



## Statement of Understanding:

### Planned Returns to the UK in Cases Involving Vulnerable Adults

- i. This statement of understanding updates and replaces an understanding agreed between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) in 2019.
- ii. **This statement of understanding applies in cases involving British nationals abroad where the FCDO Consular Assistance Department are seeking support from adult social care in the UK, to secure a planned return to the UK in cases involving vulnerable adults. The FCDO considers that people are vulnerable when they cannot protect themselves from significant physical or emotional harm or be protected by others. The FCDO may assess someone to be vulnerable because of mental health concerns, physical health concerns, destitution, homelessness, dementia, forced marriage, modern slavery etc.**
- iii. The FCDO Consular Assistance Department, through its Social Work Advisors, Country Case Teams (CCT) and/or Joint Home Office FCDO 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's adult social care service will provide either general or case specific contact details as necessary.
- iv. When the FCDO 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 FCDO will:
  - Make reasonable attempts to support the person to return to an area of the UK where they have a local connection. Where appropriate, and with the consent of the person concerned, a referral will be made by the FCDO to local authority adult social care responsible for that area.
  - If the British national is returning to reside with family or friend/s in the UK; and this is to an area that differs from the area where the British national last resided; and the circumstances still necessitate a referral to adult social care; the referral will be made to the local authority responsible for the area in which the family / friend/s normally reside.
  - If no local connection can be established, a referral will be made to the local authority adult social care service responsible for the area in which the port of entry is located for initial assessment.
- v. At the time a referral is made, the FCDO will have already confirmed that the individual is a British national. The referral will contain all available, relevant 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 adult social care staff in accordance with the Care Act 2014.

- vi. Any information shared between the FCDO and the local authority will be shared according to the requirements and limitations of the 2018 Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- vi. When a local authority's adult social care department has safeguarding and/or welfare concerns for a British national who has travelled or is living abroad, adult social care will be provided with the contact details for the relevant team in the FCDO 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@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:casework@fcdo.gov.uk)
  - For forced marriage cases contact: Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) [fm@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fcdo.gov.uk)
  - These addresses are monitored Monday – Friday during UK office hours (0900-1700).
  - For emergency out of hours assistance please telephone 020 7008 5000 and request consular assistance.
- vii. The local authority will refer concerns to the FCDO giving as much detail as is available about the individual's circumstances and last known whereabouts.
- viii. The FCDO will facilitate, where reasonably possible, the introduction of UK adult social care to the relevant in-country authorities (where these exist). The British Embassy/Consular Officer for the area will, where possible, register their interest to ensure they receive updates on any progress made by the relevant in-country authorities.
  - Where deemed necessary to support the welfare of a British national, the FCDO may arrange repatriation of the British national to the UK, and into care arranged by the relevant UK Adult Social Care department.
  - The FCDO do 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 FCDO is able to take.