

Communications when outside the UK

Before travelling outside the UK

Check with your service provider that they have activated your phone for the countries that you are visiting.

Install WhatsApp Messenger on your phone and tablet, <https://www.whatsapp.com/download/> It is free to install and use and is very good for phone calls, messages, picture messages and sharing documents, which are all sent free of charge. It is encrypted and reports message progress, one black tick indicates message sent, two black ticks indicates message is on recipients phone, the ticks turn blue when the message is read by the recipient. It uses wifi, if available, otherwise the App will automatically use data, so watch your allowance. If you wish to phone landlines try WhatsApp Business <https://www.whatsapp.com/business/>

Make sure that you have a good Email app on your device, TypeApp (Android & IOS) is excellent, free, encrypted, and transmits over wifi and data. <https://www.typeapp.com/download/>.

Get used to composing emails offline in an Email App and then sending them in bulk to minimise your time online. Webmail is not ideal when away from home because it relies on a connection to the internet which can be expensive.

Service providers offer many comms packages for use abroad, it is worth checking these out and purchase before you leave the UK. They all offer different criteria so check carefully.

Mike Burton has suggested - That people who do not have a Smartphone/WhatsApp/Skype/FaceTime can call contacts abroad by using Google Voice or Skype-Out from the main Skype app on a tablet or computer. Both of these allow calls to anywhere in the world via wifi, calls form App to App are free and from App to landline there is a small charge, usually the local call rate of the destination country.

Rob Robinson has suggested - That recent experience is that some airtime providers allow use of normal allowances whilst roaming outside of the EU but only in specific countries. He believes the leader in this area is Three, it is one of their key selling points. However if you are not already with them then you would have to buy a suitable SIM which might cost say £20 and would expire after a month. The alternative is to buy a local SIM in the country visited.

Within the EU

Cellphones all work as if you are still in the UK. Leave Roaming and Data on.

Phone calls, Texts and Data usage will all be logged to your usual UK monthly or pay as you go allowances.

Free Wifi is often available in large stores, shopping malls and cafes. Some towns offer free wifi in the central area. Use a secured connection if possible.

Picture texts are expensive. Use WhatsApp for picture messaging, it's free.

Outside the UK and in the EU

When you arrive in a country outside the UK and in the EU you will receive an advisory text message from your service provider, similar to this:-

Welcome to PORTUGAL

You can use your monthly mobile allowance in the EU at no extra cost, which means you can call, message and use data without worry. No allowance? You'll be charged no more than you would back in the UK. This is subject to our fair use policy at www.virginmedia.com/FUPinfo if you go over it we may need to apply a surcharge of 3.3p per minute, 1p per SMS or £4.79 per GB data you use. For plan pricing information go to www.virginmedia.com/roaming or call +447458333202 for free. For help call us free on +447458333789. Finally for emergency services call 112 for free. Bon voyage.

Outside the EU

Before travelling outside the EU

- check with your service provider that they have activated your phone for the countries that you are visiting.
- Switch Data Off. Otherwise the apps on your phone will automatically try to update at considerable expense, if it finds a data connection.

Free Wifi is often available in large stores, shopping malls and cafes a secure connection is preferable.

Wifi is available in hotels usually at cost.

WhatsApp is good for calls, messages and picture messages especially if free wifi is available, otherwise the App will automatically try to use data.

Texts are usually free to receive and chargeable to send, but picture messages can be very expensive.

You will receive various welcome messages similar to these from Virgin.

Hi and welcome to PANAMA!

As you're outside of the EU, you won't be able to use your UK allowances. While you're here calls cost £2.60 per min to make and £1.50 per min to receive. Texts cost 50p and are free to receive. Picture messages cost 50p per message, data costs £5 per MB. For help call us on +447458333789 - it costs £2.60 per min from a Virgin Mobile - other networks may vary.

Happy travels!

Hi and welcome to SURINAME!

While you're here calls cost £4.80 per min to make and £1.50 per min to receive. Texts cost £1.20 and are free to receive. Picture messages cost 50p per message, data costs £12.50 per MB. For help call us on +447458333789 - it costs £4.80 per min from a Virgin Mobile - other networks may vary.

Happy travels!

Hi and welcome to USA!

While you're here calls cost £2 per min to make and £1.50 per min to receive. Texts cost 50p and are free to receive. Picture messages cost 50p per message, data costs £5 per MB. For help call us on +447458333789 - it costs £2 per min from a Virgin Mobile - other networks may vary. Happy travels!

Onboard a Ship

Cabin phone calls are available via the ships system but are expensive.

Cellphone calls and texting onboard is often possible via the ships satellite comms system, providing your provider has an agreement with the shipping company, but beware and check costs with your provider before leaving home!!

Charges vary and are set by your provider and may not be preadvised when you first connect to the system!

Wifi is available but usually expensive, but free on SAGA cruise ships.

On Fred Olsen Ships

Mobile phone calls and texts can be used at your providers charges.

Wifi charges

120 minutes use as you go - reduces as minutes are used (£41.00)

60 minutes use as you go - reduces as minutes are used (£26.00)

62 days continuous unlimited internet (£372.00)

14 days continuous unlimited internet (£112.00)

7 days continuous unlimited internet (£63.00)

5 days continuous unlimited internet (£50.00)