

Charter flight from Jamaica for British travellers seeking to return to the UK

News story

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The UK chartered TUI Airways flight will depart from Kingston Norman Manley International airport, to London Heathrow on 7 May 2020.

British travellers in Jamaica wishing to return on this flight should visit [FCO Travel Advice Jamaica Return to the UK](#) page for further information on how to register. Priority is initially being given to vulnerable passengers including those over 70 and others who have medical requirements. Where possible, the FCO will bring back Jamaicans who have Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK and who have lived in the UK in the last year.

Minister for the Caribbean, Baroness Sugg said:

This is our latest flight from the Caribbean. By partnering with TUI Airways, we are going to get around 140 British travellers home from Jamaica to be with their families at this challenging time. Our staff in Jamaica will continue to make sure any Brits not on these flights get the support they need.

Asif Ahmad, High Commissioner to Jamaica, said:

This flight will help British travellers stuck in Jamaica to get back to the UK. I encourage all those with an interest to register now as it is unlikely that there will be any further charter flights. I'd also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Jamaican authorities for enabling us to get people home during this crisis.

This follows UK Government flights announced from the Bahamas, Cuba, and Guyana. British missions in the Caribbean have now helped over 11,000 British travellers return to the UK via commercial routes, including over 4,000 from Jamaica.

The flight is being organised in partnership with TUI who are using the outbound leg from the UK to Jamaica to help crew from their cruise ships to get back to the Caribbean. This is enabling us to offer a cost-effective approach to get more British travellers home.

The UK Government is working with the airline industry and host governments across the world to bring back British travellers to the UK as part of the plan announced by Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on 30 March – with up to £75 million available for special charter flights to priority countries, focused on helping the most vulnerable travellers.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The charter flights are for British travellers who normally reside in the UK, as well as their direct dependents. Jamaican citizens with appropriate residency rights will be included. A number of seats will be reserved for those deemed vulnerable.
- To book flights and register their details, British travellers should check the [FCO Travel Advice pages](#).
- Those who are eligible to fly will be sent information on getting to airports and flight itineraries directly when their seat is confirmed.
- Details regarding luggage allowance, flight costs and carriers will be available on the booking portal.
- The British High Commission continues to provide consular support to any British travellers who remain in Jamaica.
- Guidance on how to book onto a government charter flight back to the UK can be found [here](#).

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[RAF Typhoons begin NATO Air Policing](#)

mission in Lithuania

News story

Royal Air Force Typhoon jets will be in Lithuania for the summer, patrolling and protecting NATO airspace.



An RAF Typhoon FGR-4 from RAF Lossiemouth arrives at Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania

The aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth in northern Scotland will be stationed at the Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania for the UK's latest contribution to the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission.

Alongside F-18 fighters from the Spanish Air Force, the RAF Typhoons will fly over Baltic skies to deter any threats to NATO Allies' airspace. They will safely monitor and investigate any aircraft flying near Lithuanian airspace with transponders switched off or without a flight plan.

Around 150 RAF personnel – together forming 135 Expeditionary Air Wing – have deployed to Lithuania for the mission. All necessary measures have been taken to ensure that both UK and Lithuanian mandated COVID-19 precautions have been followed. The deployment, known as Operation Azotize, is a core defence task that the RAF is able to complete without impacting the military's ongoing support to the UK Government's COVID-19 response.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Britain's adversaries will not let Covid-19 stop them threatening our citizens and allies. It is for that reason the UK Armed Forces continue their operations at home and abroad – ensuring the collective defence of NATO and our national security.

This summer's deployment is the latest example of the UK's enduring and active commitment to Euro-Atlantic security, the bedrock of which is the NATO Alliance.

In nearby Estonia, over 800 British Army personnel stand sentinel on NATO's eastern flank as the lead of the country's NATO enhanced Forward Presence multinational battlegroup.

Last summer the RAF also deployed to Estonia for Baltic Air Policing, where Typhoons from RAF Coningsby conducted a total of 21 interceptions of 56 Russian aircraft over the course of four months. Previous RAF contributions to the mission occurred in 2016 in Estonia and 2014 in Lithuania.

Additionally, the RAF supported NATO Southern Air Policing in Romania in 2018 and NATO Icelandic Air Policing last year.

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[PM call with M9 Mayors: 1 May 2020](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke with the M9 group of Mayors.



The Prime Minister, Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick and Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Simon Clarke today spoke with the M9 group of Mayors and leader of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to update them on the current situation and to discuss their role in the response to coronavirus.

The Prime Minister agreed that the Mayors have a vital leadership role to play in planning for the economic recovery in their own respective regions and made clear that the Government will continue to work closely with them as it seeks to restart the economy whilst preventing a second wave of the virus.

Following the meeting, a Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister thanked the Mayors for their incredible efforts in tackling this unprecedented public health and economic challenge.

“Clearly, as we get this whole country back on its feet, mayors should be at the forefront of local recovery and the Prime Minister welcomed today’s constructive discussion about what more we can do to support businesses and people in their areas.”

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[Health and Social Care Secretary’s statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 1 May 2020](#)

Good afternoon and welcome once again to Downing Street for the daily coronavirus briefing.

I’m joined today by Professor John Newton, who co-ordinates our work on testing, and Professor Stephen Powis, who is the Medical Director of the NHS.

Every day we are working through our plan to protect life and protect the NHS by slowing the spread and building the capacity so that, at all times, the NHS has got the capacity to give can offer the very best care to everyone who needs it.

In today’s briefing, after setting out the daily statistics, I want to talk about testing.

But beforehand I would like to share some really good news. Earlier this week, I said that we are now able to begin the restoration of NHS services. Now that we are past the peak, I can tell you about the next step – the restoration of fertility services.

Few families have been untouched by the amazing advances in fertility treatment over the past generation, and I know just how time-sensitive fertility treatment can be. And I know how important it is to the families affected. And I know that this treatment can change lives for the better, forever.

So when I say thank you to all of you everybody watching for staying at home to protect the NHS, of course I’m saying thank you on behalf of the lives you are saving. But I’m also saying thanks on behalf of the lives that the NHS can now once again, help to create.

Because, together, we have protected the NHS, and now we are now restoring the NHS, and restoring the chance for so many couples to start a family.

Turning to the figures, 177,454 people have tested positive for coronavirus,

an increase of 6,201 since yesterday. 15,111 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus and 27,510 people have now sadly died across all settings, an increase of 739. As one, we will remember them and treasure their memories.

This is a virus that has a devastating impact on families, friends, on local communities. And right across government, we are working day and night to defeat it.

At the beginning of last month, at this podium, I set a goal that anyone who needs a test should get a test. And that as a nation, we should achieve 100,000 tests per day by the end of the month. I knew that it was an audacious goal, but we needed an audacious goal because testing is so important for getting Britain back on her feet.

I can announce that we have met our goal. The number of tests, yesterday, on the last day of April, was 122,347. This unprecedented expansion in British testing capability is an incredible achievement. But it is not my achievement. It is a national achievement, achieved by a huge team of people working together.

And I tell you this: the testing capacity that we built, together, will help every single person in this country. Testing is crucial to suppress the virus.

I know from personal experience, too, just how much people with symptoms want to know if they have got the disease. I know that I did. It helps remove the worry, it helps keep people safe, and it will help us to unlock the lockdown.

So many people have tragically died and the challenge that we still face is so huge, but we are making real progress.

I want to take a moment to thank and pay tribute to the incredible team who did this together and who joined together in one of the greatest national mobilisations that we've seen.

We brought together the best civil servants, the best minds from the private sector, the best scientists, the best lab technicians and the best of the best in the armed forces.

Setting stretching, ambitious goals in a crisis has a galvanising effect on everyone involved. It's a mission. If we hadn't been so bold, if we had chosen a safer, easier path, I just can't see how we would have built the capacity that we need.

In a short few weeks, we've:

- created a new test for the virus
- built a network of regional testing centres

- put a fleet of mobile testing units on the road.
- and created home testing kits, so if you can't get to a test, we can get the test to you

We've more than doubled the capacity of NHS and Public Health England labs, and created 3 brand new mega-labs to analyse the results.

So many people have played a part in this work. British diagnostic companies like Randox and Oxford Nanopore and Medical Wire and DNANudge and Samba. Logistics companies like the Royal Mail and Yodel, who were brilliant and got us out of a real hole this week. Academics like Professor Derek Crook and Sir John Bell from Oxford, and Professor Ara Darzi from Imperial.

Deloitte and Boots who have delivered our drive-through centres, AstroZeneca, GSK and Novacyte, whose lab goes on stream next week, Public Health England and the NHS, of course, who pulled out all the stops. Professor Sharon Peacock, Professor John Newton And UK Biocentre and the Crick, who set up high-tech laboratories.

And also it wasn't just a national effort. People from across the world – including ThermoFisher, Hologic, Abbott and Amazon from the US, Qiagen from Germany and Roche from Switzerland.

And this is how we did it. Because everybody everyone worked together with grit and determination to reach a shared goal, and they thrived because the team contained a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and, critically, a diversity of thought.

And when things went wrong, which they did every single day, believe me, we didn't ask who we could blame – we asked how we could fix it.

So, to my team, I want to say: you toiled tirelessly, night and day, and I am so proud of what you have achieved. To all of you, on behalf of the government and on behalf of the whole country, thank you.

As the Prime Minister has said, a big increase in testing provides a way to unlock the puzzle of coronavirus, and testing forms the first element of our plan to test, track and trace.

By mid-May we will have an initial 18,000 contact tracers in place. That work is underway as we speak. And if it needs to be bigger, we will scale it as required.

The combination of contact tracers and new technology, through our new COVID-19 NHS app will help tell us where the virus is spreading and help everyone to control new infections.

People will be able to know if they have been in close contact with someone who is transmitting the disease, and take the action that they need to. Our full-scale test, track and trace model will drive the infection rate down and

the lower the R, and the lower the number of new infections, the more effective the track and trace system will be.

Tracking and tracing will allow us to get R down, and hold R down, and so it will allow us to lift lockdown measures.

Now this disease affects us all indiscriminately, we've seen that. In recent weeks, we have had to impinge on historic liberties to protect our NHS and our loved ones, and yet our goal must be freedom. Freedom from the virus, yes – and we will not lift measures until it is safe to do so.

But also we care about the restoration of social freedom and economic freedom too. Each citizen's right to do as they please. For now, we are working together to stay home. We are impinging on the freedom of all, for the safety of all.

With this next mission, of test, track and trace, I am seeking a solution that allows us – by each of us participating – to target the measures that are needed with much more precision, and so to reassert as much as is safely possible, the liberty of us all.

That is our next mission. But for now, the most important thing for everyone to do, to keep R down and to get us all through this, is to maintain the spirit and the resolve that has had such an impact thus far.

So, please, stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

[Health Secretary welcomes reopening of fertility services](#)

- fertility regulator to lift temporary suspension of fertility services
- Health and Social Care Secretary will ask all clinical commissioning groups to ensure local services urgently resume

People who had to put their fertility treatment on hold due to the COVID-19 outbreak will be able to continue their journey to start a family, following the fertility regulator's decision to lift its suspension of all fertility services.

Fertility clinics across the UK can apply to reopen from Monday 11 May, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has confirmed, if they ensure the safety and protection of staff and patients.

The regulator has today set out new conditions for clinics, both private and NHS, to meet in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

All clinics will be required to set out a strategy to show they are meeting

conditions to provide safe and effective treatment during the outbreak before they are given the green light to restart treatment.

Social distancing will be a requirement in waiting rooms and telephone appointments could be used where suitable. Appropriate personal protective equipment will also be provided where necessary.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

Now that we are past the peak, I am delighted to announce the restoration of fertility services.

People who are relying on fertility treatment have been worried during these unprecedented times not knowing when they could continue their journey to start a family.

We wanted to open these clinics as soon as it was safe to do so, and our strict guidelines will ensure staff and patients remain safe as we continue to tackle this virus.

Sally Cheshire, Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, said:

I am pleased that the HFEA has agreed fertility clinics can apply to reopen from 11 May. Our priority throughout the pandemic has been to consider how treatment could resume quickly and safely for as many patients as possible and our clear plan sets out how clinics can treat and care for patients safely during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

I know that the closure of clinics has been extremely distressing for patients and this will be good news for those wanting to resume treatment and have the opportunity to try for their much longed-for family.

Many private clinics may be able to demonstrate their readiness to restart services relatively quickly, but it's recognised that NHS clinics may require longer to achieve the necessary conditions due to other factors, such as the redeployment of staff in frontline roles.

To ensure fair provision, the Health and Social Care Secretary will write to all clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) this week to confirm they are in a position to begin resuming fertility treatments to those in their area – either through a private clinic or an NHS service.

He will make clear that all fertility patients should be dealt with fairly and not face any additional disadvantage as a result of the service suspension.

Services were temporarily suspended on 23 March 2020 in response to the coronavirus lockdown, alongside other elective treatments by NHS England.

The new measures will mean individuals and couples looking to start fertility treatment will be able to safely continue to do so.

Clinics will be asked to provide strategic plans to the HFEA to ensure they are meeting the safety needs of patients before being given the go-ahead that they can reopen. An auditing tool will be used to ensure compliance with guidelines.

This follows news last week that the government will allow anyone who has frozen their eggs, sperm and embryos to extend their storage for an additional 2 years, as part of wider plans to support those going through fertility treatment during the global coronavirus pandemic.

Geeta Nargund, Lead Consultant for Reproductive Medicine at St George's Hospital NHS Trust, said:

We are delighted that IVF services are opening soon. We thank the government for recognising the distress faced by thousands of women and couples across our nation and acting swiftly to help them.

We must ensure that effective social distancing and safety measures are put in place so that we can not only help save lives but start creating lives again.

CCGs are responsible for NHS fertility treatment provision in their area in England. Funding of IVF treatment is the responsibility of the devolved governments.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [fertility guidelines](#) makes recommendations about who should have access to IVF treatment on the NHS in England and Wales.

But individual NHS clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) make the final decision about who can have NHS-funded IVF in their local area, and their criteria may be different to those recommended by NICE.