



Updated February 2021

## Joint Position Paper A Strategic Pathway to Re-opening International Aviation

As a result of increasing instances of COVID-19 around the world, including the emergence of new variants, many Governments, including the UK, have announced additional travel restrictions and border entry measures to add a further layer of protection to safeguard public health. These measures have been implemented rapidly and unilaterally by Governments resulting in a complex and mainly uncoordinated patchwork of differing restrictions globally, incorporating a variety of travel bans, quarantine, self-isolation, passenger declarations, and Covid test requirements.

The roll-out of vaccination programmes at scale and associated improving public health situation will necessitate the reopening of international aviation, upon which global economic recovery will be dependant. Therefore it is urgent that Governments turn their attention to developing a strategic pathway plan to enable the re-opening of the aviation sector.

The combination of Covid testing and vaccination is already acknowledged as the key enabler to lifting layers of travel restrictions. Now that testing is widely available at lower cost and as the most vulnerable sections of society become protected, Governments must come to decisions on how travel restrictions can begin to be eased and normal processes at airports and on board reintroduced. This phased re-opening should be a well-coordinated and harmonised approach, developed in conjunction with industry, with the objective to restore global connectivity as soon as feasible.

### **Vaccination and testing – two key pillars**

In developing a planned pathway for re-opening international aviation, the Government must carefully consider how a growing number of vaccinated passengers reduces the risk profile of travel.

IATA has stated that vaccination should not be a mandatory for travel and supports that vaccinated passengers should be subject to fewer measures compared to non-vaccinated passengers with exemption from testing and self-isolation requirements. Governments therefore need to work with industry on an approach to vaccinated passengers, including those vaccinated in other countries, and how to record vaccination records for travel purposes. To facilitate this, it is essential that governments quickly develop a standardised vaccine certificate that can be issued to vaccinated persons for international travel purposes.

The relationship between testing and vaccination becomes critical to reopening international travel. IATA has long supported the introduction of a pre-departure rapid testing regime, as set out in a global testing policy based on risk. We therefore believe mandatory pre-departure testing should be maintained as the ongoing primary measure and that post-arrival restrictions are phased out. Underlying this is the reintroduction of the Travel Corridors policy that would allow a quicker de-escalation of restrictions between specific country pairs. In IATA's passenger survey 81% of people in the UK said they would not travel if they would be quarantined, meaning unless quarantine restrictions are removed, the industry

cannot recover. It is evident that both travellers and the general population widely supports testing pre-departure to reduce the risk at source and provide confidence in flying.

We also propose that those who previously tested positive for Covid within a defined period, and are certified as having since recovered, could be considered in the same manner as vaccinated or tested passengers.

### **Technical solutions to enable a return to scale**

The move towards pre-departure testing and proof of vaccination or immunity pushes verification and compliance upstream and onto industry. Whilst public health measures and border enforcement remain the responsibility of governments, there is an increasing role for industry which creates a new set of challenges for airlines in scaling up operations.

The myriad of different government regimes, testing requirements and forms is hugely challenging for airlines to verify within the limited time window between check-in and aircraft boarding. There is also the legal limitation on what personal health information can be transmitted to airlines since this information is government requirements and not part of the conditions of travel between the passenger and the carrier.

Operators are already working on technology solutions and there is a risk that they are delivered faster than government pace. Therefore, we believe that it is vital that governments quickly support, evaluate and adopt the digital health wallet applications being developed by a number of providers, including the IATA Travel Pass product. These digital solutions better enable airlines to verify and board passengers at greater scale and also benefit border processing upon arrival, thereby minimising border queues.

It is essential that government moves quickly to compliment industry work on areas such as developing vaccine certificates usable in digital solutions.

### **Pathway to lifting restrictions**

The rapid adoption of different measures, without the benefit of hindsight or advance planning, demonstrated significant challenges in creating policy, industry guidance and implementation. The journey out of the crisis towards a normalised travel experience provides an opportunity to plan, implement and communicate much more effectively than the compromised evolution to where we are today.

Effective crisis planning provisions for new threats and variables and managing these unknowns should form part of the detailed scenario planning. Therefore, lifting restrictions needs to be a carefully planned and coordinated process between Governments and stakeholders that can be clearly communicated to the general population. A phased approach whereby pre-determined public health triggers or milestones allow transition, as rapidly as feasible through a series of lessening levels of restrictions, is the optimal way to provide much needed clarity and confidence to industry and the public. As part of lifting restrictions, government should also review the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice so it is consistent with the ability of passengers to travel with a testing and vaccinations scheme in place.

This paper sets out an indicative planned pathway that prioritises the phased removal of post arrival measures and self-isolation/quarantine.

## Strategic Pathway - 2021 progressive re-opening plan for UK aviation

Indicative progression of lifting restrictions through triggers/milestones. The ambition is to reach Level 1 as early as possible.



### Indicative UK Vaccination Programme

#### Groups 1-4

70 years and over  
At risk over 65 years  
Frontline

#### Groups 5-9

50 to 70 years - groups 5,7,8,9  
At risk 16 to 65 years - group 6

Rest of population – group 10

### Pathway Tiers – Pre determined levels of border measures subject to public health triggers/milestones (Vaccinations %, infection rate, hospitalisations etc)

#### Level 4 – High (Current)

- Mandatory pre-departure test
- Mandatory 10 day self-isolation
- Mandatory PCR test Days 2 and 8
- Test to Release option\* after 5 days
- Govt managed 10 day isolation for red list countries includes test package
- Passenger Locator Form (PLF)

\* Red list countries excluded

#### Level 3 – High/Moderate

- Pre-departure test for all arrivals
- Consider Vaccinated passenger exemption from pre-departure test?
- Consider Certified Covid recovered exemption from pre-departure test?
- Government acceptance of digital health wallet Apps
- Travel Corridors reinstated
- Consider reducing mandatory self-isolation period?
- Consider reducing Test to Release period?
- Consider restrictions for red list countries rather than outright ban?
- Passenger Locator Form (PLF)

#### Level 2 – Moderate/Low

- Pre-departure test preference for arrivals – **allow rapid tests?**
- Consider Test on arrival option (pre-booked) for Travel Corridor arrivals?
- Consider Vaccinated passenger exemption from pre-departure test?
- Consider Certified Covid recovered exemption from pre-departure test?
- Digital health wallet Apps
- Travel Corridors maintained
- Consider restrictions for red list countries rather than outright ban?
- Passenger Locator Form (PLF)

#### Level 1 – Low

- Consider Travel Corridor arrivals exemption from testing and self-isolation?
- Pre-departure – Consider self-testing and rapid tests?
- Consider Test on arrival option (pre-booked) all passengers?
- Consider Vaccinated passengers exempt from pre-departure test?
- Consider Certified Covid recovered exemption from pre-departure test?
- Digital health wallet Apps
- Consider restrictions for red list countries rather than outright ban?
- Passenger Locator Form (PLF)

**Maintain only until  
all restrictions can be lifted**



## Demonstrated as passenger arrivals across three categories

Entry Channel ↓	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<b>1. Travel Corridors</b>	Suspended	Pre-departure test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Or Vaccination Cert?</li> <li>Or Immunity Cert?</li> </ul> Accept Health Wallet Apps  PLF	Pre-departure test (Rapid?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Or Vaccination Cert?</li> <li>Or Immunity Cert?</li> <li>Optional test on arrival?</li> </ul> Accept Health Wallet Apps  PLF	PLF
<b>2. Other destinations</b>	Pre-departure test  10-day self-isolation  Post arrival PCR test package Days 2 & 8  Option Test to Release  PLF	Pre-departure test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Or Vaccination Cert?</li> <li>Or Immunity Cert?</li> </ul> Accept Health Wallet Apps  Self-isolation period review?  Test to Release – reduced period?  PLF	Pre-departure test (Rapid?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Or Vaccination Cert?</li> <li>Or Immunity Cert?</li> </ul> Accept Health Wallet Apps  PLF	Pre-departure test (Rapid & Self?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Or Vaccination Cert?</li> <li>Or Immunity Cert?</li> <li>Optional test on arrival?</li> </ul> Accept Health Wallet Apps  PLF
<b>3. Red list countries</b>	Pre-departure test  10-day Govt managed quarantine  Post arrival PCR test package Days 2 & 8  PLF	As determined	As determined	As determined

Level 4 (Current)	Notes
<p><b>High level of border restrictions</b></p> <p><b>Layered pre-departure and post arrival measures</b></p> <p><b>One level below a border closure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to be considered an emergency measures regime only</li> <li>• Major barrier to aviation operations</li> <li>• Lack of international alignment is undermining public confidence in the effectiveness of border restrictions</li> <li>• Confusing, time-consuming and costly to passengers</li> <li>• Complex to administer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre-departure test</b> for all international arrivals – negative Covid test taken within 3 days prior to scheduled departure into the UK. <i>Effective 04:00 18 January 2021</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges in accessing tests in some countries in the short term</li> <li>• Some confusion over what test types meet UK specifications</li> <li>• Difficulty with limited acceptance of certificates in foreign languages</li> <li>• Arrivals from CTA and certain overseas territories exempted</li> <li>• Manual upstream check and arrival border check can only be sustained at low pax volumes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Travel Corridors</b> <i>Suspended 04:00 18 January 2021</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel corridors were an effective tool despite challenges for industry and passengers with short notice changes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mandatory 10 day self-isolation</b> from arrival for all arriving international passengers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended to all passengers due removal of Travel Corridors</li> <li>• Not popular with travellers</li> <li>• Questionable real world effectiveness against modelling?</li> <li>• Arrivals from CTA exempted</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mandatory test package</b> – all arriving passengers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing package of two post arrival PCR tests taken at Days 2 and 8 applies to ALL all arriving passengers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test to Release option</b> paid for Covid test after 5 full days from departure to England. Negative test result exempts remainder of quarantine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red list countries are excluded from option</li> <li>• Marginal benefit of cost over time saving</li> <li>• Counting day from departure not consistent with self-isolation counted from arrival</li> </ul>
<p><b>Red list countries</b> – countries with additional travel restrictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrivals limited to UK/Ireland nationals or UK resident visa holders only</li> <li>• Government managed 10 day quarantine at passenger cost (includes testing package)</li> <li>• Test to Release option removed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Passenger Locator Form (PLF)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lengthy and overly complex form not popular with passengers</li> </ul>

Level 3	Notes
<p><b>Moderate/High level of border restrictions</b></p> <p><b>Relaxing of post arrival measures</b></p> <p><b>Incorporating vaccinated/previously infected passengers?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence phased reduction of post-arrival measures</li> <li>• Propose to incorporate policy for vaccinated and previously infected passengers</li> <li>• Seek international alignment where possible</li> <li>• Implement digital health wallet Apps</li> <li>• Maintains public faith in border measures by ensuring all arriving passengers have been certified tested or vaccinated</li> <li>• Begins to reduce barriers to travel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre-departure test</b> for all international arrivals – negative Covid test taken within 3 days prior to scheduled departure into the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Pre-departure testing</li> <li>• Seek improvements for foreign language acceptance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vaccination certificate or declaration</b> – Propose introducing policy for vaccinated passengers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified vaccinated more than xx days prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Certified Covid recovered</b> – Propose introducing policy for passengers certified as recovered from Covid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified recovered from a Covid19 infection prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital health wallet Apps</b> – introduce policy for acceptance of digital compliance at the border</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast track digital solutions</li> <li>• Propose passenger proof of health requirements accepted via approved digital Apps</li> <li>• Enables efficiency of boarding and arrivals processes at greater scale as passenger volumes start to return</li> <li>• Industry solutions for this are already almost complete – government needs to approve and work to integrate with industry solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Travel Corridors</b> – policy reinstated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinstatement of Travel Corridor countries as soon as feasible</li> <li>• Consider arrivals from Travel Corridors exempted from self-isolation on arrival?</li> <li>• Propose that any updates are effective from 04:00 on the Monday rather than week end</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mandatory self-isolation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reducing quarantine period now that pre-departure testing implemented?</li> <li>• Align timing to count days from departure for consistency with Test to Release</li> <li>• Consider arrivals from Travel Corridors exempted from self-isolation on arrival (as above)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test to Release option</b> - Negative test result exempts remainder of quarantine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose that Test to Release is reviewed in conjunction with and quarantine period review</li> <li>• Current policy offers marginal return on investment on quarantine time saving</li> </ul>
<p><b>Red list countries</b> – countries with additional travel restrictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain measure as determined by Health Risk assessment</li> <li>• Targeting highest risk countries enables lower level restrictions for wider market</li> </ul>
<p><b>Passenger Locator Form (PLF)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure improved PLF is in place</li> </ul>

Level 2	Notes
<p><b>Moderate/low level of border restrictions</b></p> <p><b>Further relaxing of post arrival measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target opening up of travel for Spring/Summer season</li> <li>• Consider introduction of selected test on arrival regime</li> <li>• Seek international alignment where possible</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre-departure test</b> for specified international arrivals – negative Covid test taken within 3 days prior to scheduled departure into the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain pre-departure testing as preferred testing option</li> <li>• Consider acceptance of rapid testing solutions based on both improvements to rapid testing technology and lower specificity/accuracy as government risk appetite increases? <i>(NB IATA has commissioned Edge Health/Oxera to publish a study in early March on the development of rapid testing technology.)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Test on Arrival option</b> – potential option for Travel Corridor arrivals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider Travel Corridors option to pre-book a test on arrival as an alternative to the preferred pre-departure test?</li> <li>• Beneficial for certain UK/Ireland nationals and UK residents and alleviates cases of residents stranded abroad as passenger volumes build</li> <li>• Benefits overseas territories and other locations where pre-departure testing is difficult to access</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vaccination certificate or declaration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified vaccinated more than xx days prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Certified Covid recovered</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified recovered from a Covid19 infection prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital health wallet Apps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast track digital solutions</li> <li>• Propose passenger proof of health requirements accepted via approved digital Apps</li> <li>• Enables efficiency of boarding and arrivals processes at greater scale as passenger volumes start to return</li> </ul>
<p><b>Travel Corridors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Corridors risk assessment re-evaluated as more passengers get vaccinated</li> <li>• Consider arrivals from Travel Corridors exempted from self-isolation on arrival?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mandatory self-isolation</b> – Consider further lifting of self-isolation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reducing/removing quarantine period now that pre-departure testing implemented?</li> <li>• Align timing to count days from departure for consistency with Test to Release</li> <li>• Consider arrivals from Travel Corridors exempted from self-isolation on arrival (as above)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test to Release</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Test to Release scheme?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Red list countries</b> – countries with additional travel restrictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain measure as determined by Health Risk assessment</li> <li>• Targeting highest risk countries enables lower level restrictions for wider market</li> </ul>
<p><b>Passenger Locator Form (PLF)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose App based development</li> </ul>

Level 1	Notes
<p><b>Low level of border restrictions</b></p> <p><b>One level above normalised operations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider move to a zero quarantine after arrival regime</li> <li>• Consider Travel Corridors restored to original scope in full</li> <li>• Proposed maintain Pre-departure test preference where required</li> <li>• Seek international alignment where possible</li> <li>• Supports recovery of sector at scale</li> </ul>
<p><b>Travel Corridors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider Travel Corridors arrivals exempt from Covid test and quarantine requirements as per original scope?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pre-departure test</b> for specified international arrivals – negative Covid test taken within 3 days prior to scheduled departure into the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain pre-departure testing as preferred testing option</li> <li>• Consider acceptance of rapid testing solutions based on both improvements to rapid testing technology and lower specificity/accuracy as government risk appetite increases (<i>NB IATA has commissioned Edge Health/Oxera to publish a study in early March on the development of rapid testing technology.</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test on Arrival option</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider option to pre-book a test on arrival as an alternative to the preferred pre-departure test?</li> <li>• Beneficial for certain UK/Ireland nationals and UK residents and alleviates cases of residents stranded abroad as passenger volumes build</li> <li>• Benefits overseas territories and other locations where pre-departure testing is difficult to access</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vaccination certificate or declaration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified vaccinated more than xx days prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Certified Covid recovered</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether passengers who have been certified recovered from a Covid19 infection prior to departure to the UK exempt from a pre-departure test?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital health wallet Apps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast track digital solutions</li> <li>• Propose passenger proof of health requirements accepted via approved digital Apps</li> <li>• Enables efficiency of boarding and arrivals processes at greater scale as passenger volumes start to return</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mandatory self-isolation</b> – Consider removal of self-isolation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider removing quarantine period now that pre-departure testing implemented?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test to Release</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed accordingly if self-isolation reduced/removed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Red list countries</b> – countries with additional travel restrictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain measure as determined by Health Risk assessment</li> <li>• Targeting highest risk countries enables lower level restrictions for wider market</li> </ul>
<p><b>Passenger Locator Form (PLF)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose App based development</li> </ul>