



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: SO17016

19 April 2021

Dear Grant,

**Re: Red list travel ban countries**

Following today's addition of India to the list of countries from which entry to the UK is banned, I am writing to ask you to (a) publish the assessment criteria for the red travel list ban countries and (b) outline why, if the limitation of travel from certain countries is integral to public safety, the implementation of such bans is not immediate.

Rigorous controls at the borders give us time to continue the vaccine roll-out which has been extremely successful in the hands of the NHS staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly. Furthermore it prevents further domestic infection by reducing the transmission of the virus and its new variants in the UK by limiting human mobility and social contact.

While I am supportive of travel bans, I urge you to publish the assessment criteria for the red travel list ban countries. The publication of this criteria is integral to protecting public health and ensuring parliamentary scrutiny over decisions to place countries on this list. The pandemic's portrayal as a security threat has understandably ushered in changes like travel embargos and internal mobility controls. However, it is also of paramount importance that such measures are not employed for ends beyond those they are meant to serve – that is, safeguarding public health.

In addition, I ask you to shed light on the time frames for implementation of red travel list bans. We have now lived with the coronavirus pandemic for over a year, yet the Conservative Government has time and again been too slow to act. In many cases this failure to act has caused the virus to spread further and faster, significantly adding to the death toll in this country.

The delay of the implementation of the restrictions on travel to and from India until 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 04:00 is simply nonsensical. If travel from countries added to the red list is deemed as unsafe, it seems logical that these bans are implemented immediately.

In light of this, I would be grateful if you could consider the merits of (a) publishing the assessment criteria for the red travel list ban countries and (b) shortening the time between the announcement of a ban and its implementation.

I look forward to a swift response.

Yours sincerely,

*Sarah Olney*

Sarah Olney  
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park