

The UK Government's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy

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Implications for International Travel

The UK Government has published a document setting out its national recovery strategy for COVID-19.

The document sets out the Government's approach to a phased recovery. Central to the approach is a move to "smarter controls" to be developed and announced in periodic steps over the coming weeks and months.

One of these steps will involve changes to UK border control in order to manage the risk of transmissions being reintroduced from abroad.

New Measures

The measures, to be introduced "as soon as possible", will include:

- A requirement for all international arrivals to supply border officials with contact and accommodation information.
- Providing arrivals with advice and information about the UK's social distancing regime.
- Advising arrivals to download and use the Government's contact tracing app.
- Requiring all international arrivals, unless otherwise exempt, to self-isolate in their accommodation for fourteen days on arrival in the UK.
- Where international travellers are unable to demonstrate where they would self-isolate, they will be required to do so in accommodation arranged by the Government.

Exemptions

Small exemptions to these measures will be in place to "provide for continued security of supply into the UK and so as not to impede work supporting national security or critical infrastructure and to meet the UK's international obligations".

Further clarification and definition of the criteria that will establish such an exemption is required.

All journeys within the Common Travel Area will also be exempt from the measures.

Analysis

It is not known exactly when these new measures will be introduced or for how long they will last. As a minimum, it is likely they will last until "Step Three" of the roadmap to lift restrictions in July, probably longer.

Further definition of the criteria for an exemption is needed, along with an explanation of the method for establishing qualification as an exempted person. Given the extensive use of e-gates in London airports, it is difficult to see how these measures can be imposed without a prior approval system similar to the online ETIAS scheme that is due to be rolled out across the European Union before the end of 2022. It seems highly unlikely, however, that a comprehensive digital programme will be ready in such short order.

The imposition of these “quarantine” measures is unprecedented in the history of UK immigration control and is a measure of the public health crisis currently engulfing the world.

Impact on Business Travel and Tier 2 Workers

Inevitably this new requirement will have a significant impact on business travel into the UK even as the world starts moving again more freely once national lockdowns are eventually lifted.

Whilst these measures are in force, short business trips may appear illogical given the length of quarantine proportionate to the duration of the visit. Long term relocation to the UK however should not necessarily be affected. Tier 2 migrants, for example, may work from home whilst they settle into their new working arrangements and projects. As a proportion of a long term assignment or relocation, two weeks may not be a daunting prospect as the world adjusts to new COVID-19 defence measures across all aspects of society.

We will publish further information on these new measures as soon as they become available.

Details of how we use your information can be found [here](#).

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