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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0762-16

Thank you for your email of 10 August 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

“I require a summary of the call-handling procedures of the Malaga Call Centre, in particular escalated calls/calls reporting a crime against a British national.”

When asked for further details of the type of crime, you asked for:

“If someone calls and reports that they had been raped the night before [redacted]. An overview of general call handling procedures would also be very helpful for other issues”

We have now completed our search and consultation process and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

I include with this letter all the relevant material held by the FCO to which you are entitled in response to your request.

Disclosure

You asked about the call handling procedures of the Malaga Contact Centre, in particular in relation to reporting a crime and specifically about reporting a rape.



In summary, staff at the Malaga Contact Centre follow the call handling procedures set out in our call handling system in order to decide whether they can answer the caller's query themselves or whether the enquiry should be escalated to the appropriate British Consulate covering that country.

If a caller requests assistance in relation to a rape, the Contact Centres will follow the guidance attached. For clarity, "Hot Escalation" means escalating the call immediately to an experienced consular officer at Post; "Cold Escalation" means assigning an action to a Post using our Case Management system.

Consular FOI/DPA team
Consular Directorate



Guidance from the FCO Call Handling System if the caller reports Rape or Sexual Assault:

Main points:

Consulates can:

Ascertain if the victim is safe and advise the victim about safety as soon as possible.

See the victim as soon as possible, in private if at all possible and we will do our best to make sure that officer present is of the gender preferred by the victim.

With victim's consent, arrange a medical examination immediately with local doctor if appropriate.

Arrange a medical examination with a doctor and interview with a police officer, both of the gender preferred by the victim.

Tell the victim about local police and legal procedures.

Inform next of kin if that is the victim's wish.

Provide information on local practice regarding rape and other forms of sexual assault.

Offer to assist and accompany the victim on visits to local police and doctor.

Give the victim a list of local lawyers and interpreters.

Provide details of Rape and Sexual Assault Help-lines in the UK which will help all UK victims of sexual assault irrespective of the country in which the sexual assault took place.

Listen, reassure, and not judge.

Consular directorate should follow up with the person; offer to facilitate contact with UK police and provide information on UK based support groups and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

Consulates cannot:

Make the decision for the victim about whether to report the crime.

Pay for interpreters/lawyers



CONTACT CENTRE ACTIONS:

HOT ESCALATE:

If caller is the victim

If the caller is reporting new case

If the caller is an ACCOMPANYING NOK/FRIEND or LOCAL AUTHORITY

For calls related to existing cases other than the above cases, COLD escalate by adding an ACTION NOTE to Casebook.

