



## Submission to the Global Travel Taskforce

Business Travel -  
Critical for the UK economy, for UK Plc.  
for UK SMEs, for UK entrepreneurs, for  
the UK workforce and for the UK  
business travel eco system.

**The voice of  
business travel**

March 2021

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## Executive Summary

Business travel is a lifeblood of the UK economy and a key driver of global trade. It is a particularly important partner to the aviation industry and has unsurprisingly been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like so many other industries, business travel has seen firms collapse, revenues plummet and numerous skilled and hardworking employees made redundant. It has benefitted from some of the support made available by Government, but not to the same extent as leisure travel, which has been able to draw upon a more extensive pool of grants and business rates relief.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Covid-19 has been the single greatest calamity to befall the business travel industry in two decades, and it has been no easy task to weather the storm.

However, there is an end in sight. The success of the UK vaccination programme has shown the path back to normality and there remains great enthusiasm amongst both the industry and our corporate partners to resume business travel as soon as possible.

However, we cannot do it unilaterally. The Covid-19 pandemic has compelled Government to implement extensive travel restrictions to protect public wellbeing. These restrictions (while necessary) have curtailed our industry's ability to recover and it is now up to Government (advised by the Global Travel Taskforce) to reduce these restrictions when it becomes safe to do so.

The BTA is pleased to submit this document for consideration by the GTT ahead of its report back to Government. It outlines not only why business travel is vital to the UK economy and how it has been impacted by Covid-19, but also our recommendations for how business travel can safely begin again.

These recommendations include:

- Removal of all quarantine requirements for business travellers
- Implementation of global standards for testing and health certification
- Creation of business travel bi-lateral corridors
- Coverage of Red List countries under the FCDO "all but essential travel" advice
- A 72-hour window before any introduction of a country to a red list
- Recognition that the entire business travel supply chain should operate safely and in tandem

By themselves, none of these recommendations are a magic bullet. However, together, they represent a robust package of measures which can help to mitigate many of the risks associated with the spread of the virus: and thus allow business travel to restart and support both the UK's recovery and that of the wider global economy.

## The voice of business travel

### 1. Business Travel and the economy.

The Business Travel Association is the representative body for the UK business travel industry. Its member travel management companies (TMCs) account for over 90% of all business travel booked in the UK. In a typical year, this equates to 6.4 million journeys and 32 million transactions, which contribute £220 billion to UK GDP.

The UK business travel industry is an important driver of international trade and tourism. Business travellers are the people who make the deals and relationships which drive global trade, and will have an important role to play in making Britain a truly, global trading nation.

Business travellers are particularly important to the airline industry as they account for 15-20% of its customer base. On certain routes, they are twice as profitable as leisure travellers, who only enjoy low-cost airfares due to the contribution of business travel to UK aviation. Furthermore, airlines depend upon TMCs to distribute their product to business travellers, creating a symbiotic relationship between our two industries.

### 2. The role performed by Travel Management Companies (TMC)

A TMC is a travel consultant that fully manages the business travel requirements delegated by an individual, company or organisation to fundamentally save clients both time and money.

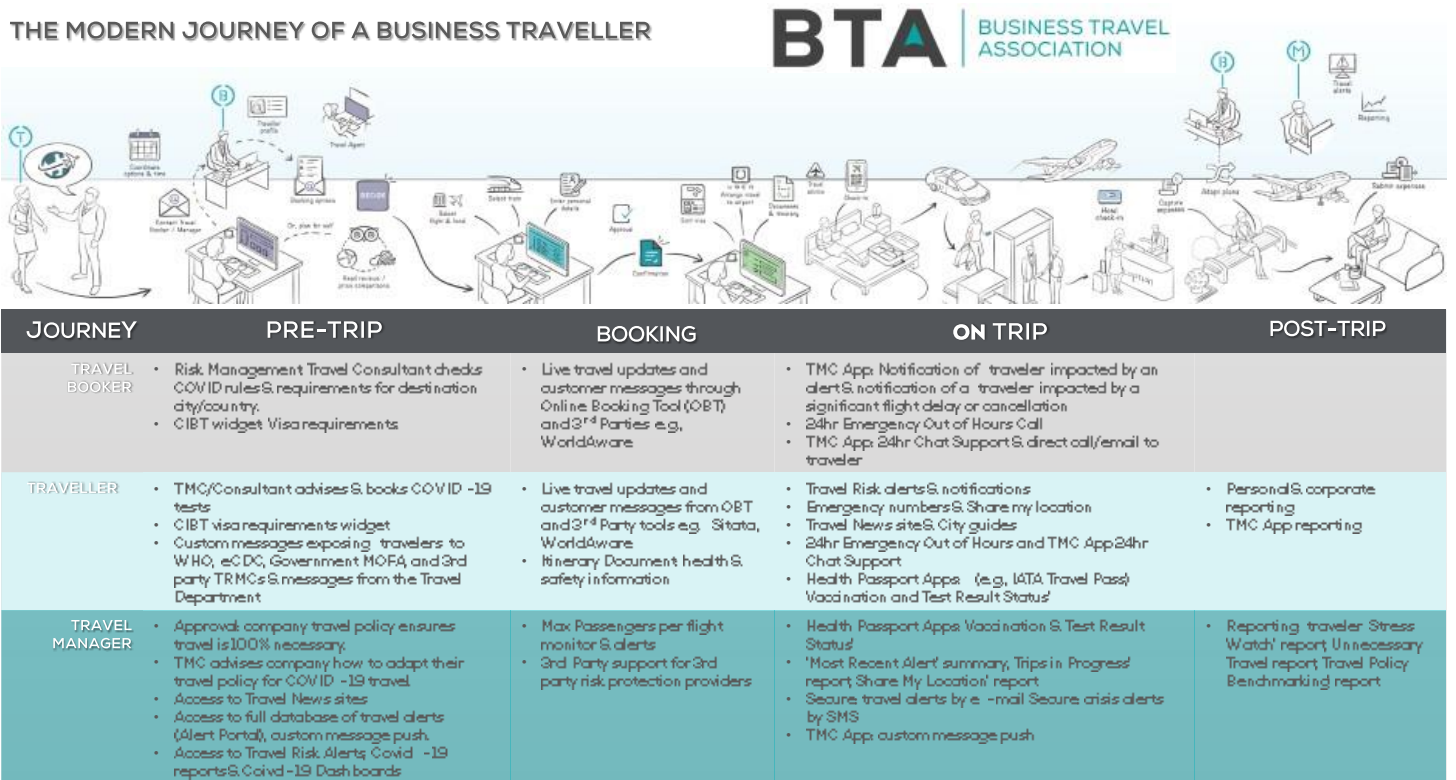
As well as making flight and hotel reservations, the TMC will offer many other ancillary services such as aircraft charter, parking and transfers, hotel accommodation, car hire, foreign exchange, group travel, insurance, marine and rail travel, passport and visa procurement, roadshow services and venue sourcing.

Company and individual profiles are safely stored ensuring all personal travel requests are adhered to within an overall travel policy with every booking.

Other management services will often include MIS reporting, account management, risk management, cost/expense management, traveller tracking/security and travel policy adherence.

Many TMCs will now also provide online self-booking tools whereby organisations can make their own flight choices, hotel reservations and bookings. Travel management companies will typically negotiate with vendors/suppliers to provide discounted fares and loyalty programmes.

The graphic below is designed to illustrate the journey of an average managed business traveller.



### 3. Why is business travel important?

There is an incorrect perception that business travel is the fiefdom of jet setting executives who work in The City or on Wall Street. This could not be further from the truth. Business travel takes many different forms and touches upon different professions, roles, and industries. These include humanitarian aid workers, construction workers, merchant seamen, oil and gas workers, engineers, medical researchers, students, academics, architects, buyers, salespeople, lawyers, entertainers, sportsmen & women, politicians...as well as bankers and top executives.

With a few exemptions, the global economy has been effectively grounded from travelling for over a year. The BTA recognises that video conferencing will continue to play a significant role in the future. However, there will always be a need for business travel to ensure that workers can be physically on site when required, and to develop those human relationships which are so essential when conducting business.

We have explained that £220bn is added to UK GDP from the business travel trips originating in the UK, and why we need a road map to restore confidence and re-ignite our industry. However, it is important to emphasise that business travel has a very different footprint compared to that of leisure travel with higher volumes of shorter duration trips, undertaken by experienced travellers under strict corporate duty of care policies. To illustrate this, there were nearly 9 million business trips<sup>1</sup> originating from the UK in 2019. These resulted in around 50 million overnight stays<sup>2</sup> with over half of these being for less than three nights.

<sup>1</sup> Statista – Business Travel in the United Kingdom  
<sup>2</sup> Statista – Business Travel in the United Kingdom

Business travel is undoubtedly a necessity for our economy and travel management companies have a vital role in ensuring that they occur in a safe and seamless way. The business travel industry therefore stands ready to work with Government to facilitate the return of global business travel in a way that is controlled and continues to protect public wellbeing.

## 4. The Impact of Covid-19

The business travel sector has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Passenger demand has plummeted, whilst the ever-changing nature of travel corridors, the accompanying quarantine period, as well as the slow introduction of testing at airports have all presented huge barriers to resuming business travel. As a result, Travel Management Companies (TMCs) have seen a collapse in revenue of up to 90%: representing a crippling blow to our industry.

The rollout of business support measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) have been welcomed by the sector and helped to provide TMCs with some relief. However, with the widespread collapse of corporate travel programmes, these schemes have not been enough to prevent significant redundancies: now estimated to be 60 per cent of our pre-COVID workforce.

Research conducted in partnership with the Department for Transport has revealed that the demand to resume business travel amongst corporate buyers does still exist – particularly for short haul and domestic travel. However, business travellers require confidence and certainty above all else, and they are reluctant to restart travel programmes whilst current measures persist.

## 5. Critical factors to restoring business travel confidence, the UK economy and building a global Britain

BTA Key Asks:



Removal of all quarantine requirements for business travellers.



Low-cost rapid testing on departure and arrival (if requirement remains)



Introduction of digital health certification apps

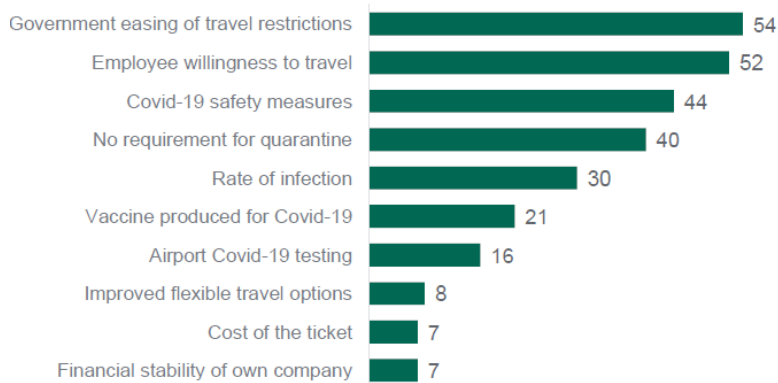


Job specific exemptions

Business travel will play a critical part in the recovery of the both the UK and the wider global economy. However, the requirements of the UK business traveller differ significantly from those of holiday makers. It is important that the Government factors this into in its plans to re-start international travel.

The research in partnership with the Department for Transport gives clear indicators of what British business needs to return to business travel. This includes an easing of restrictions, a robust testing regime and a removal of quarantine. The chart<sup>3</sup> below is from a survey undertaken in October 2020 and clearly highlights the concerns of travel restrictions to this community.

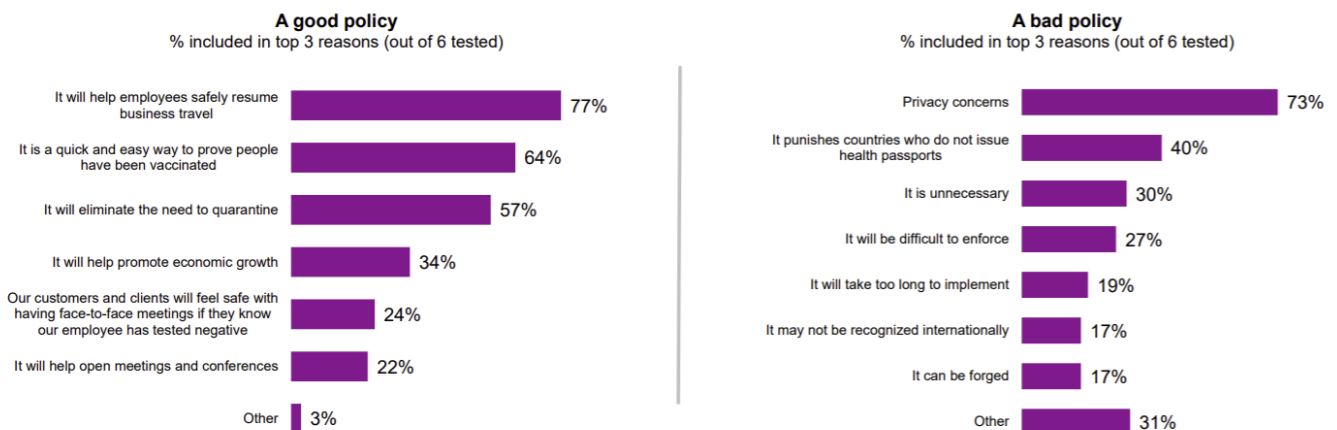
**Aspects that businesses will consider important when planning future air travel (%).**  
 N=300. Top 10 shown, all others were mentioned by <5% of businesses.



The use of digital health certification apps has risen to become a key factor that will help to restore confidence amongst corporations to send employees on business trips and to get the global economy turning again. The chart<sup>4</sup> below clearly demonstrates the overwhelming view of the business travel community on the positive impact that internationally accepted digital certification will have.

The BTA recognises that the nationwide vaccination programme has been a great success and shone a light at the end of what has been a very dark tunnel. However, the business travel industry and economy cannot wait for the entire UK population to be vaccinated before they can restart: partly because many business travellers will be in the last groups to be vaccinated – both in the UK and other countries.

**Traveller health verification – is it a good or a bad thing?**



*“Currently, millennials – ages 18-to-34 – account for about one-third of all spending on business travel, the report estimated, with most of that (90 per cent) attributable to older (ages 24-34) travellers.”<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> DFT survey in conjunction with the BTA Oct 2020

<sup>4</sup> GBTA global survey of business travel buyers & suppliers March 2021

<sup>5</sup> Boston Consulting Group’s Centre for Consumer and Customer Insight 2017



The BTA welcomed the introduction of the business travel exemption in December 2020. This exemption was a direct result of our previous engagement with the GTT. However, we strongly feel that **this exemption must now be widened beyond the present, highly restrictive criteria, to include all business travel activity.**

We appreciate that there is an overwhelming need to manage passenger flows to help safeguard public health against new variants of Covid-19. We therefore recommend that **all business travellers exempt from quarantine are required to book through a TMC**, whose expertise is well suited to mitigating many of the risks associated with Covid-19 transmission.

We view the [Safe Travel Singapore Initiative](#) for business travellers as a forward-thinking approach, allowing business travel to operate under strictly controlled conditions to certain destinations.

Our TMCs are well placed to coordinate and manage travel every step of the way to ensure that Government protocols are followed and risk is mitigated. TMCs already manage and track travellers on behalf of corporate companies for duty of care reasons, and this extension to managing the risk on behalf of Government, companies and individuals seems a natural progression of this role.

We believe that all business travel booked through a recommended TMC can be managed in this way. However, we do believe that some professions which require people to travel for their work should take priority. We therefore propose that the **following roles/professions should be given an exemption** as soon as it is feasibly safe to do so. It should be noted that many of these professions, listed below, have previously been exempt from quarantine rules.

- BTA Academic travel (e.g. research into Covid-19 treatments etc).
- BTA Faith-based travel (e.g. spiritual healing)
- BTA Humanitarian (material assistance to those in dire need),
- BTA Journalists, essential film/tv production crew
- BTA Loss adjusters (including international representation)
- BTA Musicians, performers, and crews to set-up venues
- BTA Oil & Gas
- BTA Power generation/Maintenance (broader than just Oil & Gas)
- BTA Security
- BTA Senior business executives
- BTA Ships crews
- BTA Sports teams



#### Faces of Business Travel

“Business travel is critical for our company. We regularly need to travel to meet clients and market our fleet of rigs. Despite being based in Scotland, much of our work is in the US, South America, Africa and the Far East. More importantly for us is moving our crews around the world to wherever our rigs might be operating.

Most of our crews live in the UK and in 2019, we had 13,160 air transactions. This reduced in 2020 to 6935 air transactions due to the coronavirus pandemic, but clearly travel to get our personnel to their work was critical for the survival of our company.”

Erik Ronsberg, CEO Stena Drilling Ltd

## 6. Testing & international standards

### BTA Key asks



Business Trips under 3 days to require single PCR test 72 hours before departure. No quarantine unless travelling from a red list country.



Introduction of cost effective rapid flow tests on departure and removal of quarantine for business travellers



Uk to lead International testing standards implementation

The BTA and the business traveller community believe that testing must play an integral part in the re-opening of international business travel.

Given the improvement in efficacy of rapid lateral flow tests – and their successful rollout for schoolchildren and teachers – we argue that **there is now a clear path for this type of testing to be introduced for international travellers.** The managed nature of the business travel industry will allow a structured and controlled environment that will help to ensure accuracy and safety.

This – alongside the robust traveller tracking measures provided by TMCs – will help to mitigate the risk of importation of new variants as much as possible.

The BTA asks that the UK government lead the international community to implement global standards on testing and health certification. A global approach will be the foundation of a return to confidence for business travellers.

## 7. Business travel bi-lateral corridors

### BTA Key asks



In a staged re-opening business travel specific bilateral corridors

Business travel effectively stopped in March 2020 and remains dormant with exceptions for a small number of key workers who are still travelling internationally. Unlike our leisure travel industry colleagues, we



experienced no small boost in the summer of 2020 as the opening of air corridors did not provide for business travel destinations.

Business travel cannot be forgotten again and the GTT must consider bi-lateral corridors that allow for business travel to recommence safely.




These corridors should require no quarantine at either end of the route with rapid testing before departure being the agreed risk mitigation strategy.

The crucial destinations and trade routes that should be included in our proposed business travel corridors are as follows:

Long Haul: UK to	Short haul: UK to
USA	Germany
Hong Kong	France
Singapore	Switzerland
UAE	Spain
China	The Netherlands

## 8. Frictionless Travel

### BTA Key asks

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 An adequately resourced Border Force
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 Digital exit & entry documentation
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 Minimum of 72 hour advance warning of countries being added to the red list

Corporates and their employees require frictionless travel to restart the global economy and the GTT must recognise this in its recommendations to Government. The corporate buyer community has made it clear that, under their duty of care requirements, they do not wish to see their employees trapped in airport queues for hours, placed under hotel quarantine or exposed to any additional complications or barriers when travelling for work.

The BTA asks the GTT to ensure that the UK border is sufficiently manned – with the appropriate technology solutions in place – to overcome some of the severe delays which have been experienced at UK borders. These unnecessary delays will only serve to discourage the resumption of business travel and solutions should be found to mitigate their impact.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, business travellers, in the main, are experienced travellers who operate under strict corporate travel policies that are managed closely by TMCs. Business travellers are well versed in using travel apps to make their journey as frictionless as possible and TMCs are already working closely with their customers to ensure that travellers arrive at the airport 'travel ready' with the correct documentation and tests.

The BTA appreciates that Covid-19 is a fast-moving public health emergency and decisions have to be made quickly. However, business travellers require some degree of notice: particularly when additional countries are added to the red list. Without this confidence will not be achieved and business travel will remain stagnant. The BTA asks that the GTT agree a 72-hour window before any implementation of a country to a red list. This will allow for corporates to evacuate employees, that are not under an exemption, ahead of hotel quarantine being implemented.

## 9. FCDO advice

### BTA Key asks



A recurring theme which TMCs have encountered when talking to corporate customers is the need for FCDO advice to return to its original format whereby it recommends against all but essential travel for geopolitical and non-Covid related health risks.

As we establish a road map to recovery, business travellers need to see a degree of normality returning as we find a way to live and work alongside Covid-19, which will likely be with us for many years to come.

The BTA suggests that Red List countries are covered under "all but essential travel" advice, whilst other countries are covered under advisories only. This is equally important from both travel insurance and corporate duty of care perspectives.

In addition, FCDO travel advice in regards to Covid-19, should become more targeted – particularly when applied to very large countries such as the United States – and ensure this advice addresses the risk to travellers in very specific destinations.

We also ask that the Government review its existing advice against travel in specific sectors, such as business travel, in light of the rapidly improving medical situation and vaccine rollout.

## 10. Roadmap

Air travel is a significant part of international business travel, but it is not the only part of the eco-system that needs to be running securely for corporate travellers to confidently return to taking business trips. It is important that the GTT recognises the need for the entire business travel supply chain to be operating safely and in tandem with each other.

TMCs manage the total travel journey for their customers and the GTT needs to understand the process to a managed return to all types of business travel. To help the GTT understand the strategy, requirements, and cost behind each of the factors involved in business travel we have produced the following roadmaps.

### International air

	Tier 4 or 12 April to 17 May	Tier 2 or 18 May to 21 June	No Tier or 22 June to December	Assumptions
Type of work travel	Essential travel, non-home & project workers, very limited SME	Non-home workers, increasing SME & Pharma, Retail	Non-home workers, SME, Retail, Pharma. Limited large corporates	FCDO advice is lifted in line with re-opening of travel corridors
Level of restrictions	<b>Travel for essential work</b>	<b>Limited re-opening of travel corridors and lifting FCDO advice. Red list reduced</b>	<b>All UK offices reopen late June onwards. Increase travel corridors inc. Europe, NY &amp; key US states. No hotel quarantine</b>	Reducing/removing Red List countries improves business travel confidence
Type of Testing	Red list: PCR testing x 3 (pre-depart, travel test package) Amber list: PCR testing x 4 (pre-dept, travel test pack, test to release day 5)	PCR testing x 4 (pre-departure, travel test package, test to release day 5)	Rapid tests at airports, city centres (even home tests?) to increase convenience and reduce cost plus test certificates	Reopening of offices and switch to rapid tests (in place of PCR tests) will be the main triggers to restart business travel recovery
Key enablers	<b>Removal of hotel quarantine</b>	<b>Change in Gov policy to allow more work travel and some travel corridors</b>	<b>Rapid tests replaces PCR testing reducing cost. UK offices able to reopen. Vaccine/test certificates</b>	International standards for vaccine/test certificates which work with app technology like IATA travel pass
Cost of testing & restrictions	Red list: £2,110 PCR test pre-dept, hotel quarantine + travel test package. 10 lost business days Amber list: £510 4 PCR tests (pre-dept, travel test kit + test to release). Up to 6 lost business days	£510. Up to 6 days lost business time	£40. 0 lost business days unless positive test	Wearing of masks, social distancing (where possible) and use of hand sanitiser continues High cleaning regimes by airports and airlines continues

### Accommodation

Step 1-2 Mar 8 – 12 <sup>th</sup> April	Step 3 12 April to 17 May	Step 4 17 May - 21 June onwards
Accommodation only.	Accommodation open to Essential Business Travellers	All Accommodation open to all travellers.
Essential business travel.	Hospitality in line with government guidelines;	All hospitality and restaurants open.
No/limited room service Hospitality	Gyms, outdoor hospitality	
<b>Guidelines at all levels</b>	<b>Guidelines at all levels</b>	<b>Guidelines at all levels</b>
• Hotels to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA published regulations	• Venues to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA (AIM Secure) published regulations	• Venues to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA published regulations
Social distancing, face covering in public places Temperature checks	Social distancing, face covering in public places Temperature checks	

#### Further reference

MIA Guidelines (AIM Secure)  
[https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Roadmap\\_to\\_reopening\\_\(Version\\_4\).pdf](https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Roadmap_to_reopening_(Version_4).pdf)  
 Completion of Risk Assessment  
<https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources>  
 Venue contracts to remain flexible  
[https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Custard/Version\\_2\\_-\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_contracts.pdf](https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Custard/Version_2_-_Guidelines_for_contracts.pdf)  
 LFT – testing at all levels until 'vaccine passport/ certificate' currently in government debate

## Meetings and events

<p><b>Tier 4 or April &amp; May</b> Revert to max 30 delegates for business meetings only <b>Guidelines at all levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Venues to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA published regulations</li> <li><b>LFT to be taken on arrival</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tier 2 or June to September</b> Maximum 100 delegates for business meetings only <b>Guidelines at all levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Venues to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA (AIM Secure) published regulations</li> <li><b>LFT to be taken on arrival</b></li> <li>Meetings and Event over 30 delegates, separate Covid Specific Risk Assessment carried out.</li> </ul>	<p><b>No Tier or September to December 2021</b> Revert to maximum of 50% capacity, max 1000 delegates for business meetings Private Dining for up to 100 delegates <b>Guidelines at all levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Venues to adhere to safety measures in line with Gov't approved MIA published regulations</li> <li><b>LFT to be taken on arrival</b></li> <li>Meetings and Event over 30 delegates, separate Covid Specific Risk Assessment carried out.</li> </ul>
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### Further reference

MIA Guidelines (AIM Secure) [https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Roadmap\\_to\\_reopening\\_\(Version\\_4\).pdf](https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Roadmap_to_reopening_(Version_4).pdf)  
 Completion of Risk Assessment  
<https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources>  
 Venue contracts to remain flexible  
[https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Custard/Version\\_2\\_-\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_contracts.pdf](https://www.mia-uk.org/write/MediaUploads/Custard/Version_2_-_Guidelines_for_contracts.pdf)  
 LFT – testing at all levels until 'vaccine passport/ certificate'

## Domestic Rail

<p><b>Tier 4 or 12 April to 17 May</b></p> <p>Essential travel non-home &amp; project work. Limited SME &amp; Retail.</p> <p><b>Essential travel widened to include travel for work and to conduct business, most offices remain closed</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Removal of Do Not Travel message – Change in Policy</b></p> <p>£0</p>	<p><b>Tier 2 or 18 May to 21 June</b></p> <p>Non-home workers, increased SME &amp; retail</p> <p><b>Increased travel for work but larger offices remain closed with staff working remotely.</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Change in Travel Message &amp; Policy, encouragement to travel.</b></p> <p>£0</p>	<p><b>No Tier or 22 June onwards</b></p> <p>Full travel for work including large corporates (offices now fully reopen)</p> <p><b>All UK offices reopened</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Change in Gov policy – Britain reopen for business. Flexible season tickets to support the reopening of offices.</b></p> <p>£0</p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>We anticipate that testing will not be necessary to travel domestically by Rail but that practice of social distancing onboard will remain and therefore so should the Rail safety pledge campaign &amp; measures where possible to social distance on-board.</p> <p>Wearing of masks, social distancing on-board (where possible) and use of hand sanitiser continues.</p> <p>High cleaning regimes at both stations and on-board continues.</p>
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## Ground Transportation

<p><b>Tier 4 or 12 April to 17 May</b></p> <p>Essential travel, non-home &amp; project workers, limited SME &amp; Retail</p> <p><b>Travel for essential work</b></p> <p><b>None - although most ground transport products are linked to International travel whereby PCR testing is required.</b></p> <p><b>Removal of Hotel Quarantine</b></p> <p>Included as part of overall International trip (not required domestically).</p>	<p><b>Tier 2 or 18 May to 21 June</b></p> <p>Non-home workers, increasing SME &amp; Pharma, Retail</p> <p><b>Limited re-opening of travel corridors and lifting FCDO advice. Red list reduced</b></p> <p><b>None - although most ground transport products are linked to International travel whereby PCR testing is required.</b></p> <p><b>Reopening air corridors and easing of FCDO advice</b></p> <p>Included as part of overall International trip (not required domestically).</p>	<p><b>No Tier or 22 June to December</b></p> <p>Non-home workers, SME, Retail, Pharma. Limited large corporates</p> <p><b>All UK offices reopen late June onwards.</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Increased travel corridors to support business travel.</b></p> <p>Included as part of overall International trip (not required domestically).</p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>Both Car Rental companies and wider ground transportation companies throughout the pandemic have implemented safety pledges and significantly enhanced cleaning measures.</p> <p>Wearing of masks, social distancing (where possible) and use of hand sanitiser continues</p> <p>High cleaning regimes at the end of every rental / journey continues.</p>
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## 11. Summary

Business travel must be recognised by the GTT and the government as a separate, unique and vital stream within the travel industry.

Business travel is a lifeblood of the UK economy and it has been in hibernation for twelve months with little sign of any recovery. Whilst it is likely that passenger volumes will take a long time to recover to pre-Covid levels, a vibrant domestic and international business travel industry will be an integral part of Britain's recovery and have an important role to play in creating a truly Global Britain.

Government must treat business travel as the necessity that it is, rather than a nice to have. TMCs are specialised professional services companies that work with corporates from SMEs to multinational organisations in delivering a significant contribution to the UK's GDP.

We therefore ask that the GTT works with the business travel industry to deliver a safe and secure return to business travel. This will allow the return of prosperity to our country, its economy, its people, and its global reputation.

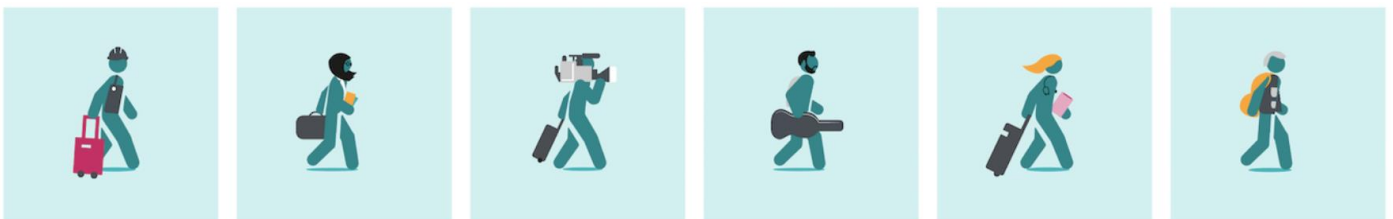
### Definition of 'business trip'

## business trip in British English

( ' bɪznɪs trɪp )

**NOUN**

a [journey](#) made [somewhere](#) and back again for business purposes in one's [working capacity](#)



The Many Faces of Business Travel