



Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
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Dear Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

As you know, additional measures have been imposed on international travellers following the identification of the new coronavirus variant of concern, Omicron. Yesterday, you told the House of Commons that *“soon, in the days and weeks that lie ahead, if, as I think is likely, we see many more infections and this variant becomes the dominant variant, there will be less need to have any kind of travel restrictions at all.”* Your statement provides the context for the Transport Select Committee’s forthcoming oral evidence session on 15 December, when the Committee will hear from the UK Health Security Agency and the Aviation Minister as part of the Committee’s inquiry on supporting the UK aviation sector.

I ask the following questions in the context of (a) the Government’s recent additions to the travel red list, (b) the re-introduction of the requirement for travellers to take a day two PCR test on arrival to England and (c) the re-introduction of a PCR or lateral flow predeparture testing requirement.

On the removal of the latest travel restrictions, could you confirm:

- when you expect such measures to end;
- if the end date is predicated on the level of community transmission, what requirements would need to be met to enable the measures to end; and
- if the end date is predicated on other requirements, what those requirements might be.

On the rationale for the latest travel restrictions, could you confirm:

- whether the Government plans to publish the evidence base underpinning its decision to introduce new international travel requirements;
- what benefit the predeparture test provides, over and above the test on arrival; and
- why predeparture testing was reintroduced when the Secretary of State for Transport had ruled out such a reintroduction.

I also recognise the volume of work that you, and your officials, are conducting and appreciate your attention in this matter. Due to a lack of financial support accompanying the new measures, those working in the travel sector, and those relying upon it, are keen to understand the reasoning behind, and the likely duration of, these measures.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Committee