

Holidays during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Summary Guidance for WSCC Foster Carers – July 2020

Like all families, foster families will be now be thinking about their summer holidays. Some of you will already have holidays booked and be intending to take these holidays either in the UK or abroad. You will be thinking about what is right for you, your family and your foster child/ren, alongside what we currently know about the pandemic and the ways to keep people safe.

West Sussex County Council wants our foster carers to enable our children to have family experiences consistent with what other children might experience during the pandemic. We recognise that family holidays are an essential part of building positive memories for a child and that these memories can last a lifetime.

However, we understand that during the Covid-19 pandemic, things like holidays are a little more complicated than usual. Therefore, we ask you to think carefully about your holiday plans and use the Covid-19 Holiday Checklist to help you consider the risks around Covid-19 and consider the following:

- Foster carers **must** assure themselves that their holiday arrangements comply with Government guidance on staying alert and safe; accommodation, travel, days out, meals out etc.
- Foster carers **must** follow Government guidance on staying alert and safe during their holiday.
- Foster carers **must** understand and have in place plans to respond to possible eventualities, including cancellations, family members and looked after children showing symptoms whilst on holiday, the possible need to self-isolate whilst on holiday, the possible need to quarantine on arrival or return from holiday destination, the possibility that a 'local lockdown' takes place whilst on holiday.
- Foster carers **must** have adequate holiday insurance and are able to respond to the financial implications of any cancellation or disruption to their holiday arrangements.
- Foster carers **must** seek the usual agreement from the SSW and Child's allocated social worker and/or Practice Manager to take the child on holiday in the UK or abroad and this may include seeking birth parents agreement. For foster carers wanting to holiday abroad this approval is agreed at Service Lead Level – your child's social worker will need to seek this approval. Those with PR for a child are responsible for giving permission (whether is just parents in regard to children under s20 or shared with the local authority for children on a care order). This is not something that the Fostering Service can do.

- Foster carers **must** be aware that the situation is very changeable and guidance and/or permission may change at short notice.

The basics.... Stay Alert and Safe

Follow Government guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) and staying safe outside of your home.

What the Government says:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:

- stay at home as much as possible
- work from home if you can
- limit contact with other people
- keep your distance from people not in your household (2 metres apart where possible)
- wash your hands regularly
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.

Guidance: Staying alert and safe (social distancing), Updated 25th July 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>

Guidance: Staying safe outside your home, Updated 24th June 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

Holidays in the UK:

Refer to the Government guidance
Note that Scotland and Wales will have different guidance
Note any 'local lockdown' measures
Refer to guidance on certain settings like Attractions, Pubs, Campsites, holiday parks etc. Check their websites to see if they are 'covid secure'.

The Government says:

Guidance; Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do, Updated 27th July 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

The particular reference in relation to holidays in this guidance is:

3.1 Are there restrictions on how far I can travel?

No. You can travel irrespective of distance, but you should take hygiene and safety precautions if using services on the way.

You can use public transport, but it is better to travel in other ways if possible. It is difficult to socially distance during car journeys and transmission of coronavirus can definitely occur in this context. So, avoid travelling with someone from outside your household or your support bubble unless you can practise social distancing.

[Further guidance on car sharing is available](#). If you need to use public transport, you should follow the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#). When travelling on public transport you are legally required to wear a face covering.

If visiting other parts of the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – you must always adhere to the laws and guidance of the devolved administrations. If you wish to travel internationally, you should follow the laws of other countries and FCO international travel guidance. Upon return to the UK, you must by law self-isolate for 14 days, unless you have come from one of [the countries listed here](#). This is crucial to help to ensure the virus does not spread across borders.

3.3 Can I go on holiday? Can I stay in my second home?

Yes, you can stay overnight away from the place where you are living. This includes staying overnight in a second home, hotels, bed and breakfasts or campsites.

You should only stay overnight in groups of up to two households (anyone in the same support bubble counts as one household) and should ensure you maintain social distancing with anyone you do not live with or is not in your support bubble. Take particular care to maintain excellent hygiene – washing hands and surfaces – and avoid using shared facilities like bathrooms wherever possible.

3.6 Can I visit outdoor tourist sites? What about indoor ones?

Yes, you can still travel to outdoor areas, such as National Parks or beaches. It is advisable to check ahead to ensure the venue is open to visitors.

You are also able to visit most indoor sites and attractions. It is strongly advised that you only attend these places in groups of up to two households (anyone in your support bubble counts as one household).

3.10 Can I go to a pub or restaurant with people I don't live with?

When eating or drinking out with people you do not live with (and who are not in your support bubble), you should keep to the wider guidance on group sizes: up to two households indoors, and up to either two households or six people from more than two households outdoors.

In all cases, people from different households should ensure they socially distance as much as possible. You should think about where to sit at a table with this in mind - the premises should also take reasonable steps to help you do so in line with COVID-19 secure guidelines. It remains the case that you do not need to maintain social distancing with those in your support bubble. This change also does not affect the support you receive from your carers.

Holidays Abroad

This is a more complex and a rapidly changing picture
Refer to the Government guidance on international travel

The Government says:

COVID-19 travel guidance

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel. [Travel to some countries and territories is currently exempted.](#)

This advice is being kept under constant review. Travel disruption is still possible and national control measures may be brought in with little notice.

The latest travel guidance in relation to travel to Spain is as below:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain>

The Government travel checklist can be found below as well:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

This guidance contains a **Plan for your travel: checklist**

Developments in the coronavirus pandemic remain uncertain around the world. No travel is risk-free. If you are planning travel abroad in the weeks and months ahead, even if you are returning to a place you've visited before, follow this checklist:

Before you travel:

- follow the current guidance in the place where you live. See the guidance for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#), and [Northern Ireland](#)
- keep up to date with the latest developments for your destination before your trip. Sign up for [travel advice](#) email alerts and check the [TravelHealthPro website](#) for travel health guidance
- find out about any entry restrictions, screening or quarantine requirements on arrival that might affect you. Check [travel advice](#) and contact the [UK-based embassy of the country you're travelling to](#) if you need more information
- read the [safer air travel guidance](#) on sensible precautions and steps to take during travel. Consider your own circumstances and health, and remember you will need to [wear a face covering](#) on flights in England and Scotland. See also the [NaTHNaC guidance](#)
- check with your accommodation provider for information about availability and the safety measures they have put in place
- read the advice of local authorities and follow all local health measures in place during your journey and in your destination. Local measures and travel restrictions may change before you arrive or during your stay. Check the [travel advice](#) page for your destination and check with your transport provider for more information
- get [travel insurance](#), and make sure you are content with the level of cover it provides. If you already have travel insurance check it is valid and provides appropriate cover
- check your cancellation rights. Speak to your tour operator, transport and accommodation providers if you have any questions

When you're abroad:

- be prepared to comply with measures at your destination to manage a localised outbreak. If you test positive for coronavirus you are likely to need to get treatment locally and stay there until you have recovered. If you are required to quarantine or self-isolate by local authorities, you should expect to do so in the country. You may need to stay longer. Plan ahead for any delays to your return home and the financial implications or practical arrangements you may need to make
- continue to follow any updates to our [travel advice](#) for your destination

When you return:

- you will need to follow the [rules for entering the UK](#). You must [provide your journey and contact details](#) up to 48 hours before you're due to arrive in the UK
- you may have to self-isolate for the first 14 days you're in the UK. See the guidance on self-isolation for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#). You may not have to self-isolate when you arrive from some countries and territories. See the [travel corridors list for England](#), and the guidance for [Scotland](#), [Wales](#), and [Northern Ireland](#)
- see the [list of people who are exempt from the English border rules](#)
- for real-time updates, follow our [embassy or high commission's social media](#) for the country you're in

Quarantine while you are abroad

If the local authority where you are proposes to quarantine you for your own protection, you should follow their advice. If there are suspected cases of coronavirus where you are, you may need to remain in your hotel room or accommodation for 14 days, move to quarantine facilities, take tests for coronavirus and, if positive in some cases, be hospitalised abroad.

You should also contact your airline or travel company, and your insurance provider as soon as you can. We only organise assisted departure in exceptional circumstances.

**The above Government guidance is correct as of 10/07/20.
This is for reference only.
Check the most up to date guidance before you travel.**

What to do now:

- Do your research; check Government guidance, travel/holiday company Covid-19 arrangements/updates.
- Use the holiday check list to help you check that your holiday arrangements are covered by current Government guidance.
- Talk it through with your supervising social worker
- Seek agreement from the child's allocated social worker – you may wish to show your checklist to the child's social worker.
- Your supervising social worker/ child's social worker will be required to complete a risk assessment with you.

We will endeavour to complete all risk assessments in a timely manner.

Review / Contacts / References	
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