



# Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Protocol Directorate  
Agreement and Credentials – Diplomatic Missions Team WH2.146  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH [www.gov.uk/fcdo](http://www.gov.uk/fcdo)

## Arrangements for the First Arrival of your new High Commissioner to the United Kingdom

### Before arrival

Please let the Protocol VIP Arrivals & Departure team know, as early as possible, the arrival date for your new Head of Mission, even if initially the date is provisional. See [Annex A](#) for contact details. Please also inform the Agreement and Credentials – Diplomatic Missions Team.

### Arrivals

For your Head of Mission's first arrival they have the option to use a VIP Suite when arriving on a commercial flight to Heathrow Airport at no cost to your Mission (depending on availability). The booking must be made by the FCDO Protocol VIP Arrivals & Departures Team.

In order for the VIP Arrivals & Departures team to make a VIP suite booking, you will need to provide the following information, along with a completed [advanced passenger information \(API\) form](#), and send to [VIParrivals.departures@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:VIParrivals.departures@fcdo.gov.uk), **no later than 7 working days before arrival**.

Please include a copy of the Head of Mission's CV / Biography.

1. Name of VIP:
2. Airport/ Terminal:
3. Total number of passengers (including Head of Mission):
4. Date:
5. Time:
6. Flight Number:
7. Mission Greeters & Mobile Numbers (2 maximum):  
*\*Please provide confirmation if they have operational airside IDs*
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8. The details of the Drivers and Vehicles as per the table below:

Driver Name	Driver Number	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Colour	Vehicle Registration

If your Head of Mission is arriving on a private flight, regardless of airport, the VIP suite will be included in the handling fees you pay to the UK flight handler. The VIP Arrivals & Departures Team should be made aware of all details relating to the private flight arrival, including receiving a copy of the API form.

As of 18 Oct 2023

We can also arrange for a Special Representative of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs to welcome your Head of Mission at the VIP Suite (dependent on their availability).

**Representatives are only provided at your request, and when a VIP Suite is used.** So please do confirm when requesting the VIP Suite or notifying of private arrival if you wish to have an FCDO Special Representative present.

**Please note:**

- It is with regret we are unable to provide a complimentary VIP suite for your Head of Mission's arrival at other airports / ports.
- We will only be able to arrange for a Special Representative of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to welcome your Head of Mission, if the VIP Suite at Gatwick or Heathrow is used.
- Health Measures may apply at UK airports / VIP Suites.

**Photographs**

Please provide electronic colour photographs of both your High Commissioner-designate and spouse to the Agreement and Credentials – Diplomatic Missions Team (see [Annex A](#) for contact details). It is important to send these photos as we use them for reference in the Director/Vice-Marshall's Office as well as for other administrative requirements.

These photographs are in addition to the passport-size photographs required for the issue of a diplomatic identity card after arrival.

**After Arrival**

**Letter to the Secretary of State**

As soon as possible after arrival your High Commissioner-designate should write formally to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs announcing their arrival. The letter should be signed personally by your new High Commissioner - for suggested text see [Annex B](#). The letter is presented to the Vice-Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps (FCDO Director of Protocol).

**Call on the Vice-Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps**

Your High Commissioner-designate's first official call should be with the Vice-Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps, Ms Victoria Busby OBE. Please contact Ms Busby's office to arrange a convenient time. At this meeting the letter to the Secretary of State is normally presented, along with working copies of credentials. These are the Letter of Credence for the High Commissioner-designate and the Letter of Recall of their predecessor. On presentation of working copies, the Vice-Marshall will confirm that the new High Commissioner has formally assumed the role and is able to carry out their functions fully.

The FCDO will inform the Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps that your new High Commissioner has called on the Vice-Marshall and presented working copies of credentials.

**Precedence**

Your new High Commissioner's precedence is usually the date of arrival in the UK, presuming prompt presentation of working copies of credentials to the Vice-Marshall.

## **Calls on FCDO senior officials**

The FCDO geographical desk officer will either consult your High Commissioner after arrival, or with the High Commission in advance, to arrange courtesy calls within the FCDO. These calls are not intended for the transaction of business. Subsequent calls should be arranged directly by the High Commission. It is not necessary for High Commissioners to make courtesy calls on Ministers around Whitehall.

## **Presentation of Credentials**

The Marshal will then arrange an Audience of His Majesty The King for your High Commissioner to present their credentials – as soon as is feasibly possible. Before the ceremony the Marshal will arrange for a briefing for your High Commissioner to go through the procedures and expectations in advance.

After the ceremony your High Commissioner may choose to host a Vin d'Honneur, although this is optional. We will provide guidance on those who may be invited to the Vin d'Honneur.

Your High Commissioner will receive a complimentary photograph of the credentials ceremony from the Marshal's office. Any additional copies may be obtained by contacting PA News Centre, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1AE, tel no. 020 7963 7000.

It is important to note that, before the presentation of credentials to The King, your High Commissioner is welcome to attend any functions, including attendance at Royal occasions following their presentation of working copies to the Vice Marshal.

## **Administration**

Form 1 (Notification of Arrival) and Form 2 (application for a diplomatic identity card) should be signed by the new High Commissioner. It is important that the High Commissioner's name appears as he/she wishes to be known during his/her term in London. Following completion of these forms the relevant British authorities are informed of the consequent entitlement to privileges and immunities. Further guidance can be found on the Protocol Missions website <https://protocol.fcdo.gov.uk> (password is 'Diplomatic2012').

**Annex A**

**Agreement and Credentials – Diplomatic Missions Team**

[ProtocolDMI@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:ProtocolDMI@fcdo.gov.uk)

**Director of Protocol and Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps**

Office of Ms Victoria Busby OBE, Director of Protocol and Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps

020 7008 0989

[Jonathan.Greensted@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Greensted@fcdo.gov.uk)

**Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps' Office**

Georgina Harford

Assistant to the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps

020 7024 5591

[Georgina.Harford@royal.uk](mailto:Georgina.Harford@royal.uk)

**Protocol VIP Arrivals & Departures Team**

[VIParrivals.departures@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:VIParrivals.departures@fcdo.gov.uk)

**Annex B**

**SUGGESTED TEXT OF LETTER TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY FROM A NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER**

[Address and Date]

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to inform you of my arrival in London on ..... in order to take up my duties as High Commissioner for..... to the Court of Saint James's.

It would be appreciated if, in due course, arrangements could be made to have an Audience of His Majesty The King for the presentation of my credentials, the working copies of which I shall deliver/have already been sent to your department.

With the assurance of my highest consideration I have the honour to be, Sir

[usual signature of High Commissioner]

[typed name of High Commissioner exactly as he/she wishes it to be used during his/her stay in London]

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH