



OUTCAN Info Sheet 2020

London, UK

LOCATION

Country: UK (England)

Town: Bristol

- **Entry/Exit requirements:** Blue; Green, Red Passport, NATO Travel orders (NTO). SOFA stamp. Visa.

Other info to Consider:

- Family (non-dependants) can come to visit for up to six months on a regular Blue passport, as part of the agreement with the UK (Commonwealth).
- As of April 2019, Canadian passports are accepted to be used to exit the UK airports, through E-gates. E-gates are not accessible if traveling with minors. Stamps are no longer required.
- Posting may be: CDLS, High Commission (HC), CFILO, Student, Ruislip Det London, Northwood NATO

POPULATION

Size: 8.7 million in the Greater London, 14 million in the metropolitan area, 22.7 million in the “city-region”

Ethnicity: Caucasian 87.1% (English 67.1%, Scottish 8.3%, Welsh 4.3%, Northern Irish 3%), black 3%, Indian 2.3%, Pakistani 1.9%, mixed 2.0%, other 0.9% (2011 census).

Religion: London is the most diverse area within the UK when it comes to religious beliefs, with the highest percentage of people identifying as Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish.

LANGUAGE(S)

Official language: English

Prevalence of French or English speaking: French as a second language sometimes.

- Very limited restaurants and shops will have some staff that speaks French.

COST OF LIVING

Exchange rate to consider: Great British Pound (GBP)

QUALITY OF LIFE

Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:

- London has a temperate climate with cool winters, warm summers with frequent precipitation all year round; similar to the west coast of Canada. Snow falls on average two weeks of the year and doesn't stay for long.

Laws and Culture:

- Drinking age is 18, minors aged 16 or 17 may consume beer, wine or cider with a meal, accompanied by a parent
- People smoke and drink more here than in Canada, including teenagers & adults
- Although you should carry an international driving permit, you can drive with a valid Canadian licence.
- Traffic drives on the left.
- UK has strong gun laws – most firearms may have to be left in long-term storage.
- Speeding and drunk driving are dealt with severely.
- Speeding is monitored via cameras (which are everywhere) and the slightest speeding (over three miles an hour) will ensure that you receive a £100 fine

Safety and Security:

- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Terrorists have carried out attacks in several European cities.
- In the United Kingdom, previous incidents have resulted in casualties. They include random violent incidents in public areas, such as knife and vehicle attacks as well as explosions.
- These incidents have occurred mainly in the London area but have also happened elsewhere.
- Further attacks in Europe are also likely.

Level of isolation:

- Canadian families vary per location/site from 1 to 12. On average 35-40 in all London (inside M25)
- French-speaking spouses may feel very isolated if they don't speak English at all.
- Spouses might feel isolated if living in central London as all Canadians live scattered across the city.

HOUSING

- If moving on the economy with children, placement of good rating school is essential when finding a house as school enrolment are based on catchment areas.
- If posted on a Red passport, the HC (Global Affairs Canada (GAC)) will be supporting/assigning housing.
- Houses have a lot of carpet.
- Housing is more difficult to find if you have pets.
- Big gardens require a lot of maintenance as things grow 12 months a year.

EMPLOYMENT**Are there employment opportunities for spouses? Yes**

- Spouses may work on the economy and on the military bases as civilians (NIN required)
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS so families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.

Op Tempo: The op tempo will vary greatly depending on position. TD is possible.

HEALTH CARE

Access: UK healthcare system is similar to Canadian standards (public waiting times, private fast)

- All posted to the UK are entitled to the National Health System (NHS) as nationals.
- 24-hour Accident and Emergency (A&E)
- Special consults take a very long time to get through the NHS.
- Private clinics are available and quicker in the area.
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe, and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP

Special needs:

- Resources and services are through school in association with family doctor recommendation.
- If a family member has special medical needs it is highly advised that they consult with MFS(E), and/or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.
- Diagnostic through schools can be a long process. Private clinics are available.

Consideration for pregnancy / birth:

- High quality health care in English. Limited to non-existent in French.
- Midwife service at home once the baby has arrived.
- Very proactive for postpartum mental welfare and support when breastfeeding.

Dental:

- Difficult to find an NHS dentist in the area.
- Private clinics are more accessible and offer the same quality of services as in Canada. You are required to pay up front, and you can then claim your expenses
- It is easy to access however; providers do not speak French.

SCHOOLING

- Members posted to the greater London Area are entitled to enrol their children in schools based on the September 2018 Working Group B (WG B) approvals.
- Schooling for families posted to Northwood and Det London is typically at ACS Hillingdon for grades JK-12.
- Schooling for families posted to Central London is typically at the American School for grades JK-12, or Southbank for grades JK-12.
- The French school is typically the Lycée International de Londres Winston Churchill for grades JK-12
- The full list is provided by CEM/GAC

Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:

- Curriculum varies depending on choice of school.
- None of them offers Canadian history or geography.

Resources for special need children:

- Educators in school.
- Should it be determined that a child requires special needs due to developmental or mental health concerns while posted OUTCAN, this could pose a serious risk to the posting and the family may be considered for repatriation.

CHILDCARE**Things to Consider:**

- There are many preschools and nurseries in the area.
- When children turn three years. old they have access to 15 free hours (but this does not include snacks, lunches, etc.)

TRANSPORTATION**Things to Consider:**

- Train service is available
- Extensive public transport available.
- Car is not recommended if posted to central London.
- Car is recommended if posted to Det London or Northwood.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES**Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?**

- Yes, under MFSE UK, located in CFSU(E) Det London in Ruislip.

Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:

- Not at post, MFS(E) SW for dependants only, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for member and family are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in the UK.

Communications (e.g. Quality of Internet connection):

- If getting internet, you have to pay for a single phone line whether you use the phone line or not.
- In the London area, cell phone service and internet are very reliable.

ACTIVITIES**Access to sports or other leisure activities:**

- On the economy, very limited in French.
- Northwood & Det London does have access to a gym for members and families.

Availability of playgrounds: Yes.

RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are common law relationships recognized? Yes.

Are same sex couples recognized? Yes.

Medications that are illegal in the country:

- Cannabis is illegal

Other Considerations:

- Banned dog breeds - American Pitbull Terrier, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro (Brazilian Mastiff), Tosa Inu
- Importation of pets is subject to rigorous controls although quarantine may no longer be necessary.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **European Commission Country Reports (2019)**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en
- **Canadian Travel Advisories**
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- **CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from US)**
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>
- **Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)**

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/europe>

- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**

<https://data.imf.org/?sk=4FFB52B2-3653-409A-B471-D47B46D904B55>

For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below:

- MFS(E) Social Worker : chebat.myriam@cfmws.com or Myriam.Chebat@Forces.gc.ca
- CAF Social Worker: martin.laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca
- MFS(E) UK: + 44 (0) 1895 613 040, MFSE.UK@cfmws.com
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com