

British High Commission in NZ urges Ex-pat brits to check passports

With COVID travel restrictions now largely lifted across the globe there has been a surge in British citizens travelling, especially to Europe for the northern hemisphere summer. This has [led to longer wait times](#) to process travel documents.

While the British High Commission in Wellington is not involved in the renewal or issuing of passports, it is reminding the estimated more than 250,000 British people in New Zealand to check that their passports are up to date – and to allow plenty of time to apply for new documents from the UK if not.

“This will be the first time that many UK citizens in New Zealand have travelled overseas since the start of the pandemic and many may not have even looked at their passports for a couple of years,” says Sam Pass, Deputy High Commissioner. “Get it out of the drawer and make sure everything is up to date. If it isn’t, apply as soon as possible to ensure this doesn’t ruin your travel plans and your documents arrive in time.”

“We are keen to remind British citizens in NZ of the important steps they need to take to have a safe and enjoyable trip – such as [checking UK government travel advice](#), making sure their passport is valid for their travel dates and taking out travel insurance.”

Her Majesty’s Passport Office in the UK recently announced that it is facing record demand. More than 5 million British people delayed applying for passports during COVID-19 because of restrictions in travel – and the office anticipates that 9.5 million British passport applications will be made this year. The advice is to [apply online for a new passport](#) well before you are due to travel. For example, those planning on travelling to the UK this year to see family at Christmas should apply now.

“While we do offer consular assistance to UK nationals we are unable to help with passport renewals, which are only issued in the UK,” says Pauline Comber, Consular Manager at the Wellington High Commission. “Holidays aren’t like they use to be, they are still fun, but now you have to do a lot more pre departure checks. And the first thing should be to check your passport.”

The advice to check the validity of passports comes on top of a [recent campaign](#) by the UK government to ensure its citizens remain safe while traveling. The campaign urges Brits to check the COVID requirements for countries they are traveling to, ensure they meet visa requirements, read the government’s travel advice for the countries they are going to, and to buy travel insurance.