

# BRITISH EMBASSY STOCKHOLM

British Embassy Update 01/06/2020

# **NEW PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES at the** **UK BORDER**

On 10 May, the Prime Minister announced new measures at the UK border to guard against a second wave of coronavirus infections.

Throughout the outbreak, we have brought in the right measures at the right time based on scientific advice and supported by SAGE. Imported cases matter most when the UK has a low level of infection. As the UK moves to a situation where domestic transmission is much lower, imported cases may become a higher proportion of the overall number of infections. Requiring arrivals to the UK to self-isolate for 14 days will reduce the risk of transmission from this group.

The Home Office has been working closely with industry partners ahead of announcing these changes. They will be subject to review every three weeks, to ensure they are in line with the latest scientific evidence and remain effective and necessary.

The Government will continue to look at further options as we move forward and these will include air bridges - agreements between countries who both have low transmission rates to recognise each other's departure screening measures for passengers and removing the need for quarantine measures for incoming passengers.

Professor John Aston, Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser said:

*“The scientific advice so far has been clear: while there has been significant community transmission of the virus within the UK the impact of putting in place additional border restrictions would have been negligible to the spread of the virus.”*

However, the spread of the virus within the UK is now lessening. We have been successful in getting the reproduction number  $R$  – the average number of new people infected by one infected person – below 1.

As the number of infections within the UK drops, we must now manage the risk of transmissions being reintroduced from elsewhere.

### **What's changing?**

**Contact locator form**– all arrivals will be required to fill this in to provide contact and travel information so they can be contacted if they, or someone they may have been in contact with, develops the disease. Border Force will undertake checks at the border and may refuse entry to any non-British citizen or resident who refuses to comply with these regulations. Failure to complete the form is also punishable by a £100 fixed penalty notice.

**Self-isolation** – passengers arriving in the UK will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and could be contacted regularly throughout this period to ensure compliance. This means that they should not go to work, school, or public areas, or use public transport or taxis. They should not have visitors unless they are providing essential

support. They should not go out to buy food or other essentials where they can rely on others.

**Enforcement** – anyone failing to comply will face enforcement action. A breach of self-isolation would be punishable with a £1,000 fixed penalty notice in England and Wales or potential prosecution and unlimited fine. The level of fine could increase if the risk of infection from abroad increases.

Public health authorities will conduct random checks in England to ensure compliance with self-isolation requirements. The Devolved Administrations will set their own enforcement measures.

**Spot checks** - Border Force will undertake checks at the border and may refuse entry to any non-British citizen who refuses to comply with these regulations and isn't resident in the UK. Failure to complete the form is also punishable by a £100 fixed penalty notice. Public health authorities will conduct random checks in England to ensure compliance with self-isolation requirements.

Removal from the country would be considered as a last resort for foreign nationals who refuse to comply with these public health measures.

### **Why make the changes now?**

Our policy throughout this pandemic has been to base decisions on the best scientific evidence to take the right action at the right time and that is what we continue to do.

The advice to date has been that such restrictions would not have had a significant impact on the spread of the virus, because the incidence of coronavirus in the UK was relatively high. And passenger arrivals to the UK are down 99%.

But the incidence of coronavirus within the UK is now falling. And as lockdown measures across the world start to be eased, we expect to see some increase in the number of passengers arriving.

We therefore must turn our attention to the border. We cannot risk a second peak of the virus from cases of coronavirus imported from overseas.

As we get the virus under control and then relax social distancing measures, the risk from other countries potentially becomes greater, even if incoming passenger numbers remain low. This is because any incoming passengers infected with coronavirus will have a greater impact to the UK due to the lower UK infection rate.

**When will these changes come into effect and where can travellers go for further information?**

The arrangements are due to come into effect on 8 June.

The new regime will be in place across the United Kingdom, although enforcement measures will be set individually by the Devolved Administrations.

Guidance can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

## **Are there any exemptions to the quarantine measures?**

There will be limited exemptions and a full list is on gov.uk. They include:

**road haulage and freight workers**, to ensure the supply of goods is not impacted;

**medical professionals** who are travelling to help with the fight against coronavirus;

**Anyone moving within the Common Travel Area**, covering Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man;

**Seasonal Agricultural Workers** who will self-isolate on the property where they are working

## **Why aren't you temperature screening at the border like other countries?**

Throughout the outbreak, all of our decisions have been based on the best scientific evidence.

The purpose of these measures is to manage the risk of transmissions being introduced from abroad. For the

moment, testing at the border is not a part of these measures.

Temperature testing will not identify everyone who is infected with coronavirus when they enter the UK – especially people who have not yet developed symptoms or for who raised temperature is not a symptom. That is why we will be asking all travellers to self-isolate for 14 days.

### **Why are these blanket measures rather than targeted at high-risk countries?**

We want to reduce the risk of imported cases being introduced to the UK. It is important that we understand the risks as infection rates change globally and a blanket approach is the most appropriate at this point in time. A similar approach has been taken by countries internationally, including Australia, Canada and the Republic of Ireland. We will be keeping the measures under review.

## **TRAVEL ADVICE FOR SWEDEN**

There are reduced options to fly to the UK from Sweden or via other countries. The airlines and travel operators are best placed to provide up to date information about schedules and flight arrangements.

If you need consular assistance 24/7 support is available from the British Embassy by telephone.

**Please call 0046 (0) 8-671 3000.**

Please stay on the line and select the option for '*calling about an emergency involving a British national*' to speak to a member of staff.

Full details of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice can be seen at:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sweden> and  
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sweden/return-to-the-uk>

## **ENTRY AND BORDERS**

Restrictions on entry to Sweden by non-residents, and non-EU citizens and their family members have been extended for at least one more month.

Countries neighbouring Sweden (Denmark, Norway and Finland) also have restrictions.

Those normally living and working in Denmark will still be able to enter the country from Sweden. In addition, you are now able to transit through Denmark for onward travel.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

If you are in need of immediate medical advice or assistance in Sweden you can contact Swedish health care services at: [www.1177.se/](http://www.1177.se/)

Or call **1177**

You can read guidance for British people travelling and living overseas following the outbreak of novel coronavirus here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

Keep up to date by signing up to email alerts on our Sweden travel advice page: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sweden/health#coronavirus>

You can read coronavirus information from the Swedish Public Health Agency here:

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/smittskydd-beredskap/utbrott/aktuella-utbrott/covid-19/>

Including information in English:

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/smittskydd-beredskap/utbrott/aktuella-utbrott/covid-19/skydda-dig-och-andra/information-pa-olika-sprak/engelska/>

Krisinformation.se aggregates official Swedish information in other languages, including English, here:

<https://www.krisinformation.se/detta-kan-handa/handelser-och-storningar/20192/myndigheterna-om-det-nya-coronaviruset/andra-sprakother-languages>

You can read coronavirus information from Public Health England here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

You can read travel advice from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs here (in Swedish):

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/smittskydd-beredskap/utbrott/aktuella-utbrott/covid-19/reserekommendationer-fran-ud/>

### **VISITS TO THE EMBASSY**

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and related restrictions, you must have an appointment to visits to the Embassy. If you need urgent consular assistance, call 0046 (0) 8-671 3000.

See the Sweden travel advice at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sweden](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sweden) for all information on coronavirus (COVID-19). Consular officers cannot provide any additional information by phone.

If you are attending an appointment, contact us in advance if you:

- have been in contact with someone with coronavirus (COVID-19)
- are feeling unwell with a cough, difficulty breathing or fever

If any of the above applies to you, you must contact us to reschedule your appointment for a later date.

For some of our services, you can book an appointment on our website:

<https://www.contact-embassy.service.gov.uk/?country=sweden&post=British%20Embassy%20Stockholm>

For urgent consular assistance, call us on:

**0046 (0)8 671 3000** (phone lines are open 24/7).