



Revised Port Health approach in delay phase of COVID-19 response

Changes to requirements

On Sunday 10 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced a series of measures as part of a road map to control transmission of COVID-19 and recovery. This included an enhanced General Aircraft Declaration (GAD) process for all flights to the UK, including the active reporting of nil returns (Annex A). This should be rolled out to all UK airports and airlines from Monday 11 May 2020 for compliance by Monday 18 May 2020. It is important to continue with the current arrangements as set out again below. A NOTAM will be issued highlighting these arrangements.

1. Carriers are requested to issue communications to all passengers as they book, immediately before they travel, and on-board the aircraft, ensuring passengers have the UK's latest public health guidance. We request that the following link to the suite of government guidance on coronavirus is highlighted during the following steps of the passenger journey - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#when-you-return-to-the-uk-protect-yourself-and-others> with further guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.
 - a. As part of the booking process (for example, via a display or link to on airline websites and in booking confirmation emails);
 - b. As part of the check-in process (either via the digital check-in process or through leaflets at check-in for those passengers who check-in at the airport). More information on the leaflets that airlines should distribute to passengers at check-in is contained in paragraph [6]; and
 - c. Through an on-board announcement, which all aircraft arriving into the UK should provide prior to disembarkation (this announcement is set out in Annex C).
2. Carriers are expected to comply with these requirements voluntarily. HMG are also progressing new regulations to make the measures in paragraph 1a, 1b and 1c a legal requirement. More detail on the legislative requirements will be communicated in due course.
3. Links to government information for operators can be found in Annex A.
4. Carriers will also be required to complete a General Aircraft Declaration (GAD) for all flights coming into the UK, confirming the health status of the flight. Please see Annex B for the GAD process in England. For Devolved Administrations, please follow the specific advice.



5. Public Health England's Health Control Unit (HCU), based at Heathrow, will continue to be the central contact point in England for the enhanced GAD process and support on public health queries not dealt with by your local NHS. Public Health England (PHE) does not have a presence at other ports. Contact details are:
 - a. Tel: +44 (0) 20 8745 7209
 - b. Email: Heathrow.HCU@phe.gov.uk
6. All ports to display COVID-19 posters prominently and make leaflets easily accessible for all travellers, replacing these as updated and new materials become available. PHE and devolved health protection agencies can work with airports and airlines to adapt materials to specific formats, displays or sizes. In line with the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10 May 2020, updated campaign resources will be made available shortly at <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>. Please check this website regularly as materials are adapted to be in line with the latest advice.

Note: Materials will change as the new measures announced by the Prime Minister come into force.
7. All airports should identify an isolation area for use in the case of a seriously ill symptomatic passenger requiring isolation whilst waiting for the local health response. The area will be dependent on local circumstances. For guidance, an outline of the expected and desirable requirements (Annex D), however the availability and configuration will be ultimately dictated by local circumstances.
8. In his announcement on Sunday 10 May 2020, the Prime Minister also announced some additional, future measures at the border. Further detail on these requirements will be communicated in due course



ANNEX A: Useful links to COVID-19 guidance

Please see the following link for the suite of guidance materials produced across government:

- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

In particular the following links to government advice may be useful to the industry:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-staff-in-the-transport-sector>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Note: This is a new virus and the understanding and science around it is developing rapidly. Best efforts are made to remove guidance that is out of date but please check that the guidance you are reviewing is the latest version.



Annex B: General Aircraft Declaration (GAD) process during the COVID-19 response for England

1. **Early notification** by aircraft to designated airport and PHE Health Control Unit (HCU) at Heathrow Airport (LHR) of any potentially symptomatic passengers while in flight.
2. **Update provided** by aircraft in flight within 2 hours of arrival, including presumptive nil returns, communicated through the same approach outlined above to the designated airport and HCU.
3. **GAD provided** by aircraft once landed as per airline or port operator standard operating procedure and to PHE HCU at LHR, ahead of disembarkation.
4. **If nil return sent to designated airport and PHE HCU**, pilot can disembark aircraft without clearance from PHE.
5. **If suspected symptomatic passenger: Risk assessment** by Medical Officer in the HCU based on GAD and initial conversations with airport and plane.
6. **Disembarkation** following agreement of the PHE clinician which could take the form of:
 - a. General disembarkation with no further public health advice.
 - b. Specific instructions on the method and order of disembarkation and moving anyone symptomatic safely to a designated isolation area.
7. **Additional follow-up with passenger if required:** the PHE Clinician will undertake a remote public health risk assessment.
 - a. For a passenger assessed as needing urgent care 999 should be called and local processes followed as per business as usual emergency response procedures to get them the care they need. No public health intervention must interfere with an emergency response and ambulance services **must not wait for** clearance to board an aircraft in an emergency
 - b. For passengers who are symptomatic but otherwise well the PHE clinician will advise the passenger/s on infection control measures in line with the latest government guidance. The current government guidance is that symptomatic passengers should proceed to their accommodation via the most direct route, while following social distancing and infection control guidance, and isolate themselves once there. In transit passengers will not be allowed to board their next flight if symptomatic. Foreign nationals should request support from their embassy or High Commission if required.



Public Health
England



Department
for Transport

Note: For Devolved Administrations, please submitted GADs to the local Health Protection Teams as per local protocol, who will provide advice.



ANNEX C: Message to be delivered by all flights into the UK prior to disembarkation

-----**MESSAGE STARTS**-----

IN-FLIGHT COVID-19 ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY AIRLINES LANDING IN THE UK: (as at 11 May 2020)

We would like to provide the following COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health message from all the UK's public health agencies.

The symptoms of coronavirus are a new continuous cough with or without a high temperature; if you experience either of those, however mild, please make yourself known to the cabin crew for onward reporting to public health agencies at your receiving airport.

Simple measures you can take to help protect yourself and family are:

1. Wash your hands;
2. Avoid touching your face with hands; and
3. Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and dispose of it immediately.

If you follow these simple rules, together we will help combat the spread of coronavirus.

Further information is available on the posters and leaflets available in the airport when you land.

-----**MESSAGE ENDS**-----

Note: This message will change as the new measures announced by the Prime Minister come into force. =



ANNEX D: Minimum Criteria for a BASIC Isolation Room/Holding area at ports

A) AIRSIDE

For one symptomatic individual

There should be a minimum of one room per terminal/major area

Essential features:

- private space, ideally located away from major thoroughfare
- accessible toilet (ideally ensuite) and with handwashing facilities
- sparsely furnished room, ideally not carpeted (for decontamination).
- seating is the minimum, but it would be desirable to have a bed/examination couch (or reclining chair)
- observation port or window, if possible
- access to water and other life essentials
- ability to maintain the indoor air temperature and humidity at comfortable levels
- electric socket
- phone for communication with supervising staff
- the space should be easily supervised (for care of unwell person)
- linked to a reasonable 'cordon' exit route, to move suspect case to an ambulance easily
- have hand gels and waste bin space
- self-closing door

Desirable features:

- negative pressure
- ante-room

Essential services (will vary depending on length of time isolation room will be used in a typical period)

- cleaning services, will need to follow cleaning guidance and wear appropriate PPE, as per PHE guidance
- supervisory service (could have basic PPE) to ensure the wellbeing of the passenger
- transport service (if passengers are to be moved large distances); for e.g. at LHR
- first responders - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>



For multiple individuals need isolation – relatively uncommon scenario

- ideally multiple rooms as specified above, would need to be available

B) LANDSIDE

- ideally rooms with the above specification or, quieter areas with less footfall, should be pre-identified which can quickly be isolated (for e.g. by screens), if a passenger or airport staff falls sick.