

## Q&A with UK Government

Summarised from a [BritCham Shanghai webinar](#) on 12 April 2022

*On 12 April, BritCham Shanghai organised a webinar and we are honoured to gather representatives from the UK government and various industry sectors to advise members and the wider community on the questions are mostly asked recently, as well as share the advanced experience, knowledge and lesson learnt from the current lock-down.*

*In this difficult and challenging time, we appreciate the efforts the British Consulate has been taken to support British nationals here in Shanghai; and our many member companies that support each other in our community. We also thank our individual members for their patience.*

*In the following weeks, BritCham Shanghai will continue to collect useful information and arrange sharing sessions to support.*

*Below we have summarised some of the questions and answers from the UK GOV.*

### **Q: What support is available to British citizens apart from the emergency phone number?**

**UK GOV:** The British Consulate's 24/7 emergency number is the best route for everyone. If you have concerns about your children being moved away, food, access to medical services or supplies, please call our **24/7 emergency number at +86 (0) 10 85296600**.

### **Q: Are you keeping track of numbers of citizens going into quarantine/coming out again?**

**UK GOV:** When we are approached, we are logging all the details of the callers and keeping in touch with the individuals. We don't have the access to Chinese government data therefore we are not monitoring the overall number of Brits that may have had to move into quarantine or have left. Our focus is on individuals whose needs are the greatest and who need our support.

### **Q: If tested positive, is it true that foreigners are exempt from going to central quarantine and can quarantine at home?**

**UK GOV:** In the short term, I am afraid that the answer is no. That is something that we have asked repeatedly of the authorities along with many other Consulates in Shanghai. But anecdotally it seems that there is some marginal flexibility around this over people not necessarily being taken to central quarantine immediately or in some cases also being left at home. But there is no official Chinese government policy announced in Shanghai. We will engage specifically on individual cases, and we will give guidance and seek to ensure that people are given supplies in those circumstances, but I am afraid that formally there is no flexible position.

### **Q: How do you support UK citizens of the policy in Shanghai changes again regarding child and parent separation to ensure a child is not separated from their parent under any circumstances?**

**UK GOV:** This is one of our top concerns. If you have the risk that your child has been tested positive and you have not, or the other way around, please call our 24/7 emergency number straight away. We will prioritise your case. We have been engaged in some circumstances and we have been able to ensure that a parent is able to accompany the child. There has been some flexibility at the margins of the policy as the Shanghai authorities announced recently, now parents, either negative or positive, are allowed to accompany their positive children.

**Q: How do you support UK citizens who are told to go to centralised quarantine but have severe allergies, medical needs, or mental health issues?**

**UK GOV:** The key point that is if there are issues around medical conditions or access to prescriptions and so on, please also contact the 24/7 emergency number. We will engage with the authorities to ensure that people have the appropriate supplies and appropriate medical treatment. This is one of our priorities.

**Q: What should British Nationals do if they need emergency care and can't get it?**

**UK GOV:** Residents in Shanghai should talk to their local committee (Ju Wei Hui), and the government has put the contact numbers and details around. You can also get access to your Ju Wei Hui through your community WeChat groups that should help you with getting access. And again, contact our 24/7 emergency number, if you are not getting anywhere from your community. We have stressed to the authorities that people who need medical treatment other than COVID need to have access to proper treatment.

**Q: Do you have any advice for people who may want to leave if things worsen? i.e. booking flights and evacuation plans.**

**UK GOV:** We recognise that this is a really difficult and personal decision for people. I understand that our community in Shanghai is deeply invested in Shanghai, with your family, jobs, life community and etc. that makes the decision really difficult. There is no formal advice from us. I would say that routes out of the country are still reasonably plentiful. We have people leaving from other cities on a regular basis and at short notice. While coming to the in-city logistics in Shanghai at the moment, people are managing to get to the airport. We've recognised that this is a really difficult decision and would not be surprising that people are thinking about this as an option depending on their own personal circumstances. Getting out of China generally is pretty straightforward and reasonably affordable at the moment.

In terms of the in-city logistics in Shanghai, obviously, it's much more challenging here because of the lockdown, also because of the number of the airlines, in particular, the European airlines are suspended as they are not able to service their aircraft in Pudong International Airport. However, there are flights departing, for example, at least a couple of flights going every day to Hong Kong, where it's possible to get your onward connections. Flights by American and Canadian operators are also operating, along with some airlines regionally to Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The first thing is to see if you are able to get the permission from your Ju Wei Hui to leave. You may need to provide the information of who is leaving, when and the ticket, as well as the relevant in-city logistics, car services and licences during the lockdown. If you already have the ticket and are not able to leave your compound, please use our 24/7 emergency number, we will try as much we can to support you.

**Q: What is the official position regarding rights to return to your home community in Shanghai, and what can the UK Consulate do to support if people are rejected and forced to pay for hotel accommodation?**

**UK GOV:** If you find yourself in that position, please do contact the 24/7 emergency number. While we will not be in the position to fund people for hotels, we will do what we can to enable people to get back home again, which will involve working with districts and Ju Wei Hui on individual cases.

**Q: Will the consulate help those who need to leave Shanghai and have booked commercial flights?**

**UK GOV:** As mentioned in a previous answer, work with your Ju Wei Hui, and community groups on the transport and so on. If you got stuck, please call our 24/7 emergency number and we will do our best to help with that.

**Q: For British citizens located outside Beijing and Shanghai and unable to travel to those cities due to restrictions, are there ways to access services such as notarisation of UK documents to apply for travel documents for family members to leave China?**

**UK GOV:** Even in normal times, the services we offer for notarisation are very limited. The normal service we provide is certified copies of UK passports and so on, but this requires face-to-face verification. Since the Shanghai Consulate team are not able to access our office, I am afraid that this service is currently unavailable. For other legalisation documents, please find details on the UK government website, [www.GOV.UK](http://www.GOV.UK), or if appropriate, through lawyers locally.

For more details on 'Which notarial and documentary services do you offer?' Please check on *That's Shanghai's* recent WeChat post at [https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Ksbo\\_AeUnSLMSM-72NHrw](https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Ksbo_AeUnSLMSM-72NHrw)

**Q: Can we receive weekly updates from UK GOV on critical issues and UK GOV activity, separately from 'follow the website'? This will help to reassure British nationals.**

**UK GOV:** We post key updates and travel advice through our 'UK Consular' WeChat account (ID: UK Consular) – this is the channel to follow. We will update that according to the changing conditions, but our prime focus is helping those people in need.

**Q: UK Government used to have a register for British nationals in China. Will this be re-established?**

**UK GOV:** We used to have people registered, but this was voluntary. There is no mandatory approach, so some people choose to register while some people choose not to (and many did not remember to de-register on departure).

What we do now for a crisis situation is that we have the 24/7 emergency number available for people to contact us proactively. Also, if we are moving to something as happened in Wuhan in 2020 for example, then we will set up dedicated facilities to deal with those circumstances and encourage people to register through that.

**Q: Do you see any movement on the approval of foreign vaccines in China?**

**UK GOV:** That is still one of the big unanswered questions. I think many of you may know that Fosun here in Shanghai has arrangement, acting as the partner of Pfizer-BioNTech for example. But although they have been working on this for many months, there is still no approval for distribution in China. I am afraid that we would not see any movement on it in the near term.

**Q: Provision of food/essentials during the lockdown. Many are missing out due to language/cultural barriers – How can UK Government support them?**

**UK GOV:** This is obviously a big challenge for everybody in this city, both Chinese and foreign residents. Many of us have learnt a lot of new things, like the community Group Buying arrangements.

I think the key thing here is to work with your neighbours, your local communities. And again, if you face real difficulties, talk in the first instance to your compound management and the Ju Wei Hui.

Sometimes this can be difficult with language barriers, there are some services available to help with these circumstances, such as **Inward Living** on WeChat (ID: InwardAsia), which provide language assistance.

If you are really running short, or have emergency cases, please contact us at the **24/7 emergency number +86 (0) 10 85296600**.

**Q: When will the UK government resume processing family visas for spouses, and will they reinstate the priority and super-priority visa applications?**

**UK GOV:**

<https://www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa>

Family visas are still being processed but may take longer to process as UKVI is prioritising Ukraine Family Scheme applications in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Priority Visas and Super Priority Visas are not currently available for family routes and we do not have a confirmed date of when priority processing will be re-introduced.

Further information on current processing times is here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk>

If this is a really pressing need for you at the moment, please contact our 24/7 emergency number and we will see what we can support and facilitate at the moment.

**Q: Can the UK GOV fast track right to abode applications for babies? My son was born here in Shanghai and has Chinese passport.**

**UK GOV:**

<https://www.gov.uk/right-of-abode/apply-for-a-certificate-of-entitlement>

Entitlement to right of abode (ROA) is a little complex as it depends on the British National parent's status.

If the parent is a British Citizen and has a child born in China, their claim to being a British Citizen (BC) depends on whether the parent is a BC "otherwise than by descent" or "by descent".

BC status can only be passed down outside the UK upon birth 1 generation, and if the parent has already benefitted from this generation provision themselves previously, any child in the next generation would need to register as British.

If the child is British by descent because the parent was BC (otherwise than by descent), they can have a ROA vignette affixed to their Chinese passport as they have ROA under Section 2(1)(a) of the BNA 1981.

They would need to apply for ROA to have a certificate of entitlement affixed to the Chinese passport.

This application can be made online and we can usually expedite if necessary due to compelling or compassionate reasons. Applicants would need to flag the case with us once the application is made.

Having a BN or BC named on a birth cert is not sufficient to travel or pass through the port on arrival.

**Q: What mental health support is available?**

**UK GOV:** We recognise that this is an extremely worrying time for Brits in Shanghai. The current Covid regulations are impacting all of our lives. We know that there is significant concern and anxiety amongst the British community.

Your emotional and mental wellbeing is important. You might like to look at our [wellbeing and mental health](#) guidance on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

You can also reach out to the following China-based support services that might be able to help you.

- **Lifeline** – Essential support for those struggling with mental health. Website: [lifelinechina.org](http://lifelinechina.org)
- **Community Centre Shanghai** – supports and enables the international community in Shanghai. Website: <https://www.communitycentershanghai.com/> or WeChat QR:



- **Local government hotline** - 12345 and press 7 for English service.

**For 24/7 urgent consular assistance, you can call us on +86 (0) 10 8529 6600.**

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