



Ministry  
of Defence



## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE STATEMENT OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL POLICY

### CHANGE OF WORK LOCATION: HEALTHCARE, WELFARE AND COMPASSIONATE TRAVEL WHILE OVERSEAS

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Healthcare, Welfare and Travel while Overseas -U

**Contact:** DBS Enquiry Centre  
- 93345 7772 (Mil)  
- 0800 345 7772 (STD)  
- +44 1225 747772 (Overseas)

## HEALTHCARE WHILE OVERSEAS

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has been Equality and Diversity Impact Assessed in accordance with the Department's Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Tool against:

#### **Part 1 Assessment Only (no diversity impact found)**

### FOR YOU AS AN EMPLOYEE AND FOR YOU AS A MANAGER

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

##### Healthcare

##### Entitlement to Healthcare and Medical Treatment while Overseas

1. On posting overseas, you and any officially accompanying dependants are eligible to receive healthcare overseas. The specific entitlements are:
2. Spouses, officially recognised partners and dependant children who
  - travelled overseas at public expense and who are similarly entitled to
  - return travel to the UK (or to another country, if recruited outside the
  - UK) at tour expiry;
3. Dependant children requiring urgent/emergency treatment (but not routine treatment) while visiting you on a School Children's Visit; and Nannies who travelled with you at public expense as officially recognised dependants. [in Germany please refer to local instructions British Forces Germany]
4. Employees may contact the Employee Wellbeing Service (EWS) which offers support to employees, including help to cope with personal, health and work related issues. The EWS also supports those who have been exposed to traumatic incidents in the workplace; more information can be found at the following link: [Employee Wellbeing Service](#). All requests for Critical Incident Support for staff serving overseas should, in the first instance, be made to Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell (JCCC) who are the single point of contact for all casualty and compassionate notifications.

##### How Healthcare is Provided while Overseas

5. The arrangements for healthcare when you are overseas vary from location to location and details of the arrangements that apply to you will be available at post. However, as a guide, the most common means of healthcare delivery are:
  - HM Forces medical and dental services (e.g. in locations such as Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Germany, and Gibraltar).
  - Local healthcare providers available under reciprocal healthcare agreements (e.g.

EU Social Services regulations).

- Local healthcare providers under contract to MOD.
- Local healthcare providers available via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Diplomatic Service Medical Scheme.
- Local arrangements in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (as part of a loan or exchange).
- Local arrangements made by a "receiving" employer/authority if on secondment

### **IMPORTANT:**

- You should always use the officially recognised healthcare provider.
- In EU member states, where reciprocal arrangements for the provision of healthcare apply, only one provider should be used so as to remove parallel pathways where differences in clinical practices might create risky health conditions to the individual. This is particularly important overseas where there is no contractual obligation on third parties to communicate with the British Forces Health Service resulting in a potentially adverse outcome for which MOD can accept no responsibility.

### **Types of Treatment and Fees and Charges**

6. The MOD will only meet the cost of necessary and essential medical/dental treatment and tests. For example, the MOD will not pay for cosmetic treatment or cosmetic dentistry. Where it would be payable in the UK you will be required to pay the equivalent NHS charge overseas (e.g. NHS prescription charges, dental charges etc.) for any treatment that you receive with the MOD covering any excess. Any bills or fees that may be raised for necessary and essential medical treatment whilst overseas will be reimbursed and funded from the local overseas budget. Similarly, where an exemption exists under NHS arrangements, these will be recognised overseas.

### **Medical Referral to the UK**

7. If medical resources are limited in the overseas area and certain types of specialist treatment and consultation cannot be provided locally or where such treatment can be provided locally, but is cost prohibited, then one of the medical authorities described above in the "**How healthcare is provided while overseas**" section can refer you or one of your dependants to the UK for essential treatment or consultation. In such instances return travel to the UK will be at public expense and will normally be undertaken by the officially recognised method of travel as detailed in **Policy, Rules & Guidance: Change of Work Location - Travel to and from Locations Overseas**. Travel by civil air will only be authorised if there are medical reasons for doing so. Travel will be to one of the following locations:
  - A hospital/treatment centre in the UK recommended by the medical authority or MOD's Occupational Health provider;

or

- previous UK permanent duty station;

or

- if no previous duty station then UK home address prior to recruitment;

or

- any location in the UK within the cost of travel to your previous UK permanent duty station or UK home address prior to recruitment.

### **Accommodation Expenses while in the UK for Medical Reasons**

8. Normal subsistence arrangements do not apply where medical referrals to the UK are concerned as they are not considered to be official duty. However, where necessary, you may take up hotel/bed and breakfast accommodation. You may either use the services of the Defence Hotel Reservation Service (DHRS) to book hotel accommodation or make your own private arrangements and claim the cost of bed and breakfast accommodation within the authorised limit - see **Policy, Rules & Guidance: Change of Work Location and Travel and Subsistence - Rates of Allowances, Costs, Rates and Charges**. No Incidental Expenses Allowance is payable.

### **Return to the Overseas Area**

9. On completion of your treatment or consultation the medical authority in the UK, or where appropriate MOD's Occupational Health provider, will confirm you, or your dependant's, fitness to return to the overseas area as long as:
10. you still have at least 6 months of your overseas tour of duty left; and
11. your dependant was not permanently invalidated to the UK and the return was not an anticipated homeward journey

### **Expectant Mothers – Return to the UK for Child Birth**

12. Expectant mothers, living in overseas areas where there are no suitable Service medical facilities able to provide similar facilities and surroundings to those available in UK, can opt to travel to UK at public expense to have their babies under the National Health Service (or privately if they have made their own administrative and financial arrangements).
13. Travel at public expense under these terms may be granted subject to the following conditions:
14. Travel to/from UK is to be by RAF/MOD Charter flights where they cover the whole or part of the route, otherwise civil flights may be used.
15. Privately Arranged Travel is not permissible.
16. No other member of the family may travel, except for officially accompanying dependants for whom adequate care cannot be provided in your absence (e.g. children under 5).
17. No subsistence is payable.

18. Return travel at public expense to the overseas area is permissible as long as there is at least 3 months of the tour of duty left and the medical authority in the UK has declared mother and child fit to travel.

## **TIPS, HINTS AND FAQs**

### **Healthcare - other things you should know about medical treatment while overseas**

#### **Q1. If I am on leave in the overseas area and require necessary and essential medical treatment will the MOD still pay?**

A. Yes, the MOD will still cover the cost of essential medical treatment if you are on leave in the overseas area.

#### **Q.2 If I am on leave in the UK or another country outside of my normal place of duty and I require necessary and essential medical treatment will the MOD still pay?**

A. No, if you are in the UK we would expect you to use NHS medical facilities and where you are in another country you will be responsible for any medical costs and you are strongly advised to take out adequate travel insurance cover.

#### **Q.3 If I am detached duty within the overseas area or in another country will the MOD reimburse the cost of any essential medical or dental treatment?**

A. Yes, the MOD will reimburse the cost of necessary and essential treatment. You should have a look at the Civilian Detached Duty Expenses.

#### **Q.4 Would the MOD reimburse the cost of travel to and from a hospital or other medical facility for attendance at an appointment?**

A. No the MOD would not normally reimburse travel costs for attendance at medical appointments in the overseas, area as this would be considered to be your own responsibility, as it would be in the UK. However, if your post is in a fairly remote location and the nearest hospital/medical facility is beyond reasonable travelling distance then you would be able to claim reimbursement of travel costs. We would consider a round trip in excess of 30 miles/51 km to be unreasonable for this purpose.

#### **Q.5 I note that when my children visit me under the School Children's Visit scheme the MOD will cover the cost of urgent/emergency treatment. Would the MOD also cover the cost of non-emergency routine treatment?**

A. No, you would be responsible for the cost of any non-emergency routine medical treatment that your child might require while visiting you. You are strongly advised to consider taking out travel insurance for your child's visit.

#### **Q.6 If the MOD medical authority refers me or a member of my family to the UK for essential treatment or consultation, or recommends a permanent return to the UK, can I opt out and gain the necessary treatment from a local healthcare provider under the reciprocal healthcare agreements (e.g. EU Social Services regulations).**

A. Yes, this is possible. However as a medical decision has been made that you, or your family member's condition would be best dealt with through treatment or repatriation to the UK then be aware that the subsequent local medical provided may not be at a UK assured standard and that reverting to the officially recognised healthcare provider would not be an option.