

**Overseas Travel Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect international travel.

From **17 May 2021**, the ‘Stay in the UK’ regulation ceased, and international travel was allowed to restart, governed by a new traffic light system (Red, amber, green list). Please note that any country may further restrict travel or bring in new rules at short notice, for example due to a new COVID-19 variant.No travel is therefore risk-free, and many countries have closed their borders or restricted entry to UK travellers. **Employees should check the gov.uk guidance** [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#covid-19-exceptional-travel-advisory-notice) **for the latest exemptions.**

**The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel to some countries and territories.** EEAST fully supports this position, which is being kept under constant review.

The guidance concerning overseas travel is updated regularly at a national level and this document may change accordingly. Please check the Trust’s Need To Know (NTK) page as well as the **gov.uk guidance** [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#covid-19-exceptional-travel-advisory-notice) for the latest update.

Employees are reminded that any overseas travel undertaken during the Covid pandemic is **at their own risk**.

## **Actions for employees preparing to leave the UK to go abroad:**

* + 1. You should check GRS for your current annual leave position, to ensure this is up to date (including any recent annual leave requests), and check that you have sufficient annual leave available should you be unable to return from abroad when expected due to Covid19 travel restrictions or be unable to return to work due to quarantine arrangements. This includes any changes to the red, amber, green list at any point after making your travel arrangements or after travelling abroad. Please note that any additional absence (including the period for quarantine) must be taken from your annual leave entitlement, unless in exceptional circumstances.
		2. You are advised to read the guidance in relation to your personal circumstances before deciding whether you are legally permitted to travel abroad. The Trust continues to strongly advise employees not to travel against the FCDO advice.
		3. You should [check the country page](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) for your intended destination each time you consider making travel arrangements. Please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>.
		4. If you still decide to travel abroad during the Covid19 pandemic, you must notify your line manager and have a discussion to ensure that you have sufficient annual leave should you be unable to return from abroad when expected due to Covid19 travel restrictions or be unable to return to work due to quarantine arrangements. **Please note that any additional absence from work must be taken from your annual leave entitlement, unless in exceptional circumstances (i.e., if you have travelled to attend a funeral, in which case unpaid/special leave may be considered).**
		5. **You should note that enhancements/supplements will not be paid for periods of unpaid leave.**

## **Actions for employees when abroad:**

* + 1. You should continue to follow updates to [travel advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/), as there may be changes for your destination.
		2. You should be prepared to comply with changing restrictions to manage local COVID-19 outbreaks, such as border closures, movement restrictions, testing and quarantine requirements.
		3. If you test positive for COVID-19, you may need to seek treatment where you are, and stay until you have recovered. If local authorities tell you to quarantine, you should expect to do that where you are.
		4. Travel restrictions may unexpectedly delay your return home. Plan for possible delays. Make sure you have access to money and have made practical arrangements to be away for longer than planned.
		5. If delays occur, you should keep in contact with your travel company or airline for any changes to transport schedules.
		6. Read this [guidance if you are unable to return to the UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-where-you-are-if-you-cannot-return-to-the-uk) due to COVID-19.
		7. If you are unable to return to work when planned, you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to discuss. As per 1.1.4 any additional absence will be taken from your annual leave entitlement (unless in exceptional circumstances).

## **Actions for employees preparing to return to the UK:**

* + 1. As travel guidance is constantly changing there may be a requirement for you to quarantine on your return to the UK, please refer to: [enter the UK](https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control).
		2. You must contact your line manager as soon as possible to inform them of any possible delays in returning from abroad as well as any other Covid-19 related delays which is likely to impact on your return to work.
		3. **You should be aware that any additional absence from work will be taken from your annual leave entitlement (unless in exceptional circumstances – see 1.1.4).**

## **Actions for employees if changes relating to a new COVID-19 variant mean they**

## **cannot return from travel abroad as planned:**

4.1.1 If you are travelling abroad and [unable to return to the UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-where-you-are-if-you-cannot-return-to-the-uk), contact your airline or travel provider for advice. You can also contact [British embassy, high commission or consulate](https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies) for urgent assistance.

4.1.2 You must contact your line manager as soon as possible to inform them of any possible delays in returning from abroad as well as any other Covid-19 related delays which is likely to impact on your return to work.

4.1.3 **You should be aware that any additional absence from work will be taken from your annual leave entitlement (unless in exceptional circumstances – see 1.1.4).**

## **Actions for Line managers:**

* + 1. When you are notified that an employee intends to travel abroad you should arrange to meet with them. Your discussion is to ensure that the employee has sufficient annual leave should they be unable to return from abroad when expected due to Covid19 travel restrictions or be unable to return to work due to quarantine arrangements. You should inform them that any additional absence (including the period for quarantine) from work
		 will be utilised from their annual leave entitlement, unless in exceptional
		 circumstances. See 1.1.4

5.1.2 The Trust recognises that some staff may need to travel abroad for reasons other than holidays, e.g., to attend family emergencies, funerals, or other exceptional circumstances. If you are informed that the purpose of travel abroad is for a reason other than a holiday you should contact Operational HR for further advice.

5.1.3 Following a discussion with the employee and all appropriate checks, where appropriate authorise / decline annual leave and update GRS accordingly.

The Trust continues to strongly advise employees not to travel abroad against the FCDO advice. **Employees are reminded that any overseas travel undertaken during the Covid19 pandemic is at their own risk.**

Additional information on travel can be found at [Gov.uk guidance for British people travelling overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#future-travel-abroad)