



Department for Transport

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

E-Mail: permanentsecretaries@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

06 June 2022

From the Second Permanent Secretary

Meg Hillier MP

Chair

Public Accounts Committee

[Sent via email]

Dear Chair,

Managing cross-border travel during the COVID-19 pandemic

Thank you for inviting me to speak to the Committee on 23 May. I was grateful for the opportunity to discuss the NAO's report on Managing cross-border travel during the COVID-19 pandemic and the wide range of work undertaken by the Department for Transport.

I am writing to correct the record on border health measures for hauliers and to provide a clarification on the scope of research produced by Oxera Consulting in conjunction with Edge Health.

First, between February 2021 and November 2021 hauliers were required to complete the passenger locator form (PLF) and undertake bespoke testing. However, hauliers were not required to undertake a pre-departure test to help reduce friction at the border and protect critical supply chains for essential goods and services.

Second, as noted during the hearing, over the course of the pandemic some UK airports commissioned research from private sector consultants, including Oxera Consulting and Edge Health, to better understand the impact of COVID-19. While the analysis and modelling work produced by Oxera Consulting and Edge Health initially focussed on infection rates and the potential for onward infection from passengers travelling to the UK, I would like to clarify that in further work this modelling also considered the potential impacts from variants of concern. The ways in which international travel measures help delay and reduce the impact of a new variant, as set out in the Oxera Consulting and Edge Health research, are in line with the government's understanding of the impact of international travel measures. However, the Oxera Consulting and Edge Health published modelling does not capture the full range of factors associated with the ingress of a variant of concern from international travellers into the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Davies CB
Second Permanent Secretary