



Home Office

Transfer or refer a case

Version 32.0

This guidance tells caseworkers, entry clearance officers and Home Office officers how to transfer or refer a case to another unit.

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About this guidance

This guidance tells you about how to transfer or refer a case to another unit.

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 the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

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 Rules and Forms team.

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Publication

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

- version **32.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **21 January 2019**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Removals casework now named returns preparation. Guidance, email addresses and CID data values amended throughout the guidance.

Amended [acceptance criteria](#) for case referral to returns preparation.

The 'inflow' team name has changed to 'workflow'.

Guidance placed on new template.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Initial checks

This page tells you which initial checks must be done before transferring or referring a case.

Caseworkers must carry out the following checks before referring a case. The safeguard and promote child welfare page explains your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and tells you where to find out more information.

Check the 'Special Conditions' screen

If the icon is activated, it will have a red box containing a white asterisk next to it. If the notes say 'STOP- CRIM.CASE', you must email criminal casework immediately. If an action marker is present, follow the CID Special Conditions caseworking guidance.

The central reference system (CRS)

CRS must always be checked for local alerts and the details must be actioned as necessary.

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Related content

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[Referring cases to criminal casework](#)

How to transfer a case on CID

This page tells you how to transfer case ownership on CID.

Before carrying out this process all [initial checks](#) must be completed.

Complete the 'case notes' screen to state you are transferring the case to an external location and the reasons for this.

The following does not apply to transfers to returns preparation.
Complete and print any required forms or letters.

Update case 'maintenance screen' on CID by completing the following:

1. Click 'case extended', which is below the 'previous category' field.
2. Enter the destination of the case into the 'allocated to (unit)' field by pressing the F9 key and selecting your chosen option.
3. Click on the 'on' box to ensure date of allocation is updated.
4. Click on the 'ownership tab' on this screen.
5. Under the 'request to unit' header, delete the current team and add the name of the team to which you are transferring the case (the F9 function button provides a full list of teams).

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European casework: North West region only

This page tells caseworkers in the North West region only how to follow the nationally agreed harm matrix as part of the Euro case consideration.

For all other regions, you must follow the process that your team has in place for these cases.

Applications from EEA Nationals: EEA 1 / EEA 3 case types

Cases assessed as a harm A category which meet the criminal casework (CC) threshold must immediately have case ownership transferred to CC.

Cases assessed as a harm A category which do not meet the CC threshold must be referred to the regional case ownership team.

Cases assessed as harm B or C must have the ownership closed on CID and the file sent to layby or to the relevant unit for any further action.

Applications from third country nationals: EEA 2 / EEA 4 case types

Cases assessed as a harm A category which meet the CC threshold must immediately have case ownership transferred to CC.

Cases assessed as a harm A category which do not meet the CC threshold must be referred to the regional case ownership team.

Cases assessed as harm B or C must have ownership transferred to the relevant regional case ownership unit for them to take forward any enforcement action.

For more information see:

- European casework process diagram
- The harm matrix

For information on how refer a case to CC see: [Referring cases to criminal casework](#).

For information on how to transfer a case to removals casework see: [How to refer cases to returns preparation](#).

Related content

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How to refer cases to returns preparation

This page tells you which cases are managed by returns preparation and how to refer cases to them.

Returns preparation manages the cases of non detained, non asylum immigration offenders without a right to remain in the UK. Where cases have a right of appeal or are entitled to apply for an administrative review, returns preparation will not take ownership of the case until all of the appeal rights have been exhausted or the administrative review concluded. Where cases do not have a right of appeal or an administrative review, returns preparation will take ownership of the case at the point of refusal.

Returns preparation is responsible for managing families through the family returns process and Border Force cases where there is a human rights claim, mental health issues or a documentation barrier and leave to enter has been refused.

Returns preparation will not accept new asylum claims. Further representations on cases previously refused asylum are only accepted in family cases that are already in the family returns process, or in those cases where a charged application has been submitted to UKVI after the asylum claim, and that application has been refused and referred to returns preparation for enforcement action.

Returns preparation receives referrals by the signpost route. The referring unit uses a specific admin event on CID to signpost the case to returns preparation. An exception to this process is the referral of family cases where there is at least one removable adult with at least one dependent child (aged under 18). These cases must be transferred to the family returns unit (FRU) for managing through the family returns process. For information on how to refer a case to the FRU please see [Referrals to the family returns unit \(FRU\)](#).

Acceptance criteria

To refer a case to returns preparation, the following criteria must be met:

- appeal rights exhausted, unless it is an appeal against a decision to refuse a non-EEA national under the EEA regulations where the appeal is non-suspensive
- no outstanding administrative review
- no asylum cases unless the claim was withdrawn by the applicant or a further 'charged' application has been made since the asylum claim
- no stateless applications unless there is an agreed valid emergency travel document (ETD) or passport that can be used to arrange removal
- no outstanding applications unless there is an out of time human rights claim or the case requires reconsideration by returns preparation
- no criminal case where there is ongoing activity

- no criminal deportation cases
- no NEXUS high harm cases
- no ongoing status in the UK (such as extant leave or exempt from immigration control)
- no detained cases
- no EEA nationals unless referred by Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams and a 'stage 1' notice has been issued

The workflow team monitor all referred cases and decide if they meet the acceptance criteria. If a case is accepted, the team will allocate the case to the appropriate casework team. It is the responsibility of the referring team to check CID to ascertain whether the case has been accepted or rejected. A rejected case will not be progressed by returns preparation.

Referring cases to returns preparation: signpost route

The referring units must input the following admin events on CID on the latest refusal case type:

Referring unit	Admin event	Admin Event Code
National Removals Command (to be used when a subject is released from detention and further casework is required)	RP – NRC Signpost	RCCNRCSP
Immigration Compliance and Engagement (ICE) teams (to be used when an immigration offender is encountered but not detained)	RP – ICE Signpost	RCCICESP
Litigation Operation teams (to be used to notify JR cases that have been concluded or JR cases that require casework action)	RP – LOE Signpost	RCCJRUSP
Litigation Operation teams (to be used once a PAP has been responded to but a further decision is required)	RP – PAP Signpost	RCCPAPS
Interventions and Sanctions Unit (to be used to flag cases requiring casework)	RP – ISU Signpost	RCCISUSP
Temporary and Permanent Migration (to be used to refer a case which requires casework action)	RP – UKVI Referral	RCCUKVIREF
Reporting Offender Management	RP – Reporting Signpost	RCCREPSP

Referring unit	Admin event	Admin Event Code
(to be used when an individual/family is reporting but further casework is required)		
All other referring units (to be used to refer a case from any other business area where casework action is required)	RP – Proforma Signpost	RCCPROFSP

Admin events are created by clicking on the Admin Event button in the Case Details screen and entering the admin event code into the 'Event Type' field or selecting from the options after clicking on the 'List of Values' button.

All referrals must include a note on 'person notes' providing a short summary of why the case is considered suitable for referral to returns preparation, what action is required by returns preparation and if there is a deadline by which that action must be completed.

Urgent cases

If a case requires urgent consideration you must email Returns Preparation Workflow Queries setting out the reasons for the urgency as well as adding a person note on CID.

Confirmation of acceptance or rejection

When referring a case to returns preparation you must make sure the case has been successfully transferred before you are no longer responsible for the case. The case will not be considered to have been completely transferred until the case has been accepted and CID has been updated by the workflow team.

If the case is accepted by the workflow team, they will update ownership of the case on the 'Ownership' tab. They will also add case type 'Returns Preparation' under the 'Associated Cases' field and place a note in person notes. These actions confirm transfer of ownership to returns preparation.

If a case is rejected by the workflow team, they will email the referrer to tell them the reason for rejection, and update CID person notes with reasons why the case has not been accepted. They will also create an admin event 'RP - Rejected' in the 'Admin Event' screen. These actions confirm rejection of the case. The case will remain your responsibility and you will need to resolve any outstanding issues before referring it again for reconsideration.

Ownership

If the case type is recorded as 'Returns Preparation' and there is no outcome, returns preparation already has ownership. You must therefore always check ownership on CID before deciding if referral is necessary.

Where ownership is already with a returns preparation team, the referring unit must contact the case owner and not use the signposting route.

Where ownership is with the workflow team, the referring unit must email Returns Preparation Workflow Queries.

Bulk referrals

It is open to teams to make bulk referrals. To enquire about making a bulk referral, please email Returns Preparation Workflow Queries to discuss further.

Files

At the point of signposting a case to returns preparation, the file must either be retained by the referring team or sent to Iron Mountain Storage. Files must not be sent to returns preparation. If the case is accepted by returns preparation, they will request the file at a later date.

Related content

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Referrals to the family returns unit (FRU)

This page tells returns preparation staff and other business areas how to refer a case to the FRU.

Cases where there is at least one removable adult with at least one dependant child (aged under 18) must be transferred to the FRU for managing through the family returns process.

Acceptance criteria

Before you can refer a case to the FRU, it must meet the following requirements:

- appeal rights must be exhausted
- no outstanding administrative review
- no outstanding judicial reviews (unless referred by litigation teams and action is required by returns preparation to conclude the judicial review)
- no outstanding applications
- no criminal deportation cases
- notice of liability to removal, such as RED.0001 notice or equivalent, served on all individuals and the key document tracker has been updated
- be barrier free
- have valid travel document or emergency travel document (ETD) applied for or agreed in principle to be received within next 10 to 12 weeks for all family members, if documents have been agreed the ETD agreement must still be valid
- all cases linked with the family box ticked on each case
- the lead case has a family welfare form (ICD.3629) created
- the lead case has a factual summary completed (ICD.2599)

Referral from returns preparation

If you are satisfied that the case meets the acceptance criteria, you must complete the following actions to transfer the case to the FRU:

- take a photocopy of the front cover, bio data and photo page of any travel documents (including any pages where dependants are added to an adult's passport) for the file and return the originals to the valuable document bank (VDB) following the guidance on [updating CID](#) and Managing border and immigration case files
- update the returns preparation case type with the outcome 'RP Tasked Family Returns'
- amend the allocated to (unit) field on the case maintenance field on CID to 'RP Family Returns Team'

Once FRU have confirmed acceptance of the case, you must send the Home Office (HO) file to Iron Mountain Storage (IMS).

Referrals from other business areas

If you are happy the case meets the acceptance criteria, you must complete the following action to transfer the case to the FRU:

- create admin event 'RP - Family Case to Family Support Team' on CID
- amend the allocated to (unit) field on the case maintenance field on CID to 'RP Family Returns Team'

Once FRU have confirmed acceptance of the case, you must send the HO file to IMS.

Confirmation of acceptance or rejection

If a case meets FRU's acceptance criteria they will create the admin event 'RP - FRU Accept' on CID and accept case ownership.

If a case referred from another business area is not accepted by FRU, they will create the admin event 'RP - FRU Reject'.

If a case referred from the returns preparation team is not accepted, FRU will remove the returns preparation case outcome 'RP Tasked Family Returns' and update the person notes, setting out the reasons for rejection and pushing the case back to the referring caseworker.

The above actions confirm the case has been rejected and the case will remain your responsibility. You will need to resolve any outstanding issues with the case before referring it again.

Related content

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Valuable document bank

Removals casework case type guide

Referring cases to criminal casework

This page gives information to all Home Office staff about the procedures that must be followed when referring an application to criminal casework (CC).

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Criminal casework: contact details

This page gives contact details for criminal casework (CC).

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Duty telephone lines

The duty telephone numbers are available to foreign national offenders, their representatives and our strategic partners. The numbers provide a contact point for the team when the named case owner is not known or is unavailable and will carry an out of hours message advising callers that the office is closed and giving details of normal opening hours.

Teams and/or location	Telephone number
Croydon casework teams - 3, 5, 6, 9, 10	020 8253 6455
Croydon casework teams - 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25	020 8253 6202
Croydon casework teams – 1, 11, 12, 13, 14	020 8760 1457
Croydon security and special cases unit European Economic Area Mentally disordered offenders Casework teams – 4 and 16	020 8760 8041
Liverpool	0151 213 2168
Leeds	0113 341 3373

Related content

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Referring a case to special cases

This page tells Home Office staff how to transfer a case to special cases (SC).

Before carrying out this process, all initial checks must be completed.

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Making a counter-terrorism referral

This page tells Home Office staff how to make a counter terrorism referral.

Before carrying out this process, all initial checks must be completed.

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Special cases unit

Making a referral to a regional intelligence unit

This page tells Home Office staff how to make a referral to regional intelligence units.

For the current process for referring a case to intelligence hubs use the Intelligence referral form.

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Refer or defer entry clearance cases

This page tells entry clearance officers (ECOs) how to handle referrals and deferrals for visa applications made outside the UK.

Entry clearance cases: what is a referral or deferral?

What is a referral?

A referral is where an application is referred to Home Office visas and immigration for a decision.

The majority of decisions will be made at post. It is important that posts do not make a decision locally on applications that do not fall within the Immigration Rules without referring.

Once a referral has been made, posts cannot make any decision on that application but must wait until they get a response.

If a referral leads to the refusal of entry clearance, any subsequent appeal must be handled by the section which refused the referred application, including authority to issue a visa outside the Immigration Rules.

If referred casework unit (RCU) decides that an application does not meet the relevant criteria, posts must draft the refusal notice using the suggested wording provided by RCU and handle any subsequent appeal.

After a referral has been made to RCU, the applicant may appeal the decision and provide additional evidence of compelling compassionate circumstances and the case will now meet the criteria. In these cases, the ECO can refer the case back to RCU for consideration outside the Immigration rules.

What is a deferral?

A deferral is when posts delay making a decision on an application because they require more information or advice.

For more information, see: [when to defer an application](#).

Entry clearance cases: when to refer an application

You must refer categories of entry clearance applications, listed in [the mandatory referrals](#), to Home Office visas and immigration for a decision. You must decide all other applications, including those that have been deferred, unless the case is particularly unusual or difficult.

You must not use the referral procedure solely as a means of passing the responsibility for a decision in a difficult case to London. To refer a case which can be decided locally wastes resources and delays decision making.

For contact details of where to refer or defer applications see [contacts for referred and deferred cases](#).

Entry clearance cases: when to defer an application

You can defer an application when it requires additional information from Home Office visas and immigration.

In addition, an application can be deferred in order to obtain specialist policy advice from the Entry Clearance Complex Case Advice team.

For contact details of where to refer or defer applications, see [contacts for referred and deferred cases](#).

Entry clearance cases: mandatory referrals

A mandatory referral must always be referred to another team to make an immigration decision.

An application which is a mandatory referral on nationality grounds can be refused locally, if it does not meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules.

Referred casework unit (RCU)

Certain categories of application that do not fall within the Immigration Rules must be referred to RCU. These include:

- other dependent relatives, for example, not the spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner, or child under 18 of persons with humanitarian protection (HP)
- all dependants of persons with discretionary leave, who do not yet have indefinite leave to remain, where there are compelling compassionate circumstances for applications to be considered outside the Immigration Rules
- relatives of persons with refugee status, who do not meet the requirements of paragraph 352A and 352D, where the ECO is satisfied that there are compelling compassionate circumstances for applications to be considered outside the Immigration Rules
- family of minors who have been recognised as refugees in the UK, where there are compelling compassionate circumstances for applications to be considered outside the Immigration Rules
- appeals allowed only on human rights grounds (for more information, see: [Appeals procedures for posts](#))
- applications from potential or matched organ donors (for more information, see: [Medical issues](#))

- witnesses to attend trial in the UK if they do not meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules as a visitor (for more information, see Entry clearance cases: mandatory referrals)
- Foreign and Commonwealth and former Gurkha service personnel
- in cases that are high profile and posts are considering refusing because approving the application would be non-conducive to the public good, or where there is media interest, you must:
 - refer to RCU as soon as possible after the application has been received
 - clearly mark the case for the attention of a senior caseworker with the date the applicant intends to travel
 - fully complete the appropriate form to assist with consideration of the case
- issuing a European Union uniform format form (EU UFF) to persons who do not hold another form of acceptable identification: if the applicant is coming to the UK for the first time for family reunion or settlement, posts can issue the UFF without reference to RCU, for more information see Entry clearance cases: mandatory referrals
- cases that have been discussed with operational managers and further clarification of the Immigration Rules or guidance is needed

Entry clearance cases: how to refer or defer an application

To refer or defer an application you must:

- decide which team is best placed to deal with the referral or deferral
- complete the appropriate pro forma in full as a word document: any incomplete referrals or deferrals, including where the pro forma is missing, will be returned to post
- send the referral or deferral pro forma to the relevant mailbox: to avoid referrals being overlooked, emails must not be sent to a named individual and the lead contact must only be used where excessive delays have occurred and the case becomes urgent
- note in the subject line of the email:
 - the visa application form (VAF) number
 - a brief description of the query
 - your post details
- scan and attach any relevant documents to the email, such as court orders or social services reports: if scanning is not possible, you must either:
 - obtain authorisation from the relevant team to fax the documents, which must be done in numbered batches of no more than 15 pages at a time, with each numbered bundle stating how many pages it contains
 - consider sending documents by bag
- provide a detailed summary of the application, highlighting the main issues
- include details of any exceptional compelling compassionate circumstances that warrant consideration outside the rules
- make an initial recommendation on the outcome based on your assessment of the evidence available (referred casework unit (RCU) referrals)
- have in place a referrals mailbox to receive replies
- check the mailbox daily and make sure all appropriate staff have access as this will avoid duplication of work

- use the 'bring up' system in Proviso for all referred or deferred cases
- send any reminders to the appropriate team mailbox and identify the email as a chaser (for example, chaser 1 or chaser 2)

Entry clearance cases: contacts for referred and deferred cases

Referred casework unit (RCU)

All applications mentioned in the section: [Categories that are mandatory referrals](#) must be [referred to RCU](#).

Evidence and enquiry (E and E)

E and E will provide information from Home Office (HO) files relating to an applicant or sponsor. E and E can send copies of deportation orders, immigration histories, photos or interview transcripts. The team aims to respond to all requests for information within 10 working days.

Many HO files are very large so posts must be as specific as possible about what is required.

E and E has asked that:

- ECOs do not send chasers within the first 10 days
- when ECOs receive the information they have asked for, they do not send an acknowledgement email because E and E catalogue all the enquiries once the relevant information is sent out

Work Permits UK

This team was disbanded following the introduction of the points-based system. The team that has replaced them deals with in UK points-based system enquiries only.

Euro casework

The team is responsible for all European related referrals or deferrals, such as European Economic Area (EEA) family permits. This includes cases for consideration for refusal under the EEA.

As well as EEA family permits, this team deals with all in UK applications for:

- registration cards
- registration certificates
- permanent residency
- family member resident stamps

Entry clearance cases: processing times for referrals and deferrals

The referred casework unit (RCU) will confirm receipt of a referral or deferral within 2 working days. The team will provide the:

- date of receipt
- Home Office reference number if applicable
- expected date of reply or target date

As long as a post has provided all the necessary information, RCU will deal with a referral within 20 working days and a deferral within 10 working days from confirming receipt.

The appropriate form will be returned to a post with a response. This will be sent by email to the post referrals mailbox. Posts must check this account regularly. RCU will also update CRS with the outcome of the referral.

Where RCU authorise leave outside the Immigration Rules, the endorsement authorised must be added. If not, Proviso must be amended to make sure the vignette records the endorsement exactly as RCU have directed.

Policy teams aim to respond to all requests for advice in 4 working days.

Evidence and enquiry aims to respond to all requests for information within 10 working days.

Related content

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Referring a case to a medical officer

This page tells Home Office officers and caseworkers how to refer an applicant to a medical officer.

To refer an applicant to a medical officer for a medical examination, see Medical grounds.

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Referring cases to the Interventions and Sanctions Directorate

This page tells Home Office staff how to refer cases to the Interventions and Sanctions Directorate (ISD).

See Sanctions: refer case to Interventions and Sanctions Directorate (ISD) for guidance on how to make a referral to ISD. They will then either apply sanctions or pass the information to the relevant external partner. Areas of abuse, or potential abuse, to refer to ISD cover:

- NHS charging
- driving licences - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) or Driver and Vehicle Agency Northern Ireland (DVA (NI))
- taxi and private hire licences
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- illegal working - Civil Penalty Compliance team (CPCT)
- private rented sector - Right to Rent scheme and civil penalties, eviction and offences
- private rented sector - Evictions team (Notices of Letting to a Disqualified Person)
- illegal migrants' current accounts (financial services)
- working with the Department for Education (DfE)
- working with the electoral registration offices (ERO)
- working with no recourse to public funds network (NRPF) Connect

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