

The Rt Hon. Grant Shapps MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

10 September 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of Airlines UK, the Airport Operators Association and our members, we are writing to set out our position on the changes necessary at the next Global Travel Taskforce checkpoint. We have provided a paper with further detail but a summary of our position is below. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this in more detail.

In our view, the government needs to fundamentally rebalance its approach to international travel and enable a more meaningful recovery of aviation, after a hugely disappointing summer.

UK aviation is an outlier, both compared to the UK's approach to domestic restrictions and internationally. While festivals and nightclubs have been able to reopen without restrictions, aviation continues to be held back by complex and burdensome rules and costly testing requirements. Summer 2021 was a worse summer for our industry than summer 2020 – making us unique in the UK economy. Europe has shown the way to safely re-open travel and has seen a much faster recovery in international travel volumes and passenger numbers. The UK is being left behind despite its world-beating vaccination programme.

The travel rules are disproportionate to any health benefit. Despite the huge cost to travellers, only a minority of positive cases are sequenced (just 0.03% of tests from Green arrivals in July), and no VoCs are being detected for the vast majority of countries.

The UK's approach has a real cost. Without a successful summer and with high burdens on travellers, the winter season is likely to be extremely challenging. Nearly 60% of staff in the air transport sector were on furlough at the end of June – the highest of any sector. Unless a significant change takes place, there will be further job losses as furlough ends.

Recognising the success of our vaccination strategy and the approach to domestic restrictions, and to align the UK with our international competitors, we propose:

- Fully vaccinated travellers and anyone travelling from low-risk countries should now be able to travel without restrictions or testing; just like domestic UK travel.
- Greater certainty and predictability so that travellers and families are not constantly looking over their shoulders in case of rule changes, disruption or significant unexpected costs.
- VoCs kept at bay through a red list, applicable only to the highest-risk countries.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Alderslade
Chief Executive, Airlines UK



Karen Dee
Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association