

LONDON

RELOCATION & SHIPPING



Introduction

London is one of the world's most visited cities, and still one of the top 5 global trading cities. London has something for everyone: from history and culture to fine food and good times.

Immersed in history, London's rich antiquity is everywhere.

The city's historic buildings, and a great many of them world-famous from the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben – are instantly recognisable landmarks, now mixed in with the modern revival buildings like the Shard, the Tate Modern extension, the Sky Garden.

Architectural grandeur, history, culture, and trade are all around you making London a real attraction for all those looking for a location to live and work.

With all of this to enjoy, London still brings its own challenges when looking to relocate. So where do you start?



Application and Customs Clearance

The UK HMRC has digitised its custom application and clearance procedure meaning that anyone wishing to move to the UK must now apply for a Unique Reference Number (URN) also known as the Transfer of Residence Process (ToR).

This process should be started as soon as possible, due to delays that can occur in processing the application.

- You must complete the application for you and your family to obtain authorisation for Transfer of Residence relief to the UK.
- Go online at UK HM Customs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>) to apply for a Transfer of Residence (ToR). That approval is given in the form of a Unique Reference Number (URN) and will allow you to import your personal effects & household goods into the UK.
- The application should be made before the packing of your effects and we strongly recommend that your shipment is not forwarded until approval is granted, the URN number is issued.
- Two copies of a list of items will be required at the application stage. HMRC, need an indication of the items to be shipped. You must sign these lists with your signature.

- Your shipment will not clear UK Customs without the URN, therefore if your shipment arrives into the UK without a URN, it is likely that storage, port or airport storage, container demurrage charges etc. will be incurred until the URN is available and release by Customs is given.

Also, to be taken into consideration are some of the restrictions on items that can be imported to the UK.

- Used household effects can be exported into the UK duty and Tax free so long as the importer:
 - Is moving their normal home to the UK Has had their normal home outside the EU for a continuous period of at least 12 months
 - Has possessed and used them for at least 6 months outside the EU before they are imported
 - Did not get them under duty/tax free scheme
 - Declares them correctly to UK customs
 - Will retain them for their own use
 - Will not sell, lend, hire out or otherwise dispose of them in the UK or elsewhere in the EU within 12 months of importation.
- Alcohol/Tobacco – must be declared. Duty on these can be high and typically 10-20% duty will be added to the value and then 20% VAT
- Indecent or obscene literature
- Pornographic material
- Counterfeit and pirated goods

Prohibited item

- Unlicensed drug
- Offensive weapons
- Indecent or obscene literature
- Milk products from outside the European union
- Foodstuffs – including pet food
- Firearms, explosives and ammunition radio transmitters
- Rough diamonds
- Animals, birds and fish whether dead or alive. Parts and articles derived from protected animal species including fur skins, ivory, reptile leather, stony corals and goods made from any of these

Working closely with a relocation company who understands, not only your requirements but also the customs procedure and paperwork will greatly reduce the stress and cost of navigating this sometimes complicated process.

Locations

London offers a vast variety of locations from inner city apartments overlooking the historical landscape to greener suburbs offering areas for families with children.

Then within a short train journey, you can be in the surrounding country locations offering larger family size property and a more relaxed lifestyle.

Popular locations for the city:

- **Bermondsey** – offering riverside apartments mixed in with the historical background of London
- **Notting Hill** – Popular with city traders and famous for its carnival, it brings a great nightlife scene along with some of the top bars and restaurants.
- **Peckham** – This area made famous by Del Boy now offers some of the most culturally diverse dining and living in London.

Popular locations for the suburbs

- **Muswell Hill** – Set on the northern hills overlooking the city, Muswell Hill offers the ideal family location, with Schools, shops and open green space. All within easy reach of the city.
- **Wimbledon** – this area comes to life every year with the tennis, but then returns to the quiet village atmosphere, offering the larger open space on the common and houses that are fit for families looking for the extra room.
- **St Johns Wood** - within easy reach of the city and west end, St Johns wood offers property from apartments to the larger 6-bed houses. Popular with the expat community due to the international schools and proximity to top class restaurants.

Further afield locations

- **Weybridge** – to the south west of London Weybridge brings access to major international schools that offer both boarding for students and international curriculums, again making it a very popular location for the expat.

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Property is often within private estates or on the golf course, accessed only through manned security gates. This area is popular with the traders from the city with a 40-minute commute back into the city via train.

- **Seven Oaks** – Down to the south east on the Kent boards lies Seven Oaks, which brings the best of both worlds, the large property in a country feel location. Alongside top schools, it brings easy access back into the city, and easy access to the south coast towns

UK Culture & Adapting

London, just like any other cities in the world, has its own norms and culture that may be different from your home country. British culture is rooted in the United Kingdom's rich history with its unique traditions and culture.

When you move to London, you might be surprised that the people speak the same language, but you may not be able to fully make a sense of what they are saying.

The British use different terminologies and pronounce words differently. Reading up on books or searching through the internet about the language the British use can help you a lot. You should also be wary of using phrases when talking with friends and co-workers as some phrases may seem innocent to you but may have a different connotation to those native in the UK. Also, be sure to keep an arm's length between you and the person you are speaking to avoid making them feel uncomfortable.

Enjoy a drink at the pub. Drinking culture is a big deal in the UK. When catching up with friends or just hanging out with some work colleagues, good old-fashioned beer is always present. Alcohol is usually available in the menu when you eat out as it is a focal point of social contact in London.

When eating with a friend or a colleague from work to eat outside, the one who invited usually pays for the meal. Instead of arguing to pay or split the bill, offer to have another meal out with them and pay for them to give back return their kindness. When you get invited to a British household, show your gratitude by bringing gifts like wine or chocolates for the host.

Moving

When looking to relocate to the UK there is consideration needed in what to bring. Some of the areas that will influence this are the length of the relocation, the family make up and budget. Also think about things like the electrical voltage, in the UK we use 240V, so items coming in from areas such as the United States will not work without a transformer which is additional costs and reduces the items life span.

There are items as mentioned in the customs section that cannot be brought into the UK, and some will attract customs duty. If these items are included in the shipment, then delays and duty will add to the cost of the move. Delays clearing customs can add considerable cost to the final bill.

There are 2 main types of Transportation, Seafreight and Airfreight when coming from overseas. Moves originating in Europe are handled in a way you would when looking to move within country and this is referred to as road freight.

Seafreight – this mode of transport is used when there is a larger volume of items to be transported IE full house moves or move where there are larger items.

When coming in from overseas location the items will be packed by the moving company and normally loaded in to a steel shipping container either at the property or if access is difficult at the origin address, the items will be taken back to the companies facilities and loaded in to the container there. Transit times can vary from 4-9 weeks depending on the origin location.

When thinking about items to bring to London, there are some things to take into consideration. London property can be smaller than the original property, so large furniture may need to be taken apart or worst case not fit. Costs can be affected by the location of the property, if the shipping container can't access the property, then a smaller vehicle will need to be used to transport the items from the container to the property.

Airfreight – when it comes to smaller shipments that need to be moved quicker, then airfreight can be considered.

This mode does bring a lot more restriction on what can be shipped. One of the most driving factors to consider is the cost, this mode of transport can be very expensive and is normally only for small personal items, which is sometimes referred to as excess baggage. Weight and volume of the shipment will also have an impact on the cost.

Airlines have very strict guidelines on the items that can be shipped, items such as liquids, aerosols, batteries and explosive items cannot be sent through this mode. Transit times are normally within 5-20 days

Road Freight – For moves across mainland Europe and within the UK, your possessions will be packed and loaded into specialist Pan -Europe- an vehicles.

Housing

As discussed previously in this guide, London offers a vast variety of property from the small studio apartment to the large 6-bedroom house overlooking royal courtyards.

When it comes to deciding on what is required there must be some thought around budget, London property comes at a cost, even for the small apartment in the East End you can be looking at a monthly rental over £1000 per month rising to £15000+ per month for the house in Mayfair.

The area will have an effect on the price, if you are willing to travel and move out from the inner city locations, you can often find a property that is more in line with budgets.

Property in London also moves very quickly, what you see on an agent's website today, may actually have already been let or sold, so it is always recommended that a relocation agent is considered, as they often have relationships with agents where rentals can be negotiated.

Buying property in London can be a minefield and again it is recommended unless you are familiar with how it all works employ the assistance of a property agent to act on your behalf.

Your relocation/moving company will be able to assist in helping you through this with services like:

- Orientation which is designed to help you decide the location you would like to live
- Home search where an itinerary of property is researched in line with your requirements. You will be taken around to visit these properties and then once the final decision is made the lease can be negotiated on your behalf.
- Settling in service designed to help you set up doctors, utility and other necessary services once you have moved in.

Schooling

London offers some of the best education in the world, with many students travelling to study here.

In the UK it is a law that all children from the age of 4 – 18 to receive some form of education.

In the UK there are 3 main types of schools' available private education facilities, International schools, and state school, each has its own criteria that need to be met, some more critical than the other. Within the UK there are education specialists who can advise and help in the application for the chosen types of schooling, and it is always recommended that unless familiar with the UK education system, they are consulted.

State Schools – These schools are funded by the UK government and offer a vast array of courses. When it comes to looking for the best school it must be taken into consideration all state schools apply a catchment area system to applications.

This means that the child will only be accepted if they live within the catchment area of that school.

This is important to consider when looking for a property, as it can influence prices and availability, with popular schools driving demand for these locations. Popular schools also limit the number of students they accept, again leading to long waiting lists, so application at the earliest possible time is important.

Private Schools – Within London you will find world renown schools Like St Pauls which dates to 1509 to Kings College founded in 1829, all achieving some of the highest examination board results.

Although whereas with state school which applies a catchment area, which will decide the location of the property, private schools do not always apply this but may be more focused on the academic abilities of the child.

Along with this is the term costs some of which can run to £30,000 per term. Sometimes favoured by the expat community due to the ability to relocate children easily without effecting their education, as most private schools will offer international recognised curriculum.

International Schools – For the expat here on work assignments, London offers the ability for the child to attend a school that is set up in a familiar way to the origin country.

Application for these schools should be made as soon as the family know they will be relocating, as places can be limited, and some schools apply a first come first served system.

These schools also have an influence on property availability and as they are mainly located in the areas of Kensington and Chelsea you will find property prices are on the higher end of the market scale. Some of the international schools offer a bus service which can mean that property can be sourced in areas outside of the main location of the school. Boarding for students is also available but comes at a cost and can be limited.

It is recommended that education support is sought, as understanding the needs of children and matching them to the correct educational requirements is key to settling into your new location quicker and reducing the stress of having children in the wrong school.

Your relocation company will always be able to help with school advice or put in place a full education support programme.

AT A GLANCE

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