

## Safety Code of Practice 38

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# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL



<b>Summary</b>	
<p>This Safety Code of Practice sets out procedures for managing the travel aspects of work-related staff and PhD Student offsite visits overseas.</p> <p>This Safety Code of Practice provides guidance for Heads of Schools/ Directorates, academic supervisors, fieldwork leaders and managers who are responsible for the health and safety of staff, students, and other participants in overseas travel.</p> <p>This code covers organised trips with groups of students for the purposes of teaching or research, and travel by individual members of staff or postgraduate students for teaching, research or other activities while representing the University within and outside the UK, including business travel. It does not specifically cover Study Abroad and Placements.</p>	
<b>Document Control</b>	
<b>Document type (CoP / SN)</b>	Code of Practice (CoP)
<b>Document owner</b>	Wendy Manning (H&S Auditor / Advisor)
<b>Document status (Draft / Final)</b>	FINAL
<b>Version</b>	12
<b>Approved by</b>	Jenny McGrother (Director of H&SS)
<b>Checked for accessibility</b>	27/01/2025
<b>Date</b>	27/01/2025
<b>Date of publication</b>	04/02/2025
<b>Next review date</b>	03/02/2028
<b>Date of original publication</b>	October 2016
<b>Revision frequency</b>	3 yearly
<b>Superseded documents</b>	CoP 38 Overseas Travel
<b>Related documents</b>	<a href="#">CoP 32 Fieldwork</a> <a href="#">TRA1 International Travel Risk Assessment</a> <a href="#">University Travel Policy</a>

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## 1 SUMMARY

This Safety Code of Practice sets out procedures for planning and managing the travel aspects of work-related offsite international visits for University of Reading (UoR) staff and PhD Students.

## 2 SCOPE/APPLICATION

Overseas travel must be effectively managed so that the University can demonstrate that all reasonably practicable steps have been undertaken to minimise risks to health and safety and to reduce the likelihood (and ameliorate the consequences of) any reasonably foreseeable incident during overseas travel.

This Safety Code of Practice (CoP) provides guidance for Heads of Schools/ Directorates, academic supervisors, fieldwork leaders and managers who are responsible for the health and safety of staff, PhD students, and other participants in international travel.

This CoP covers organised trips with groups of students for the purposes of teaching or research, travel by individual members of staff or postgraduate students for teaching and research or other activities while representing the University outside of the UK, including business travel. It does not cover Study Abroad and Placements.

This CoP does not cover staff who wish to work remotely overseas. There are complex legal and financial implications of these arrangements and prior approval at UEB level must be sought before agreement can be given for staff to work remotely overseas.

For non-travel aspects of fieldwork please refer to Safety Code of Practice 32 Fieldwork.

## 3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The University has a duty of care for those undertaking international travel as part of their role at the University of Reading. The University is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and PhD students are equipped to assess and manage the risks associated with any travel that they plan to undertake as part of their role at the University.
- Ensuring that those who travel on behalf of the University have access to assistance in the event of an incident affecting them or their travel plans.

The following have lead responsibility for the application of this duty of care:

The **University Executive Board (UEB)** will determine the level of risk associated with international travel that is acceptable to the University.

**The Insurance Team** are responsible for:

- Putting in place appropriate travel and other insurance policies, including emergency assistance support and repatriation arrangement support for travellers overseas.
- In an emergency situation, initiating communications with HOS/F in the event of a heightened risk or incident.
- If appropriate, requesting departments to make initial contact with potentially affected travelling staff and students to ascertain their welfare and to offer guidance and support.
- Escalating to the University Major Incident Team (MIT), where appropriate, for managing guidance, support and communications to travellers and departmental teams.

**University Security Team** are responsible for responding to telephone calls made out of hours to the Security emergency number (+44(0)118 378 6300) and referring the member of staff or student to the appropriate help. Depending on circumstances they may also invoke the Major Incident Plan.

**The Communications Office** are responsible for taking the lead on communications with press/media arising out of a serious incident which may attract any media attention.

**Human Resources** are responsible for ensuring that occupational health advice with respect to overseas travel is available to Managers via Occupational Health, who in turn will notify the line manager if they believe the traveller is not fit to travel. A management referral will be required.

**Heads of Schools/Directorates (HoS/D)** are responsible for the safety of travel undertaken by PhD students/staff within their School/Directorate. They must ensure:

- Travel group leaders and individual travellers have sufficiently researched, risk assessed and planned for the environment they are travelling to and the conditions that they might reasonably be expected to encounter. HoS/D are responsible for checking that any risk mitigation in place is suitable and sufficient and must not agree to any travel where they do not reasonably believe this to be the case.
- The traveller has confirmed the University's arrangements for medical and travel support overseas and completed the required forms, i.e. [Notification of Travel](#), Travel Itinerary and [Sanction Territories Travel Questionnaire](#) where applicable.
- Risk assessments fully consider the safeguarding needs for the individual and any vulnerable communities being visited for the purposes of study / research to prevent exploitation, abuse and harm from occurring. An agreed route to report any safeguarding issues must be in place.
- Staff/students are informed, and agree in advance of travel, which communication channels will be used for contact during travel. This may be via means such as regular email contact, phone call or text etc. as appropriate.
- Emergency contact information for all staff/students is up to date and accessible.
- Liaison with the Traveller and/or Insurance team occurs promptly in the event of a significant incident or where there is perceived risk, or actual threat to the wellbeing of the traveller in the territory in which they are travelling or are due to travel to.
- Support for centrally managed communications to ascertain welfare and to offer appropriate guidance and support in the event of an incident or risk as identified by the Insurance Team or Travel Management Company.
- See also [review and audit section](#) for essential post-trip review.

**Travel Group Leaders/Travellers** must:-

- Ensure they have the appropriate level of authorisation to undertake the travel. Where advice from the FCDO is not to travel, it is not a matter of personal decision whether to travel to the affected country, since any untoward incident would risk exposing the University reputationally, legally and/or financially. For this reason, any proposed journey to, or within, an affected country by staff on university business or students in connection with their studies can only be made with express permission of the Vice-Chancellor.
- Have adequately risk assessed and planned for the conditions that they might encounter and develop an emergency plan for any significant situation which may be encountered.
- Ensure compliance with the guidance in this Code of Practice and any other relevant School/Directorate procedures. For fieldwork overseas, please refer to [CoP32 Fieldwork](#) and ensure that a fieldwork risk assessment of the activities is completed.

- Complete the online '[Notification of Travel Form](#)'. Failure to do this may result in expenses not being paid. PhD students are to complete the Risk Management form on RISIS.
- Complete a [Sanctioned Territories Travel Questionnaire](#) if travelling to a [Sanctioned Country](#) and submit to UoR Insurance **at least 21 days prior to travel**. Failure to do so may result in insurance cover being invalidated. See [Sanctioned Country](#) section in this code of practice for further information.
- Comply with the [University Travel Policy](#).
- Not take any unnecessary risks when travelling on university business or activities.
- Provide their School / Directorate with up-to-date contact and next of kin details.
- Maintain regular contact whilst travelling with their School / Directorate via appropriate and pre-agreed channels.
- Inform their home department of any changes to their travel itinerary and contact details as soon as practicable.
- Confirm their wellbeing to the University as soon as practicable if contacted to verify safety in the event of an incident.
- Adhere to Government Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel guidance.

**All** travel must be booked using the [Travel Management Company \(TMC\)](#) unless a travel policy exemption applies e.g. where an individual is personally funding over 50% of the travel.

If for any reason individual travellers do not feel comfortable travelling abroad / to particular overseas jurisdictions, they should not feel or be forced to do so. Any concerns should be notified to their line manager / supervisor or other appropriate manager.

## 4 REQUIREMENTS

### 4.1.1 Approval of Travel

Table 1 sets out the authorisation levels for travel that must be complied with. These are linked to the risk assessment and risk profiling tool in form [TRA1](#). Please note, your risk assessment should reflect the highest level of risk, e.g. you may be transiting through a high-risk country or undertaking a high hazard activity in a low-risk country.

Risk Level	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Approver level	<b>Budget holder (Line Manager / Head of Department)</b> 1. Written risk assessment (Form <a href="#">TRA1</a> ) to be completed (parts A, B and D only)	<b>Budget holder (Line Manager / Head of Department)</b> 1. Written risk assessment (Form <a href="#">TRA1</a> ) to be completed (all sections).	<b>Head of School/Directorate (or line manager for HoS/D or above).</b> 1. Written risk assessment (Form <a href="#">TRA1</a> ) to be completed (all sections).	<b>Vice-Chancellor (&amp; HoS/D)</b> 1. Written risk assessment (Form <a href="#">TRA1</a> ) to be completed (all sections). 2. It is strongly recommended that a professional travel risk advisor is consulted as part of approval of any extreme risk travel.

Table 1 Approval levels



#### Notes:

1. Approvers are encouraged to seek advice from their local Health and Safety Coordinator and/or Health and Safety Services as appropriate, where there is any doubt about the risk level or mitigations chosen.
2. If the trip is being financed by an external organisation/grant award body and grant holder has authority to approve expenditure, TRA1 must still be completed and authorisation from the appropriate approver level must still be obtained.
3. Unless otherwise instructed, in the event of a world-wide pandemic where the FCDO advise against 'all but essential travel only' this would be treated as "extreme" risk and final authorisation would sit with the VC's office.
4. Where the traveller is a Head of School / Directorate or above the travel risk assessment authoriser is their line manager.

### 4.1.2 Sanctioned Countries and High-Risk Territories

Sanctions consist of a wide range of political and/or economic measures which are put in place by international, regional and state bodies with the aim of influencing the behaviour of a particular country's regimes, individuals or groups. The types of sanctions measures put in place can vary widely including (inter alia): financial restrictions, import/export restrictions and travel bans.

If travelling to a country listed as a [sanctioned country](#) by the UK Government, the traveller MUST complete a [Sanctioned Territories Travel Questionnaire](#) and return this to UoR Insurance as soon as possible and **at least 21 days prior to travel**. For [high risk territories](#) please contact the insurance team. Travelling to such countries can increase the risk of travel, so our insurers need to consider carefully the full details of your planned activities before travel commences. Additional insurance premiums or exclusions may be imposed.

### 4.1.3 Risk Assessment

The University has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students travelling on university business, as well as safeguarding the communities we work with, and any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties we engage as part of work activities. It is therefore essential that all [responsible parties](#) give appropriate due diligence to writing and authorising risk assessments for international travel.

The risk assessment should be seen as an essential planning tool that aims to address potential events which may negatively impact individuals, property and/or the environment. The individual conducting the risk assessment should be competent to do so and/or seek competent advice and guidance from a local [health and safety coordinator](#). The risk assessment should sufficiently address a range of hazards and needs commensurate with the risk level, including (but not limited to):-

- transport arrangements,
- accommodation safety,
- The environment (political, social, natural etc.),
- emergency arrangements,
- personal safety and security,
- the work activity being undertaken (including any hazardous sampling or equipment) , and
- the individual traveller(s) personal circumstances including their health / welfare / protected characteristics, declared medical conditions or disabilities (including any reasonable adjustments required to aid participation), experience and competence.



**The Head of School / Directorate has authority to withdraw approval if the situation changes between the time of approval and departure.** For further advice on fieldwork risk assessment see [CoP32](#).

All international travel for university business purposes requires a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be conducted. **International travel must not be authorised without a suitable and sufficient risk assessment** in place. The risk assessment must be approved by the appropriate level of management (see [approval process](#)) and will be required to be submitted as part of the [overseas staff travel process](#).

The purpose of any proposed trip, together with a summary of expected outcomes, must be clearly established early in the planning stage. This will enable the School/ Directorate and the University to give the proposal full and balanced consideration and decide if the expected outcomes are commensurate with the risks involved. This must be documented on the risk assessment form.

The risk assessment should be written by the traveller and/or group leader following appropriate research of the destination country and the work tasks / fieldwork / research to be undertaken.

If the risk assessment is to be undertaken by a group leader, they **must** ensure that the hazards, risks and control measures are communicated to all participants in a pre-trip briefing and in writing. Records of such communication should be maintained by the School / Directorate.

**Step 1** – Refer to [Sources of Essential Advice below](#) during pre-planning stage.

**Step 2** - Use risk assessment form [TRA1](#) (Part A International Travel Risk Profiling Tool) to determine if your trip is low, moderate, high or extreme risk in conjunction with advice obtained from step 1.

**Step 3** – Use risk assessment form [TRA1](#) to complete your risk assessment. Travellers **MUST** ensure that they complete all sections in the risk assessment form and amend, delete or change the mitigating actions (control measures) to reflect the actual trip and work activity being undertaken. **Heads of School / Directorate must not approve any risk assessments where the traveller has failed to do this.**

**Step 4** – Follow the “How to” flowchart in [Appendix 1](#).

#### **4.1.4 Sources of Essential Advice and Support (Risk Assessment)**

- i. [The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\)](#)
- ii. [Medical and Security Assistance Supplier](#)
- iii. Insurance provider Travel Assistance website and App.
- iv. Your [local Health and Safety Coordinator](#).
- v. More experienced colleagues who have travelled to the same country / region before.
- vi. Local intelligence sources and news agencies.
- vii. [UoR Travel Guidance for Staff and Students](#)

Other sources of advice may also be referred to e.g.

- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [Travelhealthpro.org.uk](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

### 4.1.5 Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessments (i.e. assessments which are completed during travel to consider changing circumstances and conditions) may be required during some work to allow flexibility. However, this should not replace adequate contingency planning, and it should not introduce completely new activities which have not been given prior approval without consultation with the person who has approved the travel.

### 4.1.6 Non-UK National Staff and Students

Members of staff or students wishing to travel to their home country for purposes related to their employment or course of study must comply with the authorisation procedures set out in this Safety Code of Practice. If this involves travel to a country on the [GOV.UK travel advisory list](#) Vice - Chancellor or delegated approval must be obtained. Those undertaking work or study overseas should also check the travel advice and consular services provided by their own country for the destination.

If the home country is classed as a sanctioned country, you must still complete the sanctions form available on the [Insurance Webpage](#). This needs to be completed **AT LEAST** 21 days prior to departure.

### 4.1.7 Existing contracts or travellers already in country

Where an existing contract is in place that requires work in a country where the personal security risks subsequently increase and the UK Government advises against travel, travel should not take place, and advice should be sought on any contractual implications (Procurement, RES or Legal).

Any travellers already in a country when a government travel advisory notice is introduced should contact the Insurance Team/University travel insurance providers/the British or own national Embassy for advice. The University insurance policy remains valid in these circumstances.

### 4.1.8 Travel Process

- i. Read the [Travel Policy](#)
- ii. Consult and comply with the advice given on the [FCDO Advice](#) web site, the medical and security assistance provider and other sources of reliable travel information and whether it is a Sanctioned Country. Please check the following for the latest update of [sanctioned countries](#).
- iii. Plan and risk assess all aspects of the trip.
- iv. Ensure you are authorised to travel.
- v. Check that the travel is within scope of the University insurance policies.
- vi. Book travel with the Travel Management Company
- vii. Check that you have a valid passport, and visa (if required), that will not expire while abroad or within 3 months of the return date. Letter for Visa applications can be obtained from the Insurance team.
- viii. Ensure work permits are obtained if required.

- ix. Ensure the necessary permissions are obtained, if necessary, from local authorities/ government etc. regarding your research, for example, interviews that have the potential to be misconstrued as espionage.
- x. Check that any health requirements such as vaccinations and fitness to travel have been addressed. Contact Occupational Health (for staff) or University Medical Practice or GP (for students) for travel health assessment, or to discuss the required vaccinations or other medical support. **If a medical practitioner has said a traveller is not fit for travel, they will not be covered by the University Insurance and their travel will not be authorised.**
- xi. Obtain information about local health care facilities and emergency medical assistance and so far, as is practicable, ensure they are satisfactory. You must have this information available to you during travel along with the insurance policy available on the [Insurance Webpage](#).
- xii. Finalise costs associated with travel (e.g. TMC, specialist training, equipment, accommodation etc.) These should be included when preparing budgets, estimates and grant applications. This may involve the Head of School/Directorate.
- xiii. Check that any goods/equipment that you intend to take with you or bring back to the UK are legal for transportation/import/export.
- xiv. Leave travel plans, personal emergency information and contact details with your School/Department for access in an emergency.
- xv. Take all essential information with you and download the insurance provider [Travel Assistance app](#), (e.g. tickets; accommodation details; passport + copy; contact details for the University; Embassy/High Commission contact details; copy of travel insurance policy and contact details plus travel assistance emergency number; etc.) Save scanned images of all-important documents, including your passport, to a secure on-line account or to family/Department, for worldwide access in an emergency. Consider hard copies in hand-luggage, hotel safe etc.
- xvi. Stop the activity (which may include leaving a location/changing travel plans) if you judge that the situation is unsafe.
- xvii. Have a communications plan in place e.g. satellite phone, email enabled on laptop, agreed schedule of phone or email contact with the University and a contact in country. Ideally, try to establish 3 means of communication, and test in country on arrival. Ensure that the communications plan is included in the itinerary/risk assessment and included in the [Notification of Travel Form](#). School/Directorate to monitor and communicate with traveller to check on welfare etc.
- xviii. Have local contact meet you at airport, if possible, ensure that both parties know what the other looks like and have proof of identity, travel with a trusted local contact or trusted reputable travel company.
- xix. Review assessment on an ongoing basis as advice and the situation on travel may change.
- xx. **Report any incidents (including near-misses) to the School/Directorate and to Health and Safety Services via the [University Incident Reporting System](#). This includes incidents that occur during leisure time.**
- xxi. After the trip, review how things went, and feed lessons learnt back into the risk assessment process.

## 5 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### 5.1.1 Emergency Plans

Travellers must have an emergency plan, appropriate to the circumstances likely to be encountered. This may be as simple as relying on the standard University travel insurance/emergency assistance cover and having access to their emergency contact telephone number, or it may require more planning and resources e.g. 'buddies' in country, flexible travel tickets, emergency currency in dollars or personal security protection.

All travellers should carry a form of personal identification, in case of accident or emergency. In some countries, this is a legal requirement.

### 5.1.2 Dynamic Emergency Planning

Continue to monitor the FCDO website and follow Government advice if all airlines cease travel.

If you need to contact the university, phone University Security on (+44 (0)118 378 6300) who will contact your Head of School/Directorate and who may invoke the Major Incident Plan.

Travel group leaders (or individuals travelling on their own) can decide to stop an activity or leave a location if they deem it to be unsafe. This decision can be made without reference to the University if local emergency advice or circumstances dictate this. The University will support the decision and will endeavour to meet any additional expenditure incurred as a result.

### 5.1.3 Insurance Assistance in Emergency

In the event of an emergency that affects your travel and accommodation, contact the Travel Management Company in the first instance. Contact details can be found on the [Travel Guidance for Staff and Students Webpage](#). Details on how to access medical or other emergency assistance can also be found here or via [AIG Travel Assistance App](#).

### 5.1.4 Emergency Funds

If a traveller needs access to emergency funds (e.g. due to lost or stolen cash or credit cards; extended duration of stay etc.) they should contact University Finance [financehelp@reading.ac.uk](mailto:financehelp@reading.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0) 118 378 6135. They will decide how best to transfer funds depending on the situation and location. In high-risk areas you may need access to emergency cash immediately so pre-planning for this is essential.

### 5.1.5 Communications

Depending on the location, a variety of methods of communication may be required e.g. landline, mobile phone, satellite phone, HF radio, agreed email communications schedule. In high-risk remote locations, up to three methods of communication may be required to provide assurance that a system will work in an emergency. Systems must be tested in country before they are needed in an emergency scenario.

Travellers must check the legal requirements for taking communications and satellite navigation equipment in and out of countries before travel; some countries ban the use of such technology and there are legal penalties for non-compliance.

### 5.1.6 Medical Repatriation

If a traveller becomes ill or suffers injury and requires either to be moved to the nearest suitable hospital or to be brought back to the UK, they must contact the University insurer as soon as possible or by using the Insurers' travel assistance app. If unable to do this for any reason, or additional advice is required, you should call the 24/7 University's security phone number +44 (0) 118 378 6300 or check the [Business Travel Website](#) for further information.

## 6 COMPETENCE/LEARNING REQUIREMENTS/TRAINING

Staff and students are encouraged to undertake necessary training commensurate with the travel / level of risk being undertaken. General awareness training is available via UoRLearn (see [Travel Training](#) for more information). For higher risk locations or activities, travellers and their line managers / supervisors should assess if more bespoke training is required, and this may need to be budgeted for in any project application processes e.g. Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT). For further advice, please speak to your local HSC in the first instance.

## 7 GUIDANCE/ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 7.1.1 Travel Information

The information that will be valuable for the traveller and the School/Directorate in case of an emergency is likely to include:

- Names of all travellers
- Passport and visa details for all travellers
- Emergency contact details (to be used only in the event of an emergency and with the prior consent of the traveller)

A copy of the itinerary, with details such as:

- Dates
- Stopovers
- Flight details
- Addresses (for appointments and hotels)
- Contact names and telephone numbers (for appointments and hotels)
- Times of appointments (where relevant/known)
- Contact names, addresses and telephone numbers of the British Consul, agents and British Embassy/High Commission
- Purchase card/credit card emergency numbers (to report loss etc.)
- Travel insurance company contact details, policy number and emergency numbers available by the Travel Assistance App
- Details of any health issues or disabilities of vulnerable individuals
- Name and contact details for the nominated School/Directorate contact.
- If there are any last-minute changes, especially of participants, the information must be updated.

### 7.1.2 Health and Medical Aspects

Consideration should be given to:

- The degree of general health fitness required (both mental and physical) for the work and for travel to the proposed destination. For staff, general advice can be obtained from Occupational Health. Where an assessment of the fitness of an individual is required, a Management Referral should be made to obtain advice about any reasonable adjustments that may be required.
- Immunisations/vaccinations and the nature of the work to be done. It can take several weeks or months for full immunity to be developed after some courses of immunisations, so advance planning is essential. Vaccinations and chemoprophylaxis tablets (e.g. for Malaria) may not prevent disease or tropical infections, but they may ensure survival. Vaccination advice may also vary with underlying health issues, destination, and length of stay and time of year.
- It is therefore important to contact Occupational Health, your GP or a travel clinic for advice on immunisations and vaccinations. More information about the vaccines required for travel to each country is available from:
  - [Travel Health Pro](#)
  - [NHS Scotland Fit for Travel](#)
  - [Masta Travel Health](#)
- Any traveller with health restrictions e.g. heart disease, epilepsy, respiratory conditions, diabetes, recent serious injury etc. should consider the possible effect that these may have on their ability to travel or the likelihood that they will need medical support while abroad. Underlying medical issues may not be a cause for concern in the UK, but they could be an issue on a long-haul flight, where air pollution is poor or in a country where appropriate treatment is not readily available. Also, disease or treatment may affect a person's response to a vaccine, or occasionally a vaccine may aggravate a disease.
- Pre-existing medical conditions are covered by the University Insurance provided the traveller is not travelling against the advice of a medical practitioner.
- It is usually safe to fly whilst you are pregnant, and it should not harm the baby if the pregnancy is straight forward. Most airlines will not let you fly after week 37 of pregnancy, or week 32 if pregnant with twins or more. Further information is available from the NHS Website.
- Where appropriate a referral to Occupational Health should be made for staff, 6 weeks in advance.
- For students, advice should be sought from the University Medical Practice. Alternatively, the individual should seek advice from their GP.
- Modifications/adjustments to enable students/staff with disabilities to take part. Advice should be sought from Occupational Health for staff, or from the University Medical Practice for students. The disclosed information should normally only be issued to the trip organiser on receipt of the participant's signed consent.
- The availability of medical assistance in-country, and the procedures for medical repatriation must be checked.
- Information about likely health hazards and preventative measures must be obtained. This might include information about food, drink and hygiene, environmental or climatic illnesses e.g. dehydration, Altitude Sickness, and endemic diseases.
- Travellers are strongly advised to have a dental check-up prior to undertaking extended travel overseas to remote locations where access to dental care may be difficult or where there is a high prevalence of blood borne virus including HIV infection.

### 7.1.3 Travel and Mental Health

Stress levels can be intensified during travel because of a lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations. Attitudes to mental illness vary between countries and in many, severe stigma and discrimination exist. Access to mental health services and medication may be extremely limited at some destinations.

Looking after yourself during travel and when abroad is important. Further information on travelling with mental health conditions is available at:

- [FCDO guidance page](#).
- [Travel Health Pro](#)
- [NHS Mental Health and Travel](#)

Staff can contact the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is an independent, free, confidential support and counselling service which is ran by CIC and is called Confidential Care. Confidential Care gives you a place to turn for support any time of day or night, 365 days a year. See the University Wellbeing Pages for further information.

### 7.1.4 Medical Documentation and Supplies

Participants should have/carry, as appropriate:

- Up to date Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or European Health Insurance Card (EHIC (if applicable)). Further information can be found [here](#).
- Vaccination certificates
- Proof of medical insurance (download via the University Insurance Website),
- Sufficient medication for the trip if required for a pre-existing medical condition, plus spares in case of loss, destruction, or damage e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin etc.
- A copy of the prescription and a letter from your doctor explaining your condition, treatment, medication, and dosage may be helpful at customs. See below re: [medication](#)
- A 'Fit to Travel' medical certificate, as required by some countries (obtainable through a GP, the University Medical Practice (for students) or a travel clinic. Staff should be referred to Occupational Health if necessary.

In some instances, travellers may wish to take sterile packs, consisting of sterile syringes, needles, etc., in case invasive emergency treatment is required whilst travelling. Medical kits containing sterile medical supplies are available from [Masta Travel Health](#)

### 7.1.5 Medication

- The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in other countries. If you are travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. Many medicines are unavailable in some countries.
- Rules for different countries can be checked with the foreign embassy in the UK but can be difficult to obtain for some countries; other useful resources are provided below:
  - [FCDO Travel Advice Webpage](#)
  - [ISTM Pharmacist Professional Group](#)
  - [International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers](#)

### 7.1.6 Travel Insurance

If the destination is remote or unstable:



- Check if the University Travel Insurer/emergency assistance provider can provide cover for foreseeable emergencies. This may attract an additional premium, payable by the School/Directorate and the trip must be referred to the VC, DVC or PVC as high risk.
- Ensure that the traveller has effective means of communication.

Travellers must draw the attention of the Insurance Team to any risks that they think may be out of the ordinary or potentially more hazardous than usual.

All travellers should take a summary of their insurance cover and emergency telephone numbers with them and download the INSURANCE PROVIDER Travel Assistance app.

The University holds policies for employer's liability; public liability; staff and student travel on university business; and professional indemnity. See the [Insurance Website](#) for more details:

**Please note, if the FCDO are advising against all travel to a country, you may not be covered by the University Insurance and your travel may not be authorised. Extra premiums may need to be paid by the individual traveller if other high risks have been identified.**

If in any doubt about the insurance cover provided, please contact the Insurance Team before travel on [uor-insurance@reading.ac.uk](mailto:uor-insurance@reading.ac.uk)

### 7.1.7 Lone Travellers

Travelling alone can bring additional risks and challenges. Research your destination in advance of travel and understand the typical local scams to avoid. [Read FCDO travel advice](#) for information on the local culture and customs for the countries you are travelling to.

#### Stay safe in your accommodation.

- never leave your key where someone can note your room number.
- do not leave your window open, especially if your room is on the ground floor or has a balcony.
- lock your room door when you are inside the room.
- if the door has a spyhole or chain, use these before opening the door to unexpected visitors.
- Take time to check the location fire escape routes.
- Avoid ground floor and bedrooms.

#### Stay Safe when out and about.

- Keep abreast of local news outlets for updates on any political / social unrest in country.
- be respectful of local dress codes and cover up as appropriate.
- in some countries, it helps to wear a ring on your wedding finger to avoid unwanted attention.
- Walk confidently and stay calm. Avoid walking alone in deserted and unlit areas and at night.
- do not tell strangers where you are staying or details about your travel plans.
- plan your daily itinerary: know where you are going and how to get back. Give a copy of your itinerary to the School/Department before you leave.
- Have a check-in procedure arranged with friends/family/School/Department.
- ask your hotel or hostel to recommend a taxi firm.
- store all useful phone numbers, including for your accommodation, on your phone in case you get lost or find yourself in an emergency situation.
- Stay sober. Never leave drinks or food unattended and do not accept drinks from strangers.
- For additional advice for **lone female travellers** see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-women-travelling-abroad>

### 7.1.8 Guidance for LGBTQIA+ Travellers

Public attitudes in some countries towards LGBTQIA+ issues are unfortunately less tolerant than in the UK and there is great variance in the social and cultural acceptance and legal treatment of LGBTQIA+ persons worldwide. LGBTQIA+ individuals can therefore face challenges to their welfare, mental wellbeing and safety. Some 66 countries globally retain criminal sanctions concerning sex between men, others criminalize lesbianism, do not protect LGBTQ+ persons against discrimination, or recognize same-sex marriage, civil partnership or child custody rights. Other laws target transgender people through laws prohibiting 'cross-dressing' and 'disguise' offences.

It is crucial that LGBTQIA+ travellers carefully research the location they are travelling to in advance of travel. LGBTQIA+ travellers can find out information on the country they are travelling to see if local laws and customs are broadly equivalent to the UK or not by checking the [FCDO Travel Advice Webpage](#) and then selecting the 'Local Laws and Customs' section.

Complete the risk profiling tool in [TRA1](#), paying close attention to the 'Local Laws and Customs' section, to determine if the destination you are travelling to is regarded as medium or high risk. Relevant information should be included in the risk assessment and/or discussed with management as appropriate. These conversations may consider any personal details which may put LGBTQIA+ travellers at higher risk such as relevant medical needs (e.g. if carrying hormone treatments or meds for HIV/Aids which may be banned or lead to unwelcome questions being raised), their social media profile, their research topics or their own personal protected characteristics or presentation etc.

General advice includes undertaking local research, avoiding overt displays of physical affection in some countries, be cautious of new acquaintances and dating apps overseas and be mindful of personal or professional social media presence, relevant apps on mobile devices and published research papers which may increase risk.

Transgender and gender diverse travellers sometimes face difficulties or delays at border controls abroad if their gender or gender expression is a different gender to the sex stated in their passport. If you are having facial surgery, get a letter from your medical team whilst abroad explaining the reason for any changes in appearance. HM Passport Office has information for [transgender and transsexual customers applying for a passport](#) in an acquired gender.

Other useful links are:

- [Stonewall](#) Country Specific information about legal and social situations in each country.
- [Rainbow Europe](#) Information on the legal situation for LGBTQIA+ people in Europe.
- [GOV.UK LGBT+ Foreign Travel Guidance](#) from the UK Government
- [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#) Information on the legal and lived situation for LGBT+ people globally.
- [Equaldex](#): LGBT+ knowledge base created by the LGBT+ community.
- [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) Travellers - Fit for Travel](#)

### 7.1.9 Incidental Holiday

If travellers are likely to undertake hazardous activities during personal down time or make their own travel arrangements e.g. by extending a business trip to take a holiday, this will not be covered by the University travel insurance outside of the days listed below. Participants will need to take out their own personal travel/accident insurance if the activities they are doing are not part of the

organised trip. The University travel insurance will cover family members who are travelling with you in the same way as detailed above.

Business trip duration (days)	Holiday duration (days)
Less than 5	0
5-12	2
13-21	5
22-35	8
36-50	12
51-65	16
66-80	20
81-100	23
101-365	25
Over 365	28

### 7.1.10 Vehicle Insurance

The use of private cars by individuals (Students or Staff) for overseas travel is not recommended. If a student or member of staff wishes to use their own vehicle overseas, they must check that their own vehicle insurance cover is adequate. **Cover for business use is required for staff and may be required for students.** Students must be advised to check the terms of their insurance policy to make sure that the cover is adequate for themselves, any other passengers, and any equipment carried.

### 7.1.11 Car Hire

Car hire is covered by the Travel Management Company. The extent of cover must be checked, including cover for any equipment carried, any off-road travel, theft, loss, damage, etc. If the cover offered is the legal minimum, this may not be sufficient. If in doubt, contact the University Insurance Team for further advice.

Travellers should also check the insurance cover for contracted external vehicles which have their own drivers. Hire should include passenger insurance, but it is always best to take advice from the University Insurance Team.

Breakdown insurance is recommended for hire vehicles. Check if it is included in the hire package.

### 7.1.12 Accommodation

Travellers should have the ability and authority to decide if accommodation meets acceptable standards of safety and hygiene. Consideration may need to be given to:

- Fire and electrical safety.
- Safety of gas appliances
- Personal security
- General safety of the structure and facilities – for example pool, lifts, balconies, cleanliness
- Environment surrounding the accommodation.
- Existence of third-party liability insurance

If the accommodation is found to present unacceptable risks to health and safety, in the first instance the traveller should contact the TMC to ask them to find alternative accommodation. If this is not forthcoming within a reasonable timeframe, or is impractical, the traveller should be given delegated authority to find alternative accommodation.

Personal security and privacy should be considered when booking accommodation e.g. depending on location, some travellers may feel less safe / secure in a ground floor room or above the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

All travellers should make themselves familiar with the fire procedures in their accommodation (alarm signal, evacuation routes, extinguishers, assembly point). Usually, fire safety instructions are displayed on the back of bedroom doors. Take the time to familiarise yourself with exit routes on arrival to reduce potential panic in an emergency.

Accommodation should be booked through the University contracted travel agent who will be able to guarantee that health and safety standards in the accommodation have been checked. However, there may be circumstances when accommodation is not booked through a contracted supplier e.g. for research in remote locations, camping or hostel accommodation etc.

Advice on camping is given in [Code of Practice 32 Fieldwork](#).

The University discourages the use of Airbnb and strongly advises the use of recognised Hotels.

## 7.1.13 Transport

### 7.1.14 Driving and Road Safety

Ensure that the travel group leader/individual traveller is competent to assess the safety of the travel arrangements in country, including travel to/from airports, transportation in-country, and the emergency arrangements, driving standards; the reliability and safety of hire car and taxi companies; what to do in the event of a road traffic accident.

Ensure that they are authorised to change the arrangements, even if this incurs additional costs, if they identify that the planned arrangements are unsafe or that safer options are available.

GOV.UK and local advice should be sought regarding the safety of public transport and road safety and driving overseas.

Travellers must ensure that they comply with local road safety and driver licence requirements.

Car/van/bus passengers **must** wear seat belts where these are fitted to the vehicle. Where there is the option of using a vehicle fitted with seat belts, this **MUST** be selected in preference to one without seat belts, even if this incurs additional costs.

Specific conditions relate to minibuses, especially with regard to driving licence requirements - further details are available from the University Insurance Team or see the University guidance [Cop52 Driving for Work Purposes](#).

**Drivers** of vehicles being driven off road must have specialist training – see the University ‘Driving for Work’ policy and procedures document. [Health & Safety Forms & Resources](#)

When hiring vehicles use a reputable company. The cheapest may not be the most reliable or the safest. The hirer has the responsibility of checking that the vehicle is as described on the delivery sheet, is properly equipped, and is roadworthy.

Plan contingency arrangements in the event that the transport arrangements fail or are assessed as unsuitable.

Risk assessments should consider the potential security threats associated with different forms and modes of transport. This applies particularly in areas with a history of kidnap or ambush.

#### **7.1.15 Air travel**

Travellers **must check** and comply with all legislative requirements relating to airline safety regulations, luggage limits, and carriage/import/export of dangerous goods and restricted or controlled articles and equipment, computer software etc.

The effects of jet lag should be considered when planning overseas visits, and subsequent work. The Finance Hospitality, Expenses and Travel policy may permit an upgrade in class of travel subject to budgetary approval.

#### **7.1.16 Aviation and marine safety standards**

The European Commission provides a list of [Airline Carriers](#) which are banned from operating in EU airspace.

University contracted travel management company will only book on EU approved airlines. No ‘blacklisted’ companies will be offered.

Travellers must not use any of the airlines banned by the EU unless there is no alternative. If they propose to fly with a carrier banned by the EU, they must obtain approval of their Head of School and justify why an alternative, safer mode of transport cannot be used. The Insurance Team must be consulted before approval is given.

Where practicable, it is preferable to use an international carrier which flies to developed destinations. Likewise, airports that receive international flights may have higher standards than a local domestic airport, even although the latter may be closer to the final destination. However, this also must be balanced by an assessment of the risk of road/ rail travel in-country to reach the final destination.

#### **7.1.17 Travel by light aircraft, non-scheduled air services and local marine services**

In some remote or under-developing areas, travel by light aircraft or boat/ferry may be the only practicable method of travel. Facilities and safety standards may be lower than would be permissible in the UK or EC. Where there are doubts about the safety of this method of travel, Head of School approval must be sought in advance.

#### **7.1.18 Dangerous, controlled, and restricted goods**

The carriage of dangerous goods by road, sea or air is governed by international regulations and conventions, covering classification, packaging, labelling and certification. Dangerous goods are any goods that pose a risk to people, property, and the environment. The relevant regulations must be checked before travel.

A license may be needed to export or import certain items – e.g. taking a sample to an exhibition. Exporting or importing controlled goods without the right license is a criminal offence, therefore anyone travelling with equipment/goods/samples must check the requirements beforehand. Travellers should also check the legal requirements for the countries that they propose to visit or travel through.

Further information on shipping dangerous goods and import/export restrictions is given on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

### 7.1.19 Use of Drones

Laws and Regulations on Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAVs) can vary widely depending on location of use. If there is an intention to take a UAV overseas, this must form part of the risk assessment process and should consider, as a minimum:

- competency of the pilot (e.g. training & experience),
- drone flight regulations for the destination country (and any countries being transited through),
- battery transportation policies for specific airline to be used,
- any required permits, Government permissions or licences required.
- any insurance requirements.

### 7.1.20 Drinking water safety

Maintain good general hand hygiene at all times and especially before eating and drinking, before and after preparing food, after using the toilet, after visiting food markets and after touching live animals. Use hand sanitiser where water is not available. Wash all dishes, cups and utensils thoroughly. Use alcohol wipes where there is no access to safe water and soap.

Contaminated food and water often pose a risk for travellers. Many of the infectious diseases associated with contaminated food and water are caused by pathogens transmitted via the faecal–oral route. Swallowing, inhaling aerosols of, or coming in contact with contaminated water, including natural freshwater, marine water, or the water in inadequately treated swimming pools, or hot tubs and spas, can transmit pathogens that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, or infection of the ears, eyes, skin, or the respiratory or nervous system.

In many parts of the world, particularly where water treatment, sanitation, and hygiene are inadequate, tap water may contain disease-causing agents, including viruses, bacteria, and parasites, or chemical contaminants. As a result, tap water in some places may be unsafe for drinking, preparing food and beverages, making ice, cooking, and brushing teeth. Pregnant women, and people whose immune systems are compromised (for example, because of HIV, chemotherapy, or transplant medications) may be especially susceptible to illness. **Take medicines to treat diarrhoea and dehydration with you in your first aid kit.**

Travelers should avoid drinking or putting into their mouths tap water unless they are reasonably certain it is safe. Consider disinfecting or filtering water when traveling to destinations where safe tap water may not be available. Tap water that is safe for drinking is still not sterile and should not be used for sinus or nasal irrigation or rinsing unless it is further disinfected by the traveller. Tap

water should never be used to clean or rinse contact lenses. Water that looks cloudy or coloured may be contaminated with chemicals and will not be made safe by boiling or disinfection.

In areas where tap water may be unsafe, only commercially bottled water from an unopened, factory-sealed container or water that has been adequately disinfected should be used for drinking, preparing food and beverages, making ice, cooking, and brushing teeth. See [Water Purification](#) for best techniques.

Beverages made with water that has just been boiled, such as tea and coffee (without milk and cream), are generally safe to drink. When served in unopened, factory-sealed cans or bottles, carbonated beverages, commercially prepared fruit drinks, water, alcoholic beverages, and pasteurized drinks generally can be considered safe. Because water on the outside of cans and bottles may be contaminated, they should be wiped clean and dried before opening or drinking directly from the container.

Beverages that may not be safe for consumption include fountain drinks or other drinks made with tap water and iced drinks. Because ice might be made from contaminated water, travellers in areas with unsafe tap water should request that beverages be served without ice.<sup>1</sup>

### 7.1.21 Food Safety

#### Preparation and storage

Cooking is the best way to make your food safe. If you can, you should:

- choose food that is served fresh and whilst still steaming hot.
- avoid pre-prepared foods which are not kept hot, kept refrigerated or kept cool on ice from buffets, street vendors, markets or restaurants.
- avoid reheating leftovers.

#### Meat and seafood

You should avoid:

- seafood which is raw: fish and shellfish can be hazardous even if well cooked. If in doubt, then it is best avoided.
- meat that is still red or pink or has red or pink juices.

#### Dairy

- Only drink or eat pasteurised milk or dairy products: boil milk that is unpasteurised and choose well-established retailers or brands if eating unpasteurised cheeses or ice cream.
- Avoid dishes that contain raw or undercooked eggs, such as mayonnaise, some sauces or desserts (e.g. mousse).

#### Fruit and vegetables

- Avoid salads and fresh herbs (including garnishes in drinks e.g. mint leaves in mojitos) where drinking water may be unsafe: they may have been washed in contaminated water.
- Peel all fruits and vegetables, including tomatoes if they are to be eaten raw: avoid types that cannot be peeled.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2020/preparing-international-travelers/food-and-water-precautions> and <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/food-and-water-precautions#food>



- Avoid berries, in particular raspberries: they are difficult to wash and may be a source of [cyclospora](#)
- Choose fruit juice from sealed cartons: freshly squeezed fruit juice may have been made with unwashed fruit.

#### **7.1.22 Health After Travel**

If you return home after travel with the following symptoms you should contact your GP and make them aware of your travel history:

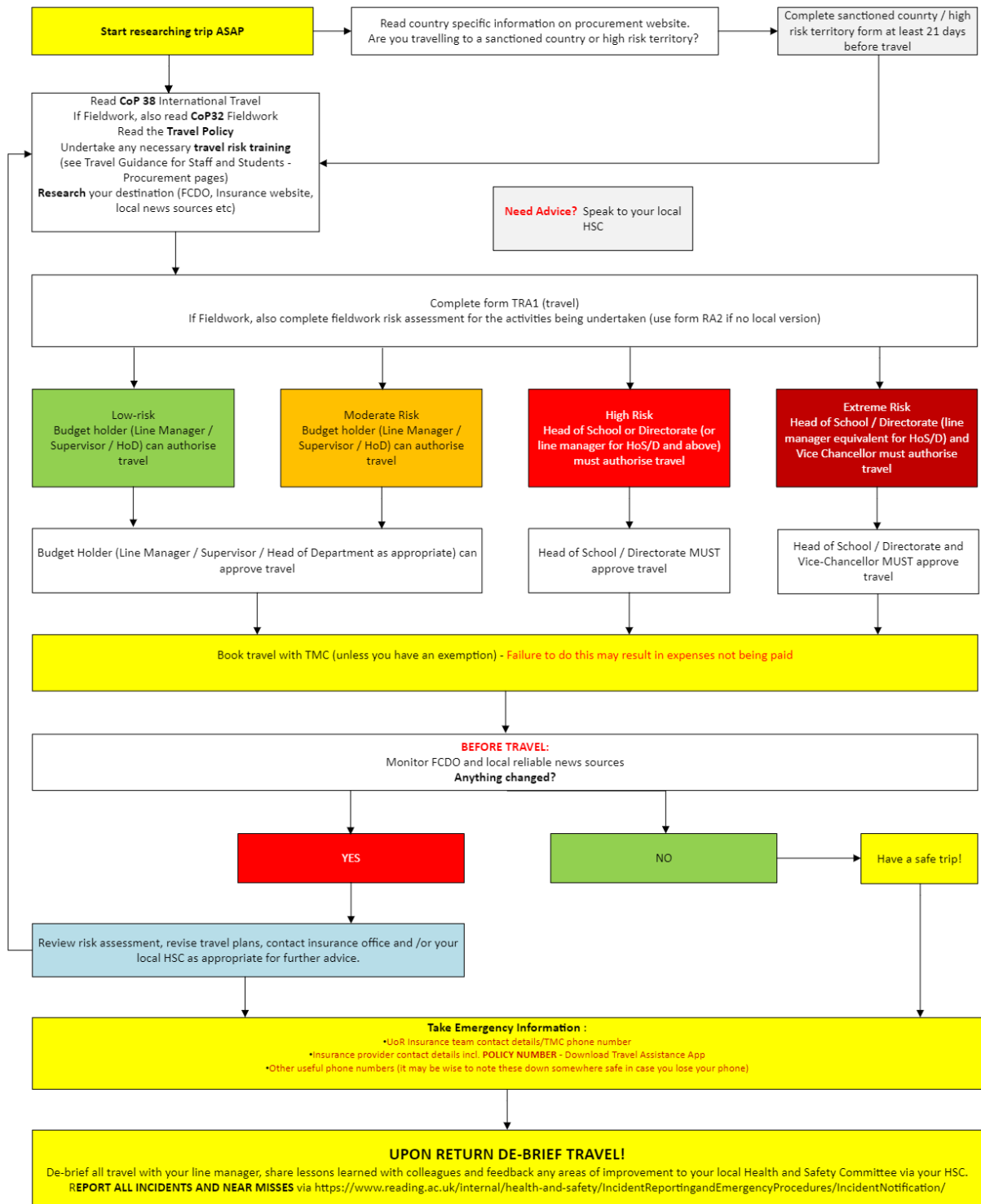
- continuous diarrhoea
- have blood or mucous in their faeces.
- a high fever
- severe abdominal pain

## **8 REVIEW & AUDIT**

Traveller and Head of School/Directorate to review adequacy of arrangements on return to the University. This includes business trips, teaching activities overseas, study trips and fieldwork trips. Pass on any lessons learned to colleagues via local Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees, the Insurance Team and Travel Category Manager. Where the local Health and Safety Committee does have concerns, they should be referred to Programme Directors or School Directors of Teaching and Learning to undertake an assessment and report back to the Committee.

This Code of Practice should be reviewed every 3 years and compliance may be subject to intermittent audit by the Health and Safety Services Auditor.

## 9 APPENDIX 1 – INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FLOWCHART



## 10 USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- [Association of British Tour Operators: How to have a safe and healthy holiday in the snow](#)
- [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#)
- [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office: Helping British People Overseas Travelling and Living Abroad](#)
- [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office: Overseas road safety checklist](#)
- [Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents: Staying Safe on Holiday](#)
- [Suzy Lamplugh Trust: Personal safety](#)
- [Travel Aware - staying safe and healthy abroad](#)
- [UK Government: Foreign Travel Advice](#)
- [US Centres for Disease Control: Cruise ship travel](#)
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) food safety fact sheet](#)
- [Travel Health Pro – Demonstrating your Covid-19 status for travel](#)
- [Carolines Rainbow Foundation \(Personal Safety advice for young travellers\)](#)
- [World Travel Guide \(country, city, food and drink, accommodation guides\)](#)
- [DJI - International Drone Flying Tips](#)

## 11 VERSION CONTROL LOG OF DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Changes	Author	Approved by	Approval date	Published date
12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change to approval process (including travel flowchart)</li> <li>2. Updates to LGBTQIA+ guidance and resources</li> <li>3. Changes to organisational titles from “Function” to “Directorate.”</li> <li>4. Competence section updated.</li> <li>5. General repairs to broken links</li> </ol>	Wendy Manning H&SS	Director of H&SS	January 2025	