



Policy name: Overseas Travel on Licence Policy Framework

Issue Date: 15 October 2026

Implementation Date: 15 October 2026

Replaces the following policies which are hereby cancelled: Travel and transfer on licence and PSS outside of England and Wales Policy Framework

Action required by:

X	HMPPS HQ	X	Governors ¹
X	Public Sector Prisons		Heads of Group
X	Contracted Prisons	X	The Probation Service
	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions		Other providers of Probation and Community Services
	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored: This policy will be monitored by exception – that being the escalation route by which staff will send challenging cases to the functional mailbox (listed below) for advice from the central policy team.

Contact: licence.policy@justice.gov.uk

Approvals

Approved for implementation - Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Gordon Davison, Deputy Director, Public Protection Group

Approved by OPS for publication: Helen Judge, Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board.
September 2026o

Associated Policies/Documents

[Licence conditions policy framework - GOV.UK](#)

[Foreign national offenders on licence and IS91 policy framework - GOV.UK](#)

¹ If this policy applies to Contracted Prisons, any reference in the document to Governors also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons.

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Revisions

Date	Action
15 October 2026	Para 5.5 updated

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This Policy Framework ensures that probation staff understand the default position regarding travel outside of the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands for offenders on licence and provides guidance on how to assess and review requests for temporary and permanent travel.

2. Background

- 2.1. All offenders on licence are subject to the following standard licence condition regarding travel abroad:
- Get permission from your supervising officer if you want to leave the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. This does not apply if you are being deported or removed for immigration purposes.

3. Equality Considerations

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity (which includes breastfeeding), race, religion or belief, sex, marriage and civil partnership, and sexual orientation. Further information can be found in the [HMPPS Equality Analysis Policy Framework](#).
- 3.2 There is potential for bias in decision making. HMPPS staff working with offenders are therefore encouraged to complete Diversity and Inclusion training. This training can be found on the [Diversity and Inclusion learning and Development Hub](#).
- 3.3 Guidance on the Language Services available to the Probation Service is available on [EQuIP](#). These include translation, transcription, braille services and interpreting services, including British Sign Language.

4. Travel Abroad Requests

This section applies to both temporary and permanent travel abroad requests.

- 4.1 An offender may apply to their Probation Practitioner for permission to travel outside the United Kingdom and Islands. For the purposes of this policy, the Islands are defined as the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. Requests may relate to **either temporary travel or permanent travel**.
- 4.2 Probation Practitioners must ensure that Registered Sex Offenders are aware they must notify the Police in advance of any travel outside the UK and Islands, regardless of duration. Approval of travel under this Policy Framework does not remove or replace this requirement. Offenders remain responsible for contacting the Police to comply with their notification obligations.
- 4.3 Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) seeking to travel abroad should be directed to their Home Office Immigration Enforcement caseworker to discuss any available voluntary return option to their home country. Offenders must be advised that leaving the UK may result in deportation or restrictions on re-entry, depending on their circumstances.

Review and Approval Process

- 4.4 Upon receipt of a request, the Probation Practitioner must assess the request against the relevant decision-making framework set out from paragraph 5.4. A request must not proceed unless the Probation Practitioner is satisfied that the criteria are met and that sufficient supporting evidence has been provided.
- 4.5 An assessment form for Probation Practitioners to complete is available on nDelius.
- 4.6 All evidence must be robust, verifiable and sufficient to clearly demonstrate that the eligibility criteria have been met. Where these requirements are met, the assessment must be reviewed by a Senior Probation Officer before submitting to the designated decision maker for consideration.
- 4.7 For the purposes of this policy, the designated decision-maker is:
- the Head of the Probation Delivery Unit (PDU);
 - the Deputy Head of the Probation Delivery Unit acting with the approval of the Head of PDU or;
 - the Regional Probation Director (RPD), where there is significant media interest in the offender/case or;
 - the National Security Director if the offender is managed by the National Security Directorate (NSD).
- 4.8 For permanent travel outside the British Islands, indeterminate sentenced and determinate sentenced offenders whose initial release was authorised by the Parole Board must be referred to the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS). PPCS will refer the case to the Parole Board where required. Referral to PPCS is not required where the Parole Board's involvement was limited to the approval or variation of licence conditions.
- 4.9 Where relevant, the Victim Liaison Unit must be contacted to ensure that any potential risks or safeguarding concerns are identified to inform effective decision-making.
- 4.10 When considering requests for travel abroad, decision-makers must take account of any relevant safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding considerations. This should include an assessment of known risks, vulnerability and protective factors, mental health needs, existing safety plans, and arrangements for ongoing support during the period of travel. Such considerations should inform, but not solely determine, the outcome of the decision.
- 4.11 Previous approval for travel abroad must not be taken as an indication that subsequent requests will be approved. All requests for travel abroad will be assessed individually against the appropriate decision-making framework.

5. Temporary Travel

- 5.1 Staff **must** apply a presumption that requests for travel outside of the UK and Islands will be refused.
- 5.2 All requests must be assessed by Probation Practitioners using the mandatory four-stage decision-making process, clearly recording how each stage has been considered and whether it has been satisfied. A request that fails to satisfy any stage of the process must be refused.

- 5.3 The four stages must be considered in sequence. If a case fails to meet the requirements at any stage, stop the assessment and refuse the request. The four stages are:

Stage 1: Eligibility Test

Stage 2: Public Protection Test

Stage 3: Destination Test

Stage 4: Travel Compliance Test

Decision Making Process

Stage 1: Eligibility Tests

- 5.4 The purpose of travel must fall within one of the following permitted categories:

- Critical compassionate need, defined as verified end-of-life or a life-threatening condition affecting the offender themselves or an immediate family member;
- Essential legal requirement which cannot be lawfully conducted in the UK, online or through an intermediary; or
- Employment related travel that is necessary and cannot be undertaken within the UK; or
- Preparatory activity directly connected to a permanent resettlement abroad application, which has already been approved or 'approved in principle' by the decision maker.

Stage 2: Public Protection Test

- 5.5 Requests must be refused where:

- The offender is assessed as presenting a high or very high risk of serious harm, or as having escalated or unstable risk factors that increase the likelihood of harm; or
- The offender falls within a restricted cohort, including Registered Terrorist Offenders, terrorist or terrorist-connected offenders, terrorist risk offenders requiring NSD management, individuals with an identified extremist ideology, those convicted of relevant sexual offences under [schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act](#), or those who pose a risk of sexual offending towards children and request travel to a country listed under [Section 172 of the PCSC Act 2022](#); or
- The offender has demonstrated non-compliance, been subject to recall, or experienced significant risk escalation during the previous 12 months; or
- The proposed travel is linked to the index offence or to previous patterns of offending.

Stage 3: Destination Test

- 5.6 Requests must be refused where the destination country:

- is subject to Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice against travel ([available here](#));
- is not subject to a mutual legal assistance or extradition treaty with the UK (the list of countries with which the UK has relevant treaties is [available here](#)), or subject to the 1957 European Convention on Extradition ([available here](#)).

Stage 4: Travel Compliance Test

- 5.7 Requests must be refused unless the Probation Practitioner is satisfied that:
- There is a low likelihood that the offender will fail to return as required.
 - The individual has demonstrated credible travel plans, including a clear itinerary and confirmed accommodation evidenced by either:
 - proposed booking details; or,
 - confirmation from a private individual that the applicant will be staying with them.
 - The proposed travel will not prevent compliance with any reporting requirements or required interventions.
- 5.8 Offenders must not book travel until approval has been granted. At Stage 4, Probation Practitioners must assess proposed travel arrangements and must not require confirmed bookings. Where approval is granted, evidence of the confirmed bookings must be provided before travel commences.

Additional Considerations for Temporary Travel

- 5.9 For the purpose of this policy, immediate family constitutes spouse or civil partner, parent, grandparents, child or sibling, including step-relatives.
- 5.10 It is expected that the offender will have spent a sufficient period in the community to enable a current understanding of risk, thereby supporting an accurate assessment against the relevant travel tests.
- 5.11 Requests for travel may be made at any point during the licence period. There is no fixed timeframe for considering a request, as each case will be assessed on its individual circumstances using the decision-making framework, including consideration of the urgency of the need to travel.
- 5.12 Probation Practitioners must consider whether the proposed travel abroad can be reasonably deferred until after the offender's supervision period has concluded.
- 5.13 Requests for temporary travel abroad for the purpose of religious pilgrimage will only be considered where the travel falls within an eligible category under the established eligibility test at paragraph 5.4. More guidance is available on [EQuIP](#).
- 5.14 In limited circumstances, offenders may be considered for temporary travel abroad for reasons which do not meet the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 5.4, provided they have completed a minimum of five consecutive years of compliant behaviour while subject to licence supervision in the community, including but not limited to those serving life or an indeterminate sentence.
- 5.15 In such cases, the requirements set out at Stages 2 to 4 of the decision-making framework must still be fully satisfied. Approval must only be granted where the designated decision-maker is satisfied that the benefits of the proposed travel, including travel undertaken with family or friends, clearly outweigh any identified risks to public protection.
- 5.16 This provision does not create an entitlement to temporary travel abroad and the presumption of refusal remains the starting point of the decision-making framework.

Employment Related Temporary Travel

- 5.17 Where an offender applies to travel abroad for employment-related purposes as per 5.4, there is a presumption that the employment has already been reviewed by the Probation Practitioner and deemed suitable. This does not automatically support approval of the travel request, which must still be assessed against stages 2 to 4 of the decision-making criteria.

The following points must be confirmed:

- The employer supports the offender's request to travel abroad;
- The employer is fully aware of the restrictions placed on the offender during the licence period;
- The offender's offending history has been disclosed to the employer by the offender;
- A written letter from the employer has been provided to the Probation Practitioner confirming:
 - the employer's awareness of the offender's circumstances; and
 - the necessity of the proposed travel.

- 5.18 Offenders who are self-employed or working on a freelance basis must:

- Provide evidence demonstrating the necessity of travel abroad for employment purposes; and
- Demonstrate that the purpose of the proposed travel cannot be met within the UK.

- 5.19 Approval is unlikely in such cases, as self-employed and freelance roles typically provide greater flexibility in how and where work is undertaken. Probation Practitioners must ensure that expectations are clearly managed at an early stage, including advising offenders that travel abroad for employment purposes will not ordinarily be permitted.

Extension of Stay

- 5.20 Where an offender has already been granted approval for temporary travel abroad and is currently undertaking that travel, any request to extend the authorised period must only be considered where there has been significant and unforeseen change in circumstances.
- 5.21 Offenders must submit a request without delay and supported by appropriate, verifiable evidence demonstrating the change in circumstances. All requests will be subject to the full decision-making process set out in this section of the Framework and must still start on the basis that there is a presumption that requests will be refused.

Electronic Monitoring

- 5.22 All electronic monitoring devices must be removed prior to travel abroad and reinstalled upon the offender's return. The Probation Practitioner is responsible for arranging both the removal and the prompt reinstallation of the device with the Electronic Monitoring Service (EMS).
- 5.23 Where the Probation Practitioner seeks removal of the device without varying the licence condition, this must be confirmed in writing to the EMS. The Practitioner must also inform the offender that, upon their return, they are required to reside at their designated address and make themselves available for the device to be reinstalled.

- 5.24 The Probation Practitioner must notify the EMS of the confirmed return date to enable a reinstallation visit to be arranged.

Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands

- 5.25 Specific travel permission is not required for travel within the UK and Islands. However, any temporary change of residence must be considered and approved. Where an offender intends to stay overnight, or for a longer period, in another jurisdiction, the relevant authorities must be notified.
- 5.26 Offenders on licence may be transferred to another jurisdiction of the UK and Islands. Further guidance is available in the [Transfer of Licence Supervision within UK and Crown Dependency Jurisdictions](#).

6. Permanent Travel Abroad Requests

- 6.1 Permanent Travel Abroad (previously referred to as “resettlement abroad”) enables an offender on licence to leave the UK and Islands and reside permanently elsewhere during their post-release supervision period.
- 6.2 The licence period continues for the duration of an offender's approved permanent travel outside the UK and Islands. The case must remain open on local case management systems until the sentence expiry date (SED). While the offender is outside the UK and Islands, licence conditions are not actively supervised or enforced by UK authorities. Any further offending committed overseas will be subject to the jurisdiction of, and dealt with by, the relevant local authorities.
- 6.3 Permanent travel abroad is therefore restricted to offenders who meet specific eligibility criteria. This is limited to offenders who either;
- Hold a non-British nationality (either solely or as a dual national); or
 - Were ordinarily resident abroad prior to the index offence.

Decision Making Process

- 6.4 To be considered for permanent travel abroad, the offender must satisfy all of the following decision-making stages. Each stage is a mandatory part of the assessment, and failure to satisfy any stage will result in the application being deemed unsuitable.
- 6.5 **Stage 1- Nationality and Residential Ties-** The offender must hold the nationality of, or demonstrate strong residential ties to, the country in which they wish to permanently reside (including, but not limited to, compassionate grounds).
- 6.6 **Stage 2- Index Offence-** The offender's index offence must not be connected, or potentially connected, to the country in which they wish to reside, nor be linked to overseas criminal activity.
- 6.7 **Stage 3- Public Protection-** Permanent resettlement abroad must not undermine the protection of the public, including the protection of victims, the management of the offender's risk of serious harm and likelihood of reoffending, or the offender's rehabilitation.
- 6.8 **Stage 4- Compliance-** There must have been no concerns during the preceding 12 months relating to non-compliance, an escalation in the risk of reoffending, or an increase in the risk of serious harm.

Additional Considerations for Permanent Travel

Immediate Travel

- 6.9 In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for an offender to undertake permanent travel abroad immediately following release from custody. Any such arrangements must form part of the release planning and be coordinated between the Probation Practitioner, the offender, and the Prison Offender Manager (POM).
- 6.10 The Probation Practitioner may require the offender to report on the day of release before travelling or may permit the offender to travel directly from the releasing establishment.
- 6.11 In all cases, the offender must satisfy the criteria set out in the decision-making framework for permanent travel abroad. The final decision rests with the designated approving manager, who must be satisfied that all criteria have been met before authorisation is granted.

Irish Nationals

- 6.12 Irish nationals are not excluded from this policy's travel provisions. However, applications for permanent travel to the Republic of Ireland (RoI) require careful consideration because travel between RoI and Northern Ireland is not routinely subject to immigration controls.
- 6.13 This does not introduce an additional eligibility requirement, but the Probation Practitioner must consider the implications for public protection and rehabilitation, including whether the proposed move appears intended to circumvent the licence period. Evidence of established family and community ties should be considered when assessing whether the application represents a genuine resettlement proposal.
- 6.14 Irish nationals, including dual nationals, are not subject to deportation and are not classified as Foreign National Offenders. Where a dual national seeks to permanently reside in their other (non-Irish) country of nationality, the considerations set out in paragraphs 6.4-6.8 apply.

Further information regarding Irish Nationals on Licence Guidance is available on [EQuIP](#).