



House Hunting Trip (HHT)

United Kingdom

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The information was current at the time of printing.*

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GREETINGS FROM YOUR MFS(E) TEAM

Welcome to Europe! This guide has been written with the intention of providing you with useful information that you can use during your Home Hunting Trip (HHT), your Destination Inspection Trip (DIT), when preparing for your move, or shortly after your arrival. Essentially, it contains all the information we would have liked to know earlier or find useful to know on our first move out of Canada.

For any additional questions, remember that you can always contact the MFS(E) Center of your new location.

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MOVING AROUND IN THE GUIDE

- To go to a Table of Contents entry or a website link, simply click on it
- To search for a specific word, use the Find tool by pressing "Ctrl" then F

Several of the websites referenced in this guide will be in a language other than English. There are a couple of options to obtain the information in English:

- You can enter the address of the website directly into <https://translate.google.com/> and it will translate the entire website
- If you have Google Chrome, you can right click anywhere on the page and it will bring up a dialog box which often has a "Translate to English" option. Due to website formatting, this option may not be available for all pages or for all text on the page.
- Some sites have the option to change the language. These sites will have either a drop-down menu listing multiple languages or flags symbolizing the language. Simply click on the language or flag (typically a British or American flag) to see a translated version of the website. Often this option can be found in the top right corner.

This guide is an ongoing work in progress, and we need your help:

- Please let us know of any errors or omissions and we will update them in the next edition.
- If there is a topic you'd like added to the next edition, do not hesitate to let us know.

You can contact us at:

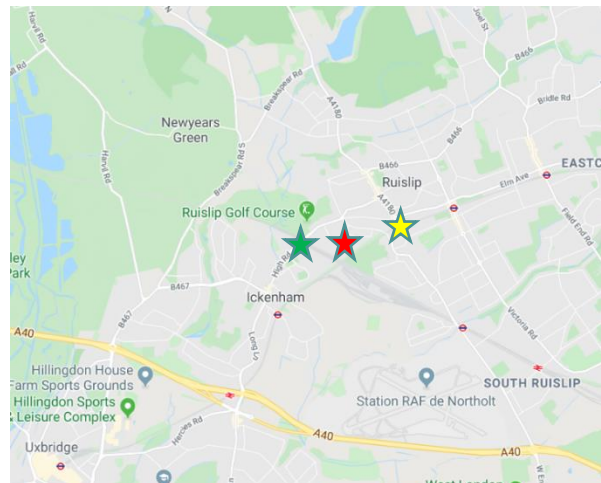
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***DISCLAIMER: Due to rules and regulations ever changing, please ensure you do your own research and consult with the resources provided for the most up-to-date policies and procedures before making any assumptions or relying on information provided here as accurate as policies and procedures change and could be different from the time this document was created and updated.
Thank you for your cooperation and attention in this matter.***

OVERVIEW OF THE UK

MAPS



- ★ Det London, Ruislip
- ★ Metropolitan Line: Ruislip, 13 min walk, 0.6 mile
- ★ Central Line: West Ruislip, 7min walk, 0.3 mile

GEOGRAPHY/POLITICS

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland... For a fast-paced overview of the differences go to www.youtube.com and type in "The Difference between the United Kingdom, Great Britain and England Explained" 😊

CLIMATE

The U.K. is an island country and the surrounding sea can cause varied temperature. The overall climate in England is often referred to as temperate maritime with mild temperatures not much lower than 0°C in winter and not much higher than 32°C in summer. It is a damp climate subject to frequent changes. Mark Twain's quote "If you don't like the weather in New England now, just wait a few minutes" could also be applicable to the U.K.

In general, it is rainier and grey than most of Canada (you may wish to consider taking vitamin D supplements). Parts of the U.K. can get higher amounts of precipitation, including flooding and snowstorms, but the large majority of the U.K. does not have snow that lasts for long or requires a snow blower (or even a shovel). The following website will allow you to enter the community name or postal code for your area to find the average temperatures, precipitation, days of frost and other interesting information:

- www.metoffice.gov.uk/

Most people only use their warmest winter parkas and other winter gear for when they head to the continent for ski trips. However, many Canadians will always have an extra layer with them (as well as a handy umbrella) to help with that dampness and chill. Because of the changing temperature and weather within the same day, it is best to dress in layers.

LANGUAGES

It is estimated that over 95% of the British population are monolingual English speakers. There are various minority Celtic languages, and speakers of these are invariably bilingual English speakers. In Scotland 1.4% speak Scottish Gaelic as well as English; in Northern Ireland 6.6% of the population are bilingual in Irish Gaelic and English; in Wales, 21% also speak Welsh. Welsh is the only Celtic language that enjoys official status. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and some border areas of England, Scots is a distinct minority language although at times it overlaps with Scottish English. The ability to speak and understand the language of the host country ensures that your posting in Europe is as rewarding as possible. It facilitates daily life like grocery shopping and banking. It is also easier to make connections and ensure that your cultural experiences are more enriching.

Rosetta Stone is the best language training program in the world. We offer licenses for the Rosetta Stone software for military spouses of the Canadian Armed Forces. If you are interested in language training in the host nation language, contact the Programs, Employment, Education and Training Coordinator for Military Family Services Europe at: MFSE.EmploymentEducationTraining@cfmws.com

CULTURAL NUANCES, ETIQUETTE AND TRADITIONS

There is a similarity between Canadians and British culture, as Canada has so much British roots, but such a difference in simple dialogue. Don't be surprised if a local greets your hello, by responding with "you alright?" This is common in the U.K., and is the equivalent of a Canadian asking someone "how are you?" Furthermore, it is not uncommon for CAF families to not have the same type of relationship with their British neighbors, as we would typically have in Canada. There is nothing personal about this. Like Canada, the neighbors can be friendly, but not to the same extent.

HOLIDAYS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

During bank holidays roads, restaurants, accommodations and attractions will be very busy. Children have limited holidays and strict attendance schedules at school so Bank and school holidays are well utilized! Everything just gets busier, similar to March Break in Canada. Below are the upcoming school holidays for England. Please double check the school break calendar in your county as dates tend to vary county to county and in the U.K.

Date	England & Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland
New Year's Day 1 January	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 January		Yes	
St. Patrick's Day 17 March			Yes
Good Friday Friday before Easter Sunday	Yes	Yes	Yes
Easter Monday Day after Easter Sunday	Yes		Yes
May Day or Early May Bank Holiday First Monday in May	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spring Bank Holiday Last Monday in May	Yes	Yes	Yes
Battle of the Boyne—Orangemen's Day 12 July			Yes
Summer Bank Holiday First Monday in August		Yes	
Summer Bank Holiday Last Monday in August	Yes		Yes
St. Andrew's Day 30 November		Yes	
Christmas 25 – 26 December	Yes	Yes	Yes

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

WHAT TO BRING

- Passport, Visa, Military ID
- Travel Orders
- Driving Licence & International Driving Licence
- Health Card
- Long form of Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Power of Attorney
- Custody Documents
- Children Vaccination & Immunization Records
- Last 2-3 years of School Report Cards
- Country Adaptor/Converter
- Phone, Tablet, Laptop Chargers
- Medication (Prescriptions)
- Extra Cash in new Currency (In case you have issues with Credit Cards)
- Width of your vehicle at its widest point with the mirrors folded in as the width of the garage entrance may be an issue. Be mindful of this measurement, as streets and parking spaces in Europe are narrower than those in Canada.
- Digital camera or use your cell phone. It is very helpful to take some pictures of the houses for comparison purposes to other homes. Please note: If you decide to take pictures, make sure to have the tenant's/landlord's permission prior. Some people might not be comfortable with having their private belongings photographed.
- Measuring tape

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

Should you have an issue where the local police have been contacted, please inform the CFSU(E)MP Det. If you experience a break and entry to your home or car, it is important to contact local police and then the CFSU(E) MP Det shortly after. If you have had military issued equipment or kit stolen, the MP will conduct a police report for your records and loss report.

Here is the link to the Government of Canada’s Emergency Assistance info, outside of Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Here is the link to the British Government’s Public Safety and Emergency site: www.gov.uk/topic/public-safety-emergencies

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Police/Ambulance/Fire (Emergency) 999
- General Emergency (in the rest of Europe) 112
- OC’s Office (UK) +44 (0) 1895 613 020
- Chaplain +44 (0) 1895 613 022
- High Commission of Canada +44 (0) 207 004 6000
- Consulate of Canada (Belfast) +44 (0) 2897-542405
- CFSU(E) Duty Officer (Germany) +49 (0) 1725 345 900
- CFSU(E) Military Police (Germany) +49 (0) 2451 717 142

PADRES

There are three Padres serving the families in Europe, and they are also available for consultation:

<p>Maj Jean-Guy Morin Located in Casteau</p> <p>Responsible for Central Europe (Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium)</p> <p>jean-guy.morin@forces.gc.ca +32 (0) 65 44 6179</p>	<p>Lt(N) Lesley Fox Located in London</p> <p>Responsible for U.K. and Northern Europe</p> <p>lesley.fox@forces.gc.ca +44 (0) 1895 613 022</p>	<p>Capt Gerson Flor Located in Naples</p> <p>Responsible for Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Romania)</p> <p>gerson.flor@forces.gc.ca +39 345 080 5673</p>
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HOSPITALS

To find out a Hospital near you, please visit:

www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/pages/nhstrustlisting.aspx

CAF MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Military members and their families can also contact the CAF Member Assistance Program at +1 800 268 7708. This is a voluntary and confidential service that allows callers to speak with a professional counsellor and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please note that Canadian toll-free numbers are not free when calling from another country, but the CAF Member Assistance Program will also accept collect calls at +1 613 941 5842.

FAMILY INFORMATION LINE

The Family Information Line offers confidential assistance and supportive counselling 24/7.

When you call you will be connected to one of their experienced professionals who can connect you with local and national resources.

The Family Information Line can be called toll free, from Europe, at 00 800 7711 7722.

A.A.MEETINGS

Information on Alcoholic Anonymous meetings in Europe or online is available at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/ or <https://alcoholics-anonymous.eu/>

COMMUNICATIONS

MAKING PHONE CALLS CALLING WITHIN EUROPE

There is no standard way to write a European phone number, which will lead to confusion. This is the same number, written different ways –

+44 - 89 - 343 80 - 14 +44 (89) 343 80 - 14 0044 (0) 89 343 80 - 14
(089) 343 80 - 14 089 / 343 80 - 14 089 343 80 14

The “+44” at the start is the exit code and U.K. country code. The “89” is the area code and the “3438014” is the phone number. There is no standard length for area codes (2-5 digits) or phone numbers (5-12 digits).

So, when dialing within the country you’re in, you do not need the exit code and country code (+44).

If you’re dialing within the same area code, you do not need to enter the area code, but you need to add a “0” before the number to call inside U.K.

CALLING OUTSIDE OF THE U.K.

The exit code for calling out of the country in Europe is 00. You then follow that with the country code, area code, and telephone number. The “+” means to use the exit code for the country you’re in – in Europe, that’s 00, in Canada, it’s 011. You can use the “+” on your mobile phone as the exit code, and your phone should pick up the right exit code, no matter what country you’re in!

CALLING CANADA FROM THE U.K.

The country code for Canada and the United States is 1. Dial the exit code (00) then the country code (1) then the number.

00 - 1 - area code - seven-digit number

CALLING THE U.K. FROM CANADA

The exit code in Canada is “011”

011-44-1895-123-456

SOME COUNTRY CODES

Austria.....	43	France.....	33	Spain	34
Belgium	32	Italy.....	39	Switzerland	41
Czech Republic.....	420	Latvia	371	Turkey.....	90
Estonia	372	Netherlands	31	Germany	49

SUMMARY

To dial a number within the U.K.	0 711 1234567
To dial a U.K. number from elsewhere in Europe	+44 711 1234567
	or 00 44 711 1234567
To dial a number outside the U.K.	+44 121 1234567
	or 00 44 121 1234567
To dial Canada from the U.K.	00 1 613 5551234
To dial the U.K. from Canada	011 44 711 1234567

TOLL FREE AND CHARGES FOR CALLS

0800

0800 and 0808 are the dialing prefix for Toll Free Calls in the U.K.

0900 and 0180 calls

0900 numbers are “premium-rate” services, and 0180 numbers are for service-oriented calls and are billed per minute or per call. Costs will vary.

SIM CARDS

Most Canadians will use a mobile phone while in the U.K. If your Canadian mobile works on a GSM network, you will be able to use it.

A CRTC law bans cellphone unlocking fees and orders that all new devices be unlocked. Canadians no longer have to pay to have their cellphones unlocked. When your phone is unlocked you will be able to use it with any mobile company simply by switching the SIM card in the back.

Make sure to unlock the phone before moving as the provider might not be able to assist once the account is closed.

VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP)

Several Canadian families have used a VoIP phone, and this is worth investigating before leaving Canada (so you can keep your number). With a VoIP phone, you can keep a Canadian phone number. This has a few benefits. Your family and friends can call you, and you can call them, without overseas long-distance charges. Besides cost, it is also less confusing for people who may not be used to European calling (like elderly parents). Keeping a Canadian phone number also can help when completing online forms, banking, registering on Canadian websites etc. And finally, if you want to keep a phone number for continuity, you can move a number to a VoIP provider when you move OUTCAN, then move the same number back to a Canadian provider when you return. Which provider to use? There are several, with varying costs and services. MagicJack and Vonage are two of the big companies, but many other VoIP providers are out there.

INTERNET/MOBILE PHONE

You will likely find a difference in Internet capabilities in the U.K. In larger centers, broadband may be available. In rural areas, where broadband may not be available you may be required to use a dongle. Dongles are small USB receivers for a wireless Internet signal (called mobile broadband). A few recommended Internet providers are:

- [BT](#)
- [O₂](#)
- [Vodafone](#)
- [Sky](#)
- [TalkTalk](#)
- [Virgin Media](#)
- [Three](#)

A great online resource can be found at www.thinkbroadband.com, which has an up-to-date list of providers and their packages and client reviews.

While you are waiting for your Internet services to be connected, you can access pay as you go WI-FI at www.btopenzone.com.

WHATSAPP

WhatsApp Messenger, or simply WhatsApp, is an American freeware, cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP) service owned by Facebook, Inc. It allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media over the internet for free, rather than using your mobile network which costs you money.

WhatsApp is a free app for iPhones, Android smartphones, Windows Phone and Mac laptops and Windows PC.

ON THE ROAD

GENERAL

Although the U.K. is much smaller than Canada, getting around will be greatly helped if you are comfortable driving as public transportation is not always readily available (or economical) depending on your location. While not required, it may be helpful to ask a neighbour for suggested driving schools in your area. Shop around to find an instructor who's a good fit for you. Being comfortable driving in the U.K. can mean a lot more flexibility and fun during your posting!

It is possible to do many great day trips just by taking a train as most train stations are right in the heart of towns.

London sidewalks (pavement) can be hard on shoes and feet. Many have sore feet at the beginning but feet get used to it and it is soon forgotten. Oh, and the pavement is often uneven, which can result in people sometimes tripping over some tiles - usually the newly arrived to London. For some reason, we adapt our walk and stop tripping over at some point.

If you have never driven in the U.K. before, you are in for a unique experience. Some have been known, after returning safely from their first foray into the English countryside, to fall on their knees and kiss the ground! Others have even been known to start attending church on a regular basis! In reality however, it is not that bad. You will soon become used to driving on the "*wrong side*" of the road and negotiating "*roundabouts*". With a bit of practice, a lot of caution and a dose of common sense, you will find driving in the U.K. no more difficult or dangerous than anywhere else, including Canada. It is extremely important, however, that you familiarize yourself with the rules of the road, road signs and driving customs before you get behind the wheel (on the right-hand side).

All driving related questions can be directed towards the Det London Movements Section at: CFSUEDetUKF&E@forces.gc.ca

DRIVER'S LICENCE

Your Canadian driver's license is accepted in the U.K. during your entire posting. An International Driving Permit (IDP) is strongly recommended if you intend to drive on the Continent (Europe) or Ireland and is required in certain countries (i.e. Greece). If you are caught without an IDP in a country that requires one, you could receive a fine or even a mandatory court appearance. You can find further information as well as an application form directly from CAA at www.caa.ca/travelling/idp-2/

PARKING

The British Parking Association (BPA) outlines four different types of parking zones in the UK, namely:

Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)

This is where waiting and loading is restricted for some or all of the time. Local authority websites will have details of CPZs in operation in their area, along with details of who's eligible for a permit and how to obtain one.

Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ)

This is where waiting and possibly loading restricted might be applied, even though there are no yellow lines. The times of operation will be stated on signs upon entry and within the zone.

Permit Parking Area (PPA)

This is an area in which you must have a stated type of permit to park during its hours of operation. You must display the permit, even though there are no parking bays or road markings.

Pedestrian Zones

These are areas that you must not enter during operational hours. Even outside these times, there might be loading and waiting restrictions, which will be stated on the bottom panel of the zone signs.

TOLLS & CONGESTION CHARGES

Driving in Central London can be challenging due to traffic, small roads and downtown congestion charges. However, if driving is a must, please visit <http://www.tfl.gov.U.K./roadusers/congestioncharging> for areas included in the congestion charges.

The daily charge is £15 if you pay in advance or on the same day, or £17.50 by midnight of the third charging day after travel within the charging zone between 07:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday.

Payment methods for tolls in the UK :

- *Coins*
- *Credit/Debit card*
- *Online*

If the toll booth is not manned and requires you to drop coins into a bucket, a camera will most likely take your license plate information and send you a bill later. If you're in a rental car, the bill will go to the rental company, which will in turn charge you for the toll on your rental bill.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

The Automobile Association (AA) and The Royal Automobile Club (RAC) are the two main automobile associations, similar to CAA, but a bit more expensive. Both offer emergency roadside service, at home service and other services depending on the package you choose. Check prices and be attentive to 'occasional specials' offered through the media. Some insurance companies will add road side assistance coverage (or breakdown coverage) as part of, or in addition to your insurance plan. *Some families have purchased AA memberships online and they have been up to 20% cheaper by doing this rather than phoning.

IF INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT

If you have an accident causing damage or injury you must give the following to anyone with 'reasonable grounds for requiring them', for example an insurance company:

- your name and address
- the vehicle registration number

You also need to give the owner's name and address if the vehicle is not yours.

You must report the accident to the police within 24 hours if you do not give your details at the time of the accident.

You must also report the accident to your insurance company, even if you're not planning to make a claim.

Accidents with uninsured motorists

You should tell the police if you have an accident with someone who's not insured.

Your insurance company will also be able to give you more advice.

You might also be able to get compensation if you're the victim of an uninsured or hit and run driver, which can be found at: www.gov.uk/compensation-victim-uninsured-driver

The information above was taken from: www.gov.uk/vehicle-insurance/if-youre-in-an-accident

CAR RENTAL

Depending if you are living in a major city or a rural area, your choices will vary. However, you can visit all major bookings, such as through Expedia, or any of the major companies directly. Please note, that you will pay a premium for an automatic vehicle, and almost always the steering wheel is situated on what would be the right passenger side for us in Canada.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The London Underground (Tube) system consists of 11 different lines, stretching across the entire city. Do not be discouraged, the Tube is easy to use and very convenient. For example, hop on the Tube at West Ruislip Station, which is located directly behind the Ruislip Detachment and be downtown in less than 45min.

If you are planning on traveling within London often, it is recommended that you obtain an Oyster Card. The Oyster Card is a plastic smartcard you can use instead of paper tickets. You can put Travelcards, Bus & Tram Passes and pay as you go credit on it, which you use up as you travel. A £5.00 refundable deposit is required for the card. The HM Forces Rail Card can connect to your Oyster Card for further discount, or you can simply purchase a discounted day pass using your HM Forces Rail Card. You can also use a [contactless](#) card or mobile device for adult rate pay as you go travel on all TFL transport services.

Always remember to "Tap out" when exiting the station.

Visit [https://tfl.gov.U.K./](https://tfl.gov.U.K/) for information on London's tube and bus system. If you buy a ticket for the Tube you can use it on buses as well (and vice-versa).

For travel with a wheelchair or pushchair, a step-free tube map can be located here:

- www.tfl.gov.U.K./cdn/static/cms/documents/step-free-tube-guide-map.pdf

There are also various smartphone apps that can assist your travels in London.

TAXIS

Generally speaking, the famous "Black Cabs" are the most expensive, but certainly offer an opportunity to experience a common site in the U.K.

The best option for finding a taxi or minicab is visiting: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/taxis-and-minicabs/book-a-taxi>

TRAIN

Travel within the rest of the U.K. has been simplified by an efficient network of railways. Visit www.nationalrail.co.U.K. As with many tickets in the U.K., tickets purchased days or weeks in advance are heavily discounted. Book early!

For additional discounts look into obtaining the HM Forces Railcard. Costing £15 for the entire year, this card will save you $\frac{1}{3}$ on most rail fares throughout Great Britain. This card is for personal travel and not for business or temporary duty travel purposes. For more information visit www.hmforces-railcard.co.U.K. Apply for this card at the British Forces orderly rooms at your local base.

The Two Together Railcard allows you and the person you travel with the most to get 1/3 off rail travel for a year when you travel together. The Railcard costs £30 for the year – or £15 each. Both travellers must be over 16. Also available for the Heathrow express train.

www.twotogether-railcard.co.uk/

BUS

Long-distance buses are called 'coaches'. The largest bus company in the U.K. is *National Express* serving 1200 destinations across the U.K. (including major airports). Visit www.nationalexpress.com or call 08705 808 080 to plan or book your trip.

Various discounts are offered. Other coach companies also offer service on specific routes (such as the *Oxford Tube*) that goes from London to Oxford and back every 12-60 minutes depending on day/time.

Check out the Internet and local media for other coach companies serving your area.

HOUSING

LOCATION

The UK has over 25 locations where members are affected. This can vary from British and NATO bases, The High Commission, CFSUE Det London, Universities, and other.

SUPPORT

As a result of having some families live on the local economy, while others may have on base accommodations, families may have different housing experiences. Plus, you may be posted to a very rural and remote area, compared to someone living in downtown London. As you can imagine, there are a number of vast difference been living in Central London or in one of the Remote communities we have members posted to.

- *If you have any questions about housing, do not hesitate to contact the Det London's Relocation Officer, Luiza Smaglinska, at Luiza.Smaglinska@forces.gc.ca*

GENERAL

- *State schools rated Good and Outstanding (as per OFSTED) can be difficult to get in to. When house hunting, it is important to consider the catchment area of the schools in your neighborhood as some of them can be quite small. Siblings of children already in a State School get first priority for state-funded nursery spaces and these are highly sought after.*
- *All children between 5 and 16 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and live at least:*
 - o *2 miles from the school if they're under 8*
 - o *3 miles from the school if they're 8 or older*
- *Public transport availability and access*
- *You can bring your current vehicle or buy a new or used one while here. It is suggested that in same remote locations, 2 cars are needed to avoid dependant/spouse isolation.*
- *Most Canadians living in London do not bring or use a privately-owned vehicle as it is possible to travel just about anywhere with a combination of bus, Tube or Train. Parking in the city is also problematic as space is limited and can be very expensive.*

CANADIAN FORCES SUPPORT UNIT (CFSUE)

Depending on where you are located in the U.K., you may only be visiting the Detachment (Det) during In and Out Clearance or you may be visiting often.

The Detachment is the administrative center for all CAF members and their families posted in the U.K. Please see below for important contact information or visit:

www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Locations/United-Kingdom.aspx

Officer Commanding	+44 (0) 1895 613 020
Chaplain Services	+44 (0) 1895 613 022
Admin O	+44 (0) 1895 613 026
HR Supervisor/Chief Clerk	+44 (0) 1895 613 028
Pay & Records	+44 (0) 1895 613 029

MFSE CENTER

Your MFS(E) Centre is in London, Ruislip, and serves local families, as well as other remote locations throughout the united Kingdom. The Centre offers Community Orientation, Information and Referral Services, Virtual Coffee Mornings, Lunch and Learns, Craft Sessions, and more! Child and Youth group activities, Travel Forums, French Coffee Mornings, and Employment Workshops are some other programs that have been offered virtually.

Through participation in our virtual programs, you may be able to connect with other CAF members and families throughout Europe.

THE HIVE

The HIVE - for people who are posted to a U.K. base serving in a U.K. position or as NATO personnel, you may have the ability to access services through the U.K.'s equivalent of the MFS.

APPLIANCES

You will find that your appliances around your house are often smaller than what you are accustomed to in Canada.

- *Often new families will need to buy some appliances for their home.*
- *Some families find their European fridge too small and prefer to buy a second one.*
- *North American pans do not always fit in your new oven.*
- *The washer and dryer are often much smaller and slower. This can pose problems for washing typical Canadian bedding.*

BEDROOMS

Wardrobes

Most houses do not have closets or other cabinets for storage; instead, they often have wardrobes to store items.

Beds

You should note that sizes of beds and bedding differ between Canada and Europe. It may be helpful to purchase extra bedding prior to your move, or you may find that you must have it shipped from Canada. If you plan on purchasing a bed while you are in Europe, do your research to ensure you will be able to find bedding that will fit upon your return to Canada.

A Comparison of UK, EU & US Mattress Sizes

UK / EU / US Toddler 30" x 55" 75 x 142cm	UK Single / US Twin 39" x 75" 90 x 190cm	EU Single 39" x 80" 90 x 200cm	UK Small Double or Three-Quarter 47" x 75" 120 x 190cm	EU Small Double 47" x 80" 120 x 200cm
UK Double / US Full 53" x 75" 135 x 190cm	EU Double 55" x 80" 140 x 200cm	UK King / US Queen 60" x 80" 150 x 200	EU King 63" x 80" 160 x 200cm	
UK Super King / EU Super King 70" x 80" 180 x 200cm		US King 76" x 80" 193 x 200cm		US California King 72" x 84" 182 x 213cm

COTTON PATCH

BASEMENTS

Almost all homes have no cellar or basement due to the extra cost of digging down further into the sub-soil and a requirement for much deeper foundations and waterproof tanking.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Europe differs from electricity in Canada, in that the voltage is higher and the frequency is lower. In Canada, our electricity is 110V and 60Hz, while in Europe, they have 220-230V and 50Hz. Some electronics are not compatible with European power and require transformers, while others are dual voltage and only require a plug adapter.

To find out if an electronic is dual voltage, look for the electronic information on the product. This information is often found on the bottom or back of the product, or on its battery pack. If the input gives a range such as 100-240V 50-60Hz, then the product **is** dual voltage and works with both Canadian and European electricity. If the input does not give a range and only says 110V 60Hz, then it is **not** compatible with European electricity.

Dual Voltage

If your product is dual voltage, then all you need is a plug adapter to use it. Since the product is already compatible with the local electricity, all the adapter does is allow the prongs to fit the electrical outlets. If you use an adapter with a product that is not dual voltage, you will not only damage your product, but you may also cause electrical damage to the building.

Lamps are typically dual voltage; however, you will need to replace the light bulbs with European lightbulbs.

Single Voltage

If your electronics only says 110V 60Hz, then it is not compatible with European electricity. To use electronics while in Europe, you will need to use a transformer. Transformers convert the local electricity to 110V 60Hz, so you can plug devices into it as if you were plugging them into a wall in Canada.



Most electronic devices have a prominent label that looks like this picture. On this device (a camera battery charger), you can see that after "Input" it says "110 – 240V", which means that it can be used with any voltage within that range, including the 110V standard in Canada or the 220-230V standard in much of Europe. All you will need is a plug adaptor.



On this next label, you can see that this coffee maker is **NOT** dual voltage. It lists simply "120V". Other items may say "110V" - anything in this range is a standard North American appliance. If you want to use something like this overseas, it will need to be on a transformer.



In this final image, you can see that some appliances have a switch for use between higher and lower voltages. This can be used overseas with only a **plug adaptor**, but do not forget to flip the switch!

TRANSFORMERS

Transformers are created with different wattage ratings, so you will need to make sure you are using the correct wattage to handle what you are plugging into it.

The total wattage of appliances plugged into the transformer must be less than the wattage rating of the transformer. To find out the wattage of an electronic device, if it is not on the label, you can multiply the voltage of the item by the number of amperes (amps). For example, if the information on an item says 110V 60Hz 1A, you would multiple 110 (voltage) by 1 (amps) to get 110 watts.

There are also websites that have information on the approximate wattage of electronic and household appliances, for example,

- www.wholesalesolar.com/solar-information/how-to-save-energy/power-table

Research before choosing transformers. If in doubt, buy bigger. Some items (like TVs) need a big surge of power when switched on, so go with three times the wattage (a 500W appliance might need a 1500W transformer). Items that produce heat (iron, hair dryer) will require more wattage.

Transformers that do not have an ON/OFF switch, or have a switch and are turned on, will consume energy while plugged in, even if you do not have an appliance plugged into them. Therefore, you should always keep your transformers off or unplugged when not in use.

As part of your furniture claim, you can purchase and claim 50% of the cost of up to four transformers.

BANKING

BANK ACCOUNT

Something you are asked to complete during your In-Clearance is to set up a U.K. bank account. To set up an account, the member will likely need to provide the bank with a letter from the Det stating that you will be employed in the U.K., a copy of a pay guide, a confirmation (written reference) from your bank in Canada on your financial standing, a proof of residence in the U.K. (i.e. copy of lease agreement) and your passport.

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

Generally you will be required to provide two documents in order to open a bank account in the UK:

- *a proof of ID*
- *a proof of address*

Banks will accept standard ID documents such as passports or identity cards as proof of ID, but can vary in what they accept as a proof of address. Documents that are usually accepted include a tenancy agreement, a recent utility bill, a bank or credit card statement that has been posted to a UK address.

Making an appointment at the bank of your choice is recommended to ensure you have all the required documentation to open an account.

If setting up a joint account with your spouse, both spouses must be present. Accounts are usually activated within 2 or 3 days and your banking/debit card/credit card should arrive within 5 days. You may find that the bank cannot activate the account until you have actually become a U.K. resident (commenced tenancy in your U.K. home); however, they can still provide you with the account information.

MOST COMMON BANKS

- *Barclays* www.personal.barclays.co.U.K.
- *HSBC* www.hsbc.co.U.K.
- *Lloyds* www.lloydstsb.com
- *National Westminster* www.natwest.com

EUROPEAN BANK ACCOUNTS

Bank accounts in Europe have an "IBAN" (International Bank Account Number) and a "BIC" (Bank Identifier Code). You will use these for making payments and receiving money. If you

are paying a bill, you will typically find their IBAN on the bill and you can use that in your online banking to make the payment. You will also provide your IBAN to companies to pay your bills (insurance, gym payments, cell phone, etc.). The orderly room and claims section at CFSU(E) will use your IBAN to deposit pay and claims into your bank account.

To make a payment, you will often need a TAN (Transaction Authorization Number). This can be a complex thing to get used to in Europe. You will likely get a sheet of TANs when you initially get your bank account, but then through your mobile banking you can use mobile TANs (a number sent to your phone) or photo TANs with an app on your phone. To use mobile or photo TANs, you will need to register your mobile number in the online banking.

EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION MANAGEMENT (CEM)

CEM EUROPE

CEM Europe's Role is to manage the education compensation and benefits programs. CEM compensation and benefits program consists of the management of Departmental Foreign Service Education Allowances and related care allowances, such as Family Reunion Travel, Education, Post-Secondary Shelter allowance, Special education on behalf of dependent children of CAF members.

For queries with CEM Europe or assistance with your allowances and claims, please contact the team at P-SFK.76ECEM@forces.gc.ca

Please visit this link for [CEM EUROPE](#) information on educational screening, Foreign Service Directive (FSD) and Education Allowance Forms.

CEM CANADA

Children's Education Management (CEM) Canada, located in Ottawa, now offers Guidance Counselling Services to all CAF families serving outside Canada. This includes : secondary curriculum review, distance learning courses prescribed for courses required for graduation, post-secondary education guidance services, liaise with guidance counsellor at post if required, review of curriculum differences among provinces/territories, advice on possible required subjects.

CEM Canada Contacts are:

Andrea Smith (A-K) Andrea.Smith2@forces.gc.ca

Alisa Hanrahan (L-Z) Alisa.Hanrahan@forces.gc.ca

Understanding and applying Children's Education Management policies can be complex. Both CEM Europe and CEM Canada will likely be involved in your children's education journey. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

To speak about your educational options, it is advisable to make contact with a guidance counselor and to discuss your children's educational options as soon as you receive your posting message.

CHILDCARE

Childcare (aka childminding) in the U.K. can be a struggle for parents with children not registered in school. There are likely to be nurseries and childminders available within your local area. Doing your research for available space is crucial if you plan on having your

children cared for outside the home. Ask a friend or neighbour for a recommended child care provider.

Due to MFS(E) U.K. being a virtual centre, we do not provide any localized childcare. We would, however, assist with finding the right childcare options in your area.

Some websites which may be helpful to locate appropriate child care are:

- *Buttons Nanny Agency – serves West London and Surrey. Registration is free. Visit <http://buttonsnannyagency.com/>*
- *Tinies Nanny Agency – available across the U.K. Registration is free. Visit www.tinies.com for more information.*
- *Sitters Babysitting Agency – available across the U.K. Quarterly membership fee for access to service. Visit [www.sitters.co.U.K.](http://www.sitters.co.U.K) for more information.*

RESOURCES

MFS(E) WEBSITE

www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Home.aspx

MFS(E) FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/MFSEurope/>

MFS(E) YOUTUBE CHANNEL

www.youtube.com/channel/UCbQXCBqcVYvLZhDj0a37h8Q

CAF CONNECTION WEBSITE

www.cafconnection.ca/National/Home.aspx

MY VOICE/MA VOIX

MyVoice is a place for you to communicate with Military Family Services (MFS). The group is a safe place to discuss your experiences as a military family and offer feedback about your military lifestyle. You can find out more at: www.facebook.com/groups/MyVoiceMaVoix/

FAMILY INFORMATION LINE

The Family Information Line (FIL) is a confidential, personal, bilingual, and free service offering information, support, referrals, reassurance, and crisis management to the military community. We serve Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families—immediate and extended. You can find out more at: www.cafconnection.ca/National/Stay-Connected/Family-Information-Line.aspx

THE CFSU(E) FACEBOOK GROUP

The CFSU(E) Facebook page is by invitation, contact your Detachment's Orderly Room.

TRAVEL ADVISORIES

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>