



Relocating to the UK and Moving to Brighton

General advice and guidance to help you
with your journey to IDS



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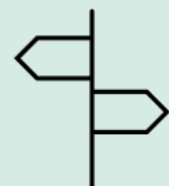
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If you have any suggestions for items to include in this guide, please contact Layla Hartley in HR on l.hartley@ids.ac.uk.



Introduction

A very warm welcome to you if you have just arrived in the UK! If you will be joining us at a later date, then we look forward to welcoming you then.

We are pleased that you are joining us at the Institute of Development Studies. We understand that relocating to a new country is a major life event; a huge undertaking which involves a lot of change. We want to support you as much as possible along your journey.

We know that you will be adjusting to a new lifestyle as well as your new job, and that you will likely have many questions and perhaps worries.

That is why we have created this guide, which we hope you will find helpful. We created it with the help and experience of other IDS employees who have relocated to work with us, so that it answers common questions and gives information that they needed when they first relocated.

The guide includes links to useful websites for further information and can be used for future reference.



About Brighton and Hove

Brighton, or Brighton and Hove as it is known, has been a fashionable seaside resort on the English Channel since the 18th century, when the relaxed charm of the little fishing town of Brighthelmstone and the presence of George, Prince of Wales, made it a popular place for Regency high society.



1 Image: Alexey Fedorenko/Shutterstock

Today, the city by the sea is still a high-octane infusion of fun, with a mix of seaside, charm, and chic city cool. With a world-famous heritage and culture, seriously good shopping, an active arts scene and sparkling nightlife. The sea is an everchanging backdrop to life and a walk along the beachfront will reveal just some of what makes Brighton and Hove tick.

Brighton and Hove has a lively culture and friendly community. It is known as a place that values and celebrates diversity - welcoming a wide range of international visitors and new residents every year. The city is also home to a large LGBTQ+ community.



2 Image: Michaelasbest/Shutterstock

The city has over 400 restaurants, offering food from around the world and to suit all tastes. The area of East Sussex has golf and sporting activities of all kinds, and the rolling South Downs National Park just outside of the city is great for walking and cycling in the countryside.



Arriving in the UK

Arrival at the airport

The closest international airport to Brighton is Gatwick Airport.



3 Image: Pabkov/Shutterstock

In the experience of colleagues who relocated to the UK and contributed to this guide, whichever kind of passport you hold, when you arrive, you will need to see an immigration agent. This is to ensure that your work permits are registered, and that you can be considered a resident of the UK. You may be arriving from a country that is visa-free and can go through the automated scanner, but we would advise you not to do this.

Our experience also suggests that it is a good idea to purchase a SIM card early into your arrival in the UK. This is because you will need to have a local phone number to open a bank account (more details further on).

Onward travel from the airport

When you have landed in the UK, there will be several options of public transport to take you to your accommodation. There are usually train, bus, and coach links from most major UK airports.

If you are flying into **Gatwick Airport**, you can be in Brighton in around 30 minutes by either road or train. If you will be travelling by train from Gatwick, the train station can be found at the South Terminal, a 5-minute walk from Arrivals. It is easily accessible from the North Terminal using the free shuttle service taking 2 minutes.

You can buy tickets for onward train travel from the airport:

- [online in advance](#) on your phone and scan the barcode at the ticket barriers.
- on the day from the ticket machines in the station in the South Terminal.

London Heathrow Airport is about 70 minutes away by road and longer by rail, depending on which terminal you arrive at. You can use the [Heathrow journey planner](#) to see your options for onward travel from the airport.

You might prefer to use a coach service. [National Express](#) have links between the airports and Brighton.

You could choose to take a taxi from the airport, but this choice is not as commonly used as by train or coach and will be considerably expensive.

We would suggest planning your travel in advance using [Google Maps](#) and the websites we have listed further on in this booklet.



Initial funds

Before you receive your first salary payment from IDS, you will need to have enough money to pay for your transport, accommodation, food and personal expenses.

Please remember to keep any receipts and/or invoices for items and expenses that you will be claiming back under the IDS Relocation Policy which our HR team will have sent you. Please refer to the relocation expenses appendix for a [list of eligible expenses here](#).

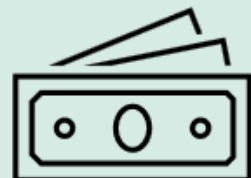
If you need financial assistance, please contact HR to find out what is possible.

Accessing cash in the UK

You will not be able to open a UK bank account until you have arrived in the UK. Please read on for more information.

If you plan to use your current cash or credit card to withdraw cash in the UK, we advise you to find out how much your bank will charge you for this service, as it can be expensive.

Alternatively, you may choose to bring British Pounds (sterling) cash with you. It is best to avoid changing money at the bureau de change at airports because of the high commission fees. Please note that while the UK is not fully cashless, many shops and eateries in Brighton no longer accept cash. This may influence how much cash you bring to the UK.



Important things to do

1. Find short-term accommodation

You will need to find somewhere to live in, or close to, Brighton. You could choose to organise a short-term rental before you commit to renting or buying a property.

If you are bringing your family, the University of Sussex has an advisory service that provides some helpful [advice for families seeking accommodation in the private sector](#) in Brighton, including details about temporary places you can stay alone while you search for somewhere for you and your family to live.

You could also look for property on these sites:

[Airbnb | Short-term rentals](#)

[Find rooms to rent, flatshare or rooms for rent with Roomgo](#)

[SpareRoom for flatshare, house share, flat share & rooms for rent](#)

A bulletin called 'Yellow Monday' is distributed to IDS colleagues and alumni. If you are seeking accommodation, including for short-term let, you can post an advert in the bulletin. To receive the bulletin or to post in it, contact Gary Edwards on YellowMonday@ids.ac.uk.

You could also contact IDS' PhD students. They frequently move out of properties when they leave to do fieldwork and look for tenants to take over leases. Contact them at: idsdphilstudents@ids.ac.uk.

2. Open a bank account

You will need to open a UK bank account to be paid. Having a bank account and a debit card is essential in the UK as most retailers are now cashless.

Traditional established banks often ask to provide proof of a UK address like a lease or utility bill. This means you will not be able to use a temporary address to open a standard account.



Many banks offer easy account opening processes, but you may be required to provide documentation such as proof of address and identification, so we suggest allowing plenty of time. Some banks are more flexible about this than others.

You will need a UK phone number to open a bank account. You can find some guidance on how to do that [here](#).

Many of those who have relocated chose to open an online bank account with Monzo instead of a traditional bank as the requirements are less restrictive and it is usually easy and fast. You can [open a Monzo account here](#).

We suggest that you consider and research your options before opening a bank account as we cannot provide you with financial advice.

3. Get a National Insurance (NI) number

Everyone who works in the UK must have a National Insurance number.

Our HR team may have already asked you to apply for your NI number, but if not, this is something you should prioritise. It can take up to four weeks to receive your NI number.

Please apply for your NI number as soon as you have arrived in the UK and begin work with IDS. You can [apply here](#).

You can find more information about National Insurance further on in this booklet and here: [NI rates and contributions](#)



Health services in the UK

The NHS and registering with a doctor and dentist

The National Health Service (NHS) is the publicly funded healthcare system in the United Kingdom. The NHS provides comprehensive physical and mental health services to virtually the entire population, and it is free at the point of use, funded through taxes paid by UK adults.

The NHS prescription charge is currently £9.90 for each prescribed item (correct at time of writing). There is a charge for each different medicine or medical appliance on your prescription.

Some prescribed items are always free, such as contraceptives and medication for hospital inpatients.

Sometimes waiting lists for treatment and services can be long.

You will need to register with a Doctor (GP) at a clinic (known as a surgery in the UK) local to you. You can [find your local surgery here](#). The Brighton Station Health Centre is an interim care option for those who have not yet registered with a GP, [their website is here](#).

You will also need to register with an NHS dentist in your local area which may mean joining a waiting list. You can [find an NHS dentist here](#).



Private healthcare

You may prefer to register for private healthcare. Private medical and dental organisations are separate from the NHS but work closely in partnership with them.

You can pay for private medical treatment yourself or claim through self-funded medical insurance. Look online for a service / insurance package that suits your needs and contact them directly to enquire. Private healthcare and medical insurance can be expensive though and most people in the UK do not have it.

You might want to get private medical treatment when:

- A private healthcare provider offers the treatment you want
- You want fast access to treatment
- You want to choose the date for a hospital operation
- You want to be treated by a consultant or specialist of your choice
- You want a second opinion on treatment you've already had
-

Sometimes specific treatments may not be available via the NHS. There are a range of private healthcare companies available, but some common ones are listed below:

[Private healthcare | Bupa UK](#)

[Get expert treatment, focused on you \(hcahealthcare.co.uk\)](http://hcahealthcare.co.uk)

[Private Hospitals & Health Care Services \(circlehealthgroup.co.uk\)](http://circlehealthgroup.co.uk)

PHARMACIES

If you need advice about a non-urgent medical or health matter, you can ask for advice at a pharmacy. Registered pharmacists are trained to advise and suggest how to treat minor illnesses and issues and can advise you on over-the-counter medications. You can [find your local pharmacy here](#).



More serious care

If you feel you need non-urgent medical advice, you can contact NHS 111.

Call 111 or get help from [111 online here](#). NHS 111 can tell you what to do next.

If you need urgent medical help for a minor illness or injury, you can go to an Urgent Care Centre without an appointment, or being registered with a doctor, and see an experienced nurse. NHS 111 will be able to tell you where your nearest available urgent care centre is.

Emergency care

If you need immediate emergency treatment due to a serious injury, accident, or illness, you can visit Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your local hospital. You can [find your local hospital here](#).

You can call 999 for a medical life-threatening emergency. You will be asked which service you need: ambulance, fire or police. Here is [more information about when to call 999 or visit A&E](#) that we suggest you read.



Mental health

We understand that moving and settling in a new country can be stressful and challenging.

If you need help due to a mental health problem or condition, your GP will be able to help you. You can find out more about [mental health services here](#).

In an emergency, call 111 or get help from [111 online here](#).

[Mental health charity Mind](#) can offer excellent advice and guidance. They offer a support line and an information line and are a useful resource.

[Samaritans](#) offer a free helpline to those in crisis and in need of urgent emotional support.

Mental health support at work

IDS supports its employees with their mental wellbeing. You can find lots of further information on the IDS intranet.

We have trained Mental Health First Aiders who are available to support you confidentially in person in the building, and remotely.

We also offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). From day one as an IDS employee, you have access to the EAP. They offer free and confidential counselling support, as well as guidance and advice on a range of personal, work and family issues including:

- Marital, family and relationship difficulties
- Bereavement and loss
- Childcare and parenting challenges
- Debt counselling and budget management
- Health and wellbeing information

You can call the EAP on 0800 083 3375, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Travel and public transport

By car

Brighton and Hove is just over 50 miles (80km) south of Central London. By road, the city is within 30 minutes of the M25 London orbital motorway via the M23/A23.

Parking in Brighton can be expensive, particularly private car parks. If your property is in a controlled parking zone you can buy [a resident parking permit](#), allowing you to park in parking bays in your zone. Please note that some areas have a waiting list.

By train

Brighton has good rail links to London with over 30 direct services a day to London Victoria, and 50 direct services to London Bridge. Brighton is part of the [Southern Railway](#) network connected to a wide network of routes which reach the North, East and West of the UK.

If you know when you will be travelling, booking online or at a station in advance is advised as this will usually save you money. Another possible saving can be made by purchasing a season ticket.

Brighton is outside of the London Oyster card jurisdiction.

Here are some websites for further information:

[Welcome to the Official source for UK trains | National Rail](#)

[Trainline : Search, Compare & Buy Cheap Train Tickets \(thetrainline.com\)](#)



By bus

[Brighton and Hove buses](#) are a reliable and frequent option of public transport, with many stops all over the city and beyond.

In Brighton you can tap your debit card to pay for your bus fare. You do not always need to buy a ticket in advance. Please note, sometimes buses do not accept cash.

[Brighton and beyond Buses | Stagecoach](#)

[The Big Lemon | zero-emissions electric buses](#)

By bicycle

Cycling is very popular in Brighton and Hove and lots of roads in the central parts of the city are equipped with bike lanes for your safety.

IDS has a 'bike to work scheme' that you can use from day one of your employment to help you to buy a bike, which [you can find out about here](#). There is a secure bike shed at IDS for those who cycle.

Ferry to France

Between April and November, a fast ferry service links Sussex to France. Departing from Newhaven (a 20-minute drive from Brighton), the ferry will have you in Dieppe in four hours. One website about the ferry is [here](#).

Getting to IDS in Brighton

The Institute of Development Studies is based at the University of Sussex campus.

With the South Downs National Park on our doorstep, we're well-served by train, bus and road, and cycling is also popular.

Information on how to travel to the IDS Building [can be found here](#).

You can use Google Maps to see where the University of Sussex and IDS is in relation to the city of Brighton and Hove and beyond.



Understanding the UK tax system

Automatic deductions – income tax and National Insurance

In the UK, your monthly pay will have automatic deductions which are for income tax and National Insurance.

Income tax and National Insurance fund crucial services that we use every day such as the NHS (National Health Service), public transport, education, police, and fire service. Each tax year runs from April to April. Each tax year is different to the last depending on the UK governments' budget decisions.

You may find this website useful: [British taxes: understanding the UK tax system](#)

It is hard to say exactly what your take-home salary will be, as it depends on several factors, including if you decide to pay into a pension.

There are websites you can use to calculate what your tax code will be and therefore what your deductions are likely to be:

[Estimate your Income Tax for the current year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[How to calculate your tax bill - Which?](#)

[ListenToTaxman - UK Tax Calculator Salary 2023 - 2024](#)

Council tax

The other consideration is council tax which every resident must pay. When you look at places to live, the council tax 'band' will be listed.

The bands differ from city to city, but here is some information about Brighton and Hove's council tax: [How much Council Tax is \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)



Understanding the cost of living

Cost of living in Brighton

We would like to be transparent about the cost of living in and near to Brighton. Renting in Brighton is more expensive than the English average. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Brighton is £1,426 per month, higher than the UK average of £1,223.

However, rental prices vary depending on the property's location, size, and amenities.

Eating and drinking in restaurants and pubs is renowned for being more expensive in Brighton than a lot of other cities, particularly more expensive than cities in the Mid and North of the UK, but not as expensive as London.

This is how much you can expect to pay for different goods and services in Brighton (source: Numbeo, 2024):

Item	Average Price
Pint of beer	£6
Regular cappuccino	£3.31
Can of Coca Cola	£1.46
1 litre milk	£1.20
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (500g)	£1.32
12 eggs	£3.34
Mid-range bottle of wine	£8
Monthly transport pass	£85
Cinema ticket for one	£12
Private full-day monthly preschool (Kindergarten) for 1 Child	£1,326.67

You can find more information about the [cost of living in Brighton here](#).



Utility bills

When renting

In the UK, most rental agreements do not include provision for your gas, electricity, water, and internet connection. You will need to manage and pay for these separately. The landlord or rental agency should be able to tell you which provider(s) the previous tenant used.

Gas and electricity

We recommend that you take photos of your gas and electricity meter readings (if you have access) when you first move into your new rental property. This way you will be able to prove your usage later. You should call the gas and electricity suppliers and give them the readings and find out what plan you are on.

Once you have this information you can compare what is available on the market and find the best deal to suit you. It can take a few weeks to switch providers.

You could use the following price comparison websites to find the best deal for you:

[Uswitch.com - So many ways to save](https://www.uswitch.com)

[Compare the Market | Just make it simple](https://www.comparethemarket.com)

[MoneySuperMarket | Always more ways to save](https://www.moneysupermarket.com)

Water

For water you will either be required to pay a fixed charge each month, or if your property has a water meter you will only pay for the water you use. You can find out which applies to you by speaking to your landlord or rental agency.



Landline phone and broadband for internet

Often broadband internet providers will require you to set up a landline telephone to have broadband access. Some properties will already have a line connecting the house to the network, but it may take time for the provider to reconnect it.

Many providers offer packages for both landline calls and internet access, and this can include handsets and routers. We recommend you use the links above to see what companies are offering. It can take two weeks to a month to be fully connected. The availability of broadband suppliers is dependent upon where you live.

TV licence

In the UK, if you watch and/or record live TV, you need to pay for a TV Licence. You can find more information and [buy it online here](#), and choose to pay for it in one lump sum or in monthly instalments.

If you only use streaming services and never watch and/or record live TV, you do not need a TV Licence.

Insurance

Some rental agreements require you to have content insurance, so we recommend you check with your landlord or rental agency.

Though it is not essential, it is a good idea to insure your belongings against theft, loss, fire and accidental damage.

You can use the above links to the price comparison websites to see what is available.



Food and groceries in the UK

Supermarkets and convenience stores

Most supermarkets are open until late in the UK, with some larger supermarkets being open 24 hours a day. You can [find your nearest supermarket here](#). Popular supermarkets that offer a variety of world foods include Morrisons, Sainsburys, Tesco and Asda.

On Sundays there are usually shorter opening hours, with most large supermarkets closing at around 4pm. If you need to buy groceries when the supermarket is closed, you may find that convenience stores are open later. You can [find your nearest convenience store here](#).

If you are planning to buy a lot from the supermarket, it may help to take a £1 coin with you so that you can use a trolley. Your coin will be returned to you after use. We would also recommend that you take your own shopping bags with you as most shops charge for their bags.

Most supermarkets offer a groceries delivery service, and/or a click-and-collect service. You can find out more on the supermarkets' website.

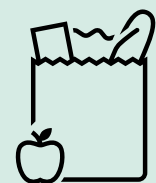
Takeaways and delivered meals

You may not have access to cooking facilities or prefer to have a meal or groceries conveniently delivered to you. If so, you could use one of these services:

[Order takeaway online from 30,000+ food delivery restaurants | Just Eat](#)

[Uber Eats | Food delivery and takeaway | Order online from restaurants near you](#)

[Groceries Delivered To Your Door | Deliveroo](#)



Food from home

If you are feeling homesick and would like some home comforts, there are lots of UK retailers who import groceries from many countries around the world. Some even specialise in ingredients, food, drinks, and homewares from specific countries:

[Click here](#) for Indian food in the UK

[Click here](#) for Bangladeshi food in the UK

[Click here](#) for Asian food in the UK

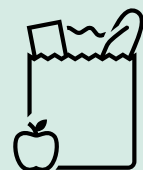
[Click here](#) for Malawian food in the UK

[Click here](#) for East African food in the UK

[Click here](#) for West African food in the UK

[Click here](#) for Middle Eastern food in the UK

[Click here](#) for Latin American food in the UK



Your longer-term plans

Finding a rental property

We recommend that you read this checklist that gives useful advice and guidance on [renting in the UK here](#).

It will be necessary to prove your right to work in the UK to a landlord.

There are several websites you could use to find a rental property in Brighton and Hove, or the surrounding areas. We recommend the following sites:

[Properties to rent in the UK | Flats and Houses to Rent | Rightmove](#)

[Houses & flats to rent | Properties to rent in the UK - Zoopla](#)

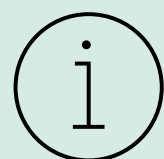
[OpenRent | Property To Rent From Private Landlords](#)

You can use these websites to browse what is available and filter searches out by your needs, budget, and preferred location.

If you have school age children, we suggest you check that schools have places for your child/children before you sign a rental agreement as class sizes are limited. Read on for more information about schools.

When you rent a property in the UK, you will usually be required to provide a deposit and one month's rent in advance. For example, if your monthly rent will be £1,200 and the deposit is £800, then you will usually be required to pay £2,000 upfront.

The initial cost when renting in Brighton can be expensive. Rental agencies and landlords sometimes ask for a [UK guarantor](#) or ask for up to 6 months' rent up front. You can find more [information about rental deposits here](#). Please contact HR for more information on how IDS could support you with upfront costs.



Driving in the UK using your current licence

Providing you have a full, valid driving licence from your home country, you can drive in the UK on your licence for 12 months from the date you became a UK resident.

After 12 months, you will have to apply for a provisional licence and pass a theory and practical driving test to be able to drive in the UK. Find [more information here](#).

Renting a car

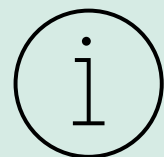
If you do not own a car, you can hire one. We suggest you search using Google for rental cars to find the best price and most convenient location for you. A popular car rental service is [Enterprise](#) which has three locations in Brighton and Hove.

Buying a car

If you want to buy a new or used car in the UK, there some key things to remember. Please do some research before making this commitment.

- You need to pay for car insurance (driving without it is illegal in the UK)
- You must pay vehicle tax
- For every car that is more than 3 years old you need to book and have an annual MOT (Ministry of Transport) test

You can find more information [about vehicle tax here](#).



Planning for your family's arrival in the UK

Accommodation

It can be hard for families to find affordable short-term accommodation in the UK (i.e. for 1 to 4 weeks), because most temporary accommodation is designed for a single occupant or couple. This means it can be challenging and expensive to find somewhere for the family to stay for a few weeks whilst you seek a long-term rental.

We recommend that you either:

- A) plan ahead and have long-term accommodation lined up in time for you and your family's arrival, or;
- B) travel to the UK on your own and stay in short-term accommodation for the first few weeks.

Schools

If you have school-age children, remember that admission to state schools is based primarily on a 'catchment area' which means where your child goes to school depends upon where you live. More information about [school admissions is here](#).

We recommend that you research schools while you are looking for a rental property as you will need to ensure you are living in the correct catchment area for the school that you wish your child to attend. An important element to consider is that schools in the UK have application deadlines which may not align with your move date.

Schools require proof of your address and/or lease to be able to admit your child.

To find out more about schools in the area, speak to your colleagues, to neighbours who have children, and refer to the local schools' Independent Office for Standards in Education ('Ofsted') reports, which you can find [here](#).

School admissions policies do change, so it is best to visit the local council website to find the newest guidance, process and application forms.

If your child is below school age, you may wish to investigate nursery (kindergarten) and childcare options in the local area. Use Google to search for nurseries, find out about free placements and get information on upcoming family events.



Pets

If you intend to bring your pet into the UK, please read the important information about [what you will need to do here](#).

If you are relocating with a pet, please be aware that most landlords do not allow tenants to have pets in rental properties.

There are exceptions, but it is likely to limit the range of choice you have on your rental property, so please allow extra time for your search.



Other information about IDS and University of Sussex

Staff ID card

Upon your arrival at the IDS building, please go to Reception on the Ground Floor, where you will be given a lanyard and your staff ID card. This will allow you access to rooms and offices. Please always wear your lanyard while on site.

Library access

One of the benefits of working at IDS is that you have access to the University Library. Find out more about the library [here](#). Please contact the HR team for information about how to get your library card.

Campus map

The IDS building is on the University of Sussex campus. Please contact the HR team for a campus map.



Adjusting to life in the UK

General guidance

You and your family may find yourselves living and working in an environment which may be completely different from that of your own country, and it can sometimes take a while to adjust.

If you need support with this adjustment, please speak with your Line Manager, a colleague, the HR team, or review the useful links and contacts section below.

Whilst living in the UK, you have the right to:

- be treated fairly and lawfully regardless of your race (your colour, ethnic or national origin), sex, age, religion/ beliefs, sexual orientation, if you identify as transgender, or if you are disabled.
- practice your own religion – equally, you are expected to show respect for people of other faiths.

You can find more information on UK laws via [Citizens Advice](#) which is a charitable organisation providing a wide range of advice on aspects of life in the UK.

You can find information about [local Brighton community groups here](#) and

Other useful links and information

[Living In The UK: Essential Expat Guide \(expatra.com\)](#)

[An expat guide to moving to the UK – You Could Travel](#)

[Holiday and festival calendar | British Council](#)

[UK bank holidays - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have any suggestions for items to include in this guide, please contact Layla Hartley in HR on l.hartley@ids.ac.uk.