

GMS Flash Alert



Immigration Edition

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United Kingdom - COVID-19: 14-Day Self-Isolation for Travellers to the U.K.

The U.K. government continues to update its immigration guidance in response to the subsiding COVID-19 crisis. On 22 May, it announced that a 14-day self-isolation period will be implemented for travellers (with limited exceptions) arriving in the U.K. from 8 June. This policy will be reviewed every three weeks.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The intention of the policy is to reduce the opportunities for coronavirus to enter the U.K. for individuals possibly carrying the virus coming from outside the country.

A 14-day self-isolation period for travellers arriving from outside the common travel area or Ireland in the U.K. from 8 June, will make many business and pleasure trips no longer viable. The limited exceptions to the self-isolation period are mostly very sector specific. Businesses that operate in sectors such as non-essential retail, professional services, banking, or legal services will see their usual business travellers impacted.

14-Day Self-Isolation for Travellers to U.K.

The British Home Secretary, Priti Patel, announced that travellers arriving in the United Kingdom from 8 June will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.¹ This will apply to both residents and visitors, regardless of nationality.

Upon arrival in the U.K., individuals will be required to fill out a form, providing their journey, intended place of stay/accommodation during the self-isolation period, and contact details should authorities need to trace them.² There are penalties for those who fail to comply, which can be enforced by local police forces.

Individuals will not need to fill in a form or self-isolate for 14 days if travelling to the U.K. from:

- Ireland;
- the Channel Islands;
- the Isle of Man.

Although the following are exempt from the 14-day self-isolation period, they will need to fill in a form²:

- Members of diplomatic missions (non-U.K.) and consular posts in the U.K., officers, servants, or representatives of international organisations and their families or dependents;
- Certain defence personnel and contractors required to deliver essential defence tasks;
- Officials required to work on essential border security duties.

There is also a detailed list of exemptions from the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days. Broadly, exempted individuals can fall into the following groups:

- individuals required to travel to another country at least once a week;
- individuals working in the following sectors: transport, health-care, energy, water, sewerage, and waste management;
- seasonal agricultural workers;
- members of diplomatic missions and consular posts in the U.K., officers, servants or representatives of international organisations with certification from their head of mission or equivalent position;
- certain defence personnel and contractors, or officials required to work on essential border security duties;
- those required to undertake policing or government work within 14 days of arrival;
- individuals providing urgent or essential support to essential services such as rail, IT, or telecommunication networks.

KPMG NOTE

Contact Form to Be Completed upon Arrival

As noted earlier, arriving travelers will have to complete a form that includes notification of the accommodation they intend to lodge at during their period of self-isolation. If such accommodation is not noted or does not meet the necessary requirements, the individual will be required to self-isolate in facilities arranged by the government.

What Happens at the Border

When a traveller arrives from outside the U.K., at the border check-point (airport, ferry terminal, Channel Tunnel station), U.K. Border Force will undertake checks and may refuse entry to any non-British citizen who refuses to comply with these

KPMG NOTE continued

regulations and is not himself/herself resident in the United Kingdom. Failure to complete the form is also punishable by a £100 fixed penalty notice. Failure to self-isolate for 14 days in England Wales is also punishable for a £1,000 fine.

Exemptions from Requirements

While it may be difficult indeed to make a pleasure trip or a business trip viable with a 14-day self-isolation requirement, there is an extensive list of exemptions³ and we would encourage businesses to review it to foster full compliance.

In particular, individuals who in the course of their employment usually travel out or into the U.K. on a weekly basis are exempt from the self-isolation period. This is not a sector-specific exemption, and we would encourage businesses to review employees who fall under this category and plan their future travel to and from the U.K. accordingly.

If you have any questions or concerns about how this policy could affect you, it is advisable to reach out to your qualified immigration counsel or global mobility professional.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For the news story published 22 May 2020 on the U.K. government website, see:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-public-health-measures-for-all-uk-arrivals> .

2 For guidance from the U.K. government on arriving in the U.K. from 8 June and the required form to be filled in, see:
<https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk> .

3 For guidance from the U.K. government on visa customers and applicants in the U.K., visa customers outside of the U.K., and British nationals overseas, who need to apply for a passport, and individuals with visas about to expire, see:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents> .

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in the United Kingdom.

The KPMG Legal Services – Immigration Team has a wealth of experience in transactional, advisory, and compliance assurance services. We will be able to advise your business in relation to practical considerations in light of the above changes, as well as what this means for your long-term recruitment and compliance strategies.



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*Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in the United Kingdom.

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