

Written evidence submitted by Qured (AAS0029)

1. About Qured

Qured has been a leading provider of COVID-19 tests since the beginning of the pandemic, having been among the first eleven approved private testing providers. We are a trusted provider for a number of major organisations within the aviation sector, including British Airways, American Airlines, and Heathrow Airport, and have also partnered with transport networks such as Transport for London.

Distinct from other testing providers, Qured offers remote supervision of our lateral flow testing procedure in order to ensure that tests are carried out safely, effectively, and with independent clinically governed verification. This model of remote verification offers a solution to the risks associated with unverified testing. Recognising the importance of protecting against future outbreaks, we ensure that every positive PCR test is genomically sequenced.

Qured's background prior to the pandemic was as a quality healthcare provider, which allowed the company to draw on our deep existing understanding of the sector while making the transition to testing.

Qured has been proud to support the reopening of safe international travel over recent months and is actively engaging on how testing can adapt to enable the aviation sector to rebuild sustainably as we emerge from the pandemic.

2. On the regulation of testing for international travel

Qured shares the wider concerns of the government, the public and the aviation industry commercially available testing should be high quality and fairly priced.

Ensuring that our products are of a high standard and at affordable costs has always been a key priority. Qured is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and by ISO.

We are one of the founding members of the Laboratory and Testing Industry Organisation (LTIO), which represents and self-regulates providers that can demonstrate their trustworthy testing services to the public. Membership is

open to only those providers who accept a Code of Conduct based on the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [letter](#) sent to all testing providers in August. This letter called on testing providers to review their practices in line with the requirements of consumer protection law amid concerns regarding suppliers not providing clear and up-front costs for testing. Addressing these concerns, within the coming months we plan to create a gold standard accreditation and kitemark to provide consumer certainty.

3. On the cost of international travel

Qured shares the desire of the aviation sector for international travel to return as fully and as safely as possible. This will, however, be contingent on the maintenance of a testing regime that balances the ability to keep cross-border travel open with adequate protections against the spread of new variants from overseas.

We recognise that the cost of testing has been an additional factor affecting tourists travelling internationally this summer. From the testing provider side, the costs of tests have largely been driven by the costs of laboratory services, followed by the associated logistical costs to deliver tests to where they are needed. As costs have reduced, Qured has passed on savings to customers on every occasion.

Where possible, Qured has continued to drive down costs to provide as good a deal as possible for consumers. Working with our corporate partners, we have offered further discounts to travellers, including through our recently [announced](#) discount for Heathrow passengers.

In terms of future trends in the market for the cost of testing, providers have made important investments in areas such as customer capability, scaling up lab capacity and supporting the development of automation. All these factors continue to represent both risk and investment taken on by providers such as Qured in order to provide high quality testing to customers at a fair price.

While the costs for testing have continued to fall as the market and government have responded to the ongoing testing requirements for travel, we believe there is the potential for further support to be provided through the waiving of VAT payments for testing which is independently verified by qualified healthcare professionals.

4. On the future of testing for travel

As we move into a new stage in how we manage the spread of COVID-19, it remains likely that a testing system for international travel will be required in one form or another for at least the medium term, as global vaccination rates catch up with those of the UK and vigilance is maintained against potential new strains of the virus.

On the Government's recently announced plans to replace Day 2 PCR tests with lateral flow tests, it is essential that the correct oversight is in place to ensure that tests are properly administered. Given how easily these tests can be accidentally or deliberately misused, ensuring that these tests and results are independently verified will be critical if the testing regime is to have real and lasting value.

With the introduction of photo verification for testing, it is vital that the requirements to ensure that test kits are linked to the individual and are not reused are robustly enforced to ensure that test results are accurate and to ensure public confidence in the testing market and providers. The enforcement of these standards will also be vital to allow responsible providers to continue to invest in quality and technology to continue to bring prices down, and to create a sustainable testing regime which balances the need to reopen international with the safeguarding of public health.

This must also be met with rigorous and comprehensive genomic sequencing to protect against the outbreak of any future strains and ensure the UK is prepared to respond to any new developments.

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