

Q&A

Why are the Annexes only being published now?

The annexes could not be published until the UK Government had completed its own parliamentary processes, including the laying of a Written Ministerial Statement before Parliament.

What is the purpose of Annex A?

Annex A extends and updates the existing MoU until April 2028 and sets out the additional funding, preparedness arrangements and support available to St Helena.

<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/documents/biot-mou-annex-a/>

What is the purpose of Annex B?

Annex B establishes a secure data-sharing framework that allows appropriate health and security screening to take place before any transfer could occur. It includes strict safeguards to protect personal information.

<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/documents/biot-mou-annex-b/>

Has the agreement changed from the original MoU?

Yes. The extension strengthens several areas, including funding, preparedness, health support, immigration capability, data protection arrangements and the detailed support that would be available if migrants were ever transferred to St Helena.

What funding has been secured?

The extension provides:

- £8 million development funding.
- Up to £800,000 preparedness funding.
- £250,000 unrestricted ex-gratia funding.

What will the £8 million be used for?

The funding is intended to support priorities including education improvements, health service investment, telecommunications infrastructure and renewable energy development.

Does the agreement commit the UK Government to uprating UK pensions on St Helena?

No. The extension records that UK Government policy has not changed on pensions uprating for those receiving UK pension and does not make a commitment in this area.

What are the other benefits?

In addition to the financial support, the Agreement also opens the potential for wider opportunities that could bring significant benefits to St Helena, subject to further review and decisions by the UK Government.

These include a review of the Overseas Territories healthcare referral arrangements with specific consideration of St Helena's request for improved mental health pathways, exploration of additional training and upskilling opportunities for staff involved in mental health services, discussions on extending certain privileges available to Overseas Territories, and UK Government support in raising pharmaceutical supply issues through diplomatic channels.

While these measures are not guaranteed outcomes, they have the potential to improve access to specialist healthcare, strengthen mental health services, reduce costs associated with overseas treatment, improve support available through St Helena's UK presence, and assist in addressing some of the challenges associated with pharmaceutical access and supply.

Why is there a commitment to introduce a Data Protection Ordinance?

The proposed Ordinance will strengthen St Helena's legal framework for protecting personal information and support the secure handling of personal data across SHG departments, as well as the private and third sectors, noting that the development of legislation is already a priority for SHG. The Data Protection Policy was approved in October 2024 following public consultation. It also supports the operation of the data-sharing safeguards set out in Annex B.

Would St Helena have to pay for migrants arriving under the arrangements?

The agreement is based on the principle that St Helena should not bear an unreasonable financial burden. The extension provides for additional UK Government funding to support healthcare, social care, education, policing, legal aid, interpretation and other services if migrant arrivals were ever to occur.

Does this agreement mean that migrants arriving under these arrangements will have more access to services and benefits than islanders?

No. The Agreement does not provide migrants with greater access to services or benefits than St Helenians. The arrangements are designed to ensure that any migrants transferred to St Helena have their basic needs met in accordance with international obligations, while ensuring that the costs of doing so do not fall on St Helena taxpayers or reduce services available to the local population.

Does the extension mean migrants will definitely come to St Helena?

No. The extension maintains preparedness arrangements should they ever be required. It does not guarantee that any migrants will be transferred to St Helena.

Why was the agreement extended?

The extension reflects delays to the ratification of the UK–Mauritius treaty concerning the Chagos Archipelago. The extension maintains existing arrangements until April 2028 while providing additional safeguards, funding and support for St Helena.