

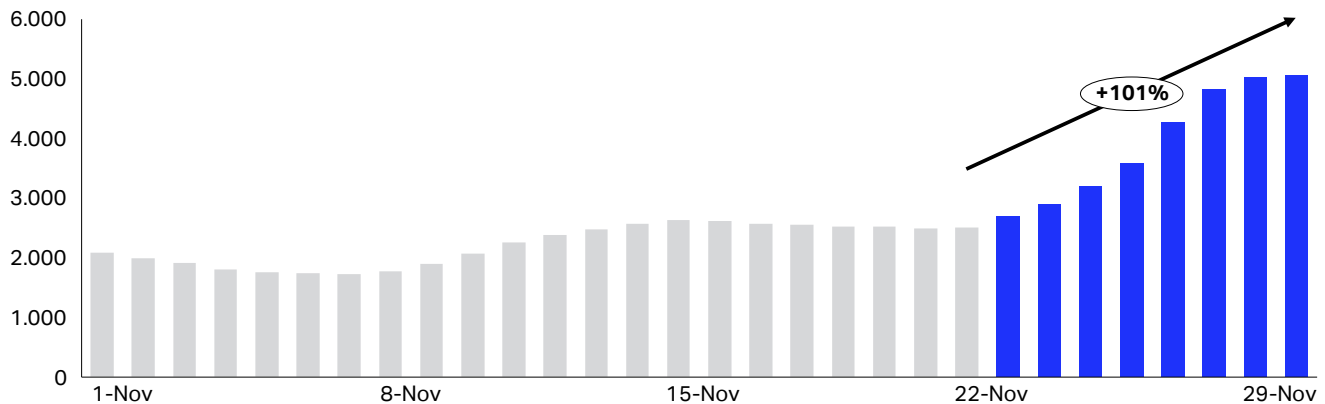


IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

11 December 2020

Shortening quarantine from 14 to 5 days boosts UK bookings

Passenger bookings between the UK and the US before and after announcement of 'Test to release' policy on 23 Nov (7-day moving average)



Source: IATA Economics analysis based on data from DDS

- For several months, the UK required passengers arriving from countries with high COVID-19 infection rates to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in the UK. Passengers were only exempted if they arrived from a country that appeared in the list of 'travel corridor' countries, a list regularly updated by UK government.
- In late November, the UK replaced its quarantine policy with the new 'Test to release' policy. Under this new framework, arriving passengers may stop self-isolating if they test negative 5 days after entry into the UK. The 'Test to release' policy will come into effect on 15th December but its positive impact can already be seen on airline bookings. Bookings from countries outside of the travel corridor increased by 45% in the week following the announcement of the new policy. The largest number (about 15%) of these bookings were for travel from the US, followed by Pakistan, Spain, India and France as the top origin countries. On US-UK routes, bookings doubled within a week.
- This experience strengthens the growing body of evidence that there continues to be demand for travel despite the pandemic, however that demand is stifled by travel restrictions such as quarantine measures. We see sudden spikes in bookings each time a government announces that quarantine restrictions are dropped for a certain country; and bookings plummeting when a country is added to the quarantine list. We are also seeing a larger-scale gradual recovery of the Latin American air transport markets since the majority of countries dropped quarantine requirements and allows entry of travellers if they carry a negative COVID-19 test.
- IATA continues to encourage governments to ease travel restrictions, which are disproportionate compared to the public health risk that travellers represent. The European Aviation Safety Agency has also recently concluded that *"[a]vailable evidence does not support quarantine and testing of travellers as an effective public health measure to substantially reduce overall transmission in the general population, except when a country has reduced transmission levels to almost zero. [...] A pre-flight test could reduce the possibility of transmission during travel, especially when departure is from a country or an area with very high incidence rates."*

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