

Mobility: Immigration alert

January 2023



United Kingdom

New COVID-19 testing requirements for travelers arriving from China Mainland

Executive summary

Effective 5 January 2023, individuals traveling to England by air from China Mainland must test negative for COVID-19 no more than two days prior to their departure, irrespective of their nationality or COVID-19 vaccination status. Effective 8 January 2023, a sample of travelers aged 18 and above arriving in England from China Mainland will be subject to voluntary COVID-19 testing on arrival in England.

Key developments

Individuals aged 12 and above whose travel originates in China Mainland and who seek admission to England on or after 12:01 a.m. local UK time on 5 January 2023 must take a lateral flow or polymerase chain reaction COVID-19 test taken no more than two days prior to boarding their flights, and test negative, to enter England. Those who fail to carry such documentation will not be permitted to board their flight.

The negative COVID-19 test result must be in English, French or Spanish and can be provided in the form of a printed document, an email or a text message on the traveler's phone. It must include the passenger's name, date of birth, the date of the test, the name of the test provider and their contact details, and confirmation of the type of test taken. A pre-departure test provided by the National Health Service (NHS) will not be accepted.

These new requirements apply to all passengers on direct and indirect flights originating in China Mainland, irrespective of whether England is their final destination or simply a transit point en route to another destination.

In addition, starting on 8 January 2023, individuals aged 18 and above traveling to England from China Mainland will be invited to undergo voluntary COVID-19 testing on arrival in England (at Heathrow Airport only).

Previously, the UK had eliminated COVID-19 pre-travel and post-arrival testing requirements for all travelers, irrespective of their nationality and the location where their travel originated.

The UK government is working with the authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to implement these requirements across the entirety of the UK.

Impact on employers

Employers may inform impacted employees traveling from China Mainland of the [new requirements](#) to avoid delays relating to travel to England on or after 5 January 2023.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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