

### **Guidance on Airbnb and similar unregulated accommodation providers.**

The University's Staff Travel and Expenses Policy available [here](#) states that "*The University will not pay for accommodation booked by Staff travelling on University business in the UK or overseas through Airbnb, Uniplaces or similar providers as the University cannot guarantee meeting its Duty of Care requirements to ensure safety in this type of accommodation.*"

The University has taken this stance as it cannot support staff using Airbnb or similar unregulated accommodation providers given the likelihood that insurance cover and practical safety standards are only advised by Airbnb and not mandated. In many cases, even Business Airbnb providers do not consistently provide:

- A recognised standard of facilities
- An audit/ inspection system of facilities – including fire safety protection measures, fire alarms, accessible fire exits.
- An agreed process for handling money or protection from financial failure of host

Airbnb standards are below those of the Hotel Proprietors Act and the International SO standards for hotels. With this in mind the University would take the view that convenience and cost considerations cannot override the University's statutory responsibilities concerning staff safety.

The University has a Travel Management Company (TMC) (Selective Travel Management) which must be used for all accommodation bookings, except for when accommodation is provided as part of a conference or it can be demonstrated that the TMC does not provide value for money (see section 12 Use of the University's Travel Management Company of the above policy).

Where the TMC is not used, the traveller must demonstrate their reasons for this. If, on an exceptional basis, there is no alternative but to use unregulated accommodation such as Airbnb, the traveller must seek prior approval from a member of the University's Rectorate Team setting out their reasons why. Price alone is not sufficient justification for the University to compromise either our duty of care or our insurance covers.

Finally, as a reminder, it is a requirement that a risk assessment is completed before any overseas travel takes place and emailed to [insurance@hope.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@hope.ac.uk)

Further information is available [here](#)

To ensure compliance with the requirements outlined above, the University shall make periodic checks to verify suitable travel arrangements are in place.

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