

MAKING YOUR OWN WAY HOME Q&A: 2025-2026

To be read with the Own Way Home Policy

General:

At the end of your season, BAS will move you from Antarctica to a Gateway (normally Punta Arenas, Falkland Islands (FI) or Cape Town) and will also make arrangements for you to head North directly to the UK. However, you do have the option of making your own way home from a Gateway.

The following gives some practical advice and guidance for staff on making your own travel arrangements when you have finished working in Antarctica.

This is all to be read alongside the Own Way Home policy document and Own Way Home agreement, which you must sign and return to the Polar Operations Support Team (POST) should you wish to make your own way home. The policy document contains important information and stipulations.

Note you must think about any visas or other entry requirements for countries you plan to travel from/to, BAS will not provide any assistance with this

Q1. I am thinking of making my own way home. Will BAS give me any financial help?

RETURN TICKETS

This season BAS will book return tickets wherever possible. If your ticket DOES cover return travel, then you will be able to change the dates or routing of travel to suit your plans (*details in Q3 and Q4*). Please note that you will be responsible for funding any difference between the cost of the ticket provided by BAS and the actual cost of your return; you will not be entitled to further financial assistance from BAS.

SINGLE TICKETS - These are issued for operational reasons only or to Wintering staff.

If you were NOT given a return ticket and wish to make your own arrangements for your return journey, you will be entitled to a fixed rate reimbursement from your outbound Gateway. Rates for 2024/25 season are:

Punta Arenas to UK	£810
Falkland Islands (FI) to UK	£803
Montevideo to UK	£505
Cape Town	£438
Frederikshavn to UK	£91

OTHER GATEWAYS

Please note: If you leave Antarctica by a different Gateway, you can also make your own arrangements to travel home. Rates for other routes will be confirmed on application to the Polar Operations Support Team.

Please remember to request this reimbursement by email when you contact the Polar Operations Support Team. This will be paid into your BAS Personal Account (or your bank account if you request it) normally after your journey has begun and once you have signed the finance form so please be aware that the money will not normally be available when you pay for your travel arrangements.

Q2. When do I have to decide if I want to make my own way home and who do I inform?

You must inform the Polar Operations Support Team a minimum of **SIX WEEKS before your scheduled Northbound travel date** if you wish to make your own way home.

We will then ask you to sign the own way home agreement so that your ticket can be released or so that we can change your travel requirements on SOUTH and don't book you a Northbound ticket

Things to Consider before confirming

- Check that you have sufficient funds to cover costs of travel, accommodation, etc. You are advised that if possible, you should arrange to carry travellers' cheques or credit/debit cards rather than cash when making your way through South America/South Africa.
- Investigate the route you intend to take to confirm rates, insurance and flexibility of travel.
- Please ensure you are well prepared. The POST will not provide support beyond one nights accommodation on arrival to your gateway location. Travel on call will not provide you with help in the result of an incident.
- If you are departing the Falklands Islands you will be responsible for paying the embarkation tax, this is £32, increasing to £40 from 1st January 2026

Q3 – How can I change my return ticket from Punta Arenas or the Falkland Islands? LATAM tickets only

We book all our commercial tickets to Punta Arenas and occasionally onward to the Falkland Islands through a travel agent in the Falkland Islands called IT&T. Once you have signed the own way home agreement we can release your ticket and you can make any changes you require.

If you are routed out through the Falkland Islands and are planning on making your own way home via South America you will need to cover the cost of the air bridge from FI to Punta Arenas as part of your flight cost.

To make a change to your LATAM ticket please contact IT&T directly on

E-mail: db.itt@horizon.co.fk

Tel: +500-22041

Fax: +500-22042

www.falklandislands.travel

Please read the below as there are some restrictions to changing your ticket:

- Tickets are issued with LATAM airlines and can only be amended using the same airline or on routes which offer LATAM codeshare flights.
- The fare is changeable for a penalty. Cost for the penalty will depend on the availability and rate of exchange on the new chosen dates. Alterations to the existing route can increase the cost of the change fee significantly.
- If you are travelling on the northbound leg of a round trip fare LON-PUQ-LON, you are more restricted to changes based on the existing origin and destination.
- The fare is changeable for a penalty. Cost for the penalty will depend on the availability and rate of exchange on the new chosen dates. Alterations to the existing route can increase the cost of the change fee significantly.

- If you are travelling on the northbound leg of a round trip fare LON-PUQ-LON, you are more restricted to changes based on the existing origin and destination.
- Partially used fares are non-refundable.
- Fares have to be used in chronological order, if you miss or skip a flight, you will be classed as a no-show and the remaining flights in your reservation will automatically be cancelled.
- ITT's usual response time is 24-48hrs but may be longer during peak periods.

IMPORTANT - You must not try and make changes to your ticket online or via the LATAM app, IT&T manage our flight bookings and all amendments must be made through them until you have made the first initial change.

Q4 – How can I change my return ticket from Cape Town?

We book our flights to Cape Town using the UKRI booking system Clarity. If you decide to make your own way home you must contact the Polar Operations Support Team no later than **6 weeks ahead of your Northbound journey** and we can help you through the process of changing your ticket. Essentially we will pay for the change and then claim the money back from the traveler.

IMPORTANT - You must not try and make changes to your ticket online or via the airline app, Clarity manage our flight bookings and all amendments must be made through them until you have made the first initial change.

Q5. On completion of my contract in Antarctica, I want to travel independently before I go home, but I'm worried about arriving at the Gateway with no accommodation. What should I do and can you help?

You will be accommodated by BAS from arrival at your Gateway for one night.

If your arrival in to your Gateway is brought forward for operational reasons then we will accommodate you for those additional nights up to and including the one night of your planned arrival.

The accommodation provided at your Gateway will be at BAS' discretion and may be on board a BAS ship. If you choose to use other accommodation from the time of your arrival at the Gateway, please note that you will be responsible for the cost of that accommodation and will need to organise this yourself.

Q6. I thought I was going to travel independently, but now I've changed my mind and want to go straight back to the UK. What can you do to help?

BAS will not compensate you if you change your mind about travelling independently, so you should take out travel insurance against cancellation.

If your travel arrangements alter as a result of a change to your contract with BAS, please contact Human Resources to discuss the situation.

Q7. My passage from Antarctica was delayed, which means I can't meet my intended independent travel plans. What is the position?

When changing the return portion of a ticket issued by BAS or booking your ticket you are strongly advised to ensure that all travel is **fully flexible** and that you take out insurance to cover cancellation and changes. BAS has no responsibility for compensating you if a delay in

your passage from Antarctica affects your independent travel plans.

If, as a result of delays in return from Antarctica, you have to cancel your independent travel, you can ask the Polar Operations Support Team to book you a flight to the UK on the most direct route. BAS will cover the cost of the direct flight to UK but has no responsibility for compensating you for the cancellation of your independent travel plans.

Q8. I have equipment to transport home from Antarctica and wish to take it on my flight. Will you pay for it? Is there an alternative?

BAS will not pay for personal equipment to be transported from Antarctica by air.

You will normally be expected to consign it to a BAS ship. It must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation for transportation by sea to UK.

If your equipment is work-related, then contact your line manager who may agree to pay airfreight charges. You or your line manager will be required to contact Supply Chain Logistics for details on how to consign the cargo, contact details can be provided by the Station Leader. If your line manager does not agree to fund the airfreight, then it must be consigned to the ship.

Please note that you will be required to collect sea freight from BAS Cambridge from mid-late July onwards. If you will not be back in UK to collect it, you must make arrangements for someone else to do so for you. You will be required to inform Supply Chain Logistics of that person's details so that he/she can be contacted on your behalf.

Q9. Why does the amount of cash reimbursed to those making their own way home vary depending on where you travel from?

As far as possible, flexible return tickets are issued, so only those who were issued with a single ticket will be entitled to a reimbursement for the return journey.

Reimbursement amounts are published in advance of the season to which they apply. This allows you to assess well in advance whether you can afford to travel independently.

The MoD rates for seats on flights from the Falklands to the UK are normally set at the beginning of the financial year. This is the amount used as the reimbursement figure if you choose to make your own way home from the Falklands.

The cash equivalents from other Gateways; Punta Arenas and Cape Town, are calculated by averaging the costs of 3 flights.

Q10. My passport runs out shortly after completion of my visit to Antarctica. Does this prevent me from travelling? Can BAS help me get it renewed?

If your passport runs out shortly after completion of your visit to Antarctica you will not be able to go travelling.

You will need to have a passport with validity of at least 6 months from the date you are due to **ARRIVE BACK** in UK, including any independent travel time (so if you are leaving Station on 1 April and going travelling until 1 June, then your passport must be valid until at least 1 December).

It is not possible to renew a full passport outside the country of origin of the passport (eg: a UK full passport can only be renewed in UK). It is sometimes possible to obtain a temporary passport in FI for UK citizens but this will only be valid on a flight directly to the UK on an MOD flight. It will not be valid for travel elsewhere.

Do not send your passport from Antarctica to BAS or to your home for renewal; it is illegal to attempt to renew a passport whilst you are out of the country.

To cover any possible contract extensions that may happen once you are in the Antarctic and avoid problems with Immigration in other countries, you should ensure that when you travel **TO** Antarctica your passport is at least:

- **Winterers:** Valid for 3 years before its expiry date.
- **Summer Staff:** Valid for 6 months from the date you are due to start your return journey.

BAS Contacts for Travel in 2024-2025

Oli Darler: daroli92@bas.ac.uk

Hana Leithgoe and Emma Harrison basopssupport@bas.ac.uk

01223 221458

Safe travels

Hana and Emma

Polar Operations Support Team

