

Terms of Reference: Global Travel Taskforce

Context

In response to the impact of and specific challenges posed by COVID-19 to international travel, the Prime Minister asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Transport to establish the cross-government Global Travel Taskforce, to consider further how government can support the sector to meet these challenges.

Terms of Reference

The Global Travel Taskforce: Safe Return of International Travel is the successor to the Global Travel Taskforce which made a series of recommendations in November 2020.

The Global Travel Taskforce will report on 12 April with recommendations aimed at facilitating a return to international travel as soon as possible while still managing the risk from imported cases and variants of concern. Following that, the government will determine when international travel should resume, which will be no earlier than 17 May. A decision on the reopening of international travel will need to consider:

- the global and domestic epidemiological picture
- the prevalence and location of any variants of concern
- the progress of vaccine rollouts here and abroad
- what more we've learnt about the efficacy of vaccines on variants, and their impact on transmission, hospitalisation and deaths

This taskforce will be led by the Department for Transport (DfT) and report to the Prime Minister. Its aim – in the context of the decision above – will be to work in partnership with industry and international partners to develop a risk-based framework that could facilitate the return of international travel, while still managing the risk from imported cases and variants.

That will include making use of the measures the government already has in place (such as testing and isolation) and building on the recommendations from the Global Travel Taskforce last year.

Scope and timing

The taskforce will:

- consider policy proposals to set out a possible pathway to safely reopen international travel, taking account of scientific and clinical data
- in partnership with industry, develop an implementation plan for the adoption of any recommendations to enable government, industry and consumers to prepare for when any decisions are taken
- consider how to implement recommendations from the previous Global Travel Taskforce, such as bubbles, to facilitate tourist and business travel
- ensure that any shorter-term changes act as a bridge to longer-term objectives on delivering vaccine certification to facilitate travel (noting this work is being conducted in parallel) and global standardisation of border measures

The taskforce will report to the Prime Minister on 12 April with an implementation plan to follow.

Membership

The taskforce will be a cross-government endeavour, with the Secretary of State for Transport reporting to the Prime Minister. It will involve collaboration between officials from:

- Department for Transport
- Department for Health and Social Care
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Public Health England
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- HM Treasury
- Home Office
- Department for International Trade
- Cabinet Office C-19 Taskforce

Officials from the Scottish and Welsh Governments and Northern Ireland Executive will be closely involved in the taskforce's work.

The taskforce will seek to achieve a joint approach while noting that health matters are devolved, so decision-making and implementation may differ across the nations.

The taskforce will also take into account evidence and data from the scientific communities and our international community.

In addition, it's vital that any proposals have been developed in partnership with industry, taking account of the vast experience from outside of government.

The taskforce will, therefore, establish working groups to feed into its final report. Most critical will be that established with the travel industry, given the need for proposals to be workable.

In addition, the taskforce will consult to inform its report:

- international partners, to discuss options for bilateral pilots and the standards needed to facilitate safe international travel
- the tourism sector and local business leaders, to consider how international travel can support economic recovery
- academia and policy institutes to provide innovative solutions to the challenges the sector is facing

As with last year's taskforce, we'll work with a range of businesses covering aviation, maritime, international rail and the tourism sector to develop the report.