



Detention services order 02/2013

Pregnant women in detention

Introduction

1. This detention services order (DSO) provides information for all staff and suppliers on the detention of pregnant women.

Policy on detention of pregnant women

2. Chapter 55.9.1 of the enforcement instructions and guidance (EIG) states that:

‘Pregnant women should not normally be detained. The exceptions to this general rule are where removal is imminent and medical advice does not suggest confinement before the due removal date, or, for pregnant women of less than 24 weeks gestation, at Yarl’s Wood as part of a fast-track asylum process.’

3. Chapter 45.2.5 of the enforcement instructions and guidance (EIG) provides further guidance on enforcement policy with regard to pregnant women or those claiming to be pregnant as part of a family unit.

Guidance on a pregnant woman’s fitness to fly

4. If a pregnant woman claims to be having problems which would preclude her from flying, the onus is on her to produce medical evidence to support this. This would apply at any stage in the pregnancy. Whilst in detention, a pregnant woman has the opportunity to raise her concerns with on-site healthcare staff, and can reasonably be expected to do so. If the concerns are raised with non-healthcare staff, the woman in question should be advised to attend healthcare to raise her concerns direct. If the concerns are raised with escorting officers whilst under escort the officers concerned should contact the triage line for advice, as they would in the case of any detainee who became ill during the journey. If the concerns are raised during an escorted removal the medically trained staff in attendance should make an assessment as to whether the removal should go ahead.
5. The guidance in the table below is taken from the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) criteria for fitness to fly and may assist case-owners when making requests to detain. Case-owners should continue to check with the Home Office’s removals ticketing agent for individual variations in carriers’ thresholds for carrying pregnant women (as required by Chapter 45.2.5 of the EIG).

Pregnancy status	Accept	Unfit to fly	Comments
Single (one baby) and uncomplicated pregnancy	Clearance not required up to 28 weeks (based on estimated due date)	-	Medical certificate required after 28 weeks. This can be given by a GP or midwife. Specialist clearance required after 36 weeks. This must be given by an obstetrician.
Multiple (twins, triplets and so on) and uncomplicated pregnancy	Clearance not required up to 28 weeks (based on estimated due date)	-	Medical certificate required after 28 weeks. This can be given by a GP or midwife. Specialist clearance required after 32 weeks. This must be given by an obstetrician.
Complicated Pregnancies	Individually assessed	Individually assessed	The most common complications are bleeding and hypertension.
Miscarriage (threatened or complete)	Once stable, with no bleeding and no pain for at least 24 hours	Active bleeding. Abdominal pain.	

Operational policy and rules unit
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30 April 2013