



Home Office



Immigration  
Enforcement

# Operation Innerste process guidance

Version 1.0

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# About this guidance

This guidance tells police forces and local authorities, who are signed up to the Op Innerste process, about the legislative powers and duties to follow when they encounter an unaccompanied migrant child. It provides some advice on the actions to take to safeguard a vulnerable migrant child, but this guidance is not intended to be a comprehensive guide. Further links are provided where guidance that is more detailed exists and how to find more information.

## 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 IE National Safeguarding Engagement and Co-ordination 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.

## Publication

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

- version **1.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **26 October 2023**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

New guidance

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Background

Operation Innerste is a multi-agency response to better safeguard unaccompanied migrant children. The process is supported by legislation and sets out the roles and responsibilities of all agencies, including Immigration Enforcement, the police, children's social care and Independent Child Trafficking Guardians.

Operation Innerste is a safeguarding and welfare process. There will be no questions about asylum claims, or any other immigration applications. It is to allow agencies to build trust and rapport with the unaccompanied migrant child to maximise safeguarding opportunities, to prevent the child going missing or being a victim of exploitation or further harm. Capturing biometric fingerprints and photographs is essential to allow the police and immigration departments to identify children later if they go missing, are trafficked, are found in distressing circumstances or have committed a crime.

Clear protocols have been developed to allow continuous communication between all agencies to ensure the ongoing safety and welfare of the unaccompanied migrant child.

This guidance has been written for Police Forces and local authorities, who are signed up to the Op Innerste process, to follow when acting as first responders to an unaccompanied migrant child.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Context

In 2016, Op Innerste was developed as a multi-agency response to the complex issues surrounding unaccompanied migrant children going missing.

The ECPAT (Every Child Protected against Trafficking) report [Heading back into harm](#) set out the importance of early rapport building with unaccompanied migrant children by authorities to turn them away from traffickers, and significantly reduce their influence. The first 72 hours following the initial encounter with an unaccompanied migrant child is critical; the creation of a relationship of trust between the professional and the child is an effective measure in preventing the child going missing.

Immigration Enforcement, in collaboration with Devon & Cornwall Police, worked in conjunction with police forces, Non-Government Organisations, Home Office Children's Champion, Border Force and the Association of Directors of Children's Services to design an enhanced process to respond to the issue/to better safeguard unaccompanied migrant children arriving in the UK. The Op Innerste process is used when the police are deployed to an inland migrant incident or when an unaccompanied child walks into the front desk. The police, as the first responder to these events, will engage in a conversation with the unaccompanied migrant child to build early rapport and a relationship of trust. It provides the unaccompanied migrant child with a safe environment to express their needs and concerns, and the opportunity for authorities to explain the support, services and protection entitled to them. The creation of a relationship of trust between the professional and the child is intended to maximise the likelihood that they will safely remain in their placement for formal age assessment (if required) and ongoing safeguarding processes.

As part of the process, police officers will consider their responsibilities to minimise a child suffering significant harm by invoking their police protection procedures under S46 Children Act 1989. Following a welfare conversation and completion of the associated document, police will capture wet fingerprints and a digital photograph using powers conferred to them within S141 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Paragraph 18(2) Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 and Common Law.

These powers exist where it is believed that the child having recently entered the UK, has insufficient documentation to satisfy an immigration officer of their identity and nationality.

Once recorded, their biometric details may be available to cross reference if the child is subsequently encountered in one of many different scenarios.

The Op Innerste process is managed by the IE National Safeguarding Engagement and Coordination Team (IE NSEC).

## Related content

[Contents](#)

# Intentions

The intention of Operation Innerste is to:

- safeguard unaccompanied migrant children
- build early rapport and reassurance to gain trust and provide a safe environment for unaccompanied migrant children to minimise the risk that they go missing from their placement, therefore maximising safeguarding opportunities
- protect children from harm; using information obtained to identify potential offenders and persons likely to expose the children to harm
- identify and make full use of appropriate legislation when dealing with unaccompanied migrant children
- standardise a national operating response to unaccompanied migrant children for police forces and local authorities' Children's Social Care who are signed up to Op Innerste along with Immigration Enforcement (IE)
- streamline the conflicting processes of different agencies into one agreed protocol to minimise exposure of the child to further trauma through unnecessary intrusiveness
- prevent unaccompanied migrant children from connecting with traffickers or other criminals, which could lead the child to being trafficked and/or exploited
- work with partners to ensure that all agencies follow the guidance for the collection and submission of personal data, bio-metric fingerprints and photographs for submission to Immigration Enforcement (compliant with data protection legislation and information assurance)
- to maximise vigilance for information that might suggest modern slavery offences. Where identified ensure the consistency of NRM submissions for all children following national guidance, complying with S.52 Modern Slavery Act 2015 responsibilities - [Modern slavery victims: referral](#)
- improve the sharing of multi-agency information to support Single Combined Assessment of Risk Form (SCARF) assessments being completed for placement in accommodation and to protect other children residing there.

## Related content

[Contents](#)

# Legislation

The Police will sensitively exercise their common law and statutory powers using both Policing and Immigration legislation to collect and otherwise process personal data for law enforcement purposes.

## Police Protection Powers (PPP)

As part of the process, police officers will consider the appropriate application of PPP, under S46 Children Act 1989, to minimise the chances of a child suffering significant harm. Following a welfare conversation and completion of the associated document, police will capture wet fingerprints and a digital photograph using powers conferred to them within S141 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Paragraph 18(2) Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 and Common Law.

As a final resort where PPP is not suitable, or the child is wholly non-compliant, consider powers of arrest under **section 24 (5) PACE** to:

- enable the name of the person in question to be ascertained (in the case where the constable does not know, and cannot readily ascertain, the person's name, or has reasonable grounds for doubting whether a name given by the person as their name is their real name)
- correspondingly as regards the person's address
- to prevent the person in question:
  - causing physical injury to himself or any other person
  - suffering physical injury
  - causing loss of or damage to property
  - committing an offence against public decency (subject to subsection (6))
  - causing an unlawful obstruction of the highway
- to protect a child or other vulnerable person from the person in question
- to allow the prompt and effective investigation of the offence or of the conduct of the person in question
- to prevent any prosecution for the offence from being hindered by the disappearance of the person in question (for example, the unaccompanied migrant child may be at risk of physical harm from a third party suspected of trafficking or exploiting them - or maybe the arrest of the child, removes them from a potential trafficking or exploitative environment, which would allow the prompt and effective investigation of an offence. Section 24 Immigration Act 1971 criminalises the act of illegal entry into the UK).

## Police powers under immigration legislation

**Only police constables, including special constables are legally permitted to exercise these immigration powers. Other civilian police staff, including detention officers and outsourced contractors are not permitted to act under these powers.**



## Power of arrest

**Paragraph 17(1), Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 (aa)** - A person liable to be detained under paragraph 16 may be arrested without warrant by a constable or by an immigration officer.

Paragraph 16, Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 (aa) – **specifically** paragraph 16(2), Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 (aa)

If there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a person is someone in respect of whom directions may be given under any of paragraphs 8 to 10 or 12 to 14, that person may be detained under the authority of an immigration officer pending -

- (a) a decision whether to give such directions.
- (b) his removal in pursuance of such directions.

This would include someone who has entered the UK illegally either without the required leave or as a Clandestine entrant, who has overstayed their leave or has breached a condition of their leave.

## Power for police to take fingerprints

**Section 141, Immigration & Asylum Act 1999** – permits police officers to act under Immigration powers to take fingerprints from a person who upon arrival in the UK fails to produce a valid passport with photograph or some other document satisfactorily establishing his identity and nationality or citizenship.

An authorised person may not take fingerprints from a person under the age of 16 unless their decision to take them has been confirmed:

- if they are a constable, by a person designated for the purpose by the chief constable of their police force

Where a child is under 16 years old the police officer must liaise with an Inspector to authorise the discharging of powers to obtain fingerprints under s141 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999. Chief Constables must ensure that the Inspectors have been given designated authority for the purpose of taking fingerprints and the decision is recorded.

## Power to obtain photographs for the purpose of establishing identity

**Paragraph 18, Schedule 2, Immigration Act 1971** (where applicable) and Common Law Powers provide the power to obtain photographs for the purpose of establishing identity.

## Information sharing with Immigration Enforcement (IE)

**Sec 20 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999** gives the police powers to supply information to the Secretary of State for immigration purposes when required.

## Property

### **ECHR Protocol 1, Article 1: The protection of property**

There will be an interference with this Article where items found on the child / young person could be used to harm either themselves or someone else.

There would be no breach of this Article in these circumstances where the decision to remove the property is lawful and necessary for the public interest, in furtherance of ECHR Article 2: The Right to Life of the individual or other parties.

### **Related content**

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# Human Rights

Op Innerste will protect individual rights under the European Convention of Human Rights, as provided by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Rights relevant to the execution of Operation Innerste include:

- Article 1 (Property rights)
- Article 2 (Right to life).
- Article 4 (Prohibition of slavery and forced labour) prohibition of servitude, slavery)
- Article 5 (Liberty and security)
- Article 8 (Privacy)

Police forces should have regard to Article 2 and 4 which create legal obligations on the public authorities to take active measures to prevent infringements of these rights. For example, Article 4 Para 60 specifies the obligation to take operational measures to protect victims or potential victims of modern slavery for which credible reason to suspect a breach has been identified.

## **Related content**

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# Police process

If a person claims to be under 18 years of age, they must be given the benefit of doubt and be treated by officers as a child under the Children's Act. This is unless they look significantly over the age of 18 or there is credible evidence for example a genuine passport, identity card or Immigration system check trace to show they are clearly over 18 years of age in which case they would be treated as an adult ([Assessing age](#) - page 11 discusses the age decision process). It would be beneficial if any observations in determining a particular course of action were recorded and shared with those actioning the case in the future.

Children should be taken to a place of safety. This should not be to police custody. A police station is only acceptable if no alternative place of safety can be identified.

## Initial contact with an unaccompanied migrant child

On first contact with (identification of) an unaccompanied migrant child (under 18 years old) the officer should explain that the police are here to keep them safe and look after them. This should be in a language the child understands, using Language Line (or other force approved interpretation services) as necessary.

Remember that some unaccompanied migrant children will not be aware that they are in the UK and may not be aware that the services provided to them within the UK are free.

It is important that officers emphasise the above points and explain that they want to help, and that they are not in trouble. This will, potentially, help to develop early rapport.

## Age assessment

The following text is a summary of the decision outcomes for assessing age. Further detail is provided in the [Assessing age](#) guidance.

The initial age assessment stage for cases where the claimed age is not accepted is intended to lead to a decision on how an individual should be treated and is divided into three possible outcomes with several reasons for arriving at them. Further guidance on how a decision should be made as to which group an individual should fall, is provided later in this section. The three possible outcomes with reasons for arriving at them are as follows:

### **Outcome 1: Decision made to treat the claimant as an adult**

A decision should only be made to treat the claimant as an adult if either:

- a Merton compliant age assessment has found the claimant to be 18 or over, which Home Office officials have agreed with after:
  - giving significant weight to the assessment

- taking all reliable evidence into account (Merton compliant age assessment already completed)
- 2 Home Office members of staff, one at least of Chief Immigration Officer or Higher Executive Officer grade, have independently assessed that the claimant is an adult because their physical appearance and demeanour very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age and there is little or no supporting evidence for their claimed age
- there is credible and clear documentary evidence that they are 18 years of age or over

### **Outcome 2: Decision made to treat the claimant as a child**

A decision should be made to treat the claimant as a child if either:

- a Merton compliant age assessment has found the claimant to be under 18, which Home Office Officials have agreed with after:
  - giving significant weight to the assessment
  - taking all reliable evidence into account (Merton compliant age assessment already completed)
- you doubt the claimant's claimed age but after a careful consideration of the specifics of the case they have been given the benefit of the doubt and their claimed age is accepted (accepting the claimed age in cases where the claimed age is doubted); or there is credible and clear documentary evidence that they are the age they claim to be

### **Outcome 3: Decision made to treat the claimant as a child until further assessment of their age has been completed**

A decision should be made to give the benefit of the doubt and treat the claimant as a child until further assessment has been completed if you cannot be sure that the individual is an adult (as set out in outcome 1) and you have not accepted the claimed age (as set out in outcome 2). This further assessment includes obtaining the view of the local authority and considering this alongside other relevant evidence (provisionally treating the claimant as a child).

Further to the above brief outcome descriptions, if an asylum seeker or migrant's claimed age is doubted and there is no reliable evidence to support their claim, you must conduct an initial age assessment in accordance with the more detailed guidance in the remainder of the Initial age assessment section.

## **Develop a rapport with the unaccompanied migrant child**

Initial proportionate questioning can be done without a responsible adult for the purpose of establishing language and necessary information for immediate safeguarding purposes.

The child should be spoken to alone and without other travel companions present (including other children) to avoid adverse influence/coercion from others who may have been complicit in the facilitation or exploitation of the child.

Only accredited interpreters/force language lines should be used to assist with communication. Do not use other adults or persons travelling with the child/family as they potentially could be a trafficker or facilitator.

## Consider using Police Protection Powers (PPP)

As part of the process, police officers will consider the appropriate application of PPP, under S46 Children Act 1989, to minimise the chances of a child suffering significant harm. Police are only to arrest for immigration offences where PPP are insufficient to safeguard the child. The police are to arrest under Paragraph 17(1) Schedule 2 Immigration Act 1971 (aa) - a person liable to be detained under paragraph 16 above may be arrested without warrant by a constable or by an immigration officer.

The administrative caution is to be administered which is as follows: -

“I am a police officer, and I am arresting you on suspicion that you are a person liable to immigration detention. This is because I suspect you have:

- entered the UK illegally
- have overstayed your leave
- have breached a condition of your leave

This is not an arrest for a criminal offence. You are not free to leave. You are not entitled to free legal advice at this stage.’

Do you understand?”

The Children Act legislation implies the power to use reasonable force in appropriate circumstances to take a child into police protection or to keep the unaccompanied migrant child there.

## Searching an unaccompanied migrant child

There is no specific power to search an unaccompanied migrant child (unless the child is under arrest) however officers should consider searching the individual for public and personal safety in line with the [National Decision-Making Model \(NDM\)](#), if appropriate.

## Safeguarding an unaccompanied migrant child

Responding officers must assess the unaccompanied migrant child for any injuries or medical concerns, taking into consideration that some conditions may not be visible, and ensure these are prioritised.

If the unaccompanied migrant child requires immediate medical attention, this must be facilitated with police accompanying the child to hospital to prevent further harm.

## Consideration of potential criminal activity by or against an unaccompanied migrant child

In most cases an unaccompanied migrant child will not be treated as a suspect and agencies will start from the premise that the child has not committed a crime. However, there are some circumstances where a crime has been committed by an unaccompanied migrant child where the investigation of that offence will take precedence.

If the unaccompanied migrant child makes other serious criminal allegations or is a victim of a criminal offence, this will take precedence over the Op Innerste process, and they will be safeguarded under that process.

## Contact Immigration Enforcement National Command & Control Unit (NCCU)

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### Official sensitive – end of section

This unique reference number should be included on the welfare form, the Fingerprint Form (IFB1) and any other correspondence between the police force, Children's Social Care and NCCU with regards to the case.

## Op Innerste pack provided by NCCU

Following the referral regarding the encounter with an unaccompanied migrant child, NCCU will send the pack (except for the fingerprint form) by email.

The pack will contain:

- Operation Innerste process guidance
- process map - see [Annex B](#) for a link to the process map
- unaccompanied child welfare form - see [Annex A](#) for how to obtain a blank copy
- IE form IS86 (to be provided to the child, explains why the fingerprints are being taken, see [Annex C](#) for how to obtain a blank IS86)

## NCCU referral to the Immigration Enforcement National Safeguarding Engagement and Co-ordination (NSEC) Team

Following the referral from the police, NCCU will inform IE NSEC of the unaccompanied migrant child encounter by copying in the IE Op Innerste email

address to the police email containing the welfare pack. This will include the individual PE (Pronto) reference number.

## Referrals to Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (ICTG)

The ICTG Service is outlined within Section 48 of the Modern Slavery Act ([Interim Guidance for Independent Child Trafficking Guardians](#)). The service is commissioned by the Home Office and delivered by Barnardo's in the following sites:

- Bedfordshire
- Greater Manchester
- London
- Wales
- East Midlands
- Hampshire & IOW
- Merseyside
- Warwickshire
- Essex
- Kent
- North Yorkshire
- West Midlands
- Gloucestershire (inc. Bristol)
- Lancashire
- Surrey
- West Yorkshire

The ICTG service offers advice, guidance, and support for children (aged under 18) who have been exploited through trafficking and modern slavery. We also provide support, advice and guidance for professionals working with young people who are victims of trafficking and modern slavery.

The service operates on a 24/7 basis. Advice and guidance, information about the service and queries regarding possible referrals can be made by contacting our ICTG Guardianship Assessment Team.

Referrals to the ICTG Service can be submitted using their [Online Referral Form](#) or by calling their Guardianship Assessment Team on: 0800 043 4303.

## Referrals to other agencies

Children's Social Care must be contacted immediately at the start of the incident. The Op Innerste process must be undertaken in partnership with Children's Social Care unless there is a significant timely wait for child for the social worker to arrive.



## Completion of Op Innerste pack

### Child Welfare form

See [Annex A](#) for how to obtain a blank copy of the Child Welfare form.

It is best practice to complete the welfare form in partnership with Children's Services. However, this must not be a barrier to engaging with the unaccompanied migrant child if children services attendance is significantly delayed.

Basic communication, initial safeguarding actions and evidence gathering can be done without an appropriate adult (AA) being present.

It is not necessary to capture an evidential video recorded interview. However, all questions and answers must be fully recorded for transparency and disclosure purposes on the welfare form.

The police use body worn cameras for immediate dynamic interaction, this may be of benefit for the initial encounter but is not necessary or required for any interview to complete the welfare pack.

### Obtain fingerprints and photographs

Fingerprints should be taken using wet ink and on Home Office (HO) form IFB1.

It is Home Office policy to defer fingerprinting a child until 5 years of age, when their fingerprints will become fully developed, see Identity management (enforcement).

Police constables and special constables, not including other police personnel will take fingerprints under Immigration powers using the following legislation:

Section 141, Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 – Permits the police to act under Immigration powers to take fingerprints from a person who upon arrival in the UK fails to produce a valid passport with photograph or some other document satisfactorily establishing their identity and nationality or citizenship.

Section 141, Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 (12) - An authorised person may not take fingerprints from a person under the age of 16 unless their decision to take them has been confirmed:

- if they are a constable, by a person designated for the purpose by the chief constable of their police force

**Where a child is under 16 the officer should liaise with an Inspector to authorise the discharging of powers to obtain fingerprints under s141 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999. Chief constables must ensure there is recorded designation for inspectors to authorise fingerprints of children aged 5 -16 years.**

Police officers are not to use police forms or a Livescan machine as these are not compatible with Immigration databases (Immigration Asylum Biometric System, IABS) and the unaccompanied migrant child is not a suspect or being dealt with under PACE.

Currently Immigration Enforcement can only upload the fingerprints to IABS (the Immigration fingerprint database) when they are received on an IFB1 in original hard copy format.

Photographs can be taken by any available digital device and emailed to IE NSEC.

**Fingerprint form IFB1 needs to be completed using wet ink in original hard copy format. Supplies of both forms will need to be obtained from IE NSEC. Due to this requirement this cannot be done in real time. Officer will need to identify where IFB1 forms are stored in force. (In force areas where grab packs have been created, IFB1 forms, and ink strips should be contained within these packs) – [video of how to take wet fingerprints](#).**

## **Use of responsible adult / appropriate adult when obtaining fingerprints and photographs**

Fingerprints may not be taken from a person between the ages of 5 and 16 under s.141 of the 1999 Act unless in the presence of a 'responsible adult' (18 years or older) who may be:

- the child's parent - however, if the parent is available than the child is unlikely to be unaccompanied
- the child's guardian - this includes a social worker who is a corporate parent
- a person who, for the time being, takes responsibility for the child (see 141(3) and (4) of the 1999 Act), but who is not:
  - an officer of the Secretary of State, that is, a Home Office employee
  - a police officer
  - a prison officer
  - a person employed under a detention centre contract
  - a person authorised by the Secretary of State to take fingerprints

The police 'appropriate adult scheme' can be used when completing the Op Innerste process.

S141(3) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 states that a 'responsible adult' is not required when taking fingerprints of anyone 16 years and over. However, when dealing with a vulnerable unaccompanied migrant child (between the ages of 16 and 18), particularly where age cannot be verified and age requires assessment, best practice is to take fingerprints with a 'responsible adult' in attendance.

For further guidance see Identity management (enforcement)

## Contact details of Children's Services

The name, area and contact details of the social worker who attended the police station, are to be obtained. Additionally, if known, the address the child is going to be accommodated at and any foster parent details. This information is to be included in the email sent to the IE NSEC, along with the photograph and welfare form. This information is important for the 72-hour follow up check with Children's Services to ensure that the child has remained in their placement.

## Use of force

As a safeguarding process police officers should **not** use force to take the fingerprints of a child under the age of 18. However, if a child refuses to have their fingerprints taken consideration must be given as to the reason why this may be the case.

## Data protection

Data protection legislation categorises fingerprints as Special Category Data.

The originating police force holds the information assurance liability until such a time as it is received by Immigration Enforcement NCCU.

This data should therefore be sent at the earliest opportunity and no later than **24 hours** from being obtained.

## Submitting the Op Innerste pack to IE NSEC

According to the Home Office information assurance policy **all documentation including the welfare form, photograph and Children's Services contact details, except the IFB1 form**, must be emailed to IE NSEC.

Once the welfare form has been completed with the unaccompanied migrant child's personal data contained within the document, it should be marked as 'Official Sensitive', before then being emailed to IE NSEC.

To ensure adherence to data protection legislation and to be Information Assurance compliant the IFB1 (fingerprint form) should be sent by hard copy in the following format:

- use double envelopes with the information placed in the inner envelope marked as **Official Sensitive**,
- include a return address on the outer envelope,
- do not mark the outer envelope as official sensitive.
- send using registered Royal Mail service, tracked or recorded delivery, or a commercial courier track and trace service to:
  - NCCU Safeguarding Team, 4th Floor, Boiler House, Soapworks, Colgate Lane, Salford, M5 3LZ

## Multi-agency safeguarding referrals

Local multi-agency safeguarding referrals (for example, MASH) must be submitted **(this is a mandatory action)**.

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### Official sensitive – end of section

At the earliest opportunity following the child being placed with Children's Social Care a full strategy meeting should be held to consider the need for a Section 47 investigation under the Children Act 1989. This should include the following:

- Police
- Children's Services
- Education
- Health

The submission of a NRM referral, where appropriate and if not already made, using the [National referral mechanism guidance](#) should be agreed in the strategy meeting.

Children's Social Care will take responsibility for welfare and safeguarding of the unaccompanied migrant child.

Full information is to be recorded appropriately on all agency systems to assist partners, as required, to safeguard the unaccompanied migrant child.

## Crime recording for the police

Consideration must be given to the possibility that any persons identified as having entered the UK by an illegal method will commit an offence under section 24 A1, B1, C1 or D1 of the Nationality and Borders Act (NABA) 2022.

If professionals suspect the unaccompanied migrant child is a victim of modern slavery then they should report a crime to the police, with the child as a victim. The police will record the crime and commence a serious criminal investigation.

Police officers must also consider recording any other offences committed against the unaccompanied migrant child on route to the UK and must be aware of the [NPCC guidance](#), which states that where a person reporting a crime is also a person without leave to remain or to enter the UK the police must and foremost treat them as a victim.

### Related content

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# Immigration Enforcement National Safeguarding Engagement and Co-ordination Team process

A general summary of the Op Innerste desk aide is provided below.

## Checks and case creation

1. Once the IE NSEC receive notification of the unaccompanied migrant child from NCCU they will use the individual PRONTO reference to complete a PRONTO check and create a case record on the Op Innerste case management record.
2. IE NSEC must conduct checks on the relevant immigration systems Atlas/CRS to see if the unaccompanied migrant child has previously been encountered or is known to the Home Office.
3. If the child is not known, a new record and person identity number (using the child's name, title, date of birth and nationality) must be created on Atlas.
4. An Op Innerste person alert must be opened in Atlas with an expiry data on the child's 18th birthday.
5. The Atlas record will need to be updated with the creation of a Compliance and Enforcement Card, a Communication Card and the relevant documents relating to the case to be uploaded onto Manage Documents.
6. If there is already a record of the unaccompanied migrant child on Atlas, then the relevant Atlas Cards will need to be updated with any required information that is missing.
7. A folder with the case reference and unaccompanied migrant child's name will need to be created within Outlook, where all the email correspondence regarding the child is to be stored.

## The welfare pack

1. IE NSEC will check that the welfare pack has been received from the police. If any element of the welfare pack has not been received then a standard reminder email will be sent to the police officer, who made the original NCCU referral for the unaccompanied migrant child.
2. Op Innerste referrals to NCCU received over the weekend to IE NSEC, will have a standard reminder email sent on the first working weekday.

3. Op Innerste referrals received on a working weekday will have a standard reminder email sent out to the referring police officer within 2 hours of the referral being made.

## Photograph and welfare form

1. The photograph of the unaccompanied migrant child must be uploaded onto Atlas on the child's record.
2. The completed welfare form must be uploaded onto Atlas under the Manage Documents option.
3. Receipt of the photograph and the welfare form must be updated on the Op Innerste case management record.

## Wet fingerprints

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### Official sensitive – start of section

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

### Official sensitive – end of section

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2. A member of IE NSEC is to check the box for new mail each time they are in the office to ensure that they uploaded onto the fingerprint system (IABS).
3. Each set of fingerprints must have an individual bar code attached to the IFB1 form, to allow for uploaded onto IABS.
4. The details on the forms are to be cross checked with the Op Innerste case management system to ensure that a record has been completed on Home Office systems.
5. To upload the fingerprints onto the IABS system, first scan the bar code and then enter the personal details. The comments section must have 'Op Innerste' recorded for Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) reference.
6. The fingerprints are then scanned and uploaded on to the IABS and sent through to the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) to store and to check against immigration systems for checks.
7. IFB checks results will be sent to IABS Results. These 2 emails per case are:
  - Police (IDENT1)

- IABS confirming match or not confirming match
8. The results ('confirmed' match or 'no' match) must be recorded on the Atlas Communication Card.
  9. Fingerprint matches against a person who is already known to the Home Office but in a different identity, must have Atlas case records linked together and details of matched cases, IFB reference must be updated on the Op Innerste case management record.
  10. Fingerprint match cases must be notified to the Senior Executive Officer (SEO) to complete a review of the case records, to ascertain if the child is at further risk or harm, has an outstanding application, has been granted leave by the Home Office or if they are registered as missing.
  11. Advice must be sought from the SEO (G7 if SEO not available) to establish further actions and notification to relevant agencies.
  12. The original set of fingerprints (IFB1 form) will be sent via Royal Mail registered post to the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB), 5th floor, Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY where they will be retained securely under IFB's retention policy.

## Scanned copies of fingerprints

1. Scanned copies of fingerprints will only be checked where the original set is not received. This method is not best practice as the deterioration in the quality of the fingerprints once printed out may not meet IABS standards. Scanned copies of fingerprints that do not meet IABS standards must be deleted. The date of deletion must be recorded on the Op Innerste case management record.
2. A note that the fingerprints had been received, were unsuitable for scanning and had been deleted will be made on a communications card on the Atlas system.

## Children's Services 72-hour safeguarding check

IE NSEC will carry out a **72-hour safeguarding check**, using the social worker contact details provided, by sending out a standard email letter to the social worker. This is to check whether the unaccompanied migrant child continues to remain in safe accommodation.

The Op Innerste case management system will be updated with the status of the child stating that they have remained in placement beyond the 72-hour point and confirm the child's residential address.

In the case of the 72-hour check coming back saying that the child has not remained in their placement and are deemed missing, see the section below entitled Missing Children.



## Unaccompanied migrant child aged assessed as an adult

If, when conducting a **72-hour safeguarding check** with the local authority they advise that the individual has been Merton Compliant age assessed as an adult, the case can be closed on the Op Innerste case management record with the status as 'over 18'. IE NSEC must establish with the Local Authority if alternative accommodation has been provided or where the individual is residing.

### Local authorities

Where details of the child's social worker have not been provided on initial referral, IE NSEC will contact the police officer responsible for the initial referral to obtain details of social workers / local authority Children's Services who took responsibility for the child. The case will **not** be closed on the Op Innerste case management system until there has been a response to a 72-hour safeguarding check email.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Missing children

A child is missing if their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the child may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others. Further information and actions to take when identifying a child is at risk and / or is missing can be found in Identifying people at risk.

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## Official sensitive – start of section

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## Official sensitive – end of section

When a child is reported missing the local authority must notify the IE NSEC Operation Innerste team.

IE NSEC will update Home Office systems and the Op Innerste case management record to show the status of the child as missing. The team will provide support to police enquiries as required.

## Related content

[Contents](#)

# Annex A: Child Welfare form (ASL.5097(a))

The Child Welfare form is a central form used across the HO and is not specific to Op Innerste.

- when complete the Child Welfare form should be marked Official Sensitive.
- the Child Welfare form is uploaded to the HO IT system and is available to all decision makers - the form may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis when decisions are made
- information recorded on the Child Welfare form under the sub heading of 'Actions/Observations' can be shared with local authority Children's Services representatives to inform a safeguarding action plan for the child

A blank copy of the child welfare form is emailed by NCCU for every Op Innerste referral to IE. However, if you require a copy of the form email IE Op Innerste who will send you a copy of the latest version.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Annex B: Op Innerste process map

For the most up to date version of the Op Innerste Process map see: Op Innerste Process map.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Annex C: IS86 (for service on child when fingerprints are obtained)

An IS86 is emailed by NCCU for every Op Innerste referral to IE. However, if you require a blank copy of an IS86, email IE Op Innerste who will send you a copy of the latest version.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)