

## Test to release for international travel: FAQ

On Tuesday 24 November, the Government announced the introduction of a 'test to release' for international arrivals, helping to provide greater flexibility for international arrivals, whether they are coming to England for business, on holiday or returning home, while continuing to resolutely protect ourselves from imported cases.

From 15 December, anyone arriving in England who needs to self-isolate will now be able to pay for a test and take the test 5 full days after they left a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list. A negative result will allow them to cease self-isolating. Tests can be found on the gov.uk providers list.

### **Key Information:**

- Travellers should check whether the country or territory they are travelling from, or a place they have recently been, is on the Travel Corridors list. If you are not required to self-isolate on arrival, you do not need to participate in the test to release for international travel scheme.
- Test providers can be found on the gov.uk list. The providers list will be published on gov.uk shortly.
- We recommend that travellers book their test before arriving in England, as they will be required to indicate on the Passenger Locator Form whether they have opted into the 'test to release' scheme. All international arrivals must complete a Passenger Locator Form on arrival in the UK.
- If a traveller decides to opt in once they have arrived in the UK and started self-isolating, they must submit a new Passenger Locator Form. Failure to submit a new Passenger Locator Form could result in a fixed penalty notice starting at £100.
- Participants must take the test at least 5 full days after they left a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list. If they travelled directly to England from a country not on the travel corridors list, this will be after 5 full days of self-isolating. The test can be taken at the place where participants are self-isolating or at a private test centre. Participants must continue self-isolating until they receive a negative result.
- Participants who test positive will move into the UK's existing system for positive cases: they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the day of the test or when their symptoms started, if earlier. Their contacts will be traced and notified as normal.
- The scheme is optional - any travellers who are required to self-isolate may choose not to opt into the 'test to release' scheme. Those who do not wish to pay for a test must continue to self-isolate until 14 days have passed since the day after they were last in a country, territory or region which is not on the travel corridor list.

## **FAQs**

### **When will the scheme come into effect?**

The 'Test to Release' for International Travel scheme will come into effect on 15 December. Anyone who is self-isolating because they have been in a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list at any point in the 14 days before the date of their arrival in England may book for a test from 15 December. The test needs to be taken no earlier than 5 full days since the person was last in a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list. For most people, this will be after 5 full days of self-isolating.

### **Where can I find more information on the test to release scheme?**

Full government guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-to-release-for-international-travel>

### **How do I find a test and why are there no test providers on the gov.uk list?**

You can find a test on the gov.uk providers list. You should check that the test you use meets minimum standards. The providers list will go live closer to the launch date for the scheme on 15 December.

### **Can I take my test immediately?**

You must take the test no earlier than 5 full days after you were last in a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list. If you take your test before then, it cannot be used to cease self-isolation early even if you receive a negative test.

### **Will people who were exempt from the self-isolation measures be exempt from taking a test?**

Yes. If a person is exempt from self-isolation requirements, including if they are travelling from a country or territory on the Travel Corridor list, they will not be required to self-isolate on arrival to England. Therefore the 'test to release' scheme will not apply to them.

The 'test to release' scheme also will not apply to international arrivals who are fully exempt from self-isolation because of their work, for example hauliers.

### **Is the scheme compulsory?**

No. The scheme is voluntary – if travellers returning from a country, territory or region not on the travel corridor list do not wish to opt in, they must complete the full 14-day self-isolation period, which starts as soon as they arrive in England and ends 14 full days after they left a country, territory or region not on the travel corridors list. Even if you do not wish to participate, you must still complete a Passenger Locator Form upon arrival to the UK.

### **Who can participate in the scheme?**

Anyone arriving in England from a country, territory or region not on the travel corridor list can opt into 'test to release'. If you are returning from a country, territory or region that is on the travel corridor list, you do not need to self-isolate.

You can also opt in to the 'test to release' scheme if you are eligible for one of the qualified exemptions from self-isolation and are only allowed to leave self-isolation for specific work-related activities. For example, there is a qualified exemption for seasonal agricultural workers, international elite sportspeople and film and high-end TV production staff. A negative test result would allow you to leave the place where you are self-isolating for reasons not covered by the exemption.

## **How can I opt in to the scheme?**

You should visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-to-release-for-international-travel> for further information about what the scheme is, how it works, and to find links to the gov.uk providers list. The providers list will go live closer to the launch date for the scheme on 15 December. We recommend booking your test before you travel, as you will need to opt into the scheme and enter your test booking details in the Passenger Locator Form, which must be completed on arrival to the UK. If you decide to take part in the scheme once you have arrived in England, you will need to submit a new Passenger Locator Form. Failure to complete a new Passenger Locator form may result in a fixed penalty notice starting at £100.

## **What modes of transport does this apply to?**

All modes of transport – travellers arriving on planes, ferries and international rail services can opt in to ‘test to release’.

## **What if I return to the UK and start self-isolating, but decide I want to participate?**

Travellers are encouraged to opt in and book their test before they travel to England, but it will still be possible to book a test after you have arrived. If you choose to do this, you must submit a new Passenger Locator Form and fill in details about your test provider. Failure to submit a new Passenger Locator Form could result in a fixed penalty notice starting at £100.

## **If I opt in after arrival, how long will it take to get the test?**

We recommend that travellers book a test before arrival in the UK so that they will have greatest certainty regarding access to a test on the right day. Travellers should bear in mind that tests will be provided by the private sector, so the Government cannot guarantee that appointments and postal tests will be available when requested, especially if travellers book with very late notice.

## **How many organisations offer this test?**

Private test providers will be added to list on gov.uk soon, before the launch date on 15 December.

## **How many tests can be taken during the isolation period?**

The traveller can stop self-isolating immediately if they receive a negative result from a privately provided test taken at least 5 full days after they were in a country, territory or region that is not on the travel corridors list. If the result of the test is inconclusive then the traveller may pay for and take another test or complete their full isolation period, starting upon arrival to England and ending 14 days after the traveller was last in a country, territory or region that is not on the travel corridors list. If the traveller receives a positive test result they cannot end self-isolation by taking another test – they must self-isolate for 10 days from when they took the test or when their symptoms started, if earlier.

## **What happens if I develop COVID-19 symptoms when I arrive in the UK?**

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms you should self-isolate and book a test using the NHS Test and Trace service. A negative test provided by NHS Test and Trace will not permit you to cease self-isolating early.

### **What happens if my test comes back positive?**

If you test positive then you will be required to self-isolate for ten days from when you took the test or from when your symptoms started, if earlier. Taking another test after you have received a positive test result will not shorten this self-isolation period.

### **How should I travel to get my test?**

You can leave the place where you are self-isolating to travel directly to a testing site or to post a home test kit. You should travel to a testing site using private transport, if possible. If you cannot access private transport for this, you should consider booking an at-home test. You should follow [safer travel guidance](#).

### **Can I take the test at home/ a testing site?**

Yes. Providers will be able to offer tests at testing sites and deliver tests to your home or the place where you are self-isolating.

### **How is the scheme enforced?**

Compliance checks are carried out by Public Health England's Isolation Assurance Service (IAS) which contacts randomly sampled international arrivals to ensure that they are self-isolating. Compliance checks are also carried out by the police

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are issued for those who are not complying with self-isolation regulations. The fixed penalty payable for a first offence remains £1,000, and increases to £2,000, £4,000, then £10,000 for subsequent offences.

### **How does someone prove to the police that they have received a negative test?**

Individuals will receive a set-form notification of their test result from the private test provider.

This notification will come in the form of a text, email or secure message. It will include whether you can cease self-isolating or whether you need to continue self-isolating and if so, for how long.

International arrivals may be asked to show their notification to the police to confirm they received a negative test result and are no longer required to self-isolate.