



## Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Statement of Understanding

- 1. In cases involving British nationals abroad where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Consular Assistance Department are seeking support from Adult Social Services in the UK, to secure a planned return to the UK in cases involving vulnerable adults. The FCO considers that people are vulnerable when they cannot protect themselves from significant physical or emotional harm, or be protected by others. The FCO may assess someone to be vulnerable because of mental health concerns, physical health concerns, destitution, homelessness, dementia, forced marriage, modern slavery etc.**

The FCO Consular Assistance Department, through its Social Work Advisors, Country Case Teams (CCT) and/or Joint Home Office FCO Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) will be provided with the referral contact details for local authority Adult Social Services departments in the UK. ADASS can provide general advice, including which local authority covers an area and the local authority Adult Social Services will provide either general or case specific contact details as necessary.

When the FCO assesses that a British national is vulnerable, who has been living or travelling abroad and is returning to the UK through their own choice and/or because of deportation, health, forced marriage or other concerns:

- The FCO will make reasonable attempts to support the customer to return to an area of the UK where they have a strong local connection. Therefore a referral will be made to the relevant local authority Adult Social Services team.
  - This will usually be to the area in which the British national was last resident.
  - If the British national is returning to family in the UK and this is to an area that is different from the area where the British national last resided, the referral will be made to the local authority where the family normally reside.
  - If no local connection can be established a referral will be made to the local authority Adult Social Services team linked to the arrival airport.
- The FCO will ensure that the relevant Adult Social Services team receives a referral explaining why the FCO is of the view that the individual is a British national. The referral will also contain all available information setting out why there are concerns for the individual including any assessments and reports in



respect of vulnerability completed by in-country departments (where these services exist). This will support the assessment to be undertaken by local Adult Social Services staff as to whether the individual is eligible and if so, ensure that a suitable plan is put in place.

- Any information shared between the FCO and the local authority will be shared according to the requirements and limitations of the 2018 Data Protection Act and GDPR.

**2. When a local authority's adult social care team has safeguarding and/or welfare concerns for a British national who has travelled or is living abroad:**

All local authority Adult Social Services will be provided with the contact details for the relevant team in the FCO Consular Assistance Department (Global Casework Team, Country Case Team or Forced Marriage Unit). General contact details are as follows:

For vulnerable adult cases contact: [casework@fco.gov.uk](mailto:casework@fco.gov.uk)

For forced marriage cases contact: Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) [fmufco@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco@fco.gov.uk)

These addresses are monitored Monday – Friday during office hours.

For emergency out of hours assistance please telephone 020 7008 1500 and request consular assistance.

- The local authority will refer concerns to the FCO giving as much detail as is available about the individual's circumstances and last known whereabouts.
- The FCO will facilitate, where reasonably possible, the introduction of UK Adult Social Services to the relevant in-country authorities (where these exist). The British Embassy/Consular Officer for the area will, where possible depending on, amongst other things, in-country infrastructure, register their interest to ensure they receive updates on any progress made by the relevant in-country authorities. Where deemed necessary for the protection of the individual, the British Embassy/Consular Officer may arrange the repatriation of the adult back to the UK, and into the care of the Adult Social Services department in the referring authority. The British Embassy/Consular Officer does not have a formal role in the safeguarding of any British national and cannot take the individual into its care, nor escort them to the UK. Where the British national has the mental capacity to make decisions their views and wishes will be central to decision making; this may limit what action the FCO is able to take.
- UK Adult Social Services are responsible for ensuring that their presence and activities in-country fully comply with the host country's laws and regulations. The FCO does not accept any responsibility in respect of those concerned.



### 3. Useful links/key contacts etc.

This agreement may include links to key legislation as well as key contact details and links to online forms or guidance (or other sources of useful information).

- Care Act Statutory guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>  
(specifically annex H 31-34)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>
- Modern Slavery Act 2015:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>
- Ordinary residence guidance (England):  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/252864/OR\\_Guidance\\_2013-10-01\\_Revised\\_with\\_new\\_contact\\_details\\_New\\_DH\\_template.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252864/OR_Guidance_2013-10-01_Revised_with_new_contact_details_New_DH_template.pdf)
- Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted>
- FCO Consular: Support for British nationals abroad: A guide  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide>
- FCO Consular: Mental Health: Travelling Abroad leaflet  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health>
- FCO Consular: Missing Person advice  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-persons>
- FCO Consular advice: other thematic advice  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/helping-british-people-overseas-travelling-and-living-abroad>
- [FCO & Home Office: Forced Marriage guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>