

COVID OPERATIONS COMMITTEE 21 (95)

Saturday 4 December 2021 | 15:30-16:15

ACTIONS

1. **DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE** to work with **COVID-19 TASKFORCE**, **THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT** and the **HOME OFFICE** to provide clarity on the advice Border Force should give to UK residents arriving at the UK border from Nigeria, without a booked MQS hotel space, if MQS is at full capacity.
2. **DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE** to ensure that **BORDER FORCE** are provided with correct guidance on the approach to be taken when a UK resident provides evidence of it genuinely being impossible to obtain a Pre Departure Test within the limited window to comply. Advice to be given on the reasonableness of issuing a UK resident with a fine or denying them entry to the UK in these circumstances.
3. **HOME OFFICE** to suspend the processing of all UK visitor and work visas for Nigerian citizens.
4. **DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE** to bilaterally engage with **HM TREASURY** on further funding needed for scaling up MQS capacity.
5. **DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS** to coordinate with the **UK GOVERNMENT** on an increased UK-wide effort to increase MQS capacity at pace.
6. **DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE** to work with No 10 and other departments to ensure that the press announcement tonight and any further communications makes clear these measures are temporary.
7. **COVID-19 TASKFORCE** to work with **UK HEALTH SECURITY AGENCY** to ensure that relevant epidemiological evidence is obtained to support projections on the number of infected traveller cases to ensure appropriate decisions can be made at the next review point.
8. **COVID-19 TASKFORCE** to work with the **DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE** to provide clarity on the potential MQS demand time-lag for travellers arriving at the UK border from indirect routes.

DECISIONS

The Committee agreed:

1. To the introduction of a Pre Departure Test requirement for a PCR or LFD test to be taken as close as possible to departure to the UK and not more than 48 hours before, for all travellers aged 12 years and over. This should come into effect from 0400 Tuesday 7 December for a temporary period and be announced on Saturday 4th December¹.
2. To add Nigeria to the Red List, as a temporary measure, with effect from 0400 Monday 6 December. The Scottish Government and Welsh Government agreed to align with this timing; the Northern Ireland Executive would align as soon as possible.
3. That the COVID-19 Taskforce should convene officials across HM TREASURY, DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT, DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE, FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE and HOME OFFICE from early w/c 6 December to provide analysis on the most likely anticipated date that these restrictions could be rolled back (the “exit strategy”).
4. To delay removing social distancing guidance in ports/airports.
5. To pause the onboarding of new countries to the Government’s vaccination certification policy.
6. That the next review date for these temporary measures would be before 20 December 2021 in line with measures introduced the week before.

¹ A write round subsequent to the Committee agreed to revise all existing international travel policies in place that relate to those aged 11 to 17 to instead be 12 to 17.