

CHANGES TO THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN VISITS (SCV) FLIGHTS FOR BFG AND HOLLAND

Parents who use SCV flights for their child(ren) may have noticed with effect from Dec 07, that there have been significant changes to the service provided. With the demise of the British Airways contract in Apr 07, the chain of command has over the last 10 months worked hard, together with Defence Supply Chain Operations and Movements (DSCOM), to provide a service which not only meets the needs of parents wherever possible, but also ensures the safety and welfare of service children in transit.

What are the new changes?

In addition to the existing BMI contract, which will continue to fly from Heathrow to Hannover, Air Partner/Air Berlin are the new contractor for the MoD and will provide direct flights from Stansted and Bournemouth to Hannover, Münster-Osnabrück, Paderborn and Düsseldorf and vice versa.

How do I book the SCV flight?

All SCV bookings should now be booked through 24 PC & Mov Regt RLC, Bielefeld Travel Centre (BTC), and **not** the Rheindahlen Travel Centre as was previously the case, using the BFG Form 4000 which is available from your Unit Admin Office.

How do I know which airport to book?

If your child(ren)'s school falls within 75 miles, by the most direct route of Stansted and Bournemouth international airports, then you will be required to use one of these airports as they are served by the Air Berlin contract. The travel centre will advise you which airport or airports you can use. The BMI service continues to be available between Heathrow and Hannover. In addition to this, the Air Trooping Flight from Birmingham can also be utilised for SCV.

Currently, however, between the months of Oct to Apr, Air Berlin do not fly out of Bournemouth. Therefore if the school is outside the 75 miles radius of another designated airport, parents will be given the choice of airport for their child(ren) to fly from and to.

What happens if my child's school is over 75 miles from the airports mentioned above?

You will be asked where you wish your child(ren) to fly from. The selected airline must, however, be able to provide an Unaccompanied Minor (UNMIN) service for children under 16 years of age and wherever possible (although parental choice

may be exercised) a direct flight. Use of an UNMIN service is compulsory for U12s and subject to individual airline conditions for those between the ages of 12-16. It should be noted that restrictions apply to the number of unaccompanied minors that may travel on any single flight and therefore early booking is advised in order to secure the first choice of travel dates and timings. 24 PC & Mov Regt RLC Travel Centre, Bielefeld, should be able to provide advice and assistance in this matter.

When and why do I have to use Unaccompanied Minor (UNMIN) service?

The MoD have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that appropriate duty of care is exercised for service children travelling on SCV flights. Children who are under 12 years of age (up to their 12th Birthday) must travel under UNMIN arrangements. Parents are entitled and can request that their child(ren) travel as UNMIN from the age of 12 years up to their 16th birthday. However, in order to maximise safeguards, it is strongly recommended that the UNMIN service is used wherever it is available for service children.

How soon can I book my SCV flight?

Parents must book flights at least 3 months prior to their child's required flight. Parents should book as early as possible but no more than 4 months in advance. This is to ensure, wherever possible, that the flight(s) they have chosen is/are available. This is especially important as most SCV flights take place during the peak holiday periods. Flights which are requested with short lead times may not be available and parents will be offered an alternative, which may not suit their other travel arrangements.

Who do I speak to if I need more information regarding SCV flights?

Questions should be raised to your Unit Admin Office and if they cannot help you then they will contact either 24 PC & Mov Regt RLC Travel Centre, Bielefeld, or HQ UKSC(G) on your behalf.