

UK to end quarantine for travelers from 'low-risk' countries

3 July 2020, by Jill Lawless



Drinkers stand within rings marked on the grass to maintain their social distance outside a bar in Canary Wharf, East London as further coronavirus lockdown restrictions are lifted in England, on Wednesday, July 1, 2020. (Victoria Jones/PA via AP)

The British government said Friday it is scrapping a 14-day quarantine rule for arrivals from a number of countries deemed "lower risk" for the coronavirus, including France, Spain, Germany and Italy.

The change takes effect July 10, just over a month after the U.K. began requiring international arrivals to self-isolate for two weeks. The full list of exempted countries will be announced later Friday, the government said. It is considered unlikely the United States, which has the highest number of [coronavirus](#) cases and deaths in the world, will be among them.

On Saturday, the government will also exempt several countries from its advice against overseas travel, meaning U.K. tourists can once again head abroad on vacation.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the

changes are "good news for British people and great news for British businesses." But he stressed that the government could re-impose quarantine restrictions "in countries we are reconnecting with."

The changes announced apply only to England, a sign of friction between Prime Minister Boris Johnson's central government and semi-autonomous administrations in the rest of the U.K.—Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been particularly critical of Johnson's approach to easing coronavirus lockdown measures and has taken a more cautious approach.



A Doorman wearing a mask outside Harrods department store opens the door for customers in London, Wednesday, July 1, 2020. Companies linked to hospitality and travel in Britain are shedding thousands of jobs as the longer term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic take hold, choosing to slim down for survival rather than await potential government handouts. Even stalwarts such as British shopping icon Harrods reportedly drew plans for 700 cuts, blamed in part on a lack of tourists. (AP Photo/Alastair Grant)

The British [government](#) also made the announcement without securing reciprocal agreements that British travelers will not face quarantines. The Department for Transport said its "expectation is that a number of the exempted countries will also not require arrivals from the U.K. to self-isolate."

Britain has the highest COVID-19 toll in Europe, with almost 44,000 confirmed deaths. The country is gradually emerging from a nationwide lockdown imposed in March, with bars, restaurants and hairdressers allowed to reopen in England on Saturday.

The European Union re-opened its borders this week to people from 14 countries including Canada, Japan, South Korea and Morocco—but not the U.S.

Britain left the EU on Jan. 31 but continues to be bound by its rules during a transition period that lasts until the end of the year.

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