

RCPCH

Royal College of
Paediatrics and Child Health

Leading the way in Children's Health

Global Links Volunteer Handbook

1. Welcome

Hello and welcome to the RCPCH Global Links Volunteer Programme – we are delighted to have you on board!

We will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us as enjoyable, rewarding and impactful as possible.

Introduction to Global Links

The RCPCH Global Links volunteer programme is part of the colleges international work supporting health systems and clinicians in resource poor settings.

The overarching aims of the programme can be summarised thus:

Global Links Programme Outcomes:

- 1. Improved quality of care provided to sick infants and children admitted to consortium hospitals*
- 2. Improved disease prevention and health promotion activities at the community level, including improvements in referral mechanisms for sick children*
- 3. Improvements in clinical leadership and managerial skills amongst UK, Asian and African paediatricians*
- 4. Establish new, and develop existing, North-South and South-South links*

The RCPCH Global Links programme is run in partnership with the Kenyan Paediatric Association (KPA), Ugandan Paediatric Association (UPA), Myanmar Paediatric Society (MPS) and the West African College of Physicians (WACP), Faculty of Paediatrics.

This exchange of child health professionals should aid the establishment of health links between the UK and Asian and African institutions, as well as improve the quality of paediatric care.

Volunteer UK paediatricians will undertake capacity building placements across Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Myanmar which aim to improve the quality of healthcare for children through various outcome measures required by donors and their own objectives. These might include training local healthcare personnel, conducting clinical audits or developing new services in collaboration with local staff. Rather than focusing on service delivery, RCPCH Global Links volunteers will make steps towards achieving longstanding improvements in the quality of paediatric care across some of the poorest countries in Africa and Asia.

The Volunteer Handbook

This handbook is designed to guide you through the Global Links Volunteer process; from selecting your placement right through to writing your final report. It details what you need to do pre-departure, what your placement might entail and the costs the RCPCH will cover versus those you need to fund yourself.

The handbook also outlines the terms and conditions of your placement, detailing what is expected of you and what can be expected of your placement hospital and the RCPCH. It also details the potential risks of working in a resource poor setting

It is vital that you read, understand and accept the information given in this handbook regarding your placement before you agree to it.

By signing the Volunteer Agreement included with this handbook, you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of the Global Links Volunteer Programme. You are confirming that you accept your choice of placement, the potential risks attached to your placement and your responsibilities regarding your health, security and code of conduct.

This Volunteer Agreement then needs to be returned to your projects manager along with a completed bank details and emergency contact details form.

If your placement is in Africa

Please send scanned copies of all signed documents to Peter.Nash@rcpch.ac.uk.

If your placement is in Asia

Please send scanned copies of all signed documents to Marcus.Wootton@rcpch.ac.uk

2. What you are going to do

Pre-departure

1. Obtaining Out of Programme Experience (OOPE) for Trainees.
2. Organising time out for non-Trainees
3. Medical clearance and immunisations
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Placement selection and objective development
6. Supervisors
7. Arrange visa and work permit
8. Booking flights
9. Self briefing
10. Pre-departure training
11. Security training
12. Pensions
13. Insurance
14. Disclosure and Barring Service

1. Obtaining Out of Programme Experience (OOPE) approval

For trainees, this is a crucial part of the pre-placement process and must be started **as early as possible**. Most deaneries like to sign off on OOPE approval **6 months** in advance of the placement start date, so getting started on the process well before this timescale is crucial. If you haven't already begun discussing your overseas placement with your training supervisor and deanery we encourage you to do so soon. The RCPCH will endorse your application and assist you with obtaining OOPE where necessary.

We have a guide to gaining OOPE approval in the International section of the RCPCH website called [Guide to Volunteering Overseas](#).

2. Organising time out for non-Trainees

There are several options for consultants who want to take time out of their role in the UK to work overseas for 6 – 12 months. These options are covered in a guide which can be found in the International section of the RCPCH website called [Guide to Volunteering Overseas](#).

Before departing, contact the RCPCH college membership inbox (membership@rcpch.ac.uk) to get reduced fees whilst overseas.

3. Medical and Psychological clearance

Medical Clearance

All Global Links volunteers will need to complete a medical check up to mitigate against the risk of health issues arising whilst you are overseas. We are using the services of the independent travel clinic Interhealth to facilitate the procedure. The process of obtaining medical clearance consists of completing an Interhealth self-cert medical document, and

then visiting your local GP to undergo a further examination. Both forms are then returned to Interhealth for a final sign off. Obtaining this medical clearance is a condition of going overseas.

Psychological Clearance

All Global Links volunteers will undergo a Psychological screening prior to departure. We are using Interhealth to conduct a Resilience Briefing - an online or telephone questionnaire which covers areas such as relationships, motivation, adaptability etc. The Interhealth psychological team then analyse the responses and the volunteer is supplied with a report on their strengths and weaknesses. The Global Links team are supplied with a basic report which will clear you to work overseas. If the results show there might be a concern whilst working overseas, a follow up service is available.

An email will be sent to you directly from Interhealth giving full details of the medical and psychological clearance process, plus access to the relevant medical forms.

Please ensure you complete both the medical and psychological procedures well before your departure date. We advise that you get going with the medical processes as soon as you have accepted a placement.

Immunisations

Before departing overseas it is important to get up to date with the correct immunisations for the country you'll be volunteering in. To find out which vaccinations are necessary you can contact Interhealth or find out from your local GP practice (for details of how to access Interhealth services, please see the Interhealth section below).

To have the immunisations administered, please use your local GP or travel clinic, or Occupational Health department at your hospital. Costs can vary considerably for immunisations, so please make an effort to keep costs to a minimum. Below is a guide to how much you should be looking to pay. If the amount you are going to be charged is much higher, please consider finding an alternative provider:

Immunisation	Average/expected cost	Additional comments
Tetanus, diphtheria with Polio, Typhoid and Hepatitis A	See additional comments	May be available on NHS, please check with GP surgery
Hepatitis A with typhoid	£70	May be available on NHS, please check with GP surgery
Hepatitis A and B combined	£60.00 per dose	Maybe available on the NHS, please check with your GP surgery
Hepatitis B three doses required	£35.00 per dose	May be available on the NHS for certain individuals.

Rabies three doses required	£50.00 per dose	
Yellow fever	£50.00	Cost includes certificate
Meningitis ACWY	£45.00	
Japanese B encephalitis two doses required	£70.00 per dose	

Antimalarials

For all the countries where Global Links volunteers work, it is necessary to take anti-malarials for the duration of their placements. Using the location information on your placement document, please consult with Interhealth or your GP to decide which anti-malarial you should take. Unfortunately, we cannot fund the cost of Malarone as it is too expensive.

To obtain anti-malarials, you will need a prescription. Like immunisations, costs for anti-malarials can vary considerably. The cheapest way to obtain them is by buying them online.

Most Volunteers opt for Malarone which is available for a private prescription as most high street pharmacies

10p for Doxycycline at Pharmplex online pharmacy:

http://www.pharmplexdirect.com/advanced_search_result.php?keywords=doxycycline

In some UK health districts you can get 3-6 months anti-malarials for free from your chemist so please investigate this option.

HIV PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) kits

During your placement you will be at risk of accidental exposure to HIV through infected blood or body fluids. For this reason we will provide you with a 3 day starter PEP kit which you must obtain before going overseas and take with you. This starter kit will give you time to confirm the status of the person you are at risk of infection from, and if necessary take the remainder of the 28 day full PEP course of drugs which will be available locally.

You can obtain the starter kit through Interhealth by booking yourself in for a PEP Kit Consultation and then ordering one to be sent to your home address.

Bed nets

To reduce the likelihood of contracting malaria and other mosquito borne diseases, we strongly recommend that you take with you a treated mosquito bed net. They can be purchased online for about £10-15. We will reimburse you for this if you send us your receipt and complete a reimbursement form.

A very comprehensive guide can be found here

<https://www.safariquip.co.uk/all-categories/insect-protection/mosquito-nets/choosing-a-mosquito-net/>

Interhealth services

As a Global Links volunteer you can access Interhealth's services at any time through their Travel Health Advice Centre. The services include advice on anti-malarials, country specific inoculations and a contact number in case of a medical emergency overseas.

Your name will be registered at Interhealth who will send you an email to inform you what to do in order to access their services. If you contact them to by phone, please indicate that you are Global Links volunteer so that invoices will then be sent directly to us.

Interhealth charge above the standard rate for anti-malarials and inoculations so please don't use them to purchase these drugs. However, they are available for up to date information on what drugs are necessary depending on the country you are going to.

N.B. Global Links will reimburse you for all costs related to your pre-assignment medical clearance, inoculations etc. However, we ask you to please use any facilities which you have access to which would help keep costs to a minimum e.g. the Occupational Health facilities at your hospital

RCPCH also strongly recommend you arrange a dental check-up before you depart for your placement but will not cover the cost of this, or any dental work that needs to be done as a result.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The RCPCH's global links program has been supporting placements of UK doctors in resource poor settings for a number of years.

The programmes are run in partnership with local overseas partners –usually professional paediatric associations or a national Ministry of Health. It should be noted that all positions are voluntary.

Trainee and consultant paediatricians work on six to 12 month clinical and capacity building placements in hospitals across our partner countries, Kenya, Uganda, Myanmar and Sierra Leone. The programs are funded by donors such as the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET).

The key areas of work:

Supporting clinical services

This includes providing clinical support to hospital teams and paediatric services. Volunteers obtain permission through the national medical boards to work clinically on wards and paediatric departments. They undertake clinical procedures and also provide advice to local clinicians as well as gaining a greater understanding of resource poor medicine and gaining knowledge and expertise from local health workers.

Training local healthcare staff

The volunteers' core functions include both formal and ad hoc training of local staff. In a formal setting Volunteers instruct on the various teaching programs including the World Health Organisations (WHO) ETAT program.

Less formally volunteers are also involved in bedside training and ward rounds whilst undertaking the clinical elements of their placement which comply with the processes and protocols outlined in formal training.

Transferring skills in paediatric education – [could this be combined with the previous sub-heading. Not sure what the original distinction was!]

The volunteers aim to support local staff to deliver both formal and informal teaching by training local staff to deliver both accredited courses and informal bedside clinical teaching including scenario based teaching using teaching aids. The aim of this is to ensure that when the volunteer placement ends the service improvement from teaching is maintained.

Developing new protocols in partnership with local staff

Global links volunteers work with local partners to develop and implement new protocols at local and sometimes national levels which reflect the guidance of the national paediatric associations and international organisations including WHO.

Building the capacity of PICU, NICU, OPD and paediatric emergency services

In low resource settings it is common for hospitals not only to be poorly equipped but also suffer supply and logistical problems. Volunteers are involved in enabling local health staff to examine their current levels of equipment and where appropriate small purchases of equipment can be made to build capacity. Volunteers are also involved in working with local partners to improve the flow of patients and treatment pathways through the hospital.

Working on community health projects

Volunteers are involved in examining the wider health setting and area that their hospitals serve. This can include meetings with community leaders, assisting in outreach work or visiting community health settings. The aim of this work is improve referral pathways and interaction between community and inpatient settings

Conducting audits of local services.

Many of the volunteers work in settings where health data and hospital mortality and morbidity figures are of poor quality. The volunteers work to improve the quality of data and use this as the basis for hospital improvement. They include local colleagues in Quality Improvement work and provide training in audit methodologies. Audits and quality improvement may also focus on specific patient groups such as neonates or on specific conditions such as sepsis, dengue or malaria.

5. Placement selection and objective development

Once you have selected, and been accepted by, your placement hospital you will begin collaborating with the local staff on your SMART objectives which you will work towards during your time overseas.

SMART objectives are;

Specific

Measurable

Achievable
Relevant
Time bound

These will focus on capacity building and will fulfil hospital needs whilst utilising your specialist skills and interests. Contact details of key hospital staff will be included in the placement documentation and it is then your responsibility to begin developing the objectives in collaboration with staff from your placement hospital (it will be possible to revise them in line with any new developments when you arrive in country where necessary). The head of the RCPCH's international team will sign off on your objectives before departing overseas.

6. Supervisors

Whilst volunteering overseas, you will have the support of an in-country clinical supervisor and UK based educational supervisor.

UK-based Educational Supervisor (for trainees): This person meets with the trainee pre and post programme and is available to be contacted by e-mail on a regular basis whilst overseas. Many trainees in the UK now have a local Educational Supervisor who provides ongoing supervision throughout their training programme. If this is not possible, then another consultant paediatrician from the UK, preferably with experience of working in a resource poor setting, will be identified as your Educational Supervisor. In most cases it will be the trainees' responsibility to find their own supervisor. However, if this is not possible, the college's international team will look for one for you.

In-country Clinical Supervisor: This will ideally be a local senior paediatrician on the permanent staff of your placement hospital who will be available to the trainee on a regular basis for advice and guidance. In placements which are more remote and/or understaffed, it might not be possible to identify a Clinical Supervisor residing in your placement hospital. In this situation a Clinical Supervisor will be identified at a hospital as near as possible to the placement hospital. They will be available for advice by phone and for occasional face to face visits. The Global Links team will find you a suitable in-country supervisor, and encourage you to get in contact before going overseas.

Before going overseas try to build up a network of sub-specialists from your hospital or previous colleagues. Think about who would be good to contact about, for example, a dermatological case, a radiological issue etc. They could be useful if you are presented with a case which is outside of your or your local colleagues' experience. This should be alongside a UK supervisor who you can contact for general matters.

7. Visas and Work permits

Details surrounding visas and work permits will vary depending on the country in which your placement is based. Entrance visas will be organised when booking flights. The processes involved in gaining work permits, medical registration, residency etc. can be a lengthy and involve collating multiple documents which are then submitted to the authorities in your

placement country. The RCPCH will give you details on what documents you need to collate before you depart. This will be handled by the global team.

8. Booking flights

The RCPCH will pay for one return flight to your country of placement. In most cases, the RCPCH will book this flight for you according to a date and departure airport you have specified.

Before your flight is booked, you must ensure your passport is valid for a minimum of six months after your expected return from your placement and contain enough blank pages to meet visa requirements. It is your responsibility to organise a new passport if this is required and the RCPCH cannot cover costs associated with obtaining or renewing passports.

9. Self-briefing

In addition to reading the 'what to expect' and 'what I am signing up for' sections of this handbook, it is your responsibility to do your own self briefing on volunteering in a developing country before you go. Do background research into your host country, read blogs from previous volunteers, find out about typical medical conditions in the location to which you are going. You can also keep up-to-date with information on the FCO website (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>). There are useful links to downloadable resources in the "what to expect" section of this handbook.

The RCPCH will endeavour to put you in contact with paediatricians who currently work/have volunteered in your placement country who could offer an additional insight. This kind of contact, with people who are/were in the same situation as you, can work as invaluable preparation. They can give you a real insight into the nature of living and working in that country. The volunteers who are still in country might not have great internet access, so don't be surprised if it takes a while for them to get back to you. Your RCPCH program manager for further details.

10. Pre-departure training

In order to prepare you for living and working overseas, you will be required to attend a two-week training course at the RCPCH in London. We will run the course directly before you go overseas and try to fit it in with the trainee rotation schedules, so should not require you to take two weeks out from your work/training but be regarded as part of your placement.

The course will cover what to expect whilst volunteering overseas, including cultural issues, security issues and legal responsibilities. The course will also cover quality improvement, paediatric education, clinical leadership and service development which will assist you when working towards your objectives. The cost of the course, including your accommodation in London, will be covered by the College.

More information regarding the dates and content of the two-week training course will be sent to you prior to your departure.

11. Security training

When living and working in a developing country, it is important to be aware of the increased security issues and take extra precautions where necessary. For this reason Global Links has employed the services of the independent travel security organisation Clarity Security. They will run a course which covers the types of safety issues which might be faced in developing countries.

When your placement has been identified, we will give you details on when and how to access the security training. Clarity Security have a lot of experience in working with overseas volunteers, and will take you through various scenarios and contexts to prepare you for the situations you might encounter.

The section of the Handbook “What you’re signing up for” outlines some of these broad topics, and we encourage you to read these before attending the course.

12. Pensions

In some projects you will still be able to contribute to your existing NHS pensions, in other programs this is not currently possible. This dependent on the donor organisation who is funding your project. Please discuss this with your program manager.

13. Insurance

Travel and Medical: All Global Links volunteers will be covered by the college’s comprehensive travel and medical insurance policy. Once your placement has been confirmed, we’ll add your name and you’ll be sent details of the policy number and how to access it. Full details of what the Travel and Medical insurance covers can be viewed once you have been signed up, and we would encourage you to read this before departing overseas.

Professional indemnity: We advise all volunteers to continue with their professional indemnity insurance whilst overseas. In the past volunteers have been able to get this at a cheaper rate if they indicate that they are going to work in a developing country. We can provide you with a covering letter to help facilitate this. The RCPCH will not pay your professional indemnity insurance for you.

14. Disclosure and Baring Service.

A condition of joining the Global Links programme is to have an acceptable Enhanced DBS clearance . It must have been issued within the previous three years and we must see the original. If for some reason you do not have a DBS certificate that meets these criteria, please let us know.

3. During your placement

- 1. Arrival and in-country induction**
- 2. Settling in to your accommodation**
- 3. Using public transport**
- 4. Personal responsibilities**
- 5. If you require medical attention**
- 6. Working at the hospital**
- 7. Working relationships and resolving problems**
- 8. Reporting against your objectives**
- 9. E-portfolio whilst overseas (for trainees)**
- 10. Developing lasting links with your placement institution**
- 11. Professional revalidation**
- 12. Local Police Certificate**

1. Arrival and in-country training

Once you arrive in your host country you will be met at the airport by a representative from our overseas partners.

You will then receive a 3-5 day in-country induction carried out by the relevant paediatric association in. This will consist of local history, culture and languages; a guide to country specific personal security issues; an overview of the local health system including standard treatment protocols; a tour of a local hospital including half day observation of outpatients / emergency treatment area; an introduction to hospital / health system at the specific hospital to which the volunteer will be attached, including provision of drugs, investigations; overview of main childhood diseases in host country (in particular how this differs from the UK).

You will also receive another contextualised induction when you arrive at your placement hospital where you'll get introduced to the local staff and begin the process of settling in.

You will receive more specific information about the arrangements made for your arrival prior to your departure.

2. Settling in to your accommodation

The RCPCH or your placement hospital will organise and cover the cost of your accommodation for the entirety of your placement.

Accommodation is likely to be basic but at the very least will include a private bedroom, (shared) washing facilities, (shared) kitchen area and regular water and electricity supply.

If you experience a problem with your accommodation, your first point of contact should be your colleagues at your placement hospital, followed by the relevant paediatric association. If problems persist, please contact the Global Links Manager.

3. Using public transport

You will be given a £250 travel allowance for longer in-country journeys, for example travel to the capital. Local travel using public transport however should be paid for out of your in-country living allowance.

Please note, you are likely to require an international drivers license if you plan to drive during your placement.

4. Personal responsibilities

During your placement it is important that you understand and respect the different culture and traditions of your host country in order to minimise conduct which might cause offence.

In turn, you will have several personal responsibilities to uphold regarding your behaviour and appearance. These might include being sensitive to cultural norms surrounding dress, alcohol consumption and sexual relationships. Discussions surrounding religion and political issues are likely to be less acceptable compared to the UK, in some countries they are completely unacceptable.

You are also expected to comply with the laws of your host country for the duration of your placement. Please read the Global Links Code of Conduct in section 5 which outlines the type of behaviour we expect you to adhere to during your placement.

Before you leave, it's a good idea to do some research into the culture of the country and region where you'll be volunteering so you know a little of what to expect, although the majority of 'dos and don'ts' will become apparent early on in your placement. As part of your in-country induction, you'll be taken through some basic cultural things to consider.

You are also responsible for your personal day-to-day security during your placement. Details regarding security and managing risks are outlined in section 5 of this handbook, 'what you are signing up for'.

5. If you require medical attention

If you become ill during your placement, your first port of call is likely to be your placement hospital/health facility. For more complex treatment, you may be required to travel to the capital. Your medical insurance will cover the cost of all medical treatment and related transport costs.

In the case of a medical emergency that requires repatriation back to the UK or country able to provide high quality medical care., please follow the steps which are outlined in the travel health insurance policy. The costs of this are covered by the RCPCH medical insurance policy

We ask that you keep us informed of your health condition throughout your placement so the College can assist appropriately wherever possible.

6. Working at the hospital

After you have had your induction and settled into your host community, you'll start work in the hospital. Your work will be partly based on the SMART objectives you set before departure and what is described in the placement description, and partly on what you negotiate with your local colleagues when you arrive. It is important to realise that there will inevitably be a period of adjustment where you become aware of what your day to day work will be, and how this will fit in with working towards your pre-departure objectives.

You will comply with the normal working hours of your placement hospital, details of which will be included in your placement document. Details regarding annual leave will also be stated in your placement document. If not, this needs to be negotiated with your placement hospital. Planning annual leave is important to help you stay fresh and motivated. It is very likely that you will need a decent break from your hospital two or three months into your placement. Remember also that it is OK to take time off if you get ill, which is likely to happen at some point during your time overseas.

Shortly after you get there, or even before you arrive, investigate what other NGO health activity or development work is happening. This will give you an idea of whether your counterparts have competing demands, and might give insight on why they are not prioritising their work with you. It might also give you a good social outlet if you find other foreign volunteers/workers in the vicinity.

7. Working relationships and resolving problems

Your primary relationship is with your placement hospital and its staff. They are expected to provide you with support for the duration of your placement, and show a level of commitment to making your time at the hospital meaningful and successful. However, as the newcomer you may need to show a higher degree of flexibility and openness in order to create harmonious working relationships. Working with staff to achieve your objectives is crucial to making your volunteering a success; mitigating problems and resolving issues with your colleagues is a key part of this.

You should attempt to resolve any problems at work with your employer hospital and local staff. If the issues persist or escalate you can contact the Global Links team and the national partners we are working with (that is the Kenyan Paediatric Association, Myanmar paediatric society, Ugandan Paediatric Association or West African College of Physicians) to mediate. Bear in mind that this might take some time to arrange.

For more information regarding managing relationships and expectations, see section four of this handbook.

8. Reporting against your objectives

You will be required to report against your SMART objectives every quarter. The RCPCH will provide you with a template which will guide you in doing this.

Please note your objectives may have to be adapted during your placement depending on varying needs, achievability and hospital structure changes. You should not put undue

pressure on yourself to confirm the placement objectives – it might well take a good month or so to get a feel for what will make a realistic set of objectives. Also, don't expect to make much progress towards the objectives within the first month. Time is an essential factor to what you are trying to achieve.

When you arrive at your hospital, be prepared to gather baseline data to help inform the progress you are making towards your objectives. Investigate what Monitoring and Evaluation is already being carried out at the hospital, and utilise existing data sources where possible.

9. E-portfolio whilst overseas (for trainees)

As part of the Global Links programme you will get access to e-portfolio for free whilst you are overseas. We strongly encourage trainees to keep their e-portfolios as up to date as possible whilst they are overseas. Sections which are particularly useful to add to are the development log, skills log and curriculum section. What is recorded will count as good evidence of any new skills and competencies which are developed. The RCPCH's Education and Training department allows trainees who are doing OOPE to add an overseas supervisor, who in this case would be your In-Country Supervisor (see above) or another senior local medic if more appropriate. It is the responsibility of the trainees to show the local supervisor the e-portfolio system. For more information about how to keep your e-portfolio up to date whilst overseas please follow this link: <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/training-examinations-professional-development/quality-training/eportfolio/eportfolio> or contact the college's Education and Training team.

10. Developing lasting links with your placement institution

A theme relevant to all Global Links placements is the development of health links between the UK, Asia and Africa. This might be achieved through a timetabled schedule of follow up activity, your involvement in an on-going project or a more informal agreement to continue remotely mentoring a colleague when back in the UK. Any kind of link activity helps to ensure sustainability to the work you start in-country, and strengthens the Global Child Health community. For a comprehensive guide to how to develop a robust health link, please visit the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) website to access their Health Links manual.

11. Professional revalidation (for consultants)

For more information about the process for revalidation and the requirements, please contact CPD and Revalidation team at RCPCH.(

Local Police Certificate

Around a month before the end of your placement visit your local police station to request a Police Certificate to prove you have not had any misdemeanours during your time in-country. It is the equivalent of a local CRB. If you apply for other international jobs in the future, it is sometimes necessary to have this document.

Post placement

- 1. Attend a debrief**
- 2. Write final report**
- 3. Settle outstanding payments/reimbursement**
- 4. Stay involved with RCPCH Global Links**

1. Attend a debrief

Upon your return to the UK, you will be asked to attend a debriefing session in which you will review your work in general terms, your progress against your SMART objectives and your experience of being a volunteer in Africa. The debrief also gives you the opportunity to give feedback on the Global Links volunteer programme itself.

2. Write final report

You will be required to write a final report, summarising the activities you have been involved in whilst overseas. This is also required as part of your OOPE and volunteers are advised to detail the experience and competencies gained throughout their placement.

The College is keen to publicise the volunteers achievements so there will be opportunities to present on your overseas work at events such as the Annual Conference or the RCPCH Child Health in Developing Countries course.

3. Settle outstanding payments/reimbursement

Within one month of returning to the UK, we ask you to settle all outstanding reimbursements with the College. In order to do this, we require receipts/record of payments and a completed expenses form. A reimbursement form is attached as an appendix at the end of the Handbook.

4. Stay involved with RCPCH Global Links

After your placement overseas has finished, we really hope you continue your involvement in global child health and stay in touch with RCPCH International. Returned volunteers are a great resource for prospective paediatric volunteers since they have a unique insight into working in a developing country and offer fantastic examples of the progress which can be achieved during a short period overseas.

We may ask you if you would like to help train on short ETAT/EPCP courses back in the country where you worked as a volunteer or similar setting.

We will ask if you would be prepared for future volunteers working in the same placement country or undertaking similar objectives to be put in touch with you, both during your placement and upon your return to the UK.

3. Who pays for what?

In general, volunteering with Global Links should not leave you out of pocket. This section outlines exactly what expenses there are before, during and after your placement, how they will be paid and how to claim reimbursements if necessary (reimbursement form included as an appendix to the handbook). There are also potential costs associated with working overseas which we will not be able to pay for, and these are outlined here too.

Pre departure

Travel

The College will reimburse your travel costs for the two-week pre-departure training course in London, and travel to the Security Training course. In order to reclaim these costs, you must retain all receipts and fill out a claim for reimbursement form (*see appendix.*) The form must be signed by you and either posted to the RCPCH or scanned and emailed to us. This needs to be done for every expense being claimed. Only costs the College considers to be reasonable will be reimbursed.

The RCPCH will also cover the cost of one return flight to your host country. In most cases, the RCPCH will book this flight for you according to a date and departure airport you have specified.

The college will also reimburse you travel costs to your departure airport if you send the receipts with a completed reimbursement form.

Medical

The RCPCH will cover the cost of the medical and psychological assessment carried out by InterHealth. The College will also pay for the required immunisations recommended by Interhealth and your supply of anti-malarials. We ask volunteers to enquire as to whether they can receive the recommended immunisations free from their NHS hospitals as part of their occupational health, to keep costs down. We also ask you to look for inexpensive anti-malarials as per the information in Medical and Psychological clearance section above. The College will also pay for the HIV/AIDS PEP kit issued by InterHealth and cover the cost of any letters signed by your GP if relevant. We will also cover the cost of a mosquito bednet.

The College WILL NOT cover the cost of any non-essential immunisations. Interhealth can advise you on the necessary immunisations for the country you'll be volunteering in. While we recommended you receive a dental check up prior to departure, we cannot contribute to the cost of this, nor any treatment that is required as a result.

It is also your responsibility to pay for prescription glasses or contact lenses, including replacement of these, should they become lost or damaged during your placement.

We will not be able to pay for any treatment required as a result of taking the medical assessment.

Accommodation

The RCPCH will cover the cost of your accommodation and meals whilst attending the two-week training course in London. The RCPCH is a registered charity so would appreciate if volunteers have free alternative accommodation available to them in London, they utilise this to keep costs down.

Training

The cost of the two-week pre-departure training course is covered by the RCPCH.

The cost of the two day security training is covered by the RCPCH.

Documentation

The RCPCH will cover the cost of your visa and work permit, including all associated costs with securing these, for example travel to the embassy or postage. In order to be reimbursed for these additional costs, all receipts must be kept and sent to the College with a completed expenses form.

The College WILL NOT cover the cost of a new passport or passport renewal should this be required.

Insurance

The RCPCH will pay for comprehensive medical and travel insurance, details of which can be found as an appendix of this handbook. You will receive the policy number and an insurance e-card prior to your departure. The insurance covers some personal effects – please consult the policy to understand what is and what is not covered.

If you wish to partake in any hazardous activities which are not covered as part of our insurance policy (e.g. diving), the College recommends you take out personal insurance cover. You will be required to cover this cost.

You are responsible for the cost of continuing your professional indemnity insurance.

During placement

Travel

The RCPCH will pay for all travel associated with your arrival and in-country induction. After your induction, and whilst you are in your placement town/city, local travel will be paid using your volunteer living allowance. You will receive a one off travel allowance of £250 to spend on longer journeys during your placement.

All authorised travel for medical, compassionate or security reasons during your placement will be paid for by the College.

If whilst overseas you want to change the return date of your flight, you will have the responsibility for this, and pay any charges incurred. We will buy air tickets where the charges incurred for changing return flights are minimal.

Medical

If you become ill during your placement all non-emergency and emergency healthcare treatment is covered by the College's insurance policy, including medical repatriation to the UK.

The College will not cover the cost of any prescription or non-prescription medication required for pre-existing conditions, including fertility treatment during your placement. We encourage you to secure enough supplies of any medication required for the duration of your placement before your flight.

Accommodation

The College will pay for your initial accommodation during your in-country induction. You will also be provided with modest living accommodation for the duration of your placement.

Living allowance

You will receive a monthly allowance of between £300 which will cover your in-country living costs. This has been set against the relative day-to-day living costs of your placement country. Your allowance will be paid into your UK bank account in monthly instalments. Before departure, be sure to let your bank know that you will be moving overseas so that you can access your UK account.

Training

The cost of any in-country training you receive as part of your induction will be covered by the RCPCH.

Pensions

The Government wants to enable any NHS employee who volunteers overseas through their Health Partnership Schemes – of which Global Links is one - to retain pensions continuity. It also wishes to ensure that this does not place a burden on NHS employers. A full outline of the terms and conditions of the NHS pension contributions can be found as an appendix of the handbook.

Tax and social security

You are responsible for maintaining any previous financial commitments whilst away on your placement. This might include income tax on any income received in your home country and National Insurance payments.

Accompanying partners and children

*Volunteers are welcome to bring their partner on their placement but the RCPCH **is in no way responsible for them during this period**. They will not be covered by our insurance policy and will receive no financial assistance from either the College or your placement hospital. The accommodation provided by the RCPCH and the host hospital during your placement*

might only be suitable for single occupancy. We will enquire whether larger accommodation can be found but cannot guarantee it, and there may be a charge attached.

Withdrawing from the programme

If a volunteer withdraws from their placement within one month of arrival for a reason which is not health or security related, or related to an emergency at home, the Global Links team reserves the right to ask the volunteer to re-pay the cost of their return flight to their placement and other related costs.

If a volunteer withdraws from the programme within one month of the agreed departure date, for a reason which is not beyond their control, they may also be asked to reimburse some of the pre-departure training or medical costs.

Overall Summary

The RCPCH will pay for the following:

	<i>Pre-departure</i>	<i>During placement</i>
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to security training and the 2-week training course • Travel to airport • Return flight to host country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel associated with arrival and in-country induction • £250 travel allowance • Travel related to medical or security reasons
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical and psychological assessment • Required immunisations • Supply of anti-malarials • HIV/AIDS PEP kit • Letters signed by GP • Bed net 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All non-emergency and emergency healthcare treatment
Insurance (see travel insurance policy in appendices)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel • Medical • Personal effects
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation during security training and 2-week training course in UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation during in-country induction • Modest Accommodation for duration of placement
Living allowance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-country daily living allowance
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-week pre-departure training course • 2 day residential security training course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa • Work permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other costs related to living and working in host country (e.g. professional registration)
NHS Pension		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full employee and employer contributions. Needs to be signed up to before going overseas. Full details in Appendices

You will be required to pay for:

	<i>Pre-departure</i>	<i>During placement</i>
Travel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charges incurred from changing the date of your flight • Additional flights not covered by medical / compassionate grounds • The cost of the flight if you withdraw from your placement within one month of arrival
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-essential immunisations • Malarone • Dental check up and dental treatment • Prescription glasses or contact lenses • First aid kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prescription or non-prescription medication required for pre-existing conditions
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional indemnity insurance • Personal insurance cover for hazardous activities 	
Tax and social security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Insurance contributions • Maintaining previous financial commitments e.g. income tax, pension payments
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New passport or passport renewal 	

5. What you are signing up for

This section of the handbook is designed to make you aware of the potential risks attached to your placement. When living and working in a developing country, it is important to be aware of the increased security issues and take extra precautions where necessary. This chapter will detail some of these potential risks, give recommendations on how to mitigate them and what to do if emergencies happen.

This section also covers codes of conduct you are expected to abide by as an RCPCH Global Links volunteer.

1. Health and safety
2. Minimising day-to-day risk
3. Serious risks and emergencies
4. Advice for women travellers
5. Data protection and confidentiality

1. Health and Safety

The RCPCH will take all reasonable steps to ensure your wellbeing and safety during the period of your volunteering arrangement. If, in the course of performing your services, you become aware of any potential hazard or unsafe working condition, you should promptly report this to your local staff/counterpart/hospital manager in the first instance. You should also let RCPCH Global Links team know;

Africa - (peter.nash@rcpch.ac.uk)

Asia - (marcus.wootton@rcpch.ac.uk)

You should also inform the Paediatric Association in your host country.

You have the right to leave your placement at any time if you feel the risk to your safety is too great

2. Minimising day-to-day risk

You can minimise day-to-day risks by observing and being sensitive to your new environment. Take time to understand how daily life functions in the community and try and assimilate yourself accordingly. Showing an interest and taking part in community functions will help form good relations. Avoid drawing the wrong sort of attention to yourself by dressing similarly to the locals, and making yourself aware of any cultural norms or 'taboos'.

Think about the way you might be perceived as a western paediatrician in a local hospital. Be conscious of forming good relationships with colleagues since they will help with community wide acceptance.

Stay alert and trust your instincts. If you feel uneasy in a situation, leave. Steer clear of heated political or religious discussions and avoid any form of public protest which could become violent. Do not take part in activity that might be illegal.

Avoid being seen as a target for theft by keeping expensive possessions hidden and be discreet with money in public places.

You are at most risk whilst you are travelling, particularly if you are on your own. Stations are hotspots for criminal activity so be sure to remain alert and keep tight hold of your belongings. Wearing a concealed money belt containing your money, passport etc is a sensible option whilst on the move. It can also help to keep any cash and credit cards in different sites on your person i.e. some in your shoes, some in a money belt, some in a bag. That way you are unlikely to lose everything even if you are mugged. Avoid unlicensed transport at all costs and only go ahead with your journey if the vehicle looks secure.

Road traffic accidents are likely to be your biggest risk whilst on your placement. Always wear your seatbelt and avoid night time driving. Before long journeys, be sure to have enough fuel, a torch and other emergency supplies in case you break down. Due to the high rate of accidents we would discourage any road travel during hours of darkness if at all possible.

In some countries it is common to use local motorcycle taxis. They are incredibly unsafe and accidents are very frequent using this mode of transport which is why we ask all Global Links volunteers to refrain from using them. By signing the Volunteer Agreement, you agree not to use them.

3. Serious risks and emergencies

In highly unlikely circumstances, serious risks such as car-jacking, armed robbery and kidnapping might occur. You will be given a one day security training course as part of your pre-departure preparation which will cover how to mitigate harm during these circumstances.

Emergency procedures

For each country where Global Links volunteers work there are emergency procedures in place. Our in-country partners have outlined what course of action should be taken if an emergency occurs, and ways of evacuation from the host country if necessary. Details of these country specific procedures will be given to you when your placement has been confirmed.

Alternatively, if you feel in immediate danger and the outlined emergency procedure does not seem appropriate, leave your area of placement immediately using the safest form of transport available to you. This could be to another location in your host country or a neighbouring country. The RCPCH will reimburse the cost of this journey.

It is important that you register with the UK embassy upon arrival in your host country since they will be able to offer help should an emergency occur.

In early 2013 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has announced a new strategy for advising British travellers during an overseas crisis or security alert. As of 14 May 2013 LOCATE registration will no longer be available. Instead, the FCO is encouraging British travellers to access current, [country-specific travel advice](#) by subscribing to their free email alert service or by following the FCO on social media via Twitter or Facebook. British Embassies and High Commissions abroad also have their own websites and may have individual social media feeds or consular networks. Contact details for all British diplomatic posts overseas are available via the [FCO website](#).

FCO Links

[FCO: Consular Strategy 2013-16](#)

[FCO Locate: Registration of British Nationals Overseas.](#)

[FCO: Support for British nationals abroad: A summary.](#)

Whilst overseas we ask that you keep the College up-to-date with your in-country contact details: any new email addresses, your local mobile number and a local address. If you plan to be away from your placement for more than a couple of days – for example, if you are travelling to see another volunteer in a nearby location or are planning a more extensive trip - please inform us. It is very important that we know where you are in case there is the need to evacuate you, or contact you about an emergency back home.

If there is a serious security incident in your placement country, one of the Global Links team will text or call to confirm your whereabouts and status. It would be helpful if volunteers replied as soon as possible.

Emergency at home/compassionate flight guidelines

The RCPCH will pay for one return flight to the UK in the event of a close family member dying or becoming seriously unwell. Close family members usually include parents, partners, siblings and children, although exceptions can be made in certain circumstances.

Volunteers are able to leave their placement and return home in the event of other home emergencies but regrettably the college cannot cover the cost of the return flight.

4. Advice for women travellers

As a woman, you might be more at risk of sexual harassment than in the UK. This often results from men perceiving western women as having different values regarding sexual conduct, based on what they have been exposed to in the media. Following local cultural norms, such as being modestly dressed, will reduce your vulnerability. Wearing a wedding ring can also help you avoid harassment.

Be wary of men who seem particularly over friendly and if you feel threatened draw attention to yourself by shouting and making a fuss. Acting confident is key; walk with purpose and try and avoid looking lost. Take extra precautions when out at night on your own by letting someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. Try

and use reputable taxi companies and never accept rides from strangers. Consider taking a personal alarm with you.

There are multiple websites with tips for women travellers you can use to help you prepare for your placement.

Speaking to returned or current volunteers from the same country or region about their experiences is a good way to discover what the risks are and how to avoid them.

5. Data protection and confidentiality

You are expected to maintain all confidential information of the RCPCH Global Links Volunteer programme and of our local partners, including not communicating this information with the press or via social media without discussing this first with your programme Manager.

If you are choosing to write a blog during your placement, think carefully about what you write about your colleagues, placement hospital and the RCPCH Global Links Volunteer programme.

Individuals are also expected to refrain from:

- disclosing private or personal matters concerning any person, including personal addresses or phone numbers.
- revealing what appears to be personal information about another contributor that would identify them in the real world and which they have not otherwise made public online, including by posting links or URLs to any area that would reveal such information
- revealing email addresses not made public online by a contributor by connecting them to a known screen name used for posting
- taking photographs of individuals without their consent

The RCPCH is bound by data protection laws and works to ensure all subject data, held in manual or electronic form, is managed in accordance with the provisions of the law.

All data will therefore be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept only as long as necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection

All your personal information is confidential and Global Links staff will treat all sensitive material with discretion.