

Coronavirus – Scotland takes steps to limit travel from South America

A new strain of the coronavirus has been identified in Brazil and The Scottish Government has reacted by imposing additional restrictions on all arrivals from South America.

The measures will come into effect at 4am on Friday morning. Anyone who has been in any of the South American countries which are listed below must isolate along with all members of their household.

The list of countries to which this applies is

- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- French Guiana
- Guyana
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Suriname
- Uruguay and Venezuela

From **4.00am on Friday 15 January** the UK Government has introduced a travel ban on all non-British and Irish

nationals, visa holders and permanent residents who arrive in the UK from the above countries and territories. British and Irish nationals, visa holders and permanent residents are still required to isolate with their households for 10 days.

And in addition to the South American countries the new rule will also apply to Portugal, including Azores and Madeira, Panama and Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) and British Overseas Territory of the Falkland Islands.

Qatar and the Caribbean islands of Aruba and Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba are also removed from the country exemption list at the same time, meaning that any travellers arriving from these countries will be required to self isolate for 10 days.

The government has already put in place the same restrictions – a requirement to self isolate for ten days – for anyone arriving here from Denmark or South Africa. This is also applicable from 4.00am on Friday morning.

Pre-departure testing will now come into effect on Monday 18 January as a result of an announcement by the UK Government. This will allow airlines and passengers additional time to prepare.

Transport Secretary Michael Matheson said: “It is important that everyone follows the regulations that mean any travel must be for an essential purpose. Very few people should be travelling internationally, and then only for a genuinely essential reason.

“The emergence of concerning variants identified in Brazil, as well as South Africa and Denmark in recent months, means we must think carefully about restrictions on international travel.

“At this early stage of vaccine rollout, and with case rates at high levels across the UK, it is important we take the

right steps to prevent importing new strains that can increase transmission or undermine the vaccine in Scotland. We are in close discussion with other administrations about additional measures we can put in place, including the timing of the introduction of pre-departure testing.”