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Home Office

# Roving officers

Version 2.0

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## About this guidance

This guidance tells Border Force officers about the role and responsibilities of a Roving officer.

**All the content of this guidance is classified as official – sensitive and must not be disclosed outside of the Home Office unless agreed by [Border Force national immigration and customs enquiries](#) (BF NICE).**

### 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 Border Force National Immigration and Customs Enquiries \(BF NICE\)](#) for the latest advice on finding support.

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 **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **15 August 2019**

### Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated to include the expansion of e-Passport gate to B5JSSK nationals.

#### Related content

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## Roving officers: background

This page tells you why Roving officers were implemented.

All ports with e-Passport gates are configured to admit adult passengers who are either British citizens, European Economic Area (EEA) or Swiss nationals, B5JSSK nationals or RTS members. Children aged 12 to 17 years old from these countries may also use the e-Passport gates but only if accompanied by an adult.

The primary objective of deploying a Roving officer is to prevent trafficking and provide safeguarding assurances by heightening security around e-Passport gates.

As arriving passengers using the e-Passport gates are not routinely questioned by an officer, the Roving officer role is to mitigate the risk of vulnerable children and adults passing through e-Passport gates undetected.

The Roving officer will also be tasked with identifying adult passengers who are seeking to use e-Passport gates to minimise interaction with a Border Force officer in the pursuance of criminal, customs and terrorist offences.

### **Related content**

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# Roving officers: role and responsibilities

This page tells you about the role and responsibilities of a Roving officer.

As a Roving officer, your core responsibility is to provide safeguarding functions, including discharging obligations in line with section 55 of the [Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) (welfare of children). You should also monitor behavioural indicators and body language of arriving passengers, in line with the [Border Force operating mandate](#), to identify passengers of any age approaching the e-Passport gates who may merit further examination.

Children aged 12 to 17 should be accompanied by an adult if they wish to use e-Passport gates. You must endeavour to identify children who are not accompanied by an adult, passengers who appear to be under the age of 18 and appear vulnerable, including those who may be travelling as part of a group for example school trips. You must intercept these individuals before they reach the e-Passport gates. Full checks can then be carried out by a Border Force officer at the referrals desk at the primary control point (PCP). As a guideline, those who appear to be under 21 and travelling without an adult should be approached to verify their age.

If a passenger who gives rise to any concerns on the grounds described above is encountered, you must:

- intercept the passenger and conduct brief questioning to establish if further examination is required
- if there are no concerns and any individuals identified are judged eligible to use the e-Passport gates, allow those passengers to proceed
- direct individuals of concern and unaccompanied children to the referral PCP desk for further questioning by a Border Force officer

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# Training requirements

This page tells you about the minimum training requirements a Roving officer should have in order to perform their role.

## Essential training for exercising the Roving officer role

All Roving officers must remain alert to the indicators of potential victims. You must have completed the following training to be deployed as a Roving officer:

- tier 1 of the [keeping children safe](#) (KCS) training- it is recommended that managers provide opportunities for officers to be trained up to tier 2 and tier 3 of the KCS course
- [modern slavery](#) training (Modern Slavery – Border Force 2017 and Modern Slavery – BF Only and National Referral Mechanism Process 2017)
- personal safety training (level 1) as a minimum before deployment- it should be assessed by local Health and Safety or Risk Assessment officers whether level 1 is sufficient for Roving officers to be deployed in relation to your specific port environment
- you must be up-to-date with relevant target profiles (including, but not limited to, modern slavery, [female genital mutilation](#), [Redacted\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#)) and should use your judgement in line with your training whilst deployed

You must also have radio contact with the duty Higher Officer or watch house – this requirement does not apply to juxtaposed ports.

Seasonal workforce can only be deployed to the Roving officer role if they have completed the requisite training. Contingency workforce officers **must not** be deployed to the Roving officer role.

## Desirable training for exercising the Roving officer role

The following training should be considered for future Roving officer deployments:

- [Redacted \\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#)
- customs detection skills (core skills 2) training- this is to ensure deployed Roving officers are [notebook](#) trained for the purposes of taking evidence
- personal safety training (level 3)

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# Roving officers deployment

This page tells you how Roving officers should be deployed at e-Passport gates to enhance our capabilities at the border.

## Compulsory deployment

For terminals with 6 or more e-Passport gates there is a mandatory requirement for a Roving officer to be deployed at all times. Where there are more than 10 e-Passport gates, it is recommended 2 or more Roving officers are deployed to man the e-Passport gates. Local Border Force managers must ensure there is enough coverage to man the e-Passport gates. Local managers making decisions on whether to deploy additional Roving officers will also need to decide on a shift-by-shift basis the number of staff required to man the e-Passport gates. This requirement should be based on risk assessment of flights and the number of arrivals. Local managers need to consider the skill-set of the officers deployed and whether the deployed officer meets the minimum requirements of a Roving officer.

## Dynamic deployment

For smaller terminals, with 5 e-Passport gates or less, there is not a mandatory requirement for Roving officers to be deployed at all times. Monitoring officers are the mandatory mechanism at smaller terminals for safely controlling the flow of children through e-Passport gates at these smaller sites. However, local managers need to make a decision whether to additionally deploy a Roving officer ahead of the e-Passport gates on a shift-by-shift basis. This requirement should be based on the threat level, risk assessment of flights and passenger arrivals from higher risk locations. The manager should consider the officers' skills set and whether they meet the minimum requirements of a Roving officer before deployment.

## Juxtaposed ports

There is not a mandatory requirement for Roving officers to be deployed at all times at juxtaposed ports. However, local managers need to decide whether to additionally deploy Roving officers around e-Passport gates on a shift-by-shift basis according to the threat level and risk assessment of passengers. The manager should consider the officers' skills set and whether they meet the above requirements of a Roving officer before deployment.

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# Legislation

This page provides information on legislation relevant to the Roving officer role.

The powers available to a Roving officer are no different to the normal powers that a Border Force officer can exercise depending on your training and designation. You need to know and understand the powers you are using when deployed as a Roving officer. You must also be clear about when you can exercise these powers and what training, authority, and designation you must hold. These powers will be set out in national guidance and can be summarised as follows.

## Immigration

### Immigration Act 1971

You must be appointed as an Immigration officer to examine an arriving passenger under [schedule 2 of the Immigration Act 1971](#) in order to confirm their identity and nationality.

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Whilst carrying out these immigration functions, you will also seek to establish the relationship between children and the adults who are accompanying them. [Children: section 55 leaflet](#) provides information on your responsibilities as a Border Force officer under section 55 which can be handed out to passengers. Performing these checks does not affect the right of anyone with freedom of movement.

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You should use your knowledge and skills to proactively interact with arriving passengers, ask appropriate screening questions and refer to colleagues or police or others as appropriate.

### Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009

Under [section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#), immigration and customs functions must be discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the UK. It should be noted that section 55 provides Border Force officers with no additional powers. It places a responsibility on officers to make timely and appropriate referrals to agencies that provide ongoing care and support to children, but there is no power in law to detain (that is prevent an individual from proceeding) solely on the basis of safeguarding concerns.



You must ensure that in carrying out existing functions, the child's safety and welfare is given priority.

## Customs

### Customs and Excise Management Act 1979

The [Customs and Excise Management Act 1979](#) allows a designated customs official to exercise a range of powers. The listed powers below can be used (but not limited to) whilst exercising your powers as a customs official and a Roving officer:

- section 49: forfeiture of goods improperly imported
- section 50: offence of improper importation of goods
- section 68: offence of exportation of prohibited and restricted goods (not indecent or obscene material)
- section 78: customs and excise control of persons entering or leaving the UK:
  - question passengers regarding their baggage
  - require passengers to make a customs declaration
  - obligation on passengers to present bags for examination
- section 138: general power of arrest
- section 139: general power of seizure
- section 163A: power to search articles for EU excise goods
- section 164: power to search persons (for prohibited and restricted or dutiable goods):
  - intimate search post arrest for controlled drugs
- section 164A: power to search person (for cash at frontier)

### Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#) are powers available to Border Force officers designated as customs officials. Important PACE powers are listed below:

- section 24 and 24A: arrest
- section 32: power to search any arrested person where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the person may present a danger to themselves or others
- section 36: defines and designates who can act as a custody officer and where custody activities can be undertaken
- section 40: power to review detention
- section 40A: allows review of custody by phone avoiding out of hours call-outs hours and the associated costs
- section 42: power to authorise longer term detention
- section 54: power to search an arrested or detained person for custody purposes where it is necessary to ascertain and record, or cause to be recorded, everything which the person has with them:

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- this also includes a power to seize items removed from a detained person during a search of person where there are reasonable grounds for believing that they may be evidence relating to an offence

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## Recording information

This page tells you how you as Border Force officer at the referral primary control point (PCP) desk should record information where an offence or commission of an offence has taken place.

Where there is an interception and a referral, it is important that key details of the passenger interaction are recorded. This helps provide a clear audit trail should there be a subsequent challenge as to the basis for the engagement or on whether Border Force has complied with its obligations in line with relevant legislation. This also helps monitor the impact of the Roving officer role on security outcomes at the border.

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You must record all referrals made in your role by the Roving officer, including indicators, by completing the Referral officer- behavioural detection spreadsheet. For all referrals which lead to prosecution, you as the officer at the PCP desk, must complete a [witness statement](#) to be admissible in court.

For those engagements that do not lead to a referral to any agency, behavioural indicators for questioning these passengers must also be captured on the [Referral officer- behavioural detection spreadsheet](#).

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