

Guidance Notes

Children in Care – Travelling Abroad during COVID-19 Pandemic – 10th July 2020

On the 4th July 2020 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) updated its global advisory against 'all but essential' travel, exempting destinations that no longer pose an unacceptably high risk for British travellers.

The list of countries that British travellers are now able to visit include, Spain, Turkey, France, Greece, Italy and Croatia. A full list of countries can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exempt-from-advice-against-all-but-essential-international-travel>

It should be noted that all advice will remain under constant review to take into account the latest situation in each country.

Any decision for a child to go abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic should be made collectively by the Care Team. This decision must be made prior to the booking of any travel abroad.

Once the care team has agreed to support the child and carers traveling abroad, the attached form must be completed and submitted to Graham Reiter, Children's Service Director with the request for the usual holiday letter.

The usual parameters are still in place for holidays, for example, must be in school holidays.

The child's views should be sought if the child/young person is of an age and understanding to have an informed discussion about travelling abroad and the risks associated with this.

Advice for foster carers

When considering travelling abroad, **prior** to making any bookings the carer should:

- check the up to date FCO guidance to ensure that the country they intend to travel to is exempt from the global advice against 'all but essential travel'.

The Local Authority will not agree to children in their care travelling to a destination which is not exempt from the global advice against 'all but essential travel. This would include withdrawal of agreement if the advice for that particular destination changes - see below.

- make sure they are aware of any local COVID-19 related measures there may be when they arrive at their destination and comply with these on arrival. Some destinations, for example, may require testing prior to entry.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

The Local Authority will not agree to children in their care travelling to a destination where they would be expected to quarantine on arrival

- consider what they would do should they be refused entry on arrival to their destination and how they would plan to return home. This may not be covered by any travel insurance policy.
- ensure that they have adequate travel insurance and check with the insurance provider what is and isn't covered under the policy.

Some Travel Insurers are **not** providing cover for coronavirus claims whereas others are offering some restrictive cover for emergency medical expenses and repatriation costs if you contract the virus abroad.

Some travel insurers are however excluding coronavirus related cancellation or disruption e.g. if you need to cancel holiday because you have caught the virus or have to self-quarantine before you leave. Similarly, if you arrive at your destination and are turned away due to a country's lockdown restrictions or if your destination enters lockdown while you are there you may not be able to make an insurance claim.

The Local Authority will expect that, as a minimum, travel insurance is in place which covers emergency medical expenses and repatriation costs if you contract the virus.

- have a contingency plan for the care of the child/children should the carer contract COVID-19 whilst abroad and be unable to provide care through illness/hospitalisation.

Prior to travelling abroad the carer should:

- check to ensure that the country they intend to travel to is still exempt from the global advice against 'all but essential travel'
- check whether there have been any changes to local COVID-19 related measures there may be when they arrive at their destination and what COVID-19 related measures they will need to follow during their stay.

The local authority is not responsible for any expenses incurred as a direct result of COVID-19, for example, should the holiday be cancelled, insurance cover is inadequate, the child is not given permission to travel abroad.

Should carers have any questions in relation to this advice or any other questions about travelling abroad they should, prior to making any travel arrangements, get in touch with their supervising social worker to discuss.

Children in Care – Travelling Abroad during COVID 19

To be completed by the child's allocated social worker and submitted to the Children's Service Director.

Name(s) and DOB of child/ren	ICS identifier(s)
Carers Name:	Social worker (child/ren) Social worker (foster carer)
Travel Destination:	Dates of travel (start/end dates):
Travel Insurance Details:	Company: Policy No: Dates of cover:
What is the FCO advice regarding non-essential foreign travel at the time of completing this form?	
Is the country the child/ren travelling to exempt from Foreign Office Travel Restrictions?	Yes/No
Does the country the child/ren is/are travelling to have any quarantine requirements on entry	Yes/No
Does the child/children have any health conditions that may make them more vulnerable should they contract COVID-19?	Yes/No: If yes provide details
Does the carer have any health conditions that may make them more vulnerable should they contract COVID-19?	Yes/No: If yes provide details

<p>What COVID-19 precautions will be put in place whilst travelling on holiday, for example, aeroplane, other transport, in the hotel?</p> <p>PPE, any rules that the country may have in place.</p> <p>Is there a plan if one or more of the travelling party is refused entry to the country on arrival?</p>	
<p>What is the child's view?</p>	
<p>Has the child's parent(s) consented to this holiday during the pandemic?</p> <p>Has the child been having direct contact with their birth family?</p>	<p>Yes/No (if no, please give details/reasons)</p> <p>Yes/No (if no, please give details/reasons)</p>
<p>Has the carer taken out travel insurance that covers all travelling parties for COVID-19 related claims abroad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● medical costs? ● Repatriation costs? ● Other expenses? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Has the carer notified the insurance company of all health/medical issues affecting those travelling?</p> <p>Are these covered under the insurance?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Has the supervising social worker seen a copy of the insurance policy confirming that the above cover is in place?</p> <p>Is the insurance cover adequate?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>

Date form completed:

Date discussed and agreed by the Care Team: