

Over three-quarters of British businesses have no plans to relocate from Singapore; the community calls for travel restrictions between the UK and Singapore to be re-evaluated

September 23, 2020: Organisations in the British business community in Singapore are calling upon Singapore and UK Government officials to review ongoing Covid travel restrictions, and welcome both the UK's recent addition of Singapore to the quarantine exemption list and yesterday's announcement from the Singapore Government of upcoming rule changes.

In the latest poll results from British Chamber of Commerce Singapore members, which opened for feedback earlier this month, **79% of businesses polled confirmed that they are not considering relocating any part of their business**. This result underlines the resilience of the business community as they look to manage their P&L, cashflow and people throughout the pandemic, with the support of initiatives created by local Government.

To avoid significant strategic changes becoming necessary, 72% of all businesses voiced the need for restrictions to be softened in both directions within the next year. 75% of members asked that combined costs for quarantine and testing be capped at less than SG\$1,000 per traveller, with almost all members accepting of a quarantine period in either country of up to a week, with a preference of less than 4 days.

Almost three-quarters of respondents are waiting on practical options for short term business travel to the UK to resume, though a quarter of these will not travel until it becomes a viable option on a mass scale. **Appetite for a return to business travel between the two countries remains strong, with 73% planning to travel for short term business in the future and almost a third in total expecting to do so at least once a quarter.** The poll also confirmed that Singapore continues to remain the transit hub of choice for members.

Businesses have been directly impacted by travel restrictions between the two countries, an issue seen around the globe between major business destinations in recent months. **Almost half of all businesses polled confirmed the travel restrictions had caused significant impacts to their pipeline of new business development and strategic plans for this year.**

The primary concern for around three-quarters of businesses is the period of quarantine required in either country, with similar numbers concerned over the lack of clarity for work pass re-entry approvals in Singapore at the point of travel, and the nature of short-notice rule changes which may become necessary for either country.

Prior to Covid, 83% of members required regular business travel between the UK and Singapore, with almost half travelling at least once per quarter. Just under half of respondents required transit to APAC countries via Singapore.

Executive Director of the Chamber, David Kelly, commented on the results from the poll:

"The response from our members is clear – Singapore remains their business location of choice, and there is an acceptance that quarantine, testing and some costs are necessary factors to limit introducing imported Covid cases into any country. However, a return to business travel is important if the business community is to recover to its full potential, and we support the call from our members for officials to negotiate a safe way for mobility to resume. We also welcome yesterday's announcements from the Singapore Government to adapt new flexible working rules at the workplace and allow essential business travel through a pilot scheme. We recognise the concern of a second wave of Covid cases and the additional measures which Governments must take to protect people, yet this must be balanced with the wider recovery of each country. The British business community in Singapore continues to make a significant impact in job creation, upskilling and the economy. The British Chamber of Commerce in Singapore will proceed to

support members and the local business community in their efforts to negotiate a path through this pandemic and provide a host of resources through our information channel at covid.britcham.org.sg and our activities. We applaud the various Government agencies for their efforts to keep people safe and stimulate the economy, and will continue to work alongside them and keep the channels of dialogue open with the business community.”

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About the British Chamber of Commerce

The British Chamber is an independent membership organisation with almost 4,000 members committed to strengthening the ties between the UK and Singapore. We have done so since 1954. Our goal is to deliver member value through the services we offer, that all work towards supporting our members in achieving their business objectives and aligning with our mission of Building Networks, Connecting Businesses and Creating Opportunities. Whether a company is just starting research into ASEAN by scoping the market opportunities in Singapore, have established their business and seeking growth, building connections to the UK Government, or looking for brand exposure and employee development activities, the Chamber is available to support their needs at every stage of the journey. With a full calendar of activities throughout the year including events, publications and opportunities to collaborate with our members, the Chamber team is available to help as a point of resource, introductions, networking, learning and profile-raising. Ultimately, our entire network benefits from our leading position as a strong and credible voice for our members and British businesses in Singapore and beyond. For further information visit <http://www.britcham.org.sg>.

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