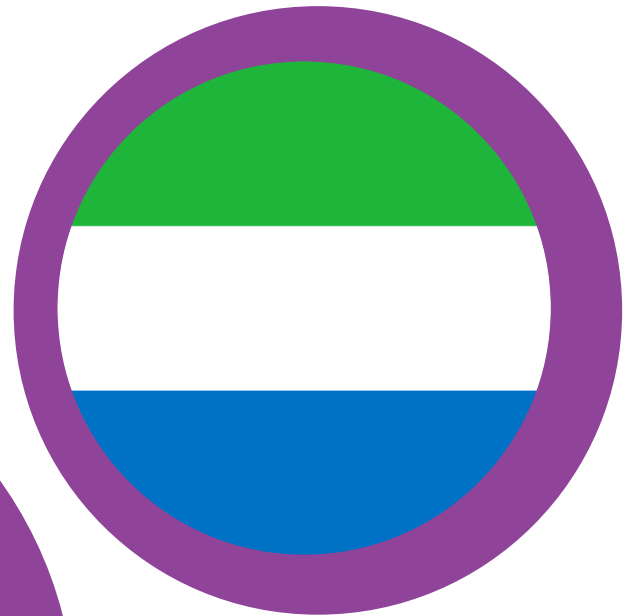


Returning to Sierra Leone



Hibiscus Initiatives provide advocacy, support and specialist services to marginalised migrants affected by the criminal justice and immigration systems to enable informed choices and positive change. We promote justice and respect to reduce inequalities.

The charity's work falls within four broad categories:

- Community and prisons
- International resettlement and detention services
- Anti-trafficking
- Volunteering and mentoring

The international resettlement programme provides a support service to clients to facilitate their reintegration into the community in their country of origin.

Through providing resettlement related support and practical assistance we aim to ensure the smoothest possible transition for our clients returning to their home countries. Often this can mean signposting to organisations providing support, finding accommodation, getting identification documents and passports back, helping with internal travel, liaison with families and providing resettlement grants to aid small business start-ups.

Our work is important to clients that have exhausted their rights to be in the UK, those that wish to depart voluntarily, or those who are being deported at the end of serving a sentence for a criminal offence.

Contact us

If you would like to know more about Hibiscus Initiatives, receive support, or know a friend or family member who may need our assistance, please contact:

Hibiscus Initiatives

Resource for London
356 Holloway Road
London N7 6PA

Email: info@hibiscus.org.uk

Website: <https://www.hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk>

Phone: +44 (0)20 7697 4120

Fax: +44 (0)20 7697 4272



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Introduction

This booklet has been designed to provide you with information that will help ease your return to Sierra Leone. Inside it you will find useful general information about your return, what to expect and a list of contact details of organisations that may be able to help with any resettlement related issues you encounter.



Planning for your return

The more planning that is done for your return to Sierra Leone, the easier it will be for you to benefit from support services when you arrive. There are a number of things to think about before you depart the UK, such as: who will meet you at the airport? Where will you stay? Can family or friends support you emotionally, financially or help you to familiarise yourself with life in Sierra Leone?

Before your departure, you may want to consider:

Medication

It is important to talk to your doctor before leaving for Sierra Leone. If you are currently taking medication, your doctor should be able to advise you on how to source further medication. It might be beneficial for you to request a letter from a GP or doctor, detailing your condition. The more information you have about your medical condition, the easier it will be to continue treatment after your arrival.

Family and friends

If you have family or friends living in Sierra Leone, you may wish to tell them of your arrival in case they can support you with your immediate needs upon your return. Try to take their contact details with you to the airport so that you can contact them on arrival or before you leave.

The British Red Cross provides a free service aimed at restoring contact between families that have been separated. You may access this programme by directly contacting them at:

Address: British Red Cross, UK Office, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL

Email: contactus@redcross.org.uk

Phone: +44 (0)344 871 1111

Website: www.redcross.org.uk

Faith-based organisations

There may be faith-based organisations in the UK that can suggest avenues of support and places of worship where you will be returning. Faith-based organisations can often provide essential basic support to those of all faiths or with no faith. A good place to start would be to contact members of your local community or faith-based leaders. It is advisable to make enquiries with these organisations or communities early on so that suitable arrangements can be made for you.



What to expect on arrival

Arrival at the airport

Once you have disembarked from the aircraft you will be taken to the airport where administrative services will be carried out for your re-entry into Sierra Leone.

Now that you are in Sierra Leone, you may want to start thinking about being reunited with family and friends, finding a job, getting a new ID and so on.



Transport

The main point of entry into Sierra Leone by air is Lungi International Airport. The Sierra Leone River separates Lungi International Airport from Freetown, the nation's capital city. It is possible to cross this waterway by ferry or water taxis. If you are traveling by road, it is possible for vehicles to board a ferry.

Ferries

The ferry port is 15 minutes from the airport and the journey across to Freetown takes approximately one hour. It is possible to buy tickets that cover the taxi from the airport to the ferry port and the ferry crossing to Freetown. It is advisable to allow extra time for your journey as the roads can be very busy on this route.

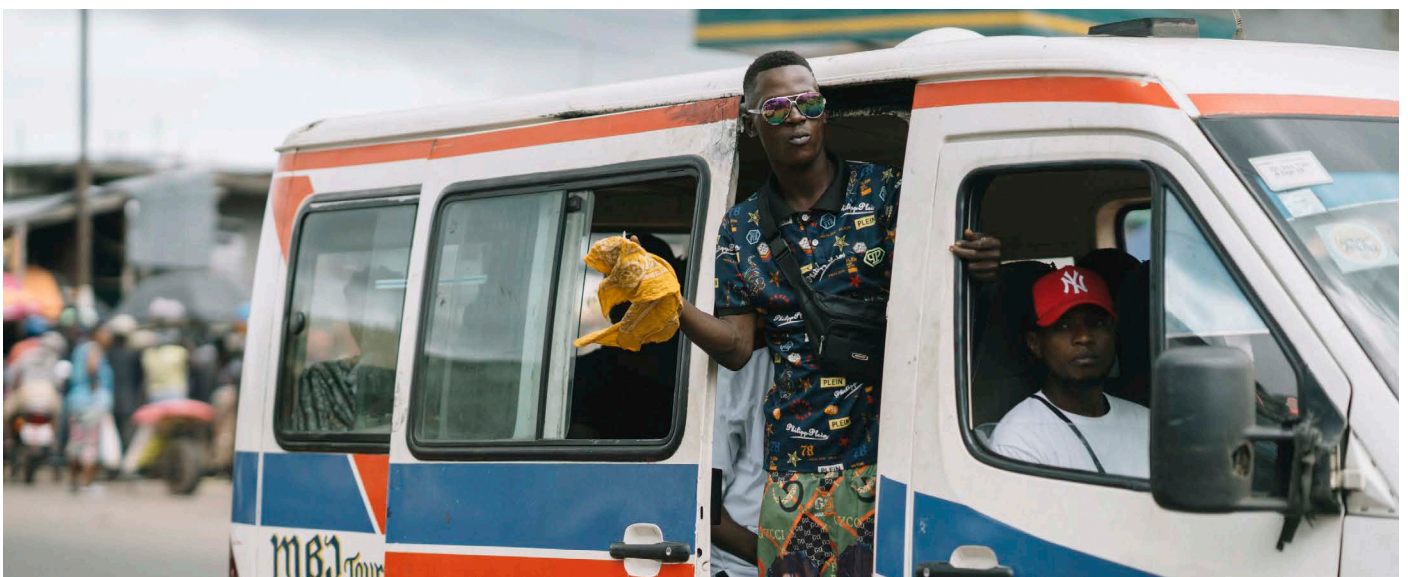
Water taxis

Sea Coach Express and Sea Bird Express currently offer a frequent service between the airport and Freetown. The journey lasts around 30 minutes and costs \$40 (approximately £30.00). Tickets can be purchased at the port or online by visiting www.seabirdsl.com.

By road

It is possible to travel by road between the airport and Freetown and this will take approximately four hours. Taxis (poda-poda) are low-cost public minibuses. This is a popular mode of transport, therefore space onboard is limited.

Private bus services operate to link major towns in Sierra Leone, the most popular company being the Road Transportation Corporation. These buses are run to a regular timetable, however they are more expensive than the poda-podas.



Essential information & important documents

ID cards

Having a valid ID card is very important in Sierra Leone as it is used in most transactions such as receiving or sending money, bank transactions and when applying for jobs.

To obtain a national ID card, you will need to go to the National Registration office in Freetown. You will be required to show documentation to prove your date and place of birth.

To apply for a voter's registration ID card, you will need to go to the National Electoral Commission. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age to register to vote.

Driving licence

An individual must be over 16 years of age to apply for a driving licence. If you are under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must co-sign your application form. Before being issued your licence, you will need to successfully complete a written and practical skills test and undergo an eye test.

You will need to provide the following documents when submitting your driving licence application to the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA) office:

Valid ID card (national ID card, voter's registration ID card or NASSIT card)
Birth certificate
Passport
Two passport size photographs

For further information, visit the SLRSA website <https://slrsa.gov.sl/>.

Opening a bank account

If you are opening a bank account in Sierra Leone, you will need to provide proof of identity and residency. If you do not have access to these documents, the bank may be able to start the process if you meet with the bank manager and explain your personal circumstances.

Other documentation commonly requested by banks when opening an account are :

- Rental contract
- Recent utility bill
- Passport-sized photographs
- Minimum deposit (amount varies from bank to bank)

There are many commercial banks in Sierra Leone such as the Bank of Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Commercial Bank and Access Bank.

Accommodation

If you are unable to stay with family or friends, short-term accommodation such as B&B's and hostels can be a cost-effective option in major towns and cities. They can be booked before you leave the UK or in the country of return via the following websites:

www.hostelworld.com
www.booking.com
www.expedia.com/Hotels
www.airbnb.com

Healthcare

Overview

There are public and private healthcare options available in Sierra Leone. All medical care has a fee, however there are some medical services provided by non-governmental organisations that may be offered free of charge.

Private healthcare services are well established and growing in Sierra Leone through specialist clinics and private hospitals. These services are generally more expensive than public healthcare services.

List of hospitals

Freetown

Dr Patrice Coker Surgery

Address: 47^a Percival Street, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 601 289 or +232 25 579 368 or +232 77 579 368

Dr Robin Coker Surgery

Address: 12 Main Motor Road, Congo Cross, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 750 112

St John's clinic

Address: 65 Macdonald Street, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 603 259

Connaught Government Hospital (public only)

Address: Wallace Johnson Street, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 865 597

Choithram's Memorial Hospital

Address: Hill Station, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 980 000

Emergency Hospital

Address: Peninsular Road, Goderich, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 611 386

Connaught Government Hospital (public only)

Address: Wallace Johnson Street, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 865 597

Choithram's Memorial Hospital

Address: Hill Station, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 980 000

Emergency Hospital

Address: Peninsular Road, Goderich, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 611 386

Other areas in Sierra Leone

Kindoya Hospital

Address: 1 Prince Williams Street, Bo

Phone: +232 76 635 881 or +232 77 790 491 or +232 30 320 666

Bai Bureh Memorial Community Hospital (public only)

Address: Mahera, Lungi

Phone: +232 76 656 124

Sexual and reproductive health

In Sierra Leone, contraception (birth control) can be bought in different pharmacies with or without prescription. Condoms can be purchased in pharmacies and healthcare centres. IUDs, implants and injections are available at family planning clinics. Sexually transmitted infection tests are available at clinics across the country, however, it is advisable that you have them carried out at a registered clinic.

Marie Stopes Society (MSS)

This organisation provides affordable family planning services, from their health centres and via outreach work. They run a toll-free helpline providing advice on family planning and reproductive health. Other areas of support include providing contraceptives, maternal health and antenatal care, information on sexual health issues, as well as testing for HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

Phone: +232 76 127 575 or 3535 (helpline)

Email: info@mariestopes.org.sl

Website: www.mariestopes.org.sl/

Psychosocial counselling

There are various mental health providers in Sierra Leone working to promote mental health awareness and offer care and treatment to those suffering from mental and emotional distress. These include private and public services in the country.

Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS)

This organisation offers holistic psychosocial care and counselling to those who have experienced torture, violence and trauma. Their treatments include Trauma Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

Address: Babadorie, Lumley, Freetown

Phone: +232 79 475 007 or +232 33 736 993

Email: enablingaccesscapspc@gmail.com or enablingaccesscapspa@gmail.com

City of Rest Rehabilitation Centre

This organisation offers psychosocial support and counselling to those with mental health needs. Their programmes of support include: one to one and group counselling sessions, workshops run by people with lived experience of mental health challenges, sports and reading groups, entrepreneur and skills training to get people into employment. For people enrolled in their programmes, they also provide 3 meals a day and spiritual support.

Address: City of Rest Rehabilitation Centre, Grafton, Freetown

Phone: +232 78 799 605

Sierra Leone Psychiatric Hospital

A mental health facility providing treatment and care for those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Address: Kissy Mess Mess, Kissy, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 610 487

Mental Health Coalition - Sierra Leone

This organisation partners with mental health organisation and private mental health doctors. Their aim is to advocate for the human rights and dignity of all those affected by and working to improve mental ill-health including service users, their families and service providers. They can provide information about the mental health support available in Sierra Leone.

Address: 13 Old Railway Line, Brookfields, Freetown

Phone: +232 76 371 709 or +232 30 064 779

Email: mhcs12012@gmail.com or mhcs12012@yahoo.com

Website: <https://mentalhealthcoalitionsi.com/partners/eamh/caps/>

Education & employment

Education

Private and public education is available in Sierra Leone. Primary education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 12 and secondary education is optional from the age of 12 until 15.

Children are required to sit a Basic Education Certificate Examination to assess whether they can continue to secondary education. If they pass, they can choose to follow an academic or vocational route.

Schooling is taught in English, with French being mandatory until the age of 12. Additionally, Krio, Mende, Temne and Limba are all taught throughout the schooling system.

Further education is optional in Sierra Leone. There are two main universities: Njala University in Bo and the University of Sierra Leone in Freetown

Employment and training

Most jobs in Sierra Leone are gained through personal contacts; it is important to tell friends and family you are looking for work. A good place to start your job search is in the local newspapers and online. The websites below contain job listings in Sierra Leone:

<https://www.sierraleonejob.com>
https://www.glassdoor.co.uk/Job/sierra-leone-jobs-SRCH_IL.0,12_IN215.htm
https://unjobs.org/duty_stations/sierra-leone
<https://careers.sl/>
<https://joblinksl.com/>
<https://sl.linkedin.com/company/joblinksierraleone>

Most vocational training focuses on agriculture, carpentry, bricklaying, mechanics, hairdressing or tailoring. The following organisations can provide details of training institutions and opportunities:

National Council for Technical Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA)

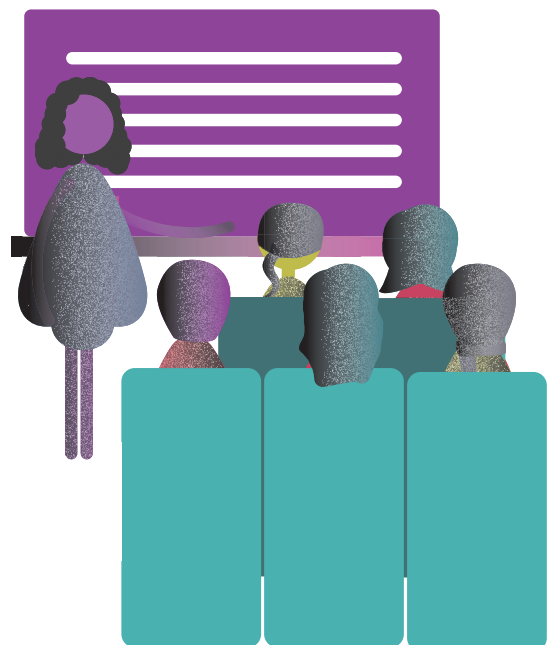
Website: www.nctva.org

Jackson and Devon Anderson Technical Institute (JADA)

Provides training in building and construction, automobile technology, electrical and business studies.

Phone: +232 76 814 929

Email: jadaprinciple@gmail.com



Useful information

Cost of living

Food	Price (Sierra Leonean Leone, Le)
Bread 1 loaf (500g)	8902.12
Milk 1 litre	30,618.85
Water 1.5 litre bottle	11,227.89
Rice 1kg	9,126.52
Eggs 12	18,600.08
Cheese (500g)	40,000.00
Chicken breasts 1kg	49,075.99
Beef 1kg (steak)	32,717.33
Potatoes 1kg	21,894.23
Onions 1kg	15,024.22
Lettuce	6,199.13
Tomatoes 1kg	30,744.45
Oranges 1kg	9,521.10
Apples 1kg	30,981.56
Bananas 1kg	8,975.81
Transport	
One way ticket (local transport)	1,711.22
Monthly pass	None
Taxi 1km	1,711.22
Taxi 1 hour	87,848.77
Others	
1 min. of prepaid mobile tariff (local)	684.49
Internet (60 mbps or more, unlimited data)	600,000.00
Formula milk	25,000.00
Diapers	80,000.00
Salaries	
Average monthly net salary (after tax)	17,185,547.92

Correct in October 2021

Significant dates and public holidays

Date	Holiday name
1st January	New Year's Day
8th March	International women's Day
Varies every year	Good Friday
Varies every year	Easter Monday
27th April	Independence Day
Varies every year	Eid-al-Fitr
Varies every year	Eid-al-Adha
Varies every year	The Prophet's Birthday
25th December	Christmas Day
26th December	Boxing Day

Shops and public services may be closed on these dates (some dates subject to change).

Emergency contact numbers

Ambulance:	999
Police:	999
Fire services:	019

Useful contacts

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The IOM offers resettlement and reintegration support to voluntary returnees to Sierra Leone.

Address: New Signal Hill Road, 18A, Freetown

Phone: +232 22 234 244

Email: iomfreetown@iom.int

Sierra Leone Red Cross (International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement) IFRC

This organisation is run by staff and volunteers, providing services such as health and social care and specialist programmes for the people of Sierra Leone.

Address: 6 Liverpool Street, Freetown

Phone: +232 22 222 384 or +232 76 517 519

Email: slrcshq@sierraleoneredcross.org

Website: <http://sierraleoneredcross.org/>

Caritas Sierra Leone

Caritas Sierra Leone is a Catholic organisation that serves to help the poor and marginalised. Currently, Caritas Freetown continues working to eradicate poverty, corruption, injustice; to facilitate equality, good governance, peace, human right; to promote women, youth and disabled empowerment and to build resilience through different action focusing in different areas in Sierra Leone.

Address: 19 Savage Street, Brookfields, Freetown

Phone: +232 78 175 328 or +232 76 722 736 or +232 22 224 590

Email: info@caritasfreetownsl.org

Website: www.caritasfreetownsl.org

Map of Sierra Leone



Disclaimer

Whilst the information in this document was collected with great care and careful attention, Hibiscus Initiatives does not guarantee the accuracy of this information. Hibiscus Initiatives does not endorse any views, opinions or policies expressed by any organisations referred to in this document and accepts no responsibility for any conclusions or results based on information provided in this booklet. This publication does not constitute an offer, solicitation, or recommendation for the sale or purchase of any produce or services.

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