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News story

## Test to Release for International Travel goes live

Transport Secretary announces launch of COVID-19 testing strategy for international arrivals.

From:

[Department for Transport](#), [Department of Health and Social Care](#), and [The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP](#)

Published

15 December 2020



- from today passengers arriving in England have the option to shorten the self-isolation by up to half on receipt of a negative COVID-19 test
- private providers list is [live on GOV.UK](#), protecting NHS Test and Trace capacity
- anyone released from self-isolation following a negative test result must comply with the current domestic rules in their local area

Passengers arriving into England from today (15 December 2020) will be able to choose to pay for a private test and potentially shorten their self-isolation as the government's testing strategy for international arrivals goes live.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced that passengers arriving from locations not featured on the government's [travel corridor list](#) can, from today, take a private test 5 full days after leaving the non-exempt place in order to release themselves from [self-isolation](#) on receipt of a negative result.

Available as an option for all passengers arriving into England by plane, ferry or train who have been in a 'non-exempt' location in the past 10 days, the move will ensure that passengers who receive a negative result on or after day 5 can immediately finish self-isolation, but must continue following the current domestic rules in their local area.

The move will give passengers the confidence to book international trips in the knowledge that they can return home and isolate for a shorter period if they receive a negative result.

With those opting into the scheme having to book and pay for a COVID-19 test from a [private provider on the GOV.UK list](#), the government is ensuring NHS Test and Trace testing capacity is protected.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

- I'm determined that, when people travel here from abroad, everyone remains safe. The introduction of this day 5 Test to Release scheme is a helpful step in the right direction. It means less time in quarantine, but only in return for a negative COVID test. Good news for those travelling and good news for the wider public too.■

International arrivals must wait for 5 full days since leaving a location not on the government's travel corridor list before taking a test from a private provider. This is because a test after 5 days of self-isolation provides materially better results than having one on arrival, as it allows time for the virus ■ should it be present ■ to incubate, helping reduce the risk of a false negative result.

Ensuring that passengers can travel safely has been one of the priorities of the Global Taskforce. It has brought together a host of experts across all modes to kick-start international travel.

Collinson CEO, David Evans said:

- I Test to Release is a good scheme that we are proud to be delivering to ensure we can support the aviation sector to open up travel in a safe way.I

The new [testing strategy](#) being rolled out today will be a critical way of achieving this, while also continuing to safeguard public health in the UK. United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation will also become mandatory for all providers offering commercial COVID-19 testing services in England on 1 January 2021.

COVID-19 has profoundly changed the nature of international travel. Travellers should make sure they check the latest [travel advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#).

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