

Travelling abroad

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See [APP on international investigation](#) for tools and instruments to support first responders and investigators when conducting inquiries or investigations that involve foreign nationals or information held overseas.

This module provides MOSOVO (management of sexual offenders and violent offenders) officers with guidance for managing offenders who travel, live or work abroad and have been repatriated.

Working within the framework of human rights, it is important to balance the right to a private life with the right of the public to be protected and kept safe from harm. The process for managing offenders who wish to travel provides robust, proportionate measures to address both.

Introduction

Registered offenders are required to notify the police of all foreign travel, as determined by the offender's notification requirements.

MOSOVO officers and staff should update ViSOR records with foreign travel notification and other relevant information without delay in line with national Home Office [ViSOR Standards](#).

If a registered offender intends to travel to more than one country, the police should be notified of the point of arrival in each country, if it is known. All such information should be included in the Foreign Travel Attachment of the offender's ViSOR record.

See Notification of offender travel for further details.

Requests

MOSOVO officers may wish to make requests for information about a nominal travelling abroad, or flag the fact that a nominal is travelling to other countries.

Under Schedule 11 2(a) of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, listed provisions do not apply for personal data processed for the prevention and detection of crime.

In line with section 82 of DPA 2018, officers can request that Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) does one or all of the following:

- provide detail from the most recent passport or all passports, or provide copies of records including a photo
- exhibit a passport record and provide a witness statement
- create an entry on the HMPO watch list and notify police of any subsequent contact

ACRO ViSOR unit

The ViSOR unit in the ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) intelligence unit monitors UK nationals convicted overseas who, if they were convicted in the UK, would be subject to the Notification Requirements of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2003, have a record created on ViSOR, and potentially be the subject of sex offender orders or other restrictions. Direct management is not possible as the offender is absent from the UK, but if the offender does return to the UK, the ACRO ViSOR unit can notify local MOSOVO teams for ongoing effective management.

UK Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records

The ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) offers a number of services to police officers and staff when investigating foreign nationals.

HM Passport Office watch list/browse

The HM Passport Office (HMPO) watch list, also known as the 'stop list' or 'browse', is a flagging service. Whenever an offender whom HMPO has been made aware of makes any contact with HMPO (for example, for a new passport application or any change of personal details), HMPO notify the police.

If there is reason to delay issuing the passport, HMPO can assist with this. Alternatively, if the applicant is wanted for an offence and they are overseas, HMPO can be requested to issue them with a one-way temporary travel document back to the UK instead.

By creating an entry on the HMPO watch list, any subsequent applications made in the UK or overseas (through the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)) will be referred to the operational intelligence unit, which then liaises with the relevant force. This is particularly useful in pre-empting a change of name (by deed poll) by suspects and offenders. The police are notified by the Home Office Watchlist and Information Control Unit (WICU) when the offenders return to the UK if a passport has been used. This may indicate a breach of notification requirements which must be robustly dealt with.

If an individual has surrendered a passport to a court or police force, and falsely declares it to be lost or stolen to HMPO, the document is added to the lost or stolen passport data extract sent to the UKBF (for inclusion on Home Office Warnings Index) and INTERPOL via the National Crime Agency (NCA).

NCA Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre Command Overseas Tracker Team

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command Overseas Tracker Team proactively investigates UK nationals suspected of travelling overseas to sexually offend against children. The focus of the team is on individuals who have never been convicted or have never come to the attention of UK law enforcement, but who are suspected of offending against children overseas. It also focuses on offenders with convictions predating the introduction ViSOR (2005). This means that the team concentrates its efforts on individuals who are not subject to the requirements of the SOA 2003 and may otherwise remain undetected.

The team disseminates timely and accurate intelligence on suspected offenders to local and international law enforcement agencies, seeking authority to disclose to other non-governmental agencies if it is considered necessary and proportionate to the investigation.

The Overseas Tracker Team works closely with the UK police service to provide consultancy on cases and assist investigations with knowledge about travelling sex offenders. The team provides intelligence which can be used as grounds for imposing civil preventative orders on travelling child sex offenders on their return to the UK.

The team records data on UK nationals who are arrested or convicted overseas, and works with the United Kingdom Central Authority for the Exchange of Criminal Records and police forces to ensure

that these individuals are made the subject of a notification on their return to the UK.

The team also provides advice to UK police forces to support good working practices with foreign law enforcement.

Referrals

The Overseas Tracker Team accepts referrals on the following criteria:

- the welfare of a child or children overseas, or incidents which indicate a child may be or is being sexually abused by a UK national overseas
- a UK national is suspected of committing sexual offences against children overseas
- a UK national is suspected of offering the sexual services of a child while abroad
- an organisation is suspected of being involved in the sexual exploitation of children overseas by UK nationals

For further information see:

- [CEOP](#)
- trackerteam@nca.pnn.police.uk
- trackerteaminternational@nca.pnn.police.uk

UK Border Force

UK Border Force (UKBF) is under the direct control of the [Home Office](#) and is divided into two organisations – the Immigration and Visa Service and the Immigration Law Enforcement Organisation.

E-borders programme

E-borders is a UKBF-owned system operated in partnership with the police and other agencies.

The system screens travellers against a number of watch lists such as the Police National Computer (PNC), which includes ViSOR markers, to identify those of current interest to the police, the UKBF and others. If a ViSOR subject is identified, their details are passed to the National Border Targeting Centre (NBTC). They will confirm whether the traveller is a ViSOR subject and send an alert to the port if intervention is required, or progress the matter via the ViSOR single point

of contact (SPoC) in the force area.

HM Revenue and Customs

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) can pursue customs investigations in certain circumstances where the police are unable to progress the case. HMRC can also support the police in targeting suspected offenders passing through customs controls.

HMRC will inform the police of any change to the details required to be notified under the SOA, and of any person passing through customs who is identified as being subject to notification requirements but who has failed to meet them.

As well as advising HMRC of any investigations relating to importing child abuse images, police forces should have policies in place to advise the NCA of target offenders who may have a national or international dimension to their offending.

Forces should also advise HMRC of day-to-day operational targets who are suspected of travelling abroad or who have contacts with child abusers resident abroad.

INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization)

The fundamental basics of intelligence exchange are governed by INTERPOL's rules on processing data – see [INTERPOL Rules on the Processing of Data](#), chapter 2.

See [APP on international investigations](#) for more information on INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization).

NCB Manchester is responsible for the international exchange of intelligence to and from the UK. This includes the notification of managed offender travel and the publication of INTERPOL circulations (notices and diffusions) on behalf of UK law enforcement.

Notification of offender travel

To be read in consultation with the NPCC/NCA INTERPOL enquiries and circulations for ViSOR nominals guidance, distributed to all MOSOVO Units and force International/Intelligence contact

points.

When a subject reports international travel, a targeted notification via INTERPOL to the country/countries being visited should be completed for all very high and high risk managed offenders in advance of travel. Offender managers are to consider on a case by case basis whether notification of international travel is appropriate for offenders managed as medium or low risk with considerations such as destination country, likelihood for onward travel, and previous travel patterns.

This is requested via completion of an INTERPOL enquiry form, and may require a risk assessment depending on the destination countries being visited. Offender managers are advised to contact their International/Intelligence contact point for further details.

Circulations (notices and diffusions)

To be read in consultation with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)/National Crime Agency (NCA) INTERPOL Enquiries and circulations for ViSOR nominals guidance, distributed to all MOSOVO units and force international/intelligence contact points.

- [See information on INTERPOL notices and diffusions in the APP on international investigations](#)

Offender managers can use INTERPOL circulations to help warn other countries of the threat posed by a subject, or to locate or obtain further information about a subject. Any information shared on circulations is replicated onto INTERPOL's nominal database and made available to law enforcement officers in recipient countries.

INTERPOL notices/diffusions are circulated for five years, can be extended at the end of the circulation period, should be updated while active and can be cancelled at any time.

Any one-off notifications of offender travel is reported through an INTERPOL enquiry form. See Notification of offender travel for further details.

For further information, see:

- [INTERPOL's website](#)
- [APP on international investigations](#)

Risk assessments

An INTERPOL risk assessment must be provided for any of the following.

- Notifications of offender travel outside of the EU/EEA or 5Eyes countries.
- INTERPOL notices.
- INTERPOL diffusions targeted to any countries outside the EU/EEA.

All INTERPOL risk assessments must be authorised by an officer of inspector rank or above.

Copies of INTERPOL enquiry, notice, diffusion and risk assessment forms are routinely made available on police forces' intranet sites, internal systems or can be requested from force international liaison officers.

Return of deported sex offenders

Where no direct return flights to the UK exist, consideration should be given to:

- sharing information with the transit country concerned via INTERPOL
- gaining help from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in the country holding the offender and in the transit country to gain the cooperation of the authorities in the transit country
- obtaining assistance of either NCA or airline liaison officers, chief immigration officers, or UKBF staff deployed abroad
- encouraging the foreign country's authorities to stamp the offender's passport indicating deportation – this should help the transit country deny entry
- preparing and agreeing press statements from the FCDO and all UK law enforcement agencies party to the deportation

This guidance applies if the officers from a UK police force go to the foreign country and accompany the offender back to the UK. It also applies if officers are unable to accompany the offender back to the UK and the foreign country's own law enforcement agency offers to do so.

- [See further information on extraditions to and from the UK in the APP on international investigations](#)

In cases of child sexual abuse abroad, see APP on [child abuse](#). This guidance also provides information on safeguarding children identified as victims.

Further media issues that should be considered include:

- the foreign country's authorities may wish to promote widespread media coverage at the point of deportation, which may antagonise the offender and not assist UK law enforcement to achieve a smooth departure
- the possibility of brokering a news embargo
- media coverage and its potential deterrent impact
- the impact of media coverage on the offender's past victims and the offender's immediate family

Offences outside the United Kingdom (Section 72 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003)

Under section 72 of the SOA 2003 it is an offence for a UK national to commit an act outside the UK, against a child, which would constitute a relevant sexual offence if committed in England and Wales.

The exact description of the offence does not have to be the same in both the UK and the foreign country in which the offence was committed. For example, the offence of rape could apply to a UK national who raped a child in another country although that offence was described differently under the law in that country.

Section 72(1) provides that even if a UK national commits an act outside of the UK which does not constitute an offence in that country but does constitute a sexual offence in England and Wales, the UK national is guilty in England and Wales of that offence.

Further assistance and guidance regarding the provisions of section 72 can be sought through local legal departments or the NCA.

Tags

Sexual and violent offenders