

Criminal casework

Handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers

Handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers

About this guidance

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This guidance tells you about the telephone contact service provided by criminal casework to foreign national offenders (FNOs), their representatives, and the Home Office's strategic partners.</p> <p>To improve the Home Office's service to these groups of people, each caseworking area has a duty officer contact number. This telephone number provides a contact point for a team when the named case owner is not known, or is unavailable. It has an out-of-hours message, saying the office is closed and giving details of normal operating hours.</p> <p>For more information on the operation and administration of the duty number service, see links on left.</p> <p>Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since the previous version of this guidance.</p> <p>Contact - This page tells you who to contact for help if your senior caseworker or line manager can't answer your question.</p> <p>Information owner – This page tells you about this version of the guidance and who owns it.</p> <p>Safeguard and promote child welfare – This page explains your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and tells you where to find more information.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>Changes to this guidance</p> <p>Contact</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers

Changes to this guidance

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This page lists the changes to the handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers guidance, with the most recent at the top.

Date of the change	Details of the change
11 June 2013	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor housekeeping changes.
18 December 2012	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls meant for other teams:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ page deleted• Minor housekeeping changes.
	For previous changes to this guidance you will find all earlier versions in the archive. See related link: Handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers - Archive.

Related links

See also

[Contact](#)

[Information owner](#)

Links to staff intranet removed

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Service operation times and staff training

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells you when the criminal casework duty officer lines are in operation, how calls to these numbers are handled, and how staff train to manage this service.</p> <p>The duty officer lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.</p> <p>The local team manager appoints a suitably-trained administrative officer in the administration team to answer initial calls. These are then passed to the relevant case owner if necessary.</p> <p>All Home Office staff who handle phone calls can access the e-learning course: Handling calls with confidence and professionalism.</p> <p>Staff in criminal casework who are in regular contact with foreign national offenders (FNOs) and their representatives need to complete the e-learning course: Turning difficult callers into delighted customers.</p> <p>To access the e-learning courses, see related link: 1. Using Discover.</p>	Links to staff intranet removed
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Informing correspondents of contact details

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to tell potential correspondents how to contact the duty officer telephone service.</p> <p>The relevant duty officer numbers and office hours must be included on all documents and correspondence sent to foreign national offenders (FNOs), whose case is being managed by criminal casework, and their representatives. The number for the dedicated hotline for the facilitated return scheme (FRS) must also be included. For further information on FRS, see related link.</p> <p>Local managers must put in place processes to tell FNOs the relevant duty officer number when their case is first allocated to a case owning team, using the FNO allocation cover letter. There are four versions of this document available on the CID document generator, which must be used in different circumstances as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICD.4488 – Letter on allocation: Custody – Reps only (to be issued to a representative of a FNO still serving a custodial sentence)• ICD.4489 – Letter on allocation: Custody – Prison (to be issued to the FNO still serving a custodial sentence by the prison)• ICD.4492 – Letter on allocation: Released or Reps (to be issued either to a representative of a FNO now released or directly to a FNO now released)• ICD.4599 – Letter on allocation: IS detained – immigration removal centre (IRC) or prison (to be issued to the FNO being detained for immigration purposes through either the IRC or prison). <p>The appropriate version of this letter must also be sent when a Home Office file is permanently transferred to a caseworking team with a different duty officer telephone number.</p> <p>Once the case is allocated, the prison must be told of the details by fax, using the FNO allocation fax cover – the ICD.4491 available on the CID document generator.</p>	Links to staff intranet removed
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	<p>If the case is allocated to a criminal casework case owner during a FNO's prison induction interview, they must be given the duty officer contact details. This must be done by the prison operations and removal team (PORT), using the FNO induction cover letter – the ICD.4490 available on the CID document generator.</p> <p>For more details on how criminal casework allocates FNO cases to case owners, see related link: Workflow.</p> <p>A list of duty officer numbers is available on Horizon (see related link: Criminal casework contact details). Managers must make sure any changes to these details are emailed to the regional communications team (see related link).</p> <p>Direct telephone numbers of individual Home Office officials must not be given to members of the public without the consent of the official concerned.</p> <p>If it is necessary to give a contact number, the relevant duty officer number must be given.</p> <p>Depending on your work, and in line with local line management instructions, you can include your direct line number on correspondence. For example, it may be useful to give your direct contact details in correspondence with Home Office or Prison Service staff only, that will not be seen either by the FNO or their representative.</p>	
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Out of hours messages

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells you about the message staff in criminal casework must use when the office is closed to tell callers when to call back.</p> <p>Local managers of criminal casework caseworking teams must make sure a message is recorded for callers who contact the duty telephone number when the office is closed. The following message is recommended:</p> <p>‘Thank you for calling the Home Office Immigration Enforcement criminal casework [insert casework team name]. Our office is now closed. Please call back during office hours. Our normal operating hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.’</p> <p>Managers must also make sure the duty telephone line is diverted to the message at the end of each working day and the diversion is cancelled at the beginning of the next working day.</p> <p>In some teams, it may be appropriate to allow callers to leave a recorded message if they wish. If so, arrangements must be made for any messages to be accessed and cleared on the next working day, in order to prevent the number becoming blocked.</p> <p>For instructions on how to set up a messaging service, see related link: Telephone messaging service.</p>	Links to staff intranet removed
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Handling the initial call

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to handle an initial call to their team's duty officer telephone number.</p> <p>Any calls received on the external duty officer telephone line must be answered with the following line:</p> <p>'Home Office Immigration Enforcement [team member's name] speaking. Can I help you?'</p> <p>In some teams it may be appropriate for the person receiving the initial call to deal with the caller's enquiry, if they can. For example, in the facilitated returns scheme (FRS) team, the administrative officer covering the FRS hotline will deal with the enquiry in line with their agreed processes and not forward the call on to another team member (for details on how the FRS team manage calls, see related link: FRS team call etiquette).</p> <p>If the person answering the call is not the owner of the case being queried they must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check the caller has come through to the appropriate team• if not, pass the call on promptly to the appropriate caseworker• record the call on the team's log (see related link: Duty phone call log). <p>The initial call handler must ask the questions needed to fill in the log sheet and establish the correct case owner to avoid blocking the duty officer line for any longer than necessary. A suggested script at this point is:</p> <p>'I need to ask you a few short questions to help make sure I can pass you on to the right person as quickly as possible.'</p> <p>If the caller cannot provide a Home Office reference number, they must be asked their name, date of birth and nationality, which can be used to find the case reference number on CID.</p>	Links to staff intranet removed
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	<p>If the case owner is absent, the call must be passed to the team leader.</p> <p>If the caller's case is put through to the wrong team it must be redirected to the appropriate team who currently owns the case. The duty officer numbers for criminal casework caseworking teams are available at the related link: Criminal casework contact details.</p> <p>The task of identifying the credentials of the caller and any follow-up action is the responsibility of the case owner or member of the team who is dealing with the caller's enquiry.</p> <p>Sometimes local managers have a rota of people to deal with cases belonging to absent colleagues. These details must be sent to the person designated to answer the duty officer phone.</p>	
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General call handling and protection of information

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Handling different types of calls

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Calls from foreign national offenders

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to the person and letting them talk • considering what you can do for the caller • explaining what is causing delays, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an inability to verify their identity ○ a late claim for asylum ○ responses from their embassy, and ○ if possible, give timescales for actions by criminal casework • explaining what can be done to reduce delays, for example contacting their embassy directly or producing necessary documentation • explaining why they are being detained, and explain the bail process • explaining what they need to give criminal casework to help with obtaining a travel document • giving information about the facilitated returns scheme (FRS), the FRS team hotline is 020 8760 8513. 	
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Calls from representatives of foreign national offenders

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to handle calls from representatives of foreign national offenders (FNOs) received through their team duty officer telephone lines.</p> <p>If someone calls who is listed on CID as the FNO's elected legal representative, they are able to make the same request as the FNO would in person.</p> <p>The duty officer must ask for the representative's reference number they use in correspondence with the Home Office, and check with the correspondence held on the FNO's file or on CID. If there is any doubt about the credentials of the representative, they must be called back using the telephone number listed on CID or on official correspondence on file.</p> <p>The representative's details on CID are accessed through the 'sponsoring organisations' icon which appears on the left-hand side of the 'case details' screen.</p> <p>If the representative's query cannot be answered immediately, the duty officer must tell them they will be called back or an answer will be faxed to them, and give clear timescales for doing this. If the query is complex or there is uncertainty as to how to proceed, they must be asked to put their request in writing, as further advice may be needed from a manager or senior caseworker.</p> <p>Once removal directions (RDs) are set for a FNO, representatives will probably call the duty officer number more frequently. Sometimes it is not possible to give an update immediately if the case was passed to another team to progress (usually that will be the operational support and certification unit (OSCU), if RDs have been set and are due to take place within 72 hours).</p> <p>Contact numbers for OSCU must never be given out. If necessary, the criminal casework caseworker must tell the caller they will investigate the matter and call them back. Teams must plan ahead for this eventuality, especially if several removals are due to take place over a short period.</p>	In this section Calls from foreign national offenders Calls from family members of FNOs and other third parties Calls from press and media about FNOs
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Calls from family members of FNOs and other third parties

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Calls from press and media about FNOs

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to handle calls from press or media organisations about foreign national offenders (FNOs) received through their team duty officer telephone lines.</p> <p>If you receive calls from the local or national media regarding a particular issue or case, no information must be given out by the team. The caller must be referred to the Home Office news desk in the press office, on 020 7035 3535.</p>	In this section Calls from foreign national offenders Calls from representatives of foreign national offenders Calls from family members of FNOs and other third parties
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Dealing with abusive or persistent callers

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This section tells criminal casework staff how to deal with abusive or persistent calls to their team's duty officer telephone line.</p> <p>The following issues are covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how to avoid abusive or persistent calls, where possible, and• where an abusive or persistent call is taken, how to tackle it. <p>For more information, see related links.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>How to avoid abusive calls</p> <p>How to handle abusive calls</p>
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Handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers

How to avoid abusive calls

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to avoid abusive or persistent calls to their team's duty officer telephone line.</p> <p>Staff in criminal casework teams can help prevent difficult situations developing during calls to the duty officer line by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• staying calm• listening to the caller and making them aware you are actively listening• asking questions to gain more information or clarify issues• not engaging in arguments• not taking any criticism personally, and• passing the call onto a manager if it is felt the situation is becoming too difficult. <p>In many cases, using these techniques during a call will make sure the conversation remains civil and professional, even where there may be difficulty in conveying information, or disagreement as to what action will be taken.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>How to handle abusive calls</p>
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How to handle abusive calls

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page tells criminal casework staff how to handle an abusive or persistent call to their team's duty officer telephone line.</p> <p>The Home Office's customer charter says staff will not tolerate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• abusive, intimidating or threatening behaviour• swearing and offensive language• insulting remarks about a person's sex, race, nationality, disability status, age, actual or perceived religion or belief, or actual or perceived sexual orientation• shouting• insults about our procedures, staff or other people• attempts to use pressure or bribery to get information or progress. <p>Criminal casework is arranging for this statement to be included with the information it provides to foreign national offenders (FNOs) about their contact with the Home Office. However, callers will occasionally resort to some of the above language and behaviour even when the call is handled as correctly, professionally, and helpfully as possible.</p> <p>If unacceptable language or behaviour is used by a caller, they must be warned that if they continue to speak or act in that way, the call will be terminated. If the caller continues to be abusive or offensive, you must tell them that any further representations must be made in writing, before putting the telephone receiver down.</p> <p>For a flowchart setting out the process to be followed for terminating an abusive call, with a suggested script to follow, see related link: Call termination process and script.</p> <p>Following the termination of the call, the duty officer must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• complete an abusive call record sheet (see related link: Abusive call log)• send the completed form to the local assistant director	<p>In this section</p> <p>How to avoid abusive calls</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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- place a copy of the record sheet on the person's Home Office file, and
- make a note on CID.

Records of abusive calls are collated and forwarded to the health and safety department. Abusive calls will not be tolerated and must be followed up, where relevant, with prisons and immigration removal centres.

If a caller threatens a member of staff or a minister with violence or other physical retribution, details of the call must be recorded as described above, and the incident reported immediately to the departmental security unit's (DSU) security compliance section. DSU can be contacted using the telephone numbers below:

Restricted – do not disclose – start of section

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

Restricted – do not disclose – end of section

Threats to a detainee or offender must be referred to the relevant establishment. Threats to children must be reported to the child welfare services. For more information, see related link: Safeguard and promote child welfare.

Depending on the nature of the threat, it may be appropriate to report it to the police. If there is any doubt, the duty officer must discuss this firstly with their manager, and then with DSU who will provide advice.

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Follow-up actions after finishing a call

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Dealing with complaints

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	<p>the following address:</p> <p>Nominated responsible officer Criminal casework complaints, Briefing and correspondence team 10th floor (long corridor), Lunar House 40 Wellesley Road Croydon CR9 2BY</p> <p>Email: UKBACustomerComplaints@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk</p>	
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Contact

About this guidance Service operation times and staff training Informing correspondents of contact details Out of hours messages Handling an initial call General call handling and protection of information Handling different types of call Dealing with abusive and persistent calls Follow up actions after finishing a call Dealing with complaints	<p>This page explains who to contact for more help with a specific issue relating to handling telephone calls to criminal casework duty officer numbers.</p> <p>If you have read this guidance and still need more help with this category, you must first ask your senior caseworker or line manager.</p> <p>If your question cannot be answered at that level, they or you may email the criminal casework operational process and policy team (CCOPPT) using related link: Email CCD process team).</p> <p>Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact CCOPPT, who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.</p> <p>MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Modernised guidance team.</p>	<p>Related links See also</p> <p>Changes to this guidance</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Information owner

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This page tells you about this version of the handling telephone calls to duty officer numbers guidance and who owns it.

Version	4.0
Valid from date	11 June 2013
Policy owner	Criminal casework operational process and policy team (CCOPPT)
Cleared by director	Angela Kyle
Director's role	Criminal casework director
Clearance date	2 November 2011
This version approved for publication by	Richard Short
Approver's role	Assistant director, modernised guidance team
Approval date	10 June 2013

Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact CCOPPT using related link: Email CCD process team, who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.

MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Modernised guidance team.

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