

# Global Travel Policy

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

International travel is a key factor in the successful operation of Sightsavers. It is considered vital in order to build successful relationships and carry out our work. Action must be taken to ensure that it is necessary, cost effective and meets security guidelines.

This document exists to outline the requirements, necessary compliance and monitoring processes which are in place and to which travellers must adhere.

It is designed to complement the *Physical Security Policy* and *Expenses policy*.

## 2. Purpose & Principles

The purpose of the Sightsavers' Travel Policy is to ensure that:

- travel is undertaken only for a valid business purpose
  - authorisation from the appropriate manager is required
- travel is as cost effective as possible
  - lower cost options will be provided based on the information supplied by the requestor only reasonable connections / layovers will be offered).
  - as flight costs increase as travel date approaches, the earliest possible involvement of the travel team is required
  - justification and approval for any alternative selection will be required for reporting purposes, such reports will be supplied to the management team on a quarterly basis
  - The earning or use of reward/loyalty points will not be taken as a deciding factor in flight choices
- travel costs incurred are in accordance with the expenses policy
  - these will be charged to Sightsavers directly (either centrally or at country office)
  - when this is not possible expenses must be claimed in a timely manner
  - Travellers must refer to the *Expenses policy* for details.
- travellers are safe and secure whilst travelling
  - Sightsavers will develop and maintain processes to identify and mitigate risks (refer to the *Physical Security Policy* for details)
  - Sightsavers will provide mandatory security training for ALL travellers. Additional training will be provided when deemed necessary (see *Physical Security Policy* for details)
  - Sightsavers will provide appropriate insurance – policy details can be found on the intranet sites
  - Sightsavers will implement a process as appropriate for dealing with major incidents and travellers will be informed and trained as necessary
- travellers stay healthy whilst travelling
  - Sightsavers will pay for all reasonable expenses that are incurred by the traveller in order to stay healthy while travelling
  - If a traveller becomes ill as a result of their travel, Sightsavers will take appropriate action to help them return to full health
    - Note the traveller is expected to take reasonable steps to protect their own health
  - travellers receive sufficient and appropriate support to ensure that their travel is successful – it should be noted that it is the employees responsibility to ask for additional assistance as and when this is required

### 3. Scope

This document is applicable to all employees, contractors, trustees, donors, supporters and anyone travelling on behalf of Sightsavers including partners and INGOs.

Regional or country specific guidelines, procedure or variations may apply – travellers should check with their manager, the intranet sites or the Travel Desk in the Corporate Services department.

### 4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Monitor the safety of travel in the countries in which the organisation operates.
- Monitor the safety of travel to all other countries to which we travel
- Ensure more stringent approval procedures are carried out for higher risk travel (see the *Physical Security Policy* for details)
- Provide the tools/training needed to ensure employees are prepared
- Provide resources and support in case of emergency
- Provide the necessary pre and post travel health support via appropriate suppliers
  - Travellers are responsible for contacting that supplier directly for support
  - Costs relating to this service are paid centrally
- Cover all reasonable and necessary business related expenses incurred in the course of travel
- Be aware of cost but ensure safety is paramount when considering and arranging travel

It is the responsibility of the line manager to:

- Discuss with the individual the purpose of the trip, ensure they are kept informed whilst preparations take place
- Supply approval in writing to the Travel Team
- Read and comply with the *Travel policy*, and the *Physical Security Policy*
- Ensure the individual is equipped to travel
- Ensure the individual attends any mandatory/necessary travel security training in accordance with the *Physical Security Policy*
- Hold a copy of the travel itinerary and contact details during the period of travel and remain in contact with the individual in accordance with the *Physical Security Policy* Pre Departure process

- Approve expenses in accordance with the policies and rules of Sightsavers (for details see the *Expenses policy*)
- Take action to support the selection of the most cost effective travel options

It is the responsibility of the traveller to:

- Read and comply with this *Travel policy*, the *Physical Security Policy*, the relevant country specific security plan and the *Expenses policy*
- Take necessary steps to ensure that travel can be arranged in a timely and cost effective manner
  - As costs vary depending on how far in advance the booking is made, the traveller should involve the travel team as early as possible
- Take necessary steps to gain and provide security and line manager approval, ensuring that the line manager has copies of the itinerary and communication plan (as per the Pre-departure Checklist)
- Complete the Travel request form as completely as possible to allow the best alternative fares to be offered
- Prepare for the trip using the relevant tools, including attending any mandatory international travel and/or security training
- Take sensible and reasonable precautions whilst travelling to ensure own and any travelling companions' safety and health
- Recognise that they are an ambassador for Sightsavers whilst travelling
- Respect and be sensitive to the local culture and working environment of the country/ies and people being visited
- In cases where an individual is travelling with or arranging travel for a non-Sightsavers employee necessary steps must be taken to ensure that all procedures are followed

## 5. Approval

It is the responsibility of the traveller to ensure their line manager approves each trip.

### *A: Employees*

Employees' travel, accommodation booking and expenses are subject to the finance approval guidelines and delegated authority limits. This can be broken down into various steps.

### **Manager Approval**

All travel requests must be accompanied by manager approval either in the form of an email to the travel team or a note added to the service desk ticket. This written confirmation acts both as approval to travel and the primary level of financial approval.

NOTE: It is responsibility of the traveller to ensure that this is supplied.

## **Financial Approval**

It is not practical, given the time sensitivity of flight costs and the availability of line managers, to request/obtain approval of exact cost at time of booking. Therefore the manager approval is taken as financial approval for spend up to £1500.

Secondary approval will be sought for travel where costs are greater than £1500.

Secondary approval from the CEO or, where the traveller is the CEO, by the Director of Finance and Performance is required in ALL cases where Business class of travel is requested. Staff will normally travel economy class, although in rare cases staff can travel premium or business class where Sightsavers has medical advice that economy travel could adversely affect the person's health or where there is a particularly intensive travel schedule including long flights and/or when the staff member is required to perform in high level meetings immediately on arrival.

Secondary approval may also be sought where the traveller has refused a reasonable "lower cost option" resulting in significant additional cost to the organisation.

## **Security Approval**

This is completed through the Resilience database (for full details please see *Physical Security Policy*)

NOTE: bookings will NOT be completed without the security approval code.

## **B: Trustees**

There is considerable value in trustees visiting Sightsavers' overseas programmes, and the organisation will actively seek opportunities for trustees to visit Sightsavers' work overseas.

A trustee who wishes to travel overseas should discuss plans at an early stage with the CEO or management team.

Trustees may also travel at Sightsavers' expense if they are to carry out a specific task for which they are particularly well qualified e.g. evaluation of projects/programmes, audit work or fundraising.

Trustees are expected to follow Sightsavers travel rules unless their travel arrangements are at their own expense.

NB. Trustees are expected to comply with the *Physical Security Policy* at all times.

## **6. Types and Standards**

### **Air**

#### Emirates Skywards Miles

Sightsavers have a relationship with Emirates by which Skywards miles are gifted to the organisation and can be used to purchase Economy class tickets. This gift significantly mitigates cost of air travel if used wisely.

It should be noted that nearly all Emirates flights route through Dubai and for this reason usage for some locations is not recommended. Therefore use of Skywards miles is:

- Strongly recommended for all travel to/from the Middle East or Asia,
- Recommended for travel to/from East Africa
- Offered, on request, as an option for travel to/from West Africa

In cases where use of Skywards miles results in a stopover in Dubai travellers may make use of the Marhaba lounge in the airport reclaiming costs through expenses.

It must be noted that Emirates ONLY allow Skywards miles to be used to purchase Economy fares. An Economy class flight purchased in this way cannot be upgraded.

#### Rail Travel to/within Europe

Eurostar offers cost effective and regular rail services to/from London, Paris and Brussels. Onward journeys to/from these cities to other European destinations are possible. Rail travel to such destinations are also time competitive versus air travel.

Consideration should always be given to using rail over air where practical within Western Europe.

#### In General

Sightsavers policy mandates the use of flights which are cost effective. This is defined as an economy class fare close to the time(s) requested on the Travel Request Form regardless of routing, restrictions, penalties or airline.

The number and duration of stopover(s), the safety and service record of the airline(s), the acceptability of the airport(s) in which time needs to be spent and the overall length of flight(s) are taken into account.

Traveller preference for Gatwick or Heathrow will be taken into consideration - that is the airports are treated individually NOT as one. There are destinations which are only served by one or other of these airports meaning that the preference cannot be offered.

The majority of airlines do not allow exit row/ extra leg room seats to be pre-booked. However many do allow this at check in at a cost. In such cases the traveller may book these and reclaim the costs via expenses.

The Corporate Services Team will advise on the limited range of circumstances under which Sightsavers will reimburse costs incurred for access to airport lounges, internet access complimentary drinks, etc.

#### Staff based in United Kingdom & Ireland

All trips must be requested through the Resilience site.

NOTE Travellers/requestors must complete the Security process through the Resilience Database for ALL international travel.

NB Travel to/from Republic of Ireland to/from UK *is* international travel.

### Staff based in other locations

Flights which result in the traveller leaving the country in which they are normally based are deemed “international”.

All International flights must be booked through the Travel Team via Resilience.

NOTE Travellers/requestors must complete the Security process through the Resilience Database for ALL international travel.

### **Hotel**

Sightsavers policy is to ensure that accommodation is in hotels which meet cost, service and security criteria. Location is also taken into consideration. Mid-range/middle standard/2-3 star properties are selected where possible. Given the high cost of food & beverage in hotels and in an effort to reduce costs, in areas where eating out is an easy alternative, bookings will usually be on “room only” basis.

In frequently used locations the travel team/local offices have identified a number of properties that meet requirements. In some cases a specific advantageous rate has been contracted and in order to maintain and improve these rates to maximise cost, bookings must be made into these hotels when possible.

### United Kingdom & Ireland

All accommodation requirements must be made through the Travel team to allow for central payment and support of contracts. In locations where travel is infrequent, the travel team may require additional information (e.g. event or area required) in order to recommend a suitable hotel.

### International – where Sightsavers have offices

Accommodation requirements must be addressed to the local office who own the responsibility for booking and paying for hotels in their country (as per the *Expenses Policy*). Only in cases where the local office is unable to assist should the traveller contact the travel team with details of their requirements. Direct bookings must not be made without the permission of the local office and Travel team.

### International – where Sightsavers do not have an office

Unless accommodation is arranged and paid for by a third party, all accommodation requirements must be made through the Travel team to allow for central payment and traveller tracking. The travel team may require additional information regarding the travel itinerary to best select the most appropriate property.

### **Meetings**

We have meeting room capacity in Haywards Heath and the majority of country offices. The expectation is that day to day meetings will take place in house.

On occasions where an offsite meeting facility is required, a Meeting and Event form (available on the Resilience Database and on Iris) must be completed and sent, via Service Desk ticket, to the travel team.

Due to availability and rates it is strongly recommended that the booking process begins a minimum of 6-8 weeks prior to the meeting date.

Based on size, logistical support and location required the request will be handled directly by the Travel Team internally, or outsourced either partially or completely to the contracted event management company. The meeting arranger will be advised which team is working on the request and any relevant contact details.

To ensure that the relationship with the event management company is managed efficiently, duplication of effort does not occur and that knowledge of requests is held centrally, the event management company will not accept new meeting requests direct from staff members.

Where the meeting is to be held off site

- the meeting arranger and attendees must refer to the *Expenses policy* regarding what items can and cannot be claimed
- the meeting arranger is responsible for cancellation (it should be expected that contracts include detailed cancellation clauses and these should be reviewed carefully as late cancellation is likely to result in partial or full payment)

## **Ground**

Where available, travellers must make use of public transport or Sightsavers cars/drivers.

### United Kingdom

International travellers will generally arrive in either London Heathrow or London Gatwick airports.

- **Trains**  
Both airports have direct and frequent services to London (25mins). Gatwick has direct trains to both Haywards Heath (13mins) and Brighton (32mins)
- **Coaches**  
Coaches run between Gatwick and Heathrow and are the most cost and time effective link between the airports (exact time depends on traffic conditions but roughly 1hr 15mins).  
Coaches also run from both airports to Brighton.
- **Taxis**  
Taxis should NOT be used except in cases of early or late arrival times, significant luggage or where the sharing of a taxi with other staff members makes this the most cost effective option.

Public transport costs should be paid personally and then reclaimed in accordance with the *Expenses policy*.

Sightsavers will not permit the use of a private car unless the traveller has “business” insurance. In cases where cost or logistics make a car more appropriate please contact the Service Desk a minimum of 5 days prior to travel date for hire car options.



## Europe

Most European countries have extensive rail networks serving the major metropolitan centres and airports. Eurostar offers a cost and time effective option for travel to from London, Paris and Brussels. These rail services should be used where they exist.

## International – where Sightsavers have offices

When visiting locations where there is an office, local staff must arrange transportation (including but not limited to airport transfers). The Sightsavers car/driver should be used where possible. Alternatively the local office may offer a trusted and contracted alternative. Full details of the airport pick up including name and contact mobile phone number of the driver and traveller must be obtained by all parties in advance of travel.

## International – where Sightsavers do not have offices

In locations where Sightsavers do not maintain a country office, travellers are advised to contact the host for advice and, where necessary, support with regard to ground transportation.

In cases where there is no host the traveller must contact the Travel Team.

## **Visa**

It is the responsibility of the traveller to ensure that visa requirements are met. The time needed to obtain a visa must be factored into travel plans.

At the time of initial travel request the traveller must check visa requirements and take action accordingly.

It is required that all travellers (both employees and contractors) travel on Business visas for insurance purposes. Tourist visa should NOT be utilised for business related travel.

It should also be noted that many countries have specific rules with regard to Journalists – it should be remembered that the definition of a “journalist” is set by the country to be visited. Any traveller who is involved in the production of images or text which is for publication MAY be treated as a “journalist” and it is recommended that any such traveller contacts the embassy of the country to be visited to ensure any/all specific requirements are known and met prior to visa request. It is the responsibility of the staff member or hirer (in the case of consultants) to ensure that any relevant requirements have been checked with the necessary embassy and addressed accordingly”.

It should be noted that while some embassies do have “express” visa services these are at additional cost and will only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Staff travelling on non-UK passports must allow extra time for all visa requirements.

When supplying information on visa requirements the Travel team will rely on governmental sources supplemented by expert advice from our Travel Management

Company. In cases where there are various/conflicting information sources the stricter guidelines will be used.

It is recommended that vaccination certificates (e.g. yellow fever) are kept with the passport and carried on all trips.

Should the traveller fail to provide the Travel Team with at least three whole weeks' notice of travel, the travel team cannot be held responsible for any resulting visa issues. It should also be noted that the traveller themselves may be required to take additional action, and a late notice handling fee may be charged to the travellers cost centre.

## **7. Health**

It is the responsibility of the traveller to ensure that the correct vaccinations/medications have been obtained for the proposed trip.

Sightsavers will pay for all reasonable expenses that are incurred by the employees or other stakeholders in order to stay healthy whilst travelling on Sightsavers behalf. This includes vaccinations.

If employees become ill as a result of their travel Sightsavers will take appropriate steps to help them return to full health, taking into account local country health service provision.

Employees are expected to take reasonable steps to protect their own health.

### **Vaccinations and medications**

Sightsavers have a contract with a health care provider "Interhealth" (tel: 020 7902 9000, <http://www.interhealthworldwide.org>).

Interhealth can arrange all necessary vaccinations and travel related medicines – the company specialises in the support of charity personnel and therefore are in the best position to support Sightsavers' travellers.

New staff members are advised to contact Interhealth well in advance of the first work related trip to ensure that any medical requirements are met.

Regular travellers are recommended to sign up with Interhealth's "Myhealth" service to allow management of their health needs on an on-going basis.

Payment for all Interhealth services is via invoice. Employees should ensure that orders are accompanied by the necessary purchase order number.

Please note that some countries have questions on / require records of vaccination as part of their visa process.

The most common instance of this is Yellow Fever - Travellers are strongly advised to carry their yellow fever vaccination certificate with them at all times when travelling especially to destinations in Africa, Asia and Central/South America. This is especially relevant in the case of multi-destination travel as some countries require such documentation based on recent destination rather than country of origin.

### **Medical related items**

It is strongly recommended that preventative measures against mosquito-borne diseases (insect repellent and mosquito nets) are used, and that a sterile medical kit is carried. For those travellers that do not own such items a limited number are held by the travel team and are available on loan.

### **Screening & Medical Check-up**

All employees that travel internationally may request medical checks/screening at any time up to 12 months after travel. This service is provided as part of the Interhealth agreement (full details can be found on [www.interhealth.org.uk](http://www.interhealth.org.uk)) but is at additional cost and therefore line manager approval and a purchase order must be obtained before any appointment is booked.

## **8. Insurance**

### **Sightsavers group travel insurance policy**

Sightsavers Group Travel Insurance covers all those travelling on Sightsavers business.

Employees' personal effects are covered but travellers should note that the policy has limits with regard to total amount insured and individual item(s) of significant value. It should also be noted that the policy may not cover the full replacement value.

Similarly the cover for loss of money, traveller's cheques, tickets, passport, and credit cards is limited.

- Business Items
  - Total insured amount £3000
  - Single item maximum value £3000
- Personal Items
  - Total insured amount £10000
  - Single item maximum value £3000

For travellers carrying items worth more than these limits additional insurance should be purchased.

The Group Travel Insurance does **not** cover:

- Travel that is not related to Sightsavers business purposes
- Travellers employed by a third party/partner organisation who are insured by that employer

- Travellers with high-value professional equipment where it is assumed that a suitable insurance policy is already in place e.g. camera equipment
- Travel by an employee taken as leave after or before a work trip – in such cases personal travel insurance must be purchased

NOTE: The policy does not include a 'pre-existing condition' exclusion, however if the traveller wishes to make the insurers aware of any condition for any reason they should contact the travel team via the service desk who will advise details of the Insurers account manager and contact details.

In the event of loss or theft the traveller must:

- Inform local police and obtain a police report, case number or similar document or reference.
- Cancel any stolen credit card(s) either corporate or personal as soon as possible
- Request a “Group Travel Insurance claim form” from the Service Desk and complete it as specified as soon as possible.

In the event of a stolen passport the traveller will need to contact the nearest Embassy or High Commission.

It is strongly recommended that copies of any important documentation or items such as credit card are taken and kept separately in case of need.

## 9. Security

Security is managed within the *Physical Security Policy*, and Country Specific Security Plans. Employees must refer to these documents for detailed principles and procedures.

## 10. Costs and expenses

All international flights must be booked through the Travel Team, with domestic flights booked through the local offices.

Accommodation must be booked and paid centrally by the travel team or booked and paid locally by the local office.

Sightsavers will pay for all reasonable expenses incurred by employees for the purpose of travelling or while travelling. Sightsavers will reimburse actual costs incurred, rather than pay daily allowances (although some specific allowances may be agreed within a Region or Country).

For specific rules about what can and cannot be claimed refer to the *Expenses Policy*.

## **11. Travel booking process**

Sightsavers is committed to maintaining appropriate processes to ensure that the travel approval and booking procedures underpin the principles of the policy and in particular the valid business purpose of travel and the safety and security of those travelling.

### **Specifics**

There are a number of steps the traveller must follow when made aware of the requirement to travel, these are detailed in Travel - Process document but are outlined below.

### **Planning**

Prior to contacting the Travel team the traveller must discuss the proposed trip with management and start the security approval process via the Resilience Database. Travel costs are extremely time sensitive – as a cost control measure it is strongly recommended that where possible travel is booked a minimum of 2 weeks prior to departure dates.

### **Approval**

The travel team will not book travel without Security approval, which should be obtained through the Resilience Database, It should be noted that in cases where the lowest logical fare is not taken or any sector of the travel falls outside policy the Travel team may require additional approval before booking is completed.

### **Flights**

The Travel Team will source suitable flights based on the submitted Travel request form. It should be noted that cost is a significant factor together with the date/time requested – a traveller's request for a specific routing or airline will not be treated as a deciding factor.

Due to Sightsavers relationship with Emirates (detailed above) all requests will be reviewed and, where appropriate, Emirates flights will be offered.

### **Accommodation**

When arranging flights the need for accommodation should be considered and included in the Travel request form.

#### **United Kingdom**

All accommodation booking must be made through the Travel Team.

#### **Overseas**

All accommodation requests must be sent to the Travel Team.

The only exceptions to this are:

- where travel is conducted to a country with a Sightsavers office in which case the local office is responsible for booking accommodation and settling bills for accommodation and meals (less any personal extras) and any other significant business costs relating to the trip for all overseas travellers. The local office should charge such costs back to the relevant cost centre through the accounting system.
- where travel is to attend a specific conference or event which includes accommodation for attendees at a specific hotel. As this is often at significantly reduced rates and via a specified booking method the traveller should book this direct.

### **Visas**

The Travel Team must be contacted for information regarding when a visa is needed and will provide website links for the application form, advice on supporting documentation and length of time needed to obtain.

It is the responsibility of the traveller to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for visas to be obtained. It is required that all travellers (both employees and contractors) travel on Business visas for insurance purposes. Tourist visa should not be utilised for business related travel.