



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Heathrow Travel Care
Crisis Social Work Services

Social Work Across the Globe

How British consulates, and local and global partners work together to support vulnerable British nationals abroad

Wednesday 9 October 2024



Social Work across the Globe – How British consulates, and local and global partners work together to support vulnerable British nationals abroad

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Child Policy Unit (CPU): top tips for working with us

- CPU are an internal advisory unit. We are unable to ‘rescue’ children. We do not engage directly with British nationals abroad
 - You can send court orders and specific child policy questions to us. However, please do not share our details with the public
 - The best way of raising a case is via the relevant British embassy or the FCDO switchboard if UK based (0207 008 5000)
 - It is useful to provide as much information, as soon as possible (accurate names, whether they are a British national and the nationality of all those involved, dates of birth, addresses in the UK and overseas)
- Remember:**
- The FCDO is not a safeguarding authority. We cannot conduct welfare checks of our own but can liaise with the local safeguarding authority in-country
 - The FCDO has no legal jurisdiction in the countries in which we operate. This means we cannot contravene local laws, exit requirements or procedures
 - The FCDO cannot take responsibility for, or custody of children

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Who can we help?

- **British national children** (the FCDO's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) are sometimes able to help non-British national children who are habitually resident in the UK. However, for non-forced marriage and child Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases, they are unable to provide support beyond facilitating safeguarding referrals, and would signpost you to the relevant embassy)
- **Children with an automatic claim to British nationality**, even if they have never held a passport
- **Mixed-nationality families where at least one member of the family unit abroad is British** (or has an automatic claim to British nationality)
- **British national parents**
- **British dual national children** in the country of their other nationality



We can also share information with local authorities about any child of any nationality, if we believe they are suffering or at risk of significant harm

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How can we help?

- Make a record of any concerns in case a family contacts us for assistance
- Try to establish details of the child's situation, family history and the current concerns
- Confirm who has parental responsibility and establish what any court orders regarding the child mean
- Signpost to local or UK support groups, NGOs or charities that might be able to help
- Facilitate making a referral to the local safeguarding authority or make a referral ourselves if necessary.
- Try to put you in direct contact with social services/ police in-country (dependent on how they operate)
- Consider applications for an Emergency Travel Document or consider financial options (these are last resorts and not immediately publicised, and usually involve strict conditions)
- Express our interest and seek updates on active legal proceedings or a police or social services investigation
- Under Section 72 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, should a British National commit a sexual offence while in another country, they can be found guilty of that offence in England and Wales. We can inform authorities in-country of this, and facilitate communication between them and UK authorities, thereby enabling evidence sharing, notices, and cross-border prosecutions



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However, we cannot

- Guarantee the safety of British nationals abroad
- Locate British nationals abroad
- Seek the enforcement of UK court orders beyond the scope of our policy
- Provide financial support for legal or medical fees or living costs abroad
- Assist with visas for non-British nationals
- Provide or recommend mediation services
- Forcibly remove children from their home or carer
- Take children into our care, including at an embassy, Ambassador's residence, other UK government premises, or private accommodation
- Assume responsibility for a child or young person
- Interfere with the processes of another country, including immigration matters (visa, travel bans) or legal proceedings.
- Provide legal advice or act as someone's legal representative
- Assess a child's health or welfare
- Make decisions on behalf of children
- Instruct local authorities on how to respond to safeguarding concerns
- **Take on the role of a local authority where local services are limited or unavailable**



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Other organisations

Interpol: If you have serious concerns about a child's safety / welfare, consider involving Interpol (by contacting your local UK police force). Consider whether port alerts can be sent out to prevent the child leaving the country. Interpol can also ensure a joined-up response with international police units to locate and safeguard the child.



Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB): Where there are no local social services, CFAB may be able to facilitate welfare checks. They usually do so via court order referrals. Their advice line (020 7735 8941) is useful for understanding whether they can be of support in a case. Note, they cannot remove a child from a situation.



International Child Abduction and Contact Unit (ICACU): In cases of International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA), where the UK operates the **1980** Hague convention on IPCA with the country the child has been abducted to, ICACU can advise on the Hague returns process. Where there is a child protection case in a country operating the **1996** Hague convention on child protection, ICACU can facilitate contact between both countries' relevant services. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-child-abduction-and-contact-unit-application-form>

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Prevention is better than cure

- When developing safety plans for vulnerable children and young people, consider whether there are adequate local social services in the country they are planning to visit. If there are not, remember the FCDO is unable to act as a safeguarding authority.
- If you believe a child is at risk of parental child abduction, preventing that child from leaving the country is always better than ensuring their return. In non 1980 Hague countries, there are limited routes for parents to take, and they must engage in local court proceedings. Consider whether 'port alerts' can be put out to prevent the child being taken. You should also contact HMPO who can place tags/alerts on passports. Social services and police should liaise together in these cases.
- If there is a family where there is evidence of domestic abuse, and you believe they are considering going abroad, make clear the risks of doing so. Consider if there are measures you can take to prevent the child being taken abroad while domestic abuse is ongoing (i.e. port alerts). Domestic abuse and family abandonment situations can quickly turn into held against will cases.
- Alert us as soon as you are aware of a domestic abuse situation overseas. In many domestic abuse and held against will situations, we are informed after they have been in country for months, and the child's place of habitual residency is the new country. Issuing ETD's in these instances has a high bar for evidence as we need to ensure we are not facilitating a parental child abduction. This is particularly difficult in countries with no safeguarding authority. Acting swiftly in these cases is essential.

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Family abandonment

Abandoned family cases are where one parent travels with their family to another country for what the family believes to be a temporary visit, but once in the other country, leaves them and strips them of their ability to return home, for example by taking away their passports and / or access to funds.



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Case Study

Background: A father reports that he travelled to USA with his two children (11 & 9 years old) and their mother to visit the mother's family last month. However, the mother is now saying she intends for the family to remain in USA. There is a history of domestic abuse including coercive control, financial abuse and occasional incidences of physical violence.

The father says the mother has never hit the children, but they're unhappy in USA and miss their friends. The father thinks he can access the family's passports and intends to travel to the UK. However, he will need support on arrival as he wouldn't feel safe returning to the family home. He may need financial assistance but is hoping his family will help him out. He says the mother (and her family) cannot know of his plans as they will prevent him from leaving with the children. For now, he is going along with the plan to stay in USA to keep the mother happy.

What assistance can the FCDO provide?

What are the concerns?

What do you think we need to consider?

Is there anyone you think would need to be brought into this case?

What do you think our next steps should be?

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Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Specialist Social Work Advisers (SWAs)



Steve Davenport

SWA Team Leader

Advises on cases involving older adults (65+) and dementia

Chris Heywood

Advises cases involving mental health

Approved mental health professional (AMHP) in the UK



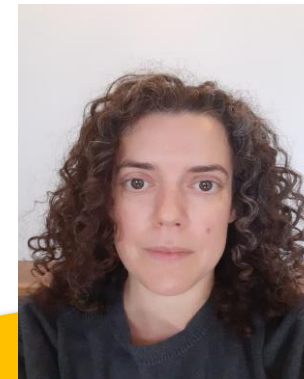
Annika Dann

Advises on cases involving child welfare and safeguarding

Works closely with Child Policy Unit (CPU) and the DSO network

Sarah Erlacher

Advises on cases involving vulnerable adults (under 65), homelessness and destitution

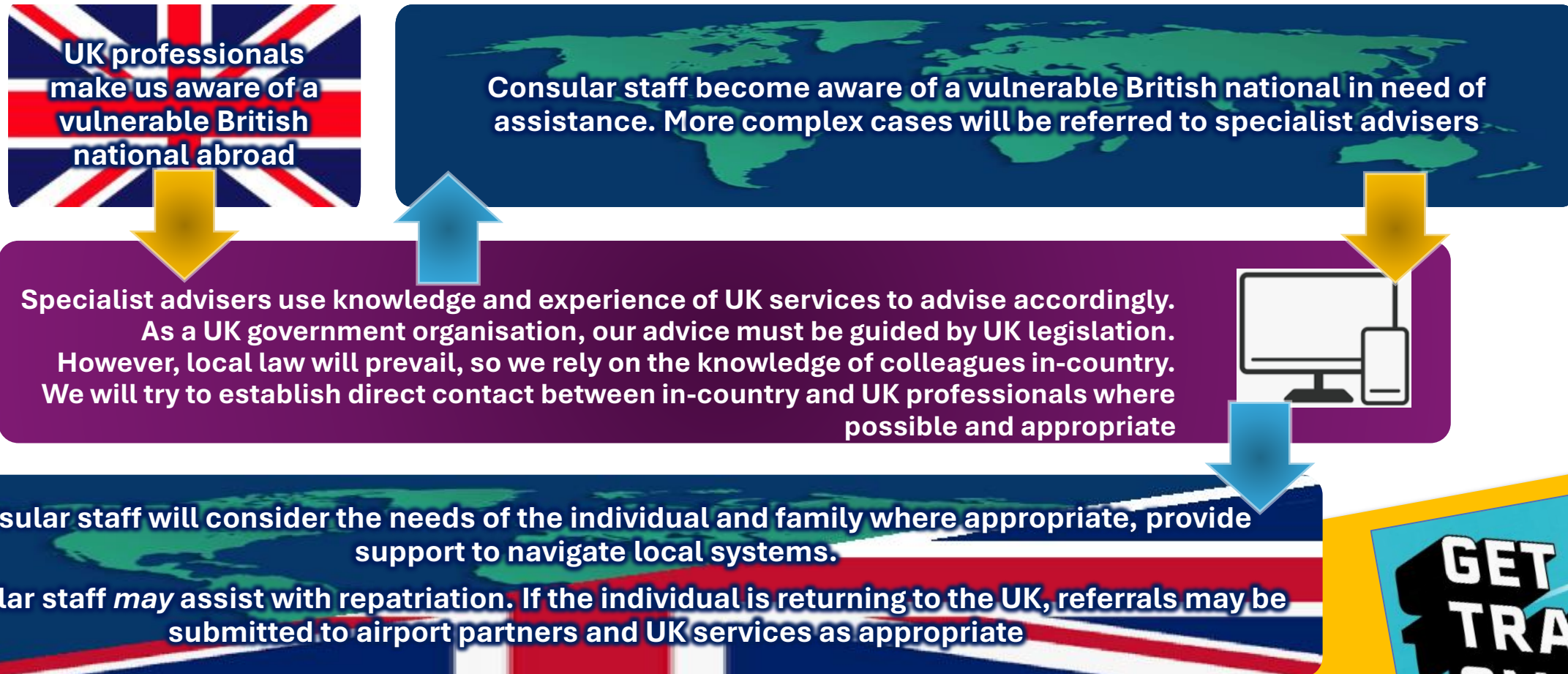


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How work comes our way



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Liaison with UK services

- Most consular cases do not involve UK services
- Referrals made to relevant local authority / NHS service based on:
 - UK address
 - Registered GP
 - Port of entry
- ADASS / FCDO joint statement of understanding available at: <https://www.adass.org.uk/statement-of-understanding-planned-returns-to-the-uk-in-cases-involving-vulnerable-adults/> or search: ADASS FCDO
- How we can help you



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Our purpose

To advise and assist individuals in crisis or distress at Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Travel Care
Crisis Social Work Services



1972



2022

 Unique Service - Only airport-based social work team

 Established 50 years

 Funded by HAL, LB Hillingdon and Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

Strong links to partner agencies such as:

- Local authorities, Mental health services, homelessness services
- Aviation Police, Heathrow security, UK Border Force
- FCDO, embassies and consulates
- Charitable organisations

heathrow_travel_care@heathrow.com

Our team

Heathrow based:

Airport
based
Social
Worker

Airport
based
Social
Worker

Airport
based
Social
Worker

Emergency
Planner

FCDO / Westminster based:

FCDO Social
Work
Adviser:
Mental
Health

FCDO Social
Work
Adviser:
Older
People &
Dementia

FCDO Social
Work Adviser:
Homelessness
& Repatriation

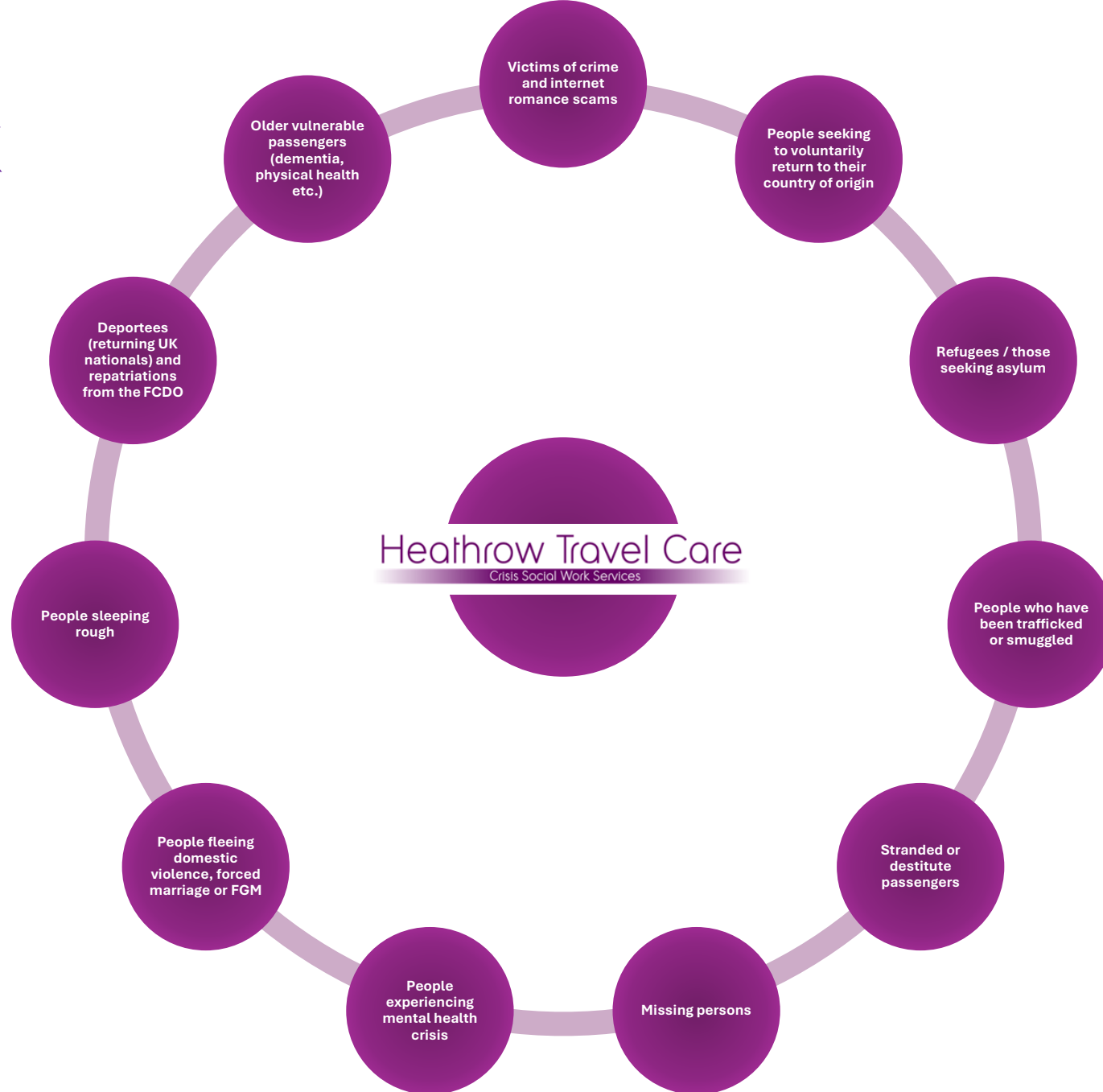
FCDO Social
Work
Adviser:
Child Welfare
&
Safeguarding

Collective Experience: Local authority social work, world travel, additional languages, previous airline & airport work

Main Areas of Work:

- Day-to-day crisis social work
- Advice to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- Emergency response to Heathrow Airport

Our work



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Our partners



Emergency planning and response

- On-call 24/7 to respond to an airport incident
- Part of the lead emergency response team at Heathrow
- Lead agency providing psycho-social first aid and initial humanitarian assistance to survivors, their relatives / friends and airport staff
- We can deploy an appropriately experienced / trained initial response team including 25 volunteers, airport chaplains + Heathrow Travel Care staff

Incident On Airport
Notified by Airport Control - deploy
initial response team to reception
centres within 45 minutes

Incident Abroad
Notified by FCDO - assist with
planning and provide initial
humanitarian assistance on arrival
in the UK

heathrow_travel_care@heathrow.com



You can find us in: Room 00142, North Wing, Terminal 3 Arrivals (Landside)



Heathrow Travel Care

Opening hours:

Mon to Fri: 09.00 - 17.00

Please contact us:

T: +44 (0)208 745 7495

E: Heathrow_travel_care@heathrow.com



Heathrow Travel Care

Independent crisis social work team

We offer advice and assistance to distressed or vulnerable people across the whole airport community

The support we offer includes:

- Mental health
- Homelessness
- Exploitation
- Returnees and deportees
Supported by the Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Office
- Safeguarding
- Children & families
- Victims of crime
- Initial Response Team
Providing psycho-social first aid in the
event of a major incident at Heathrow

Contact us at:

Room 142, North Wing, Terminal 3, Heathrow Airport, Hounslow TW6 1BZ
T: +44 (0)20 8745 7495 E: heathrow_travel_care@heathrow.com
W: www.heathrowtravelcare.co.uk

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