



Home Office

General Instructions
Immigration returns, enforcement and detention

Partnership working

Version 6.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the procedures when working with the police or other agencies.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email Enforcement Policy.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Review, Atlas and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **6.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **13 June 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

The following changes have been made:

- the section on Licencing Act visits has been scaled down and linked to the new guidance for staff to follow that can be found here Section 179 of the Licensing Act 2003 right of entry to premises being used for a licensable activity
- grades for who to consult and inform when unable to attend a police call out amended
- re-formatting for better flow and general housekeeping
- references and links to old processes have been removed or replaced where appropriate

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Working with the police

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the procedures for working with the police.

For information on seeking police assistance, or where the police or another agency suggests a joint operation, you must follow the procedures that are set out in Enforcement planning assessments.

Police call outs: initial contact with National Command and Control Unit

National Command and Control Unit (NCCU) is Immigration Enforcement's 24/7 contact centre and a central point of contact for UK policing. NCCU can be contacted by UK policing for all enquiries relating to foreign nationals encountered in the course of their daily operational activity.

A large proportion of referrals from UK policing are from custody suites. Custody teams are required to undertake livescan fingerprint checks (for more information see Identity management (enforcement)) to lock in the identity of the individual in custody prior to referral into NCCU. Other information which NCCU staff will ask for includes:

- where they are detained
- time of arrest (see [PACE clock](#))
- grounds of arrest
- claimed identity and nationality (with documentary evidence where available)
- claimed immigration status
- any vulnerabilities / safeguarding concerns
- any police information from Police National Computer (PNC) relating to criminality to support immigration enforcement action

Checks will then be conducted on the following Home Office systems (where necessary):

- Atlas
- Entity
- Pega
- Pronto
- Single Intelligence Platform (SIP) Central Reference System (CRS)
- IABS Fingerprint Database
- DVA to access His Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) passport records held in the HMPO Passport Application Support System (PASS)

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

The NCCU will consider the information identified and assess and consider next actions and signpost to the relevant teams, including referral to the Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team, for further action. The individual will be referred to ICE on pronto.

NCCU refer all suspected immigration offenders to the relevant teams for action. NCCU will also ensure that:

- where there is an Atlas case raised, any referral from NCCU to ICE is noted on Atlas and a person alert added
- where appropriate, referrals from NCCU will be made via PRONTO
- relevant case work functions will also be informed via email where necessary for information
- once NCCU have referred to the appropriate team, NCCU relinquish responsibility for the case

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Responding to a police call out

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the procedures when they receive a call from the police.

Police and criminal evidence (PACE) clock

For the purposes of these instructions, the term PACE means the rules that must be applied under the:

- [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#) – applies in England and Wales
- [Police and Criminal Evidence \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989](#) – applies in Northern Ireland

PACE does not apply in Scotland, where the [Criminal Procedure \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#) is the relevant legislation.

A person detained under PACE can be kept at the police station for a maximum of 24 hours from the relevant time. This is known as the 'PACE clock'. The 24-hour period can only be extended in exceptional circumstances by a police superintendent, and is very unlikely to be extended where the only issue to be determined is that of the person's immigration status.

In accordance with PACE, a person can ordinarily only be held for a maximum of 24 hours during which time a decision must be made to either:

- charge them with an offence
- release them on bail
- release them without charge

In cases where a person is being held pending further investigation relating to a criminal offence, officers are restricted to completing their investigation within the 24-hour period. Whether or not the person is held for the maximum period is a matter for the police. The police may not extend the period to allow for the investigation of an administrative immigration breach.

During this period, the detained person is allowed 8 hours of continuous rest. When a decision is taken to bail the detained person so that further enquiries can be undertaken, the 24-hour clock will start again when the detained person reports in compliance with their bail conditions. If there are only 3 hours left when the detained person is bailed, there will only be 3 hours left when they report off bail to make a decision on a case.

If the police have arrested the person for a criminal offence but do not intend to pursue the case further, the following options apply. The person must be either:

- arrested and detained under [schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971](#)
- arrested in connection with an immigration related criminal offence

- released

Attendance at police station

Having conducted the checks and gathered all relevant information, you must decide whether it is appropriate for an officer to attend. You must discuss this with the duty Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) and prioritise the case taking into account:

- case type and probability of removal
- number of police call outs waiting
- staffing levels
- a harm assessment of the case including reasons for arrest

Upon attending the police station, you must read the custody record to gather any additional information available. Take particular note of the property sheet as you may find that if a detained person was not originally arrested for an immigration offence, documents relevant to your enquiries may have been returned to them and labelled as 'miscellaneous documents' or 'X documents'. This could include identity cards, bank cards, payslips or other beneficial paperwork relating to their identity.

You must make full use of the opportunity that this presents to search for identity documents that confirm nationality and identity. Where no identity document can be located you must complete an emergency travel document application form for all appropriate cases encountered at custody suites.

In all cases take the opportunity to explain the options for voluntary departure. You must record the fact that you have done this, and the result, on Pronto and Atlas. Police officers will have recorded the circumstances of the arrest in their notebook and a copy should be attached to the custody record. This details the circumstances of the arrest and will include any significant statements. Always record the custody number on Pronto under custody actions.

Always ensure you return any custody record as you found it.

Service of papers to the police station

In the same way as NCCU can serve relevant papers by emailing those decisions to the police station, the ICE team responding during office hours can also send papers electronically to a police station in various situations, such as when police have made a non-immigration arrest and either release or bail, informing NCCU that the ICE team can attend but there is little or no time left on the 'PACE clock'. In this instance, the ICE team when informed will send the NOL and IS91/IS91R to the police station in order to transfer the person to immigration detention at the police station until IOs can attend.

Similarly, in cases where a person has been arrested and detained at a custody suite but subsequently refused by the Detention Gatekeeper (DGK), or where a person has been arrested by police but is not currently removable from the UK,

including where a person has been arrested for non-compliance with conditions attached to immigration bail, a BAIL201 form can be sent to the police station.

Refusing a request to attend a police station

On the few occasions that immigration officers are unable to deal with an individual following a police call-out the following procedure must be followed. A Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) or His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) must be consulted before the police or other agency is advised that Immigration Enforcement cannot attend. The CIO or HMI must then be notified along with a written report of the reasons preventing attendance and the advice given to police or other agency on how to proceed. This report must be copied to the Grade 7 of operations immediately.

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Participation in police led operations

Police or another agency may request assistance in an operation where they are investigating criminal or other offences. There may be a need for immigration advice, for example confirming a person's status or the validity of identity documents.

It is imperative that there is no ambiguity as to who is the lead agency for the operation.

The police (or other agency) will:

- provide the officer in charge (OIC)
- produce and give the briefings
- have a critical incident structure in place

If immigration offenders are detected, you must act in an advisory capacity up to the point at which you take action under the [Immigration Act 1971](#).

The participation of Immigration Enforcement staff in police-led operations must be authorised by an officer of Grade 7 (Assistant Director) rank through the tasking and coordination group (TCG) process. Any situation likely to attract media attention must be brought to the attention of the Grade 6 and press office. For further information see: Enforcement planning assessments.

High risk or high profile operations with police

Seeking police assistance

Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams frequently work with the police to make maximum use of resources, known as 'mixed team operations', where non-arrest trained officers are present for intelligence gathering or forgery expertise. In these circumstances, the team can operate in one of three ways:

- arrest team - this will be either all arrest-trained immigration officers (IOs) or a mixture of arrest-trained IOs and police officers:
 - no non-arrest trained staff will be able to take any active role within such a team
 - non-arrest trained staff may go on the visit as an observer at the discretion of the OIC as is normal practice
- enforcement team - non-arrest trained officers and police officers only:
 - the operation would be police-led with the police taking primacy on any public order or breach of the peace situations

It is important to remember that you **must** seek assistance from the police where:

- a risk has been identified which makes the visit unsuitable without police assistance (for example, the subject has a history of extreme violence)
- the police indicate that a visit would be inappropriate without them

These are particularly difficult and sensitive operations which require careful planning in the form of a meeting with all those agencies likely to be involved, for example Immigration Enforcement representatives, local police officers, detainee custody officers and perhaps social services and/ or community liaison officers, depending on the circumstances. Where such a meeting is necessary, the Home Office will supply a case summary and complete an operation notification form (ONF), or in the Metropolitan region, a request form.

For further information see: Enforcement planning assessments.

Support role during police operation

In some police operations it may be more appropriate for you to attend the police station instead of participating in the operation, especially with regard to personal safety.

Officers providing support during a police operation must not undertake a role for which they have not been trained.

For further information on operations conducted by police or other agencies in public areas see the 'Public operations' section of Enforcement visits.

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Working with other agencies

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the procedures when working with agencies other than the police.

Multi-agency operations: liaison and tasking

Working in partnership with other agencies allows for an operational plan that targets multiple offences that fall within the remit of other relevant agencies. This enables agencies to use a range of powers and approaches to tackle immigration abuse and crime.

Immigration Enforcement can benefit from being involved in other agency-led visits that are likely to identify suspected immigration offenders. Their presence can create an effective, visible deterrent and facilitate effective information sharing. See: Data sharing in enforcement cases.

Other agencies are similarly likely to benefit when invited to participate in Immigration Enforcement-led visits where intelligence suggests that offences other than immigration offences may have been committed and will be able to offer specialist advice. A multi-agency tasking and planning process can also lead to targeted, efficient enforcement action.

Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team stakeholder liaison and engagement is organised at the local level by nominated officers.

Where such liaison results in an invitation for your ICE team to take part in other agency-led operations this request must be submitted to your local tasking and coordination group (TCG) for approval.

Visits to business or residential premises led by other agencies

When a multi-agency operation is proposed, it is important to remember that ICE teams need a legal basis to enter the premises in question. If there is a suspicion that immigration offenders may be present, but there is insufficient intelligence to obtain a search warrant for arrest purposes, your legal basis of entry may be by obtaining the fully informed consent of the premises' occupier, which has been fully explained and recorded on Pronto and on the Notice to Occupier. See: Record keeping during enforcement visits.

You will have a legal basis of entry if named on the warrant of the lead agency but it must be clear how your presence relates to the purpose for which the warrant was issued. For instance, if the lead agency requires immigration advice whilst on the premises, you must be satisfied that this is necessary for the purpose for which the warrant was granted and not relied on as alternative to obtaining an immigration warrant. This will be especially the case when the warrant obtained by the lead agency is to search for evidence only.

See also Enforcement visits.

Other considerations on multi-agency visits include:

- your vital role as a conduit for the flow of potential intelligence between agencies involved before, during and after the visit, see: Data sharing in enforcement cases: standards of operational practice
- powers under the [Immigration Act 1971](#) must not be used for the sole purpose of enabling the police to detain persons for the purpose of investigating non-immigration matters
- Immigration Enforcement and the police must have regard to the same guidelines in the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) codes of practice](#) when investigating criminal offences, so officers must ensure that other agencies are aware of the limitations on ICE teams when they are leading their own investigations

See also:

- Administrative and criminal powers (IE)
- Search and seizure

Referrals from other agencies during joint operations

Other agencies present on an operation may stop an individual under their own powers and refer them to an immigration officer (IO). IOs must ensure they follow the guidance on in-country examination in Enforcement interviews.

For further information concerning 'Singh v Hammond' see the 'Administrative powers to examine a person's immigration status in-country' section of Enforcement interviews.

Questioning should take place in the same way that it would on a street operation, see the 'Public operations: in-country examinations' section of Enforcement visits.

Common multi-agency visit types

Licensing Act visits

Joint enforcement operations may take place with local authority licencing officials and the police. For guidance on the procedures to follow during licencing act visits see Section 179 of the Licensing Act 2003 right of entry to premises being used for a licensable activity.

Beds in sheds

The term 'beds in sheds' relates to property owners using the outbuildings of residential properties as dwellings, in contravention of the Town and Country

Planning Act 1990 and the Housing Act 2004. The document '[Improving the private rented sector and tackling bad practice: a guide for local authorities](#)', issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, sets out the action local authorities can take, including working with the Home Office.

Councils planning such enforcement visits frequently invite Immigration Enforcement officers to attend based on current intelligence of suspected immigration offenders. Immigration Enforcement staff can assist by identifying who the individuals found in outbuildings are and by determining their immigration status. This supporting evidence can be used in subsequent prosecutions brought by the council.

The power of entry in these council-led operations is typically a warrant under [section 196B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). Under [section 196C\(b\)](#), the person applying for the warrant may take with them such persons as may be necessary. Magistrates may be content to include Immigration Enforcement staff on the council warrant when asked to do so but the warrant is not being issued for an immigration purpose and it must be clear what the grounds for being named on the warrant are and how your presence relates to the purpose for which the warrant is issued. If the magistrate does not agree to the inclusion of the ICE team on the council warrant, you will need an alternative valid power of entry.

See also:

- Administrative and criminal powers (IE)
- Warrants: procurement and use

Trading Standards visits

Local authority Trading Standards (TS) departments are able to enforce several Trading Standards-based pieces of legislation to prevent the operation of rogue traders and unfair businesses in their local community. ICE teams can be invited to accompany Trading Standards where intelligence leads to a suspicion of illegal working by suspected immigration offenders at targeted premises. ICE teams cannot be named on warrants served under section 30 of the [Consumer Protection Act 1987](#). However, the act allows the authorised officer (the Trading Standards officer) to take with them 'such other persons...as may appear to him as necessary'.

See also:

- Illegal working operations
- Warrants: procurement and use

ICE teams frequently serve civil penalty referral notices (CPRNs) on employers during multi-agency visits. ICE team members must ensure they have a valid power of entry when serving CPRNs.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)

HMRC has a wide remit, enforcing legislation related to:

- individuals and employees (including the minimum wage, income tax, national insurance and tax credits)
- employers (including registering as an employer and PAYE)
- businesses and corporations

As such, they are a major partner in multi-agency operations and frequently take part in licensing, illegal working and police-led visits, amongst others.

In order to take maximum advantage of HMRC's powers, Immigration Enforcement co-operate with HMRC to maximise the impact of ICE team activity, for instance by notifying HMRC of evidence of suspected tax offences.

As in all of the examples of ICE team involvement in multi-agency operations above, you must have a valid power of entry to ensure the integrity and legality of your presence on the premises.

Street homelessness operations

Immigration Enforcement works with local communities, business partners and stakeholders to assist in areas where immigration concerns are raised to resolve issues and improve the lives of those in the communities we serve.

The process for conducting street homelessness operations is the same process as intelligence-based police-led street operations, and can be found in the 'Crime reduction operations (CROPS)' section of Enforcement visits.

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