



Department for Transport

Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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17 December 2021

Dear Huw,

International Travel Update

I am writing to update the Transport Select Committee on the UK Government's plans to ease restrictions for international travel, following a review of the temporary and precautionary international travel measures introduced to slow the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant.

From 4am on Wednesday 15 December, all 11 remaining countries and territories were removed from the red list. As such, passengers arriving from Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe will not have to stay in a managed quarantine hotel on arrival in the UK.

As Omicron cases rise in the UK and in countries around the world, the travel red list is less effective in slowing the incursion of the variant from abroad and these temporary measures are no longer proportionate.

While all countries have been removed, the red list policy remains in place alongside the managed quarantine service policy, acting as a crucial line of defence against the importation of variants of concern.

The Department of Health and Social Care has implemented legislative changes to ensure individuals were released early from Managed Quarantine from 4pm on Wednesday 15 December, and further guidance has been provided to the affected individuals. There will be refunds for unused days of the package guests have paid for, although payment may take up to 28 days. Anyone who has tested positive will need to continue to stay in Managed Quarantine. Passengers who booked a hotel room in Managed Quarantine for after 4am Wednesday 15 December are entitled for a full refund and should contact their hotel operator or booking operator.

The additional temporary testing measures for passengers taken in response to Omicron also remain in place. The Government recognises the impact that these temporary health measures have on the travel and aviation industry, and they will be reviewed again in the first week of January.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the Government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel, and the devolved administrations have confirmed that they will be aligning with these changes.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT