08 Dec 21

**DEFENCE ADVICE NOTE (DAN) 18**

**COVID-19: INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND EXEMPTIONS POLICY (INBOUND TO UK)**

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| **For any queries relating to DAN 18 contact the appropriate TLB COVID Cell.****AIR:** Air-COVID-19GMB@mod.gov.uk**NAVY:** NAVYOPS-COVID@mod.gov.uk**Fd ARMY:** FdArmy-COVID-CELL@mod.gov.uk |

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| All forms and templates are now contained in the:[**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) |

**SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

1. This DAN complements the wider regulations and law applicable to every traveller entering the UK. All Defence personnel should read, understand and comply with that HMG [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).
2. There are occasionally differences between the law applicable in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This DAN primarily reflects English law, where the law in another Devolved Administration is different, that difference is highlighted.
3. **Exemptions**. Ministry of Defence personnel must comply, wherever possible, with essential public health measures to minimise the risks of COVID-19 cases being introduced from abroad. On some occasions, exemptions from the law may be possible and they are explained in this DAN. Ministers have directed that exemptions should be used sparingly, approved at senior levels (2 Star level, but some exemptions may be delegated further), and recorded centrally.
	1. **Mitigations**. When granting an exemption, an assessment of the risk that those exempted will bring COVID-19 into the UK must be conducted, and consideration given to mitigations which will be put in place to lower that risk.
	2. **Cancellation of Activity**. An exemption from legal requirements must be the last resort and must only be considered where an activity cannot otherwise go ahead, even if all other mitigations[[1]](#footnote-2) have been deployed. If an activity does not meet the threshold for an exemption, and mitigations are insufficient, it must be cancelled and that cancellation should be reported using the process set out in Section 2 for, and Annex A to, DAN15.
	3. **General Exemptions**. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to provide a general exemption for an individual (for example aircrew) where their role requires frequent travel in and out of the country. Otherwise, it is expected that an exemption will be specific to a single entry into the UK for a specific individual (or group travelling together).
	4. **Presentational Risks**. There is significant reputational risk to Defence for the improper approval of exemptions, in particular due to the associated increased risk to public health. Authorising officers approving an exemption must factor this into their decision making.
	5. **Recording of Exemptions**. MOD is required to keep accurate records of any exemptions agreed. Details (including copies of risk assessments and mitigation measures adopted) should be retained locally for a period of three years. In addition, in order to report centrally, information on all exemptions granted must be provided to the central COVID-19 team via the [Power BI App](https://apps.powerapps.com/play/515d7565-7784-4c01-addc-3cef42494bbc?tenantId=be7760ed-5953-484b-ae95-d0a16dfa09e5&source=email&hint=dca7e2e5-1f0a-4741-aa0b-53fa84e352e0) (note that Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge must be used to access this form). Authorising authorities are to report exemptions as soon as possible to allow MOD early foresight, but no later than the start of the exemption (unless there are exceptional circumstances which would preclude this.
4. There is information relating to the children of MOD personnel who board in UK schools and whose parents are based overseas at Annex A to the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)**.**
5. A diagram to guide the reader through this DAN is overleaf at Figure 1.

Start

**FIGURE 1 – INBOUND TRAVEL DECISION FLOW**

Sect 5

Sect 5

Y

N

N

Return to UK.

Return to UK.

Return to UK.

Book Day 2 Test

Book Day 2 and 8 Tests

Book Day 2 and 8 Tests

Y

Sect 3

Complete a Passenger Locator Form.

Has the
traveller been
in a Red List country
in the last 10 days?

Sect 2

Conduct a Pre Departure Test.

Is the
traveller
fully
vaccinated?

Isolate on return to UK until in receipt of PCR result

Sect 6

Day 2 Test. If NEGATIVE, no further isolation required. If POSITIVE, isolate for further 10 days.

In England, there is a Test-to-Release option at 5 days.

Day 2 and 8 Tests still required

Day 8 Test.

Day 2 Test

Sect 5

Isolate at home for 10 days

Sect 4

Day 2 Test

Day 8 Test.

Enter Managed Quarantine.

Sect 4

Sect 5

**SECTION 2 - PRE-DEPARTURE COVID-19 TESTING**

1. The UK Government [directs](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae#changes-to-pre-departure-testing-from-4am-tuesday-7-december-2021) that all travellers (aged 12 or over) entering the UK[[2]](#footnote-3) from non-red list countries must complete a pre-departure in the 2 days before they begin their journey. Travellers from Red List countries must take a Pre Departure test in the 2 days before they begin their journey as directed [here.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories#before-you-travel-to-england--red-list-rules) Exemptions from this requirement may be available where conducting a test is either not practicable or there are extenuating circumstances. The flowchart below at Figure 2 is a guide but travellers must also read and understand the relevant paragraph in this DAN:

**FIGURE 2 - PRE DEPARTURE TESTING**

Start

Y

Compassionate ‘A’ Traveller (Para 2.4)

JCCC/DSCOM will liaise directly with Border Force.

N

N

Y

Annex D required in hard copy

Authorised by 2-Star risk owner (can be delegated to 1-Star).

Defence Exemption?
(Para 2.6)

Is there
any reason
why you should not conduct a
 Pre Departure Test?

Reasonable Excuse?
(Para 2.2)

No requirement for formal certification, but make sure you carry evidence of your excuse when entering the UK border.

Conduct a Pre Departure Test.

N

Y

Y

N

No further exemptions possible - conduct a Pre Departure Test.

1. **Reasonable Excuse for not testing**. There are several ‘reasonable excuses’ for not taking a pre-departure test, which are:
2. The passenger was:

(1) Medically unfit to provide a sample for a qualifying test;

 (2) Due to a disability not reasonably able to obtain a qualifying test;

(3) Requiring medical treatment with such urgency that taking a qualifying test was not reasonably practicable.

(4) Ill with coronavirus and required emergency medical treatment; or was accompanying a person in the last two categories in order to provide support (whether medical or otherwise) for whom it was not reasonably practicable to obtain a qualifying test.

1. A person began their journey in a country or territory where a qualifying test was not available to the public or it was not reasonably practicable to obtain a qualifying test due to a lack of reasonable access to a qualifying test or to a place in which to take a test[[3]](#footnote-4).
2. It was not reasonably practicable for a person to obtain a test due to the time required to travel to the UK from the country or territory where they began their journey and it was not reasonably practicable for them to obtain a qualifying test in their last point of departure, if different to where they began their journey.
3. There is no legal requirement for an exemption letter where travellers have a ‘Reasonable Excuse’ for not conducting pre-departure testing. However, some supporting evidence is recommended:
4. In the case of a medical reason for not testing (i.e. Para 2.2.a. above) a template is in the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)Annex B which could be used in conjunction with supporting evidence from a valid, relevant, medical practitioner. The template letter should be authorised at OF3 rank or above (or civilian equivalent).
5. In the case of other ‘reasonable excuses’ (i.e. Paras 2.2.b. and c. above) a supporting letter should be provided by the relevant Chain of Command and authorised at OF3 rank or above (or civilian equivalent).
6. **Compassionate Category A travellers**[[4]](#footnote-5). The default position must be that every traveller who would normally be required to test complies with that [direction](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae). In the event that a Compassionate Category A traveller is unable to test, JCCC/DSCOM will liaise with the Border Force and the airline to ensure the traveller is permitted to undertake the journey. All other compassionate travel passengers will be required to undertake a COVID-19 test before travelling.
7. **Convalescent COVID-19 travellers**. Government guidance is [here.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-people-travelling-to-england#type-of-test) If you have recently recovered from COVID but are no longer infectious, you should use a lateral flow device (LFD) test. As per Government guidance above, LFD tests have a lower sensitivity than PCR or LAMP tests, so they are less likely to return a positive result from a historic infection. The LFD test must meet the minimum performance standards as set out in the link above.

**Host nation authorities (including any transit countries) and transport operators may have requirements in excess of those contained in this DAN. Personnel are advised to check prior to booking to ensure that all requirements can be meet**

**Defence Pre-Departure Testing Exemptions**

1. There may be a small number of individuals who may require a Defence exemption from pre-departure testing. This exemption can be applied to MOD Crown servants[[5]](#footnote-6), Defence contractors and Visiting Forces[[6]](#footnote-7) (VF) including:
2. Individuals who perform niche roles who frequently travel into the UK and/or for who it would not be appropriate to use overseas testing options.
3. Personnel involved in certain sensitive operations for who it would not be appropriate to use overseas testing options.
4. Exemptions must be authorised by the risk owner at 2\* level in the TLB, Command, or organisation who is responsible for the individual requiring the exemption. This may be delegated by the 2\* risk owner at their discretion, but not below 1\*.
5. An exemption should be specific to a single entry into the UK for a specific individual (or group travelling together). However, if any individual travels in and out of the UK frequently, a general exemption (of no more than 3 months) could be granted.
6. The approving authority should provide each traveller with a letter in hard copy or electronically confirming the exemption. A template letter titled ‘Exemption from Pre-Departure COVID-19 Testing’ is at [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) Annex D. This will be required at the border to provide proof of exemption.

**Reimbursement of Testing Costs**

1. **Duty Travel**. Pre departure testing, for all personnel[[7]](#footnote-8) should be organised and paid for by units as part of routine Duty Travel arrangements. Where unit pre-booking is not possible, reasonable costs for duty journeys can be reclaimed as follows:
2. **Service Personnel (SP)**. SP must demonstrate that they were unable to access a free testing facility provided by the host nation or other source. Costs are to be reclaimed via JPA using ‘Miscellaneous’ expense type then selecting ‘Medical, Dental, Opticians and Prescription fees’ from the dropdown menu. For Service Personnel based in the UK, and more detail, please refer to the AF Rem Allces Directed Letter[[8]](#footnote-9).
3. **MOD Civil Servants.** Civilian staff travelling or serving overseas can reclaim the costs of one private COVID-19 test, per person, per duty journey. Costs are to be reclaimed via the ‘Miscellaneous’ expenses claim form Miscellaneous Expenses Claim HR Form 1108. You should record ‘COVID-19 Test’ in the justification box.
4. **Family Travel**. Defence personnel9 and their immediate family who are assigned overseas and are required to travel to the UK on duty[[9]](#footnote-10) can reclaim the costs of one private COVID-19 test per duty journey per individual traveller through JPA or HRMS as above.
5. **Government Contractors and Visiting Forces**. Government Contractors (or their employers) and any Visiting Forces should cover their own costs incurred through Pre-Departure Testing.

**SECTION 3 – PASSENGER LOCATOR FORM**

1. COVID-19 regulations require all arrivals to the UK to complete a Passenger Locator Form (PLF). The PLF is completed online at: [Fill in your passenger locator form](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/passenger-locator-form-how-to-guide), ideally prior to arrival at the UK border but no earlier than 48 hours before arrival.
2. **If using Defence Managed Quarantine Service**. There are specific instructions for completing the PLF if using the Defence MQS at Para 4.9.
3. **If Post—Arrival Testing booked through QTOC**. If travellers have booked testing through the Defence Quarantine and Testing Operations Cell (QTOC) (using the process at Para 5.2.b) they will not have a test booking reference number which is necessary to complete the PLF. Travellers are to are to tick “I am exempt from testing” and give the reason as “Defence”. Travellers should also carry a completed copy of the letter contained [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) **Annex E** which can be signed-off at any level of the Chain of Command (but individuals cannot self-certify).
4. **Exemptions from requirement to complete a PLF**. Most inbound travel exemptions do not absolve the traveller of the requirement to complete a PLF. The sole exception is the Essential Defence Activity Exemption at Para 4.12.b which includes an exemption from the requirement to ‘provide information’ (i.e. complete a PLF).
5. **Diplomats and Members of International Organisations**. Other nations’ diplomatic staff including officers and employees of international organisations, and the families of these people, are exempt from the requirement to complete a PLF.

**SECTION 4 – MANAGED QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Until 3 Oct 21, the requirement for quarantine, isolation or otherwise was governed by the origin country from which a traveller arrived into the UK. From 4 Oct, the traveller’s vaccination status has also become a factor. In general:
	1. Irrespective of vaccination status, those arriving from [Red List](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories#red-list-of-countries-and-territories) countries[[10]](#footnote-11) must quarantine in a Managed Quarantine facility. This could be the Government system, or the Defence system. See Para 4.2.
	2. Fully vaccinated travellers arriving from non-red list countries must self-isolate and complete a PCR test by the end of the 2nd full day of return. (Section 5 of this DAN.) They are to remain in isolation until receipt of a PCR result or until 14 days after arrival, whichever is sooner.

If PCR test result negative, no further isolation required. If test result positive or inconclusive, they must isolate for 10 full days. The day the test was taken is Day 0.

Completion of a Passenger Locator Form will still be required (Section 3 of this DAN).

* 1. Travellers arriving from non-red list countries who are not fully vaccinated must self-isolate (Para 4.14).
1. **Which system to use**.Travellers arriving from [Red List](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories%22%20%5Cl%20%22red-list-of-countries-and-territories) countries[[11]](#footnote-12) must quarantine in either Government Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) or the Defence Managed Quarantine Service (DMQS). The DMQS replicates the Government MQS for some Defence travellers. The default should be to use the Government MQS, especially for those travelling with dependants. The Defence MQS system should be used for:
	1. Travellers who, for security reasons, should not have their personal details, movements, or connections with Defence, to be compromised (e.g. Special Forces).
	2. Travellers arriving with either weapons, munitions, crypto, or any other material subject to special handling requirements.
2. **Onward Travel within the Common Travel Area**[[12]](#footnote-13). The nations that comprise the Common Travel Area have agreed that travellers arriving from Red List countries will complete Managed Quarantine in the country that they arrive into. The traveller will then be free to continue their journey on completion of 10 full days isolation and with a negative day 8 COVID-19 test result; or in order to directly leave the Common Travel Area.
3. Those whose final destination is Northern Ireland should familiarise themselves with **JMC NI OPO 20-003 – PJ SHAMROCK PHOENIX**, the latest version of which can be found at the [38 (Irish) Bde and NI Garrison COVID-19 Resilience Information Portal](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/teams/14919/SitePages/COVID-19-Resilience.aspx).
4. **Welfare Considerations**.Decompression and Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) provision for personnel returning from overseas activity must be factored into MQS planning, whether using the Government system or not. Additionally, contact plans should be created so personnel welfare can be monitored, and individuals are communicated with regularly. It is especially important to ensure that personnel returning from a long deployment can easily contact their family, as an additional 10 days separation will cause additional stress. Any individuals who are at risk and are vulnerable may be eligible for an exemption from MQS on a case by case basis.

**Government Managed Quarantine**

1. **Government Process**. Most travellers returning to the UK from a Red List country should use the Government Managed Quarantine System, booked via <https://quarantinehotelbookings.ctmportal.co.uk> Existing J1/ Travel Booking cell functions should complete this action and process any necessary payments alongside organising other elements of travel.
2. Further detail on the Devolved Administrations’ respective MQS is available here: [England](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/booking-and-staying-in-a-quarantine-hotel-when-you-arrive-in-england) [Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-health-checks-at-borders/), [Wales](https://gov.wales/how-isolate-when-you-travel-wales-coronavirus-covid-19) and [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-travelling-northern-ireland-red-list-country).

**Defence Managed Quarantine Service (DMQS)**

1. **DMQS Process**. The DMQS is at Garats Hay (formerly the Welbeck Defence 6th Form College). It is booked through TLB COVID-19 cells and the Defence Quarantine and Testing Operations Centre (QTOC).
2. **How to fill in PLF for DMQS**. Travellers must include details of the Managed Quarantine package on the PLF that must be complete prior to arrival in the UK; if using a Defence Managed Quarantine System (MQS) refer to Annex F contained within the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)**.** Occasionally, individuals have been questioned with regard to the 7-digit quarantine package invoice number 0000000, which is entered onto the PLF for personnel due to enter Defence MQS. This generic reference number is required to ensure the PLF can be completed although it has no relation to a physical invoice.
3. Notwithstanding the various exemptions below, all travellers can leave Managed Quarantine to fulfil a legal obligation or to travel to a port to leave the Common Travel Area in order to allow a parent to meet children to return to a home address.
4. **DMQS Alternatives Options**. Alternative DQMS solutions can be developed, particularly for large volume moves or RiPs. Any consideration of creating alternative sites must firstly involve consultation with the SPO-COVIDTeam@mod.gov.uk as there are several legal and medical requirements which must be satisfied under powers held by the Secretary of State for Defence.

**Exemptions from Managed Quarantine**
5. **There** are three potential exemptions from Managed Quarantine:
	1. **Home Quarantine Exemption**. The Home Quarantine Exemption allows Defence personnel (military and civilians) and their dependants[[13]](#footnote-14) returning from either an operational tour, or an Assignment, from a Red List country, to self-isolate at home, as opposed to in Managed Quarantine. The aim of the Home Quarantine Exemption is to mitigate impacts on morale and wellbeing caused by COVID-19 which are intensified through living in a Red Listed country. The authority to grant an exemption, is at 2-Star level but may be routinely delegated to 1-Star level, and to OF5/B1 level if there is a requirement to limit access to welfare information. Travellers making use of this exemption will require a signed copy of the letter at Annex G to the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true).
	2. **Essential Defence Activity Exemption**. The Essential Defence Activity Exemption allows travellers to exit Managed Quarantine to conduct essential activity. The authority to grant an Essential Defence Activity Exemption lies at 2-star, but may be delegated to 1-star. Some examples of possible ‘essential Defence activities’ within scope of the Defence exemption are below (note this is not an exhaustive list, merely illustrative):
6. Small numbers of Defence personnel or contractors who are required to undertake training or other activity on return to the UK in order to maintain high readiness (R3 or higher) for essential specialised Defence tasks.
7. Small numbers of Defence personnel or contractors who are required to maintain a ship or submarine or aircraft on return to the UK where this activity cannot be delayed by 10 days or completed by other personnel.
8. Defence personnel or contractors who are required to undertake work on major Defence equipment programmes where delaying by 10 days will have a significant effect on the output.
9. Critical aircrew and enabling functions (including AeroMed personnel) who are required to undertake operational roles within less than 10 days of entering the UK.
10. Small numbers of Defence personnel or contractors who are required to undertake essential maintenance of essential Defence equipment within 10 days of return to the UK.
11. Visiting Forces who are required to deliver essential Defence activities within 10 days of arrival in the UK and where this cannot be done remotely while self-isolating. In the case of allies, activity which is necessary to maintain their operational capability may be considered essential to UK Defence.
12. Individuals who perform niche roles who will be required to work within 10 days of return to the UK and where this cannot be done remotely while self-isolating.
13. Personnel, including Reserve Forces, who are required to support essential COVID-19 response activities.
14. Personnel involved in certain sensitive operations whose personal details and travel information should not be provided.
15. Where return to the UK for rest and recuperation for an individual is considered essential to the delivery of the mission, the operational commander may consider an exemption from a long or arduous operational posting where appropriate.
16. Where a Royal Navy crew returns to the UK as part of a watch rotation cycle.

Some examples of activity which is unlikely to be worthy of a Defence Essential Activity Exemption are:

1. Personnel returning from operations who are not immediately required for essential Defence activity.
2. Travel to the UK, including return from overseas travel, for personal reasons, although in certain circumstances the Personnel Resilience Exemption may apply (please see further detail below). The fluid nature of travel restrictions, including the potential for their introduction at no-notice should be a factor in planning. Personnel should note that time in self-isolation resulting from personal travel, where working from home cannot be undertaken, should normally be treated as annual leave, though the Chain of Command / Line management are able to authorise Special Paid Leave in exceptional cases.
3. Travel to the UK in relation to international meetings/conferences (unless necessary for essential Defence activity and where the activity cannot be undertaken via other means).

	1. When utilising an Essential Defence Activity Exemption, **travellers should only exit quarantine to conduct the activity and then return to quarantine as soon as possible**. Those travelling under an Essential Defence Activity Exemption are also exempt from the requirement to conduct a Pre-Departure Test and complete a Passenger Locator Form. Travellers using the Essential Defence Activity Exemption must use a bespoke Post-Arrival-Testing regime which is described at Para 5.3.c. Travellers making use of this exemption will require a signed copy of the letter at Annex H to the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)**.**
	2. Eligibility for the Essential Defence Activity Exemption:
		1. **Contractors**. The Essential Defence Activity Exemption can only be utilised if the contractors need to exit quarantine to conduct essential Defence activity. If the contractors need to exit quarantine in order fulfil another, non-Defence, contractual obligation, then exemptions should be sought by the other relevant government department or their employers; guidance is at [Entering the UK](https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control). Within Defence, exemptions should be authorised[[14]](#footnote-15) by the appropriate Contracting Authority, which in most cases will be DE&S, Defence Digital, SDA or DIO (or, when they are the direct Contracting Authority, PJHQ for CONDO deployments, and FLCs for contractors deployed in support of other operations).
		2. **Visiting Forces**. The Defence Essential Activity Exemption may be applied to Visiting Forces entering the UK (not as part of a consular mission). Where Defence Essential Activity Exemption is used, Diplomatic Clearance (DipClear) applicants[[15]](#footnote-16) may be requested to demonstrate to Director National Security their consideration of COVID risks and the mitigations imposed to reduce the concomitant risks to public health and as required under Para 1.3.a.
		3. **Senior Military and Diplomatic Visits.** SPO-COVIDTeam@mod.gov.uk should be approached ASAP about any potential requests for Defence Essential Activity Exemptions for VIP military visits. The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) should be approached for potential exemptions for visiting politicians and their delegations. The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) should be consulted for potential exemptions for visiting Trade Delegations.
		4. **UK Defence Attaches**. UK Defence Attachés should follow the FCDO policy with respect to potential exemptions from the legislation, but MOD will exceptionally retain the right to withhold an exemption. Mil Strat & GE and the relevant IPS desk must be informed of any exemptions granted to Defence Attachés.
4. **Personal Resilience Exemption**. In extremis, the Personal Resilience Exemption (Para 4.15.b below) which is ordinarily used to exempt personnel (and their families) from isolating at home, could be used to exempt personnel (and their families) from managed quarantine.

**Isolation at Home**

1. Travellers who are not fully vaccinated and who return from a non-red list country are required, by law, to isolate at home for 10 days. They must also complete a Pre-Departure Test (Section 2), submit a Passenger Locator Form (Section 3) and conduct Day 2 and 8 PCR tests.

**Exemption from Isolation at Home**

1. There are two potential exemptions from Isolation at Home[[16]](#footnote-17). **The Test to Release scheme (Section 6) should be the default option for managing the delivery of Defence tasks against a self-isolation requirement; only where this scheme does not provide the necessary relief should the other exemption be authorised.** Prior to authorisation of any of these exemptions the authorising officer should consider use of the Test to Release Scheme. The other exemptions are:
2. **Essential Defence Activity Exemption** (Para 4.12.b). The Essential Defence Activity Exemption, normally used to exempt travellers from Managed Quarantine, can also be used to exempt travellers from Isolation at Home.
3. **Personal Resilience Exemption**. Crown servants[[17]](#footnote-18), and/or their dependants, may be exempted from the requirement to isolate at home when returning from a non-operational[[18]](#footnote-19) overseas posting[[19]](#footnote-20), where isolation would reasonably interfere with any of the following conditions:
4. They have children at a UK education establishment and travel is required for collection/ escort, or to provide care.
5. They are geographically dislocated from spouses or long-term relationship[[20]](#footnote-21) partner.
6. They are required to comply with Court directed child access arrangements.
7. To provide respite from the stressful effects of COVID-19 restrictions upon single personnel living in shared Defence accommodation.
8. And other cases where the individual’s Chain of Command / Line Management assess that it is required for welfare reasons.

The authority to grant an exemption, is at 2-Star level but may be routinely delegated to 1-Star level, and to OF5/B1 level if there is a requirement to limit access to welfare information. Travellers making use of this exemption will require a signed copy of the letter at Annex I to the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)**.**

1. **Diplomats and Members of International Organisations**. Non-UK diplomats and representatives of international organisations, such as NATO (but not their families), who would normally expect to have diplomatic privileges and immunities, can be exempted from self-isolation where the head of the mission or international organisation confirms to the FCDO[[21]](#footnote-22) in writing that the person is required to undertake work which is essential to the functioning of the international organisation, and which cannot be undertaken whilst the person is self-isolating.
2. **Other reasons for exiting Isolation**. There are other reasons, not specific to Defence, which could allow anyone to leave Isolation:
3. **Compassionate Grounds**. A traveller may exit Isolation at Home on compassionate grounds, including to attend a funeral, of a member of their household or a close family member. The individual will need to provide data on entry to the UK and self-isolate in the normal way but is permitted to leave self-isolation in order to visit the individual who is the subject of the compassionate case or to attend the funeral. The Defence exemption is not required in this case.
4. **Medical Grounds**. A traveller may exit Isolation at Home in order to seek medical assistance, where this is required urgently or on the advice of a registered medical practitioner:
5. The scope includes accident and emergency departments[[22]](#footnote-23), dentists, opticians, audiologists, chiropodists, chiropractors, osteopaths, other medical or health practitioners and services relating to mental health. The Defence exemption is not required in this case.
6. Patients that are recovered to the UK via Aeromedical Evacuation will be managed on a bespoke basis by the Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC). The AECC is authorised to liaise with relevant authorities and provide exemptions as appropriate to the clinical need of the patient and the relative urgency of treatment.
7. **Weekly Commuters**. Where individuals can demonstrate a continued need to commute on a weekly basis to and from the UK may be exempted from Isolation at Home but are still required to complete a Passenger Locator Form. The Chain of Command / Line management should consider whether the role can be delivered without the need to commute. **This option is not available to travellers arriving into Scotland**.

**SECTION 5 - POST ARRIVAL TESTING**

1. All travellers arriving into the UK must undergo some form of post-arrival testing. The rules for entry into England are shown below. There may be differences in the Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Travellers should consult the relevant Devolved Administration’s website:
2. Travellers arriving into England from a Red List country and entering Managed Quarantine (Government or Defence) must conduct COVID tests at both day 2 and day 8 from their arrival, irrespective of vaccine status. HMG delivered MQS packages (inclusive of tests) are to be booked through the [dedicated online portal](https://quarantinehotelbookings.ctmportal.co.uk/). Defence MQS packages, for personnel arriving via military ports of entry, should be booked through respective TLB COVID-19 Teams[[23]](#footnote-24) or the QTOC.
3. Travellers arriving into England from a non-Red List country who are not fully vaccinated, must conduct COVID PCR tests at both day 2 and day 8 from their arrival.
4. Travellers arriving into England from a non-Red List country who are fully vaccinated, must conduct a COVID PCR test by day 2 from their arrival.
5. **Booking of Tests**. Tests can be booked as follows:
6. The default mechanism is that tests must be ordered through the QTOC using the process at Annex J of the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true). The Annex J process requires a CSV UTF-8 file to be submitted, via respective TLB COVID-19 Cells, to the QTOC. Tests booked through the QTOC are centrally funded.
7. In an emergency, individual tests can be booked through the civilian route using the [dedicated online portal](https://quarantinehotelbookings.ctmportal.co.uk/) following the guidance for “Green Routes only”. Tests booked use this portal will require payment to be made by the traveller and then reimbursed through JPA/HRMS.
8. NHS Test and trace LFD and private/third party purchased LFD tests cannot be used for international MOD duty travel, including PDT or Day 2 returnees from non-red list countries and are **not a valid travel test**. Any traveller mis-using an NHS Test and Trace LFD test would be committing an offence of not having a valid test package and may face enforcement action.
9. DHSC has directed that QTOC PCR Tests are not to be used for Visiting Forces, Foreign Dignitaries or VIPs. TLBs may, if they deem it necessary, fund Post Arrival Tests for Visiting Forces, Foreign Dignitaries or VIPs through a private testing provider.
10. **Effect of Exemptions on Post Arrival Testing**. The various exemptions afforded to Defence personnel may have an effect on the concomitant testing requirement, as follows:
11. **No effect.** The following exemptions have no effect on the requirement to conduct Post-Arrival Testing**:**
12. Pre-Departure Testing Exemption (Para 2.6).
13. Managed Quarantine – Home Quarantine Exemption (Para 4.12.a).
14. Personal Resilience Exemption (Para 4.15.b)
15. **Convalescent Positive travellers** (Para 2.5). UK personnel who are COVID Convalescent are **not** exempted from post-arrival testing. Government guidance is [here](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fguidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person%2Fguidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person&data=04%7C01%7CTimothy.Greaves663%40mod.gov.uk%7Ce628866a82c340f206d408d9b6770f88%7Cbe7760ed5953484bae95d0a16dfa09e5%7C0%7C0%7C637741444748535320%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=60Wzlv5TNbUkWL4sOY1SS65FpVZi%2BSjhl342MlFERjA%3D&reserved=0). If you have previously received a positive COVID-19 PCR test result you are not usually advised to be re-tested within 90 days of this result. However, you should have a PCR test within 90 days of a previous positive PCR test if:
* you develop any new symptoms of COVID-19
* you are a close contact of someone who has been identified as a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19
* you are required to take a PCR test upon entry into the UK

If you are tested within 90 days of a positive PCR test result for any of these 3 reasons, and the PCR test result is positive, you must stay at home, self-isolate and follow the [stay at home guidance.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

1. **Essential Defence Activity Exemption** (Para 4.12.b). Travellers returning to England using an exemption for essential Defence activity must undertake mandatory testing after arrival using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs)[[24]](#footnote-25). Fully vaccinated personnel must test on Day 2. Travellers who are not fully vaccinated will have to test on days 2,5 and 8. Tests must be taken no less than every 3 days for constant travellers (primarily for those travelling daily). Defence personnel (including contractors and VF) using this exemption can access tests as follows:
2. LFD tests for Essential Defence Activity Exemption Testing can be accessed via Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS) as part of Defence’s existing workplace testing process. If a new ATS is required, refer to [DAN 13](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/SitePages/Covid-19-defence-advice-notes.aspx) for guidance on the set-up process.
3. If an ATS is not accessible, some pharmacies in England will offer LFD kits to enable home self-test. If Defence personnel are unable to access LFDs from either an ATS or pharmacy there is an option to order LFD kits [online](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)[[25]](#footnote-26) for home self-tests.
4. A PCR test will be required if an LFD test returns a positive result, to allow for genomic sequencing this test must be delivered through the national testing programme. In the event of a positive LFD, individual must isolate for 10 days or on receipt of a negative PCR. The previous exemption from isolation is annulled. Tests can be booked on the gov.uk portal.
5. If a positive test was generated following Day 2 testing and has been followed up with a genomic sequencing PCR test as required, there is no need to undertake the Day 5 LFD or Day 8 LFD test, or if found after the Day 5 test was taken, there is no requirement to undertake Day 8 testing. The individual must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of their positive LFD.

**SECTION 6 – TEST TO RELEASE**

1. The Test-to-Release Scheme enables travellers isolating at home to end that isolation at 5 days, rather than the normal 10, providing they pay for an additional Day 5 test (and it is negative). Government guidance is [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-to-release-for-international-travel).
2. **Reimbursements of Costs**. Defence will reimburse costs incurred for a private COVID-19 test taken under the Test to Release scheme in the following circumstances:
	1. **Service Personnel.** SP serving overseas and any immediate family[[26]](#footnote-27) can reclaim the costs of one private COVID-19 test, per person, per duty journey. For duty journeys Defence will cover the testing costs for any other immediate family who are re-uniting with the SP. Costs are to be reclaimed via JPA using ‘Miscellaneous’ expense type then selecting ‘Medical, Dental, Opticians and Prescription fees’ from the dropdown menu. Should the need to isolate be removed, Defence will no longer cover the costs of testing. For Service Personnel based in the UK, and more detail, please refer to the AF Rem Allces Directed Letter[[27]](#footnote-28).
	2. **MOD Civil Servants.** Civilian staff travelling or serving overseas and any accompanied family can reclaim the costs of a one private COVID-19 test, per person, per duty journey. Costs are to be reclaimed via the ‘Miscellaneous’ expenses claim form Miscellaneous Expenses Claim HR Form 1108. You should record ‘COVID-19 Test’ in the justification box. Should the need to isolate be removed, defence will no longer cover the costs of testing.

**SECTION 7 – PROVING VACCINATION STATUS**

1. For the latest Government travel policy for vaccinated personnel please refer to the Government [website](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).
2. Defence personnel will be able to prove their vaccination status via the NHS COVID Pass. Details of how Defence personnel can obtain an NHS Covid Pass Certificate for travel and other events, can be found on DefNet ([here](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/SitePages/Vaccination-Certificates-for-Defence-Patients.aspx)), using the [NHS Online service](https://covid-status.service.nhsx.nhs.uk/). Please note, Defence personnel will not be able to use the NHS App, although the NHS Online service will give the required utility.
3. **Travellers unable to obtain an NHS COVID Vaccination Pass**. Travellers who were fully vaccinated outside of the NHS or Defence Medical Services and therefore cannot obtain a NHS COVID Pass can utilise the letter at Annex K of the [**DAN 18 Letter Appendix**](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/defnet/HOCS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B97E9428A-306C-48FC-9348-7290D6CA880A%7D&file=20211206-DAN_18_Letter_Appendix-OS.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) to prove their vaccination status. The letter must be signed by the chain of command of the serving member or the relevant contracting authority at at least OF5 level and presented to the UK Border Force alongside valid identification and proof of vaccination from the relevant host-nation. This provision can be used by:
* UK Service personnel and their dependants[[28]](#footnote-29)
* Crown Servants and their dependants.
* Defence contractors and their dependants who re ‘ordinarily resident’[[29]](#footnote-30) in the UK.

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| 1.1 | 4 Jun 20 | Initial Issue |
| Version history omitted |
| 7.3 | 26 Aug 21 | Removal of eligibility date for Home Quarantine exemption in line with renewed FCDO policy and update of Government MQS costs. |
| 7.4 | 10 Sept 21 | Change of DMQS location and introduction of guidance regarding ‘amber plus’ countries and contact details for TLB COVID Cells added. |
| 7.5 | 30 Sept 21 | Updated to reflect the new travel system, updated guidance for vessels travelling around the CTA and IW. |
| 8.0 | 12 Nov 21 | New format throughout – all annexes and exemption templates removed and included in a separate document (link in contents table). |
| 8.1 | 29 Nov 21 | Changes made to reflect updated travel regulation in line with Government legislation regarding Omicron VOC. |
| 8.2 | 6 Dec 21 | Clarification on testing requirements/ removal of exemption for Convalescent travellers in line with Government legislation following emergence of Omicron VOC. Inclusion of PDT requirements for all travellers as of 0400 7 Dec 21. |
| **8.2.1** | **8 Dec 21** | **Amendment to PDT timelines as per Gov.uk advice. Hyperlink update for Letter Appendix.** |

**VERSION HISTORY**

1. The most likely mitigation to international travel is to not travel and conduct the activity virtually. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Arriving from outside the common travel area (The United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. HMG has accepted that personnel travelling from the Falkland Islands or Ascension Island will not have to possess a negative test result. Personnel traveling from other locations should be prepared to justify that it was not reasonably practicable to obtain a qualifying test should check-in or immigration staff request it. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. An extremely compassionate case justifying travel at public expense immediately - [JSP 751 Part 1 Vol 3](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Documents/JSP751_Part1_Vol3.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Any person employed in the civil service of the Crown or any member of the naval, military or air forces of the Crown. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Visiting forces means any contingent or detachment of the forces of a country, being present in the United Kingdom (including United Kingdom territorial waters), on the invitation of Her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Armed Forces and Civil Servants. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Directed Letter – Allowance and Expense Arrangements in Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) dated 14 Jul 21, [Armed Forces Allowances and Expenses](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Pages/Armed-Forces-Allowances-and-Expenses.aspx). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. This includes travel conducted under School Children’s Visits regulations – find the latest guidance on [DefNet](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Pages/Armed-Forces-Allowances-and-Expenses.aspx) or the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tri-service-regulations-for-expenses-and-allowances-jsp-752) website. Otherwise, examples of duty travel can be found at JSP 752 Chapter 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Where appropriate, the websites of the Devolved Administrations (DA) should be checked for any differences. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Where appropriate, the websites of the Devolved Administrations (DA) should be checked for any differences. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Home Quarantine Exemption may not be applied to Visiting Forces or Contractors. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Authorised at 2 Star level, but can be delegated to 1 Star. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. [JSP 105](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Pages/JSP105.aspx) MOD Diplomatic Clearance Policy for Visits to the UK and Overseas Territories. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Including whilst awaiting D2 PCR results [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Any person employed in the civil service of the Crown or any member of the naval, military or air forces of the Crown. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. In exceptional cases, the Personnel Resilience Exemption can also be used for someone returning from an operational tour which would follow the same process as set out above; this would be for circumstances in which it was not possible for the household to self-isolate along with the returning SP and absolutely no alternative accommodation was a viable option. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. The Personnel Resilience Exemption can also be used to support eligible personnel whose Residence at Work address is in the UK and their immediate family’s Selected Place of Residence overseas. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. An established Long-Term Relationship which is recognised by Defence and on JPA either as LTR(E) or Emergency Contact or HMRS equivalent. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. If A&E is required, consider dialling 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. NAVY - NAVYOPS-COVID@mod.gov.uk; ARMY - FdArmy-COVID-CELL@mod.gov.uk; AIR - Air-COVID-19GMB@mod.gov.uk; QTOC – (COVID-MOD-QT-OpsCen@mod.gov.uk)

. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Passengers using DE are to use LFD vice PCR. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. At time of publication DHSC had not updated this site to cover Defence personnel, this is expected to be changed as the requirement comes into force. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Immediate Family is defined in [JSP752 Chapter 2 para. 02.0123](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Pages/Armed-Forces-Allowances-and-Expenses.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Directed Letter – Allowance and Expense Arrangements in Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) dated 14 Jul 21, [Armed Forces Allowances and Expenses](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/HOCS/Pages/Armed-Forces-Allowances-and-Expenses.aspx). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Under-18s are exempt from self-isolation on returning from an non-red list country. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. A person is ordinarily resident if they are living in the United Kingdom: **lawfully**, **voluntarily**, **for settled purposes as part of the regular order of their life for the time being**, whether for a long or short duration. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)