

ENQUIRIES ABROAD / OVERSEAS TRAVEL POLICY

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PROCEDURES & GUIDANCE

CASES INVOLVING ENQUIRIES ABROAD / OVERSEAS TRAVEL

BACKGROUND

1. An increasing number of family cases involve an international element. On occasion these cases require some enquiries to be made outside the jurisdiction of England. Exceptionally, these enquiries may need to be undertaken by the CAFCASS practitioner ('practitioner') personally travelling outside the jurisdiction of England.
2. Practitioners, managers, solicitors and the courts have all expressed concern about the lack of access to clear guidance on this issue. This pack seeks to bring together existing reference material with some overarching guiding principles.

AIM

3. To assist practitioners and managers in assessing;
 - those cases in which enquiries abroad are necessary;
 - who is best placed to undertake those enquiries and
 - if enquiries are to be undertaken personally by the practitioner, to ensure that appropriate, safe and cost effective arrangements are made.
4. To streamline the decisions making and planning process and ensure that CAFCASS resources are used appropriately and proportionately in accordance with children's best interests.

GENERAL ISSUES

5. Enquiries abroad can arise in both public and private law cases. Ultimately it is the court that will determine what enquiries are appropriate and which party / agency should be taking the lead on those enquiries.
6. As soon as it becomes apparent that travel abroad may be considered by the court, the practitioner should discuss with their service /contract manager. The practitioner should not make a recommendation for travel abroad without first obtaining service /contract manager approval.
7. There should be consideration of the need for enquiries abroad and how to facilitate those enquiries at the outset of the case and this should be addressed in the case plan. Any issue likely to warrant travel abroad should be discussed and assessed by the practitioner and service/contract manager at the earliest opportunity and prior to the court making a direction on the issue.
8. Each case should be judged on its merits. Any departure from this guidance should be justified and agreed.
9. The service/contract manager is the decision-taker regarding whether a recommendation for travel abroad should be made to the court.
10. In all cases where travel abroad is recommended by the practitioner the approval of the Regional Director (RD) is required before making that recommendation to the court. All cases of travel to a 'High-Risk' area must be referred to the RD at the earliest opportunity.
11. Set out below are the key considerations before a recommendation for travel abroad should be made:

ARE THE ENQUIRIES NECESSARY?

12. Are these necessary investigations? I.E. Is the information to be gathered by enquiries abroad necessary for the court to make an informed decision in the best interests of the child?
13. If so, are the proposed enquiries limited to relevant issues and is the extent of the enquiries proportionate to the issues?
14. Enquiries abroad may add to delay in the case. The practitioner should satisfy himself or herself that any proposed enquiries justify any anticipated delay on the facts of the particular case.

WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE ENQUIRIES?

15. If enquiries abroad are necessary, do they properly fall to the practitioner? There should be no automatic assumption that CAFCASS is the appropriate agency to undertake enquiries abroad. Often, the enquiries are more appropriately undertaken by one of the other parties.
16. Reluctance by another party to undertake enquiries or a concern by the court that they will not do so as quickly as CAFCASS should not in itself be a sufficient reason to transfer that duty/burden to CAFCASS.
17. In care proceedings the majority of enquiries abroad should fall to the local authority. The local authority is under a statutory duty to carry out the necessary assessments of the child's needs and how to meet those needs as part of their care planning. The details of these enquiries and assessment are helpfully set out in the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' document. The assessment/enquiries remain that of the local authority notwithstanding that some of those enquiries may need to be made abroad. The Local Authority does not have to undertake those enquiries by their own workers and will often use International Social Services ('ISS') or other agencies.
18. The practitioner should not undertake enquiries that properly fall to the local authority. This may well compromise their role in critically evaluating those assessments on behalf of the child. Joint visits with Social Services must be given very careful consideration. Such visits may blur the practitioner's role or be seen as fettering the practitioner's independence.
19. In international relocation cases, the burden to demonstrate that suitable arrangements will be made for the child fall to the applicant (usually a parent) not the practitioner.
20. Where it does not fall to the practitioner to take the lead in making enquiries abroad, they may still usefully have input into the scope of those enquiries and how they might be undertaken.

ENQUIRIES ABROAD BY PRACTITIONER

21. Where the enquiries abroad are necessary and properly fall to the practitioner there is no automatic expectation that this will require personal travel abroad. Indeed, this should be exception.
 22. Firstly, the practitioner should check with the ISS to see whether they would be able to assist within the timetable set by the court. ISS is a voluntary organisation with 21 international branches and with links to social service agencies in a further 130 countries. Many aspects of our work abroad can be carried out, facilitated or supported by ISS.
23. Contact with ISS can be made directly on 0207 735 8914 at www.issuk.org.uk/ , or through the President's Chambers in the High Court in London, who can advise on whether a service is available in a particular country (0207 947 7197 or e mail to penelope.langdon2@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk) . Penny Langdon will also follow up any difficulties with ISS on any particular case or report ordered by a court.
24. Where ISS cannot assist or cannot assist in an appropriate timescale, the practitioner should consider what other agencies may be able to assist. E.g.:

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- The relevant British Embassies and High Commissions Abroad (see President's Guidance on liaison attached);
 - Using local government and/or voluntary agencies / charities;
 - Instructing a local solicitor as agent (through the child's solicitor);
 - Instructing an Independent Social Worker in the foreign jurisdiction;
 - Another practitioner who has particular experience/skills relevant to the enquiries being undertaken or who is better placed to undertake those enquiries for some other exceptional reason (e.g. they are already travelling to that country to undertake enquiries in another case). The RD and the CAFCASS Message Forum may be used to access this information.
25. Where the enquiries abroad may need to be relied upon in judicial or administrative proceedings in the foreign country (e.g. in a subsequent adoption or placement) the practitioner should check whether any work done on a foreign visit by a practitioner would be accepted in that country. Some countries will not see as valid work done by those who are not accredited by federal or provincial bodies. This may result in unnecessary delay and/or duplication and will support the use of local agencies /professionals as set out above. This may also be an issue for consideration by the practitioner in considering the appropriateness of a local authorities proposal for assessments in other countries.
26. Consideration should be given to alternative methods of gathering information without the need to instruct an agent or personally travel abroad e.g. through appropriate use of telephone enquiries; e-mail; video conferencing and links with social work agencies in foreign jurisdictions.
27. Having made the enquiries above, the practitioner should discuss with their service/contract manager whether it may be appropriate for the practitioner to travel abroad themselves. That assessment should have regard to all of the information gathered above and take the following matters into account:
- Does the practitioner have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to undertake the enquiries / assessment?
 - Issues of diversity and differences in culture, race and language of the practitioner and the country/people being visited.
 - Is the practitioner more appropriate than any local agency with local knowledge and expertise?
 - Is it safe for the practitioner to travel to the country?
 - The estimated costs of personal travel abroad by the practitioner (to include costs of travel and subsistence / translators / escorts / insurance / in-fill etc). Costs should be contained in the normal way i.e. by booking reasonably priced travel and accommodation.
 - Does the method of making enquiries demonstrate the best value for money?
 - Any delay issues.

DISPUTES

28. It is anticipated that CAFCASS will work closely with the Courts and parties to the proceedings in making informed and pragmatic arrangements for enquiries abroad. The court and parties should provide CAFCASS with a reasonable opportunity to make the enquiries set out in this guidance in order that an informed view can be taken.
29. Most disputes should be capable of being resolved through local discussions or negotiations. In an exceptional case, CAFCASS may wish to intervene in the case to argue that the enquires are not necessary; that the responsibility for the enquiries properly fall to another party (e.g. a local authority) or that the costs of the proposed enquiries are prohibitive. A service/contract manager or RD can take advice at any stage from CAFCASS Legal on the merits of such action.

RISK ASSESSMENT

30. A risk assessment should be undertaken, particularly when travelling to countries where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ('FCO') has assessed a degree of risk. The FCO assessment of risk can be found on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk.
31. If a practitioner needs to be accompanied, professional judgment needs to be exercised by the practitioner and the service/contract manager. Each situation must be judged on its individual and often unique merits.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

32. The Practical Guidance at Annex 4 should be followed. That guidance aims to ensure:

- Practitioners remain safe.
- CAF/CASS acts promptly and appropriately in the event of the practitioner encountering serious illness, injury or threat to personal safety.
- Practitioners can be contacted quickly and appropriately in the event of an emergency involving their family or close friends and that their next of kin can be contacted.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND INSURANCE

33. The authorisation form (at Annex 5) should be completed by the practitioner and authorised by the service/contract manager (and in cases of travel to high risk areas, the RD). It acts as a valuable 'checklist' and ensures that key contact details are recorded.

34. Practitioners should ensure they have adequate business travel insurance for their journey.

July 2006

Re: International Social Services (UK)

The President of the Family Division met recently with the Director of International Social Services (UK) and members of his staff to discuss the valuable work which ISS provides. The President is keen to promote the use of their services where appropriate.

ISS is a voluntary organisation of qualified social workers. It has 21 international branches, and links to social service agencies in a further 130 countries. ISS is able to accept referrals on children cases with an international aspect, and to organise the production of a social work report by the local social service agency in the relevant country. Reports may comment on a range of matters relevant to the welfare of the child – eg – relating to a proposed placement abroad in either private or public law proceedings (including the suitability of permanent carers overseas, aspects of the household and relationship, or the facilities available in the area); tracing a child's family abroad; notification to overseas agencies where children are thought to be at risk.

ISS charges a referral fee to the referring agency. It is generally preferable that referrals are made via the Local Authority (in cases to which they are a party) or via CAFCASS.

CAFCASS officers may be requested by the court to conduct enquiries abroad or may themselves consider this necessary. For the most efficient use of public funds, and CAFCASS officer time, it is important the CAFCASS officer should conduct the following checks, bearing in mind there may be cases in which the CAFCASS officer considers it necessary for enquiries to be conducted abroad personally.

Before making any commitment or agreement with the Court to travel abroad the CAFCASS officer will:

1. Check with the local authority and the other parties to see who is the most appropriate person to take responsibility for enquiries abroad. In specified proceedings this will usually be the local authority.
2. Wherever reasonably practicable, and before instructing an agency in another country, to check with the ISS to see whether they would be able to assist within the timetable set by the court.
3. Discuss and seek the agreement of the relevant CAFCASS Service Manager to make enquiries abroad and to the estimated costs before agreeing to a Court request to travel.

The President and ISS have agreed that a maximum of 4 months for the production of a report is appropriate in general, subject to particular urgency or difficulties in other cases. ISS has agreed to monitor the progress of the report-writing in the overseas country so as to advise the court promptly if there are to be any difficulties in meeting the timetable set by the court.

From time to time there may be countries in which the ISS is unable to obtain a report, depending on local conditions. A judge wishing to ascertain whether or not the ISS is able to assist in a particular country should contact the Family Division Lawyer in the President's Chambers, Ms Ananda Hall, who will make enquiries of the ISS on an urgent basis (see contact details below).

1st July 2003
Ms Ananda Hall
President's Chambers
T: 020 7947 7197
F: 020 7947 7274
E: Ananda.Hall@courtservice.gsi.gov.uk

PRESIDENT'S GUIDANCE

**Liaison between Courts in England and Wales and
British Embassies and High Commissions Abroad**

28th November 2003

- 1 This guidance note describes procedures that are to be followed when a court in England and Wales exercising family jurisdiction seeks to invoke diplomatic assistance. The procedures have been agreed between the President of the Family Division and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ("the FCO").
- 2 Courts exercising family jurisdiction in England and Wales regularly deal with cases where children have been wrongfully removed to a foreign country or have been retained there wrongfully, most commonly by a parent or relative. Such cases may involve abduction or removal with a view to forced marriage abroad.
- 3 The jurisdiction in question may arise under the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, the Children Act 1989, in wardship, or under the inherent jurisdiction. The case will frequently (though not necessarily) be dealt with in the High Court because of its international aspects. Diplomatic assistance may be sought, via the FCO in London, from the relevant British Embassies and High Commissions abroad.
- 4 Where the country to which the child has been taken is a party to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction signed at The Hague on 25th October 1980 ("the Hague Convention"), established procedures apply for the making of applications for the return of the child, via the Central Authority (which for England and Wales is situated in the Office of the Official Solicitor and Public Trustee at 81 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1DD, DX: 0012 London Chancery Lane, telephone 020 7911 7127, fax 020 7911 7105).
- 5 Where however the country concerned is not a Hague Convention Contracting State, there may be difficulty in securing the return of children to England and Wales from that country. In many circumstances such children remain habitually resident in England and Wales under English law notwithstanding their physical absence. There may however be no effective legal mechanism in the country concerned for the enforcement of any order for return made by the courts of England and Wales.
- 6 It may be possible in appropriate cases for representatives from the relevant British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate to assist in ascertaining the whereabouts of children, to conduct interviews, and to facilitate travel arrangements for return to England and Wales. Such activities will however always be subject to the requirements of the domestic law of the country in question.
- 7 If in any case the court wishes to investigate the practicability of seeking such assistance, contact should be made by telephone or fax with the Head of the Consular Directorate at the FCO. Such contact should ideally be made before the order is finalised, not least to avoid the risk of arousing unrealistic expectations. The FCO may be in a position to clarify what level of assistance it is in a position to offer in the country concerned. The FCO will be able to identify the relevant Embassy, High Commission or Consulate to which any order or request for assistance should be directed, and to forward documents.
- 8 It has been found that in many cases an order modelled upon that made in *Re KR (Abduction: Forcible Removal by Parents)* [1999] 4 All ER 954, [1999] 2 FLR 542 has proved effective. Specimen provisions for an order derived from that case and for other situations are reproduced in the Schedule.
- 9 The FCO provides a facilitative role in relation to the return of a child but is not able to care for or take control of the child. The naming of specific officials (for example Ambassadors or High Commissioners) must be avoided.

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- 10 The FCO is keen to co-operate in any way that is appropriate but judges and practitioners should be aware of the limitations of orders that seek to prevent the abduction of children by providing for the deposit of passports at an Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. It must be noted that:
 - (a) The FCO is dependent upon the co-operation of the parent to comply with such an order and there is nothing the FCO can do to guarantee compliance.
 - (b) If at any time the parent requests the return of the passports it would be inappropriate for the FCO to retain them.
 - (c) On return of the passports no further responsibility lies with the FCO in relation to the parties' future movements.
- 11 Orders are usually silent on the subject of funding. The FCO is unable to be financially responsible for the repatriation of a child. What can be achieved will depend on the particular circumstances of each case.
- 12 In a case where assistance can be given by the FCO, the order should provide for disclosure of relevant documents to the FCO and its representatives. A copy of all such orders should be sent to the Director of Consular Services, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2PA; telephone: 020 7008 0212; fax 020 7008 0152. Telephone contact may also be made via the FCO Switchboard: 020 7008 3000; Director of Consular Services: 020 7008 0175; or PA to Director of Consular Services: 020 7008 0212.
- 13 If the order relates to Pakistan a copy should in addition be sent to the Clerk to the Rt Hon. Lord Justice Thorpe, the liaison judge nominated for the purposes of the judicial protocol made on 17th January 2003, [2003] Fam Law 199. The Clerk's contact details are: Royal Courts of Justice, DX 44450 Strand RCJ, telephone 020 7947 7432, fax 020 7947 6408.

Elizabeth Butler-Sloss
President

Schedule

Specimen Provisions for Orders

AND WHEREAS [AB] is a Ward of this Honourable Court and is a British citizen; born in and domiciled in the United Kingdom; and currently [believed to be] travelling outside England and Wales with a United Kingdom passport

AND WHEREAS in consequence of the fact that this Court has ordered that [AB] remain a Ward of this Court while (until [s]he attains the age of 18 years on [date]) [s]he remains a minor, this Court is empowered and required to exercise its custodial jurisdiction over him/her and to ascertain his/her best interests and to facilitate and protect those best interests

AND WHEREAS it appears from an order made in [details of proceedings] on [date] (of which a copy is attached) that [AB] was habitually resident in England and Wales [on [date]/at the time [s]he was removed from this jurisdiction]

AND WHEREAS this Honourable Court is anxious to protect and secure his/her well-being and best interests and to ensure that [s]he may freely express his/her wishes concerning his/her country and place of residence

AND WHEREAS this Honourable Court is anxious to ensure that [s]he is not induced or coerced into contracting any marriage or betrothal against his/her will

AND WHEREAS this Honourable Court is satisfied that all interested parties are before the Court including CAFCASS (the Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Services) appointed by the Court to represent the Ward

AND WHEREAS this Honourable Court having heard oral evidence from [] is of the view that serious grounds exist in the present circumstances to question whether this Honourable Court's Ward [AB] is able freely to express his/her views and wishes and in particular with regard to his/her country of residence

AND WHEREAS this Honourable Court has in the interests of [AB] determined that [s]he should so soon as practicable return/be returned to England and Wales

IT IS ORDERED that every person within the jurisdiction of this Court who is in a position to do so shall co-operate in assisting and securing the immediate return to England and Wales of [AB], a Ward of this Honourable Court

AND NOW THEREFORE THIS COURT RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS any person not within the jurisdiction of this Court who is in a position to do so to co-operate in assisting and securing the immediate return to England and Wales of the Ward [AB]

AND THIS COURT RESPECTFULLY INVITES all judicial and administrative bodies in the State of [] to render assistance in establishing the whereabouts of the Ward of this Honourable Court and in arranging for him/her to be placed in contact with and facilitating his/her travel to the British Embassy/High Commission/Consulate at [] with a view to his/her immediate return to the United Kingdom

AND IN THE EVENT that the said [AB] discloses to the British Embassy/High Commission/Consul (or their authorised representative) at [] that [s]he wishes unequivocally to return to England and Wales, [s]he do so return; and that in that event the judicial and administrative authorities of the State of [] be respectfully invited to take all such actions as may facilitate such return.

AND NOW THEREFORE THIS COURT RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS all judicial, administrative and law enforcement authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to use their best endeavours to assist in taking any steps which may to them appear necessary and appropriate in locating, safeguarding and facilitating the return to England and Wales of the said minor child[ren] pursuant to the laws of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and in accordance with the Protocol made on the 17th January 2003 in London and signed by the Honourable Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and by the Right Honourable The President of the Family Division of the High Court of Justice of England and Wales.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES KEY INFORMATION

ISS is an international social work charity. ISS UK works in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies in the UK and around the world, facilitating a global exchange of information and access to protection and support services. ISS aims to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children and vulnerable adults across international borders.

ISS UK's operating costs are met by a mixture of fees levied within the UK, limited government funding and fund raising.

ISS provides a number of services including enquiries overseas (from one off visits to provide a brief report through to more complex cases) and requests for information from police and/or social services in other countries. ISS has case charges for such work.

Requests to ISS for enquiries to be made overseas are made through the UK headquarters:

Tel: 020 7735 8941

e-mail: mark.issuk@btopenworld.com

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide straightforward steps to follow whether you are a practitioner (employed or self-employed contractor) or manager.

2. SCOPE

This guidance is intended to cover people making a visit to a country overseas on behalf of the Courts and or CAF/CASS. Practitioners should complete all forms and adhere to the guidance, before any formal travel arrangements are made. Practitioners should also ensure they have adequate business travel insurance for their journey. This guidance should also advise other CAF/CASS staff who are routinely involved in authorising and the processing of travel arrangements.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this document are to ensure that:

- Practitioners remain safe.
- CAF/CASS acts promptly and appropriately in the event of the practitioner encountering serious illness, injury or threat to personal safety.
- Practitioners can be contacted quickly and appropriately in the event of an emergency involving their family or close friends, likewise if they are involved in an emergency situation and their next of kin needs to be contacted.

4. LINE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Regional Director



Line Manager (either service manager or contract manager)



Practitioner

4.1 No individual should travel overseas on behalf of CAF/CASS until they have completed a travel authorisation form and had it signed by their service/contract manager. Travel to high-risk areas will require the additional authorisation of the RD.

4.2.1 Practitioners to high risk areas are to arrange flights on flexible air tickets with the facility to alter the return arrangements should they need to leave a country earlier than planned owing to a security related matter.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Practitioners should:

- Check status of the country being travelled to on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website, for any security issues.
- Complete Next of Kin form and give to service/contact manager
- Ensure all signature boxes on the Travel Authorisation Form have been completed
- Return fully completed Travel Authorisation form to the service/contract manager
- Obtain 6 passport sized photographs, together with a photocopy of your passport front and back and visa pages, driving licence and plane tickets, give copies to your Service Manager/Contract Manager
- Obtain medical advice from your doctor and /or the Department of Health (see <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en>) regarding necessary vaccinations, and a letter stating you are fit for travel (CAFACSS to re-imburse cost of necessary vaccinations on production of appropriate receipt.)
- If traveling within Europe, ensure you have a current European Health Insurance Card
- Ensure a mobile phone is available that will operate in country of visit.
- To have pre travel and post travel debriefing with service/contract manager.
- If an emergency or incident occurs during travel, please ensure an Incident form is completed on return to the office
- Carry a short message in the language of the local country with details or name, passport number, who you work for and their contact details in case of injury or other emergency

5.2 Service/contract manager

It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the practitioner obtains the pack from them as soon as the practitioner has been confirmed as going, and that all sections of the travel authorisation form have been completed before he/she signs the form off.

- Ensure practitioner checks the status of each country traveled to
- Assist the RD to manage any security incidents that may affect future travel plans.
- Confirm and file practitioner's itinerary
- Ensure practitioner has completed all relevant authorisation forms before traveling.
- Carry out pre and post travel debriefing
- Designate a deputy if away
- If an emergency occurs during travel to follow CAFACSS procedure and notify next of kin

5.3 Regional Director

- Agreeing travel to high risk countries
- Directing the service/contract manager in implementation of security procedures
- Supervising crisis response in the case of serious security incidents
- Supervising investigations into any accidents reported whilst abroad
- Ensure service/contract managers carry out pre and post travel debriefs

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5.4 Emergency Action

The practitioner's manager is responsible for seeing that actions identified in the event of an emergency are carried out as a matter of the highest priority. They should give details of the emergency to:

- Regional Director
- Communications Team
- Regional Human Resources ('HR') Advisor

The manager's role is to keep track of the flow of information so that the other members of this group can concentrate on different aspects of managing the emergency. If necessary the HR Advisor will contact the next of kin identified on the personal information sheet for that travel, recognising that staff may want to nominate someone other than their immediate family to hear first of an emergency.

The Communications Team will be responsible for managing any media coverage of the emergency. Managing the media may be an important part of managing the security emergency. The service /contract manager is to alert the Communications Team when an incident occurs.

Each security incident should be viewed individually. Steps taken by CAFCASS staff may include some or all of the following:

Practitioner responsibilities whilst abroad

- Keep a log of all events
- Complete an accident report form.
- Notify or visit the police
- Notify the relevant Embassy or Consulate

What could be done?

- Notify or visit the local Governor/Mayor/Official
- Notify of visit the local commander of the national military
- Notify next of kin
- Notify Foreign Office
- Seek legal advice

The service manager/contract manager has the authority to overrule a practitioner's desire to remain in a situation of risk unless the practitioner considers the risks involved in attempting to leave a situation of risk far outweigh those involved in remaining.

A practitioner should on their own authority leave a situation of risk if they believe it to be the best decision for security reasons.

During working hours, the first point of contact for the practitioner is the service/contract manager and then the business manager. Outside of work hours, one of these latter two should be available by mobile phone. It is understood that mobile telephone networks may not be supported in many circumstances. In this instance other arrangements must be made.

Practitioners are to be provided with emergency contacts in and out of working hours before traveling as part of their travel authorisation form, and should agree that the arrangements are sufficient.

The RD should ensure there is an updated list of practitioners kept in the regional office noting all overseas travel. They will also ensure that the travel authorisation form and updated personal information forms are readily accessible.

Incident Reports

Where practical and as soon as possible the Incident report form should be completed and sent to the RD. This would also apply to traffic accidents.

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Country Security

Practitioners should check the FCO web site on the country security to which they are visiting. The Foreign Office has two categories of travel security:

1. advice against all travel to the following countries: and
2. advice to travel on essential business only.

If travel is proposed to a country deemed 'essential business only', practitioners should discuss with their service/contact manager and RD whether the trip is necessary.

ANNEX 1 SECURITY PLAN

1. General Security

Although at first sight all may appear calm and peaceful, there are a number of dangers that could pose a risk to practitioners. It is important that staff do not become complacent. This is especially important during the first few days after arrival when people are new to an environment. Threats to personal safety can occur when least expected, staff should try to familiarise themselves with the country beforehand by reading guidebooks or talking to other staff who may have traveled to the same country/region. Practitioners should also know the location of the nearest Embassy/Consulate, Medical Centre and Police station.

2. Threats, Risks & Vulnerabilities

Typical problems may include domestic or personal robbery (mugging), car theft, kidnapping, and armed robbery. Practitioners should always be as careful as possible when traveling in a foreign country, ensuring they are more vigilant than they would normally be. Practitioners should minimise the risks by not traveling on public transport, ensuring the hotel know where you are traveling to and when you are expected to arrive back, if hiring a car you are certain of the route you need to take and sufficiently competent in all aspects of the vehicle.

3. Basic Precautions

Regardless of the country being traveled to, certain practices should be adhered to:

3.1 General

- Always carry a copy of your passport front and rear pages, plus the relevant visa page. Lock the original in the hotel safe. This is essential.
- Always carry your CAFCASS identity card
- Always keep copies of your court papers locked in the hotel safe
- It is recommended that you always carry two hundred US Dollars or equivalent in local currency for emergencies
- Always carry your own medical details, especially if you are allergic to certain drugs or need to take regular medication
- Always carry a list of emergency contact details
- Always carry a mobile phone with you that works well in the region/country
- Always communicate directly with your Line Manager if possible if the security status of the country changes.

3.2 Vehicles and Journeys

- Avoid public transport if possible, this can be unpredictable and unsafe in certain countries instead take a reputable taxi (check with local hotel beforehand)
- When hiring a car use a reputable company and ensure the car is roadworthy before accepting it. Ensure you carry your driving license with you at all times
- Plan your route carefully, ensure you know the way and have a suitable map with you. Always know where you are, if you are lost stop at the nearest safe place. Lock all your doors and wear your seatbelt
- Do not travel after dark unless absolutely necessary
- Do not stop for accidents, this could be an ambush or robbery

ANNEX 2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Military Checkpoints:

It is important that strict procedures at checkpoints are adhered to, to avoid any confusion or problems. Questions should be answered as fully as possible.

When approaching a checkpoint, slow down. At night, dip headlights and turn on the interior lights. On approaching a checkpoint that has become hostile, reverse the vehicle to a safe distance. Do not turn the vehicle around as this can be taken as a defensive manoeuvre.

2. Ambush of Crossfire

There is no foolproof method for avoiding or escaping an ambush. The vehicle is the main target, so if it is not possible to drive straight through or reverse back out again immediately, all occupants must get out of the vehicle as quickly as they can in a direction away from the source of the attack. Once out of the vehicle, get as low to the ground as possible and crawl into cover where you cannot be seen.

3. Kidnapping

Be aware of your vulnerabilities and consciously try to reduce them. If the worst does happen:

- Try to keep cool, keep your mind active
- Be co-operative and obey kidnappers commands. Keep a low profile
- Build a rapport by drawing attention to your needs and other human needs like hunger, thirst, use of lavatory
- If there is a rescue attempt by force, drop quickly to the floor and seek cover. Keep your hands on your head. When appropriate identify yourself.

4. Crowds and Mobs

Definition: a crowd is a peaceable gathering of people, a mob an aggressive group with a purpose

- The most appropriate solution is to avoid mobs by pre-empting the situation and avoiding it.
- Do not aggravate the situation by being argumentative

**AUTHORISATION FORM
FOR TRAVEL ABROAD**

- Each practitioner travelling overseas on behalf of CAF/CASS should complete all of the following sections.
- The RD should authorise all travel to High Risk countries.
- When all sections of the form have been fully completed, copies are to be sent to the service /contract manager and RD.

SECTION ONE

BASIC INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR ALL PRACTITIONERS

1. Name:
2. Regional Office/Team Area:
3. Passport Number: Date of Expiry: Visa Number
4. Blood Group* and/or Allergies* (Optional but could save your life)
5. Dates of travel, including country(ies)
6. **Your reason for travel**
7. **As appropriate, please list other organisation/embassies visiting:**
8. **Next of Kin** – (Please complete – regardless of having given the information previously. It would be helpful if you could indicate the relationship, for example, brother / wife / partner etc

Name: _____

Address: _____

- Daytime Telephone Number: _____
- Evening Telephone Number: _____
- Mobile Telephone Number: _____
- In the event of an accident or hospitalisation do you want your next of kin informed? **YES/NO**

9. Medical Precautions and Vaccinations

- I am familiar with the medical requirements / precautions to the country(ies) I will be visiting

YES/NO

- My vaccinations are up to date for the country(ies) I am visiting, and I am fit to travel.

YES/NO**10. CAFCASS Identity Card**

- Do you have a CAFCASS identity card?

YES/NO

(If you do not have a card, you must obtain one before this form can be completed)

11. Insurance

- I have taken out travel insurance for the duration of the trip, which includes business travel and medical treatment at appropriate levels of cover?

YES/NO**12. Additional Information for Travel to High Risk Countries**

- This visit takes me to a High Risk Country(ies)?

YES/NO

If YES, I have contacted the relevant Embassy, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office guidance on travel abroad?

YES/NO**13. Signature of practitioner**

The details above are correct. I confirm I have taken the appropriate measures to ensure my safety on this visit.

Signature:**Date:**

- 14. Authorisation of service/contact manager (and RD if a high-risk country).** CAFCASS and the practitioner have completed all the necessary preparations to ensure that this visit can be completed as safely as possible. I am satisfied this is a necessary visit and risks have been kept to a minimum.

Signature:**Name:****Date:**

SECTION THREE**PRACTITIONER CONTACT NAMES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

This form should be taken with you when you travel outside of the United Kingdom. A copy should also be given to the Regional Director and kept in the regional office in case of an emergency.

1. **Name of Practitioner:**

2. **Service/contract manager:**

Telephone Number:

3. **Regional Director:**

Telephone Number

4. **EMERGENCY FOREIGN OFFICE NUMBERS IN LONDON**

- Foreign Office Assistance: +44 (0)207 008 1500 (Out of Hours ask for the 'Response Centre')
- www.fco.gov.uk (for up to date information in all countries and general information)

5. **DETAILS OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE REGION OR COUNTRY TO CONTACT IN AN EMERGENCY**

- British Embassy or High Commission:

Telephone Number:

- Police Services:

Telephone Number:

- Medical Centre:

Telephone Number:

6. **INSURANCE DETAILS**

- Name of insurance provider
- Policy number
- Emergency contact number

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

1. Documents

- Contact Names & Numbers Form
- Court Order
- Case Documents
- Personal Credit card
- Driving License of International Permit
- European Health Insurance Card (if travelling in Europe)
- Foreign Cash
- CAF/CASS Identity card
- Maps and Travel Books
- Selection of two passport photographs
- Mobile Phone with International Dialing Capabilities plus charger
- Up-to-Date Medical Vaccination Booklet
- Passport & Country Visas (with photocopies)
- Laptop Computer (including discs, telephone cables and chargers)

2. Other Items

- Appropriate clothing for country/climate/culture
- Batteries and or chargers
- Camera / film / batteries
- Continental / USA electric plug
- Prescribed medicine / pills

POST SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE & DEBRIEF FORM

At the end of your trip please complete this form and return it to your service/contract manager

Name: _____ **Region:** _____ **Countries**
Visited: _____

1. Did you check the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website for security information prior to departure? **YES / NO**
If No, please give reasons

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2. Were you advised of the correct inoculations recommended for the region? **YES/NO**

3. Did you experience any problems at the airport on arrival that you had not been prepared for or warned about? **YES / NO**

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4. How did you get from the airport to your planned location or accommodation? Did you experience any problems? **YES / NO**

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5. Was your accommodation secure? **YES / NO**

6. Did your accommodation and the areas around feel safe? **YES / NO**

7. At any point of your visit did you feel threatened or in danger? **YES / NO**
If yes, please give reasons and anything that could have been done to prevent it

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8. Where you in contact with any Consulates or Embassies during your visit?

YES/NO

If yes, please give reasons

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9. Was there any aspect of your trip you were unprepared for?

YES / NO

If yes, please give reason and what you think you could have done to be more prepared

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10. Do you have any other comments about your visit that might help future practitioners planning their travel abroad?

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