



Home Office

# Detention Services Order 01/2013

## Paid Activities

June 2026



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# Document Details

**Process:** To inform staff and contracted service providers of the conditions under which detained individuals may be provided with opportunities to engage in paid activities within immigration removal centres.

**Publication Date:** May 2025

**Implementation Date:** March 2013 (republished May 2025)

**Review Date:** May 2027

**Version:** 4.0

## Contains Mandatory Instructions

**For Action:** All Home Office staff and contracted service providers operating in immigration removal centres.

**For Information:**

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**Contact Point:** [Detention Services Orders Team](#).

**Processes Affected:** Paid activities for residents in the immigration removal estate.

**Assumptions:** N/A

**Notes:** This DSO replaces DSO 01/2013 version 2.0

# Instruction

## Introduction

1. This instruction concerns the conditions under which detained individuals may be provided with opportunities to engage in paid activities within immigration removal centres (IRCs).
2. For the purpose of this DSO, 'centre' refers to immigration removal centres.
3. This instruction does not apply to Residential Holding Rooms (RHRs) nor to Residential Short-Term Holding Facilities [RSTHFs].
4. Two different Home Office teams operate in IRCs:
  - Detention Services Compliance team (Compliance team)
  - Immigration Enforcement Detention Engagement team (DET)

The **Compliance team** are responsible for all on-site commercial and contract monitoring work. The **DETs** interact with those in detention face-to-face on behalf of responsible officers within the immigration removal centres. They focus on communicating and engaging with people detained at IRCs, serving paperwork on behalf of caseworkers, and helping them to understand their cases and detention.

There are no DETs at residential STHFs or the Gatwick PDA. Some of the functions which are the responsibility of the DET in residential STHFs are carried out by the contracted Service Provider and overseen by the International and Returns Services (IRS) Escorting Contract Monitoring Team (ECMT). In the Gatwick PDA the role of detained individual engagement is covered by the local Compliance Team.

## Policy

5. The opportunity to engage in paid activities may be provided to detained individuals under Rule 17 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001.
6. Detained individuals are exempt from the provisions of the minimum wage by way of Section 59 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.
7. Detained individuals will not be allowed to engage in paid activities for more than 30 hours per week.
8. Whether or not the opportunity to engage in paid activities is provided to detained individuals, all centres must have arrangements in place to provide all detained

individuals with the opportunity to participate in activities to meet, as far as possible, their recreational and intellectual needs.

9. Centres may not operate their own paid activity schemes outside the scope of this instruction.
10. Centres may not pay bonuses or other additional rewards to reward or incentivise detained individuals in relation to paid activities.

## Level of Compliance

11. Provision of paid activities should be directly linked to a level of compliance and co-operation by the detained individual on two levels.
12. With the centre operator – only detained individuals who comply with the rules of the relevant centre may be allowed to engage in paid activities. Before submitting an approval request for a Resident to engage in Paid Activities, contracted service providers must first ensure the resident complies with the requirements of paragraphs 5 - 10.
13. Residents should be advised on accessing paid activities (in a language they understand) that these opportunities confer a position of responsibility and that security or safeguarding concerns, or non-compliant or violent behaviour will result in them automatically losing the opportunity to engage in paid activities. Residents are informed of the responsibilities that each paid activity role encompasses during the training process. Rules and regulations are clearly highlighted and visible throughout the resident's time in the IRC.
14. With the Home Office (DET Team) – only those detained individuals who are actively co-operating with the Department in relation to the resolution of their immigration case may be allowed to engage in paid activities. Detained individuals should be advised upon taking a paid activity that opportunities confer a position of responsibility and are subject to their active and continued co-operation. They will no longer qualify for opportunities if they cease to actively co-operate with the Department.
15. Once the contracted service provider is content a Resident meets the conditions of compliance, they must submit a formal request to the onsite DS Compliance team who will review their application in line with the compliance requirements and provide the contracted service provider with the outcome to their request. Contracted service providers should keep an audit trail of requests and their outcomes to be made available to the on-site Compliance team within 24 hours.
16. Detained individuals who the Area Manager (SEO Grade) has decided are not eligible to undertake paid activities as determined by the conditions above, may reapply for the provision after a period of one month following the original decision. The decision

on this re-application will be at the discretion of the Area Manager, based on their compliance as outlined in this DSO.

17. Examples of not actively co-operating with the Department would include, but are not restricted to, a refusal to complete emergency travel document application forms, a failure to attend an interview without good reason, or disruptive behaviour either in the centre or during attempts to remove an individual.
18. Exercising a legal challenge to an immigration decision (e.g. submitting an appeal, applying for bail, seeking a Judicial Review) does not constitute an example of not actively co-operating.
19. Any decision by the centre operator to withdraw or not permit a detained individual's opportunity to engage in paid activities on grounds of eligibility, as determined by their level of compliance and co-operation shall be authorised by the Detention Services SEO Area Manager and confirmed in writing to the detained individual, using translation if necessary, by the contracted service provider staff. The contracted service provider must then inform the relevant member of DS staff regarding the withdrawal of paid activities.

## Rates of Pay

20. Any payment for paid activities shall be over and above the daily allowance paid to detained individuals.
21. There are two tiers of pay rate:
  - Routine activities will be paid at a rate of £1.00 per hour.
  - Specified projects as authorised by the on-site Centre Manager will be paid at a rate of £1.25 per hour.
22. Detained individuals may not be paid at any other rate.
23. A project shall generally relate to a finite task (e.g. painting a set of rooms) and require a minimum of six hours to complete (whether during the course of one day or spread over a number of days).

## Self-audit

24. An annual self-audit of this DSO is required by contracted service providers to ensure that the processes are being followed. This audit should be made available to the Home Office on request.

## Revision History

Review date	Reviewed by	Review outcome	Next review
April 2019	S Ali	General reformat and update	April 2021
May 2025	Akash Shourie	Updated to reflect language changes and general content updates. The role of DS Compliance in auditing and approving Paid Activities. Clarification on the responsible grades/equivalents for activities and processes Rates of pay reviewed and reflected in the DSO	May 2027
June 2026	Akash Shourie	Updated to correct Home Office audit requirements	May 2027