

COVID-19: consular FAQs by British nationals in India

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the UK government has advised against non-essential travel overseas.

Please sign up for alerts on our [travel advice page](#) and follow our social media channels (@UKinIndia) for the latest information.

Urgent Consular Assistance

If you require urgent consular assistance, please contact our consular helplines on:

- New Delhi: +91 (11) 2419 2100
- Chennai: + 91 (44) 42192151
- Mumbai/Goa: +91 (22) 6650 2222

Alternatively contact us via the web messengers:

Flights

What is the UK doing to set up evacuation flights?

We are urgently working with the Government of India and airlines to enable returns to take place on commercial flights, and we will update our [guidance for British nationals](#) as soon as more information is available.

What is the likely timescale for evacuation flights to commence?

Currently there is a restriction on commercial international passenger flights until 14th April 2020, and on commercial domestic flights until the end of the government lockdown on 15th April 2020. If anything becomes available before then, we will let British nationals know by updating our travel advice and social media channels.

Will international flights resume on 14th April 2020 as previously stated?

The situation is highly fluid and British nationals should be prepared for the possibility that this could be extended. We are in close contact with the Government of India and will update our guidance as soon as more information becomes available. Please also stay in contact with your airline.

Why has UK not acted whilst other foreign missions have already run evacuation flights?

We are collecting information on British nationals currently in India to help understand how best to support you and to advise you when commercial flights become available to the UK. If you are a British national who is visiting India and want to be kept informed of commercial flights that may be

available from India to the UK please contact us using the email address Congry.Newdelhi@fco.gov.uk. Please see “contacting the FCO” section below which sets out what details you will need to include.

How will I get to the airport when flights operate?

We are working with the Government of India and State governments to put plans in place to enable British nationals to reach airports once commercial flights resume.

Accommodation, Food, and Supplies

Our hotel is threatening to throw us out, what can we do?

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You should ask your hotel to provide alternative accommodation, or talk to the police who can assist with this.

We are unable to buy any food, water, medicines or other essentials because all the shops are shut – what can we do?

The Government of India has ordered that food, medicines and other supplies will continue to remain available during the lockdown period. We are aware that supplies are running low, and some shops are closed. State Governments are working to put systems in place, and we are in touch them.

If you need medicine, use Google to check on pharmacies closest to you and see if they will deliver. If not, you should walk (don't drive) to the nearest pharmacy or ask for assistance from your accommodation provider. Carry any medical papers or prescriptions and be prepared to answer questions if stopped by the police – the majority of police will let you through if you have a legitimate reason for being out.

If the same medication you're on is not available, consult a local doctor for an Indian alternative or go to the nearest hospital. In a genuine medical emergency, call an ambulance.

If you are in Goa

The State of Goa has implemented a lockdown and curfew, meaning if you are outdoors you may be stopped and detained by authorities. You should stay indoors as far as possible and only step out for legitimate reasons. Be prepared to explain why you are out if you are stopped. For food requests the Goa State Government has set up the helpline +91 9423890066, and for medicine requests the helpline +91 7823026971. If you require urgent consular

assistance, please contact our consular helpline on +91 (22) 6650 2222.

Can you arrange safe passage for me from A to B during the lockdown?

There is currently a 21-day lockdown declared across India. You should only be moving out of your accommodation for legitimate reasons. If you need to travel for a genuine emergency, please contact the nearest police station and explain the situation to the police, who will be able to help you. If you cannot contact them yourself, seek assistance from your accommodation provider.

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How can I extend my Visa?

The Indian Government has announced that visas will be extended for those who have been unable to leave the country because of the lockdown measures. You should apply to the Foreigners' Regional Registration Office (FRR0) for an [extension online here](#).

I didn't get a response to my email I sent to the Congry.Newdelhi@fco.gov.uk inbox?

The Congry.Newdelhi@fco.gov.uk mailbox is set to automatically acknowledge an email you have sent to us. Please check your Junk email to see if an acknowledgement has gone there. If you have not received an automated response, please double check the email address and resend your information with no attachments. If this fails, then if possible please send from another email address.

Due to the volume of emails we are receiving, we will be unable to send an individual response to everyone. We will however send any updates on the availability of flights to everyone on the list. You should also register for alerts to our Travel Advice and follow us on social media for any updates.

Please ensure to include all of the following information, so that we do not have to contact you for further information, reducing our capacity to assist. Presenting the information clearly will help us work through the information quickly. Please include, in the following format:

- Your full name (and names of any family members with you)
- Date of birth (for all named family members)
- Passport number
- Visa status
- Contact details
- Exact location in India
- Date of arrival in India

- Details of the return flight that you had planned to take back to the UK
- If you have any special circumstances, such as a medical condition

What's happening to my information now? I've not received any more emails from you?

We have received a very large number of emails and we are putting all resources in place to support you as needed – we ask that you do not email us again to follow up.. We will send any updates on the availability of flights to everyone on the list. You should also register for alerts to our Travel Advice and follow us on social media for any updates.

Can I send other important information to the Congry.Newdelhi@fco.gov.uk inbox?

Please only send the requested information to the congry inbox. If you need consular assistance or guidance, please call us instead on

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- Chennai: + 91 (44) 42192151
- Mumbai/Goa: +91 (22) 6650 2222

Or write to us via the web messengers:

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Flickr](#), [Youtube](#), [Eventbrite](#) and [Blogs](#)

[Defence Electronics and Components Agency COVID-19 update](#)

DECA will remain operational in line with Government guidance throughout the COVID-19 emergency to deliver key Defence and National Security outputs, support overseas operations (where possible), and MOD contingency plans held at readiness to provide Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities.

Our Business Continuity planning is based on our ability to support those tasks which are critical to Defence and National Security interests in these challenging times, with DECA seeking urgent assistance from our customers to determine which of their products fall into these categories. We are currently contacting our customers to establish which tasks are critical so that we can plan and resource accordingly while at the same time complying with Government advice on home working for those non-critical activities or where people can operate remotely.

We also appreciate that, as the on-going situation continues to develop, critical tasks will emerge and priorities will change and we will keep our

customers updated to reflect this. To remain updated with our ongoing support to defence, please [subscribe](#) to receive updates.

[Government announces new action to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains](#)

The [statement](#), which is published to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, outlines action being taken to ensure that taxpayers' money does not line the pockets of criminals who exploit vulnerable workers.

Thousands of businesses are currently required to publish annual modern slavery statements under the Act.

To lead the way for the public sector, the UK government has now published its statement which assesses the risk of modern slavery across around £50 billion of its annual spending. Individual ministerial departments will publish their modern slavery statements from 2020/21.

The government has also consulted on strengthening the requirement for large businesses to publish their modern slavery statements – including extending this to public bodies – and has committed to developing a registry for modern slavery statements.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

As we acknowledge everything this government has achieved for victims of modern slavery over the last five years, I am proud that we are taking this unprecedented step to show how we are tackling slavery during procurement.

We are committed to targeting perpetrators and safeguarding victims of this horrific crime, both domestically and globally.

Cabinet Office Minister Lord Agnew said:

As a government, we are committed to driving out modern slavery in all forms, so it is crucial that we make sure it's nowhere to be seen in the supply chains which helps provide our vital public services.

I am also delighted that across government, we will be publishing

our own modern slavery statements, so people can see the work we are doing to fight this terrible practice.

The statement sets out the government's efforts towards eradicating modern slavery from its supply chains, including direct engagement with around 400 suppliers on implementing effective modern slavery due diligence and delivering training to more than 250 government commercial staff.

The government has already announced plans to deliver greater social value through its commercial activities, that will incentivise businesses to become more responsible and sustainable.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 continues to be a landmark piece of legislation, which gives law enforcement greater powers to tackle modern slavery and improved essential support for victims.

Measures in the Act included:

- introduction of the statutory defence for victims who were compelled to commit criminal offences
- creation of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians in England and Wales to advocate on behalf of trafficked children
- creation of the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to encourage good practice in tackling modern slavery and the identification of victims.

Earlier this week the government published [statutory guidance for safeguarding victims of modern slavery](#) that sets out the support available to victims and the process for determining whether someone is a victim.

The number of live police operations has increased thanks to the provisions under the Act, from 188 police operations in December 2016 to at least 1,810 in February 2020. In the year to September 2019, the police recorded 6,544 offences of modern slavery, an increase of 53% compared with the previous year (4,268 offences).

Dame Sara Thornton, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, said:

Five years ago, the Modern Slavery Act introduced ground-breaking new measures to improve the protection offered to victims and survivors of modern slavery and to bolster the law enforcement response against perpetrators of this devastating crime.

However, protecting victims and prosecutors is not enough. We need to do much more to tackle the structures that allow exploitation to thrive. Ensuring that businesses, public services and government are doing all they can to prevent trafficking from taking place in their supply chains is vital.

I welcome the publication of the government modern slavery statement and this commitment to continue taking a world-leading

approach to tackling modern slavery.

COVID-19 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR SERVICE OF WRITS, MOTIONS & OTHER COURT DOCUMENTS

In light of the current situation, there will be no staff based in the office at Victoria Quay for the next few weeks. Accordingly the Office of the Advocate General is, until further notice, unable to accept service of any writs, motions for specification of documents, other motions and applications or other court documents which would normally be sent by post to the Victoria Quay address.

We will however accept service of all such documents electronically. Please send all communications to DivisionASolicitors@advocategeneral.gov.uk and they will be acknowledged as soon as possible.

Please note this does not supersede any existing agreed electronic service arrangements which may be in place with private practice firms handling UK Government litigation in Scotland.

The arrangements set out in the document relating to service on the service of documents page on this website are superseded meantime.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): impact on our services

We will continue to operate as close to normal as possible in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We would like to apologise to anyone who might be affected by a slower-than-usual service.

Impact on our services

Our Business e-services, which receive the majority of all applications, are running as normal. In these unprecedented circumstances all other services are facing varying degrees of disruption and there may be some delays. However, we are working hard to minimise disruption and are prioritising the services that allow property transactions to continue as normal.

We anticipate minimal disruption to:

- bankruptcy searches
- Find a property
- land charges searches
- local land charges searches
- MapSearch
- official copies of documents
- official searches of the index map
- official searches of part
- official searches of whole
- Property Alert

We anticipate that some of our services will be affected by the current situation with some applications taking slightly longer than our usual service standards.

We anticipate moderate disruption to discharge updates.

We are working hard to ensure our most important services continue. As a result services which have less impact upon the normal operation of the property market are likely to experience more significant disruption. We anticipate that we will be unable to meet normal service standards for these services.

We anticipate more significant disruption to:

- register create applications
- register update applications

Cancellations

We have extended all current cancellation dates until further notice. We will update you once we resume normal service and at that point we will send warnings of cancellation again, giving you four weeks to reply to our requests for information (requisitions).

Extensions

We will aim to grant any request to either extend a notice period, or allow a further period for making an objection, for any reason related to the coronavirus. However, there are some circumstances where we will not be able to do so including where:

- in some cases, the Land Registration Rules 2003 prescribe a period or a maximum period – while we cannot extend the maximum period, we may be able to delay determining the application concerned to allow for late responses
 - an example of where we might do this would be to allow for a late objection to an application for the entry of a restriction (s.45(2) and r.92(9))
- the registrar serves notice of an application to cancel a caution against first registration (s.18(4) and r.53) or to cancel a unilateral notice (s.36(3) and r.86) on the expiry of the prescribed period, which

cannot be extended beyond a maximum number of days, the registrar is obliged to cancel the caution or unilateral notice in the absence of an objection

- the period for serving counter notice to an application for registration as proprietor by a squatter under [Schedule 6](#) to the Land Registration Act 2002 cannot be extended (para.3 of Sch.6 and r.189) – counter-notice is ineffective once the notice period has expired: paragraphs 3(2) and 4 of Schedule 6
 - rule 189 deals with the notice period for giving counter-notice: no provision is made for the period to be extended

Evidence of identity

We will no longer reject applications where identity evidence is not provided. Instead we will now raise a request for information (requisition) so the application does not lose its priority.

More time to access PDF downloads

We know many of our business customers have only limited access to their systems at the moment. We have therefore temporarily extended the time you have to [access your organisation's PDFs on the portal](#).

Documents for applications completed on or after 16 March are now available free of charge for 90 days from the day they were completed, instead of the usual 30 days. This includes completed registrations and documents for guaranteed queries such as official copies and official searches.

Register, title plan and document views that are in your download area will also benefit from the extended time.

Land Charges applications

We have changed our practice to allow most Land Charges applications to be made by email, through attaching PDF copies of application forms and any supporting evidence. Only customers with a variable Direct Debit account will be able to do this. A new paragraph 6.1.3 has been added to [practice guide 63](#). The change does not extend to those applications that can already be made through the portal or Business Gateway. Practice guide 63 contains full details.

Expedite an application

We apologise if your application is affected by this necessary prioritisation of work. If you feel that your application is urgent, you can ask us to expedite it using Application Enquiry in the HM Land Registry portal. If we approve your request, we will process your application sooner. [Find out how you can expedite your application](#).

Telephone service

Our Customer Support Centre is not answering telephone calls until further notice. You can [send us a message](#) using our online form.

Visiting our offices

We have temporarily suspended our service that allows you to make appointments to visit us in person. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience.

View land and property information by post

You can apply by post to view information we hold about property and land.

Apply by post for:

You will be temporarily unable to visit our offices to have your identity verified using forms ID1 or ID2, or submit an application for registration in person.

You can have your identity verified by a solicitor, barrister, or notary public if they are still available at this time. Get more information, including a video, on our [identity verification requirements](#).

You can continue to [get in touch with us or use a guide that may answer your question](#). We will respond as quickly as we can.

Keeping you up to date

In response to questions raised by our customers as a result of coronavirus, HM Land Registry continues to review its practice, policy and procedures regularly including, for example, the use of electronic signatures and also the lodgement of incomplete applications.

We will update customers if we revise our guidance.

You can follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).