, and secure interoperable digital solutions for vaccine and testing certification.

52. HM Government has, and will continue to have, a leadership role in shaping the emerging global framework for international travel in a steady state of an international travel landscape that co-exists with an endemic COVID-19. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has been at the heart of these efforts. Through our membership of ICAO's Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce, we have helped deliver a global harmonised approach to restart and recovery. Looking ahead, this work will be further developed to reflect progress on vaccination and how we can develop common protocols and certification for testing and vaccination. ICAO is working closely with the World Health Organization as it develops its policy on vaccination travel risks (such as through transmission) and smart COVID-19 status certification, which are expected by early summer. ICAO will then use this to develop further international aviation guidance for the long-term ability of the aviation sector to adapt to the reality of the post-pandemic economy and society and how this experience can be used to build a more resilient and sustainable international civil aviation system. ICAO's High-Level Conference on COVID-19 in October will be focused on these aspects.

53. This is just one example of our multilateral collaboration to date, and we look forward to continuing to work with multilateral and global partners, such as the ICAO, International Maritime Organization, G7 and G20, to push for and expedite common global standards. We will continue to lead this work through other multilateral fora, including at the OECD where appropriate, whilst being clear on the importance of ensuring alignment with data protection obligations.

54. In the meantime, an increasing number of states (including Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Malta and Iceland) have made unilateral policy declarations about entry requirements based on their desire to drive up international travel and tourism. We will continue to check the detail of the policies that these countries will apply and will seek to agree a standard approach to the information required where appropriate. This will enable the UK government to provide travellers with clear information about requirements that will apply at their destination abroad.

Travel certification

55. To permit people to travel internationally, states have set out COVID-19 status requirements for entry, including negative COVID-19 tests pre-departure. Increasingly, this status includes vaccination status, a negative test, and/or immunity (antibody) status. We will play a leading role in development of international standards around a digital travel certification system that can enable travellers to evidence their COVID-19 status to demonstrate they meet public health entry requirements. The NHS is developing a digital and non-digital solution for individuals to demonstrate COVID-19 status. NHSX is working with the Department for Transport and other departments to consider the role of these in helping to facilitate outbound travel.

56. For inbound international travel, our ambition is to have a system in place to facilitate travel certification for international travel. Any solution for international travel certification needs to be user friendly, interoperable with various other systems and able to facilitate a quick interaction at the border.

57. Government will continue close coordination with the transport and tech industries to work towards a certification system that works for border authorities and carriers alike, and is interoperable, safe and secure.

58. The Department for Transport will progress work to explore the testing of technology solutions with like-minded states to ensure these can operate effectively at scale as international travel recovers. We will also explore the feasibility of bilateral pilots for testing initiatives such as digital solutions on particular routes, or with other countries.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** Maintain leadership role within multilateral organisations including the ICAO, IMO and OECD, and work with like-minded states including the G7, G20 and Five Eyes group to develop strategies for reopening international travel.

- **Recommendation:** Continue close coordination with industry to ensure third party apps can be integrated with a national digital certification system that is interoperable, safe and secure.

- **Recommendation:** Explore the feasibility of bilateral pilots for testing initiatives such as digital solutions on particular routes, or with other countries.