

Britain announces anti-Ebola screening at airports, rail hubs

October 9 2014

Britain on Thursday said it would start screening travellers coming from Ebola-hit parts of west Africa at Heathrow and Gatwick airports and on Eurostar trains from Belgium and France.

"Enhanced screening will initially be implemented at London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports and Eurostar terminals," the [government](#) said in a statement.

It said this would include researching passengers' recent travel history "as well as a possible medical assessment, conducted by trained medical personnel rather than border force staff".

"These measures will help to improve our ability to detect and isolate Ebola cases," it said, adding: "It is important to remember that the overall risk to the public in the UK continues to be very low".

The government said this would offer "an additional level of protection" on top of screening of passengers boarding planes in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"However, it is important to stress that given the nature of this disease, no system could offer 100 percent protection from non-symptomatic cases," it added.

The announcement follows public pressure in the wake of the Ebola case in Spain. The government had dismissed screening in a statement on

Tuesday.

"This would require the UK to screen every returning traveller, as people could return to the UK from an affected country through any port of entry. This would be huge numbers of low risk people," it said at the time.

But Keith Vaz, head of the parliament's home affairs select committee, said: "I think targeted [screening](#) would help and if it discovers just one case it would make a huge difference.

"We don't want to be in a position like they are in Spain where one case has caused huge distress," he said.

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