

Heathrow Travel Care

Heathrow
Making every journey better

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About Heathrow Travel Care

Our purpose

Heathrow Travel Care is an independent Social Work agency safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of any vulnerable person in crisis or distress at Heathrow Airport. We were established in 1972 to assess, advise and assist both passengers and staff experiencing difficulties. We deliver a professional, compassionate and holistic Social Work service specialising in trauma response.

In UK society, a growing emphasis on effective risk management and business continuity, is combined with due regard for duty of care. This has highlighted the need to identify and take action on human welfare issues at international ports.

Located at the heart of a thriving airport with our global connections, expert understanding of the environment, broad and unique knowledge base and skill set we are ideally positioned to focus on the social, psychological and humanitarian needs of those using or working at Heathrow. We provide care and support that is individually tailored for each service user whilst remaining sensitive to the needs of the business community.

Our Service

- Crisis social work
- Social work advice to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Emergency planning and response
- Training and mentoring.

Our values

Compassion and belief in people

First and foremost our staff care about people. We are dedicated, professional and work with integrity to support our service users. We don't judge and always work collaboratively with service users to enhance their personal autonomy and counteract marginalisation. We take the time to listen and we persevere regardless of how complicated or challenging the issues our service users may present.

Respect

At every level, we are passionate about valuing individuality and diversity. We endeavour to uphold human rights, to give our service users a voice and to confront discrimination or social injustice whenever and wherever we face it.

Openness and honesty

At all times we aim to be transparent and trustworthy with our service users and partner agencies, to be open, honest and timely in the event of dealing with concerns or complaints and to be clear and realistic when giving information or advice.

Confidentiality and consent are essential principles of Heathrow Travel Care's engagement with service users and professionals whom remain central to decision making.

Professional standards & development

We adhere to statutory standards and Social Work legislature. Our practitioners are constantly updating their knowledge and skills through ongoing training. As an agency we always strive for excellence and are committed to growing and adapting according to the changing needs of our service users and current social trends.

Who We Are

Heathrow Travel Care consists of a team of qualified Social Workers, an Emergency Planner, office support volunteers and trained emergency response volunteers. Additionally, we have the support of accountants and legal advisors.

Individually, we have extensive experience in Local Authority and voluntary sector Social Work, airline and airport work. Our Social Workers are registered with the Health & Care Professions Council and comply with their standards of conduct, performance and ethics. All staff and volunteers are subject to enhanced Criminal Records Checks and core staff hold airside ID passes.

Heathrow Travel Care is a limited 'not for profit' company. We are a UK registered charity and governed by a Board of Trustees who provide their time voluntarily.

Why Heathrow Travel Care

Local Authorities have a statutory duty of care for under 16's, older people and people with a severe and proven, current mental health problem or disability. Those who fall outside this tight remit and who do not have a robust voluntary, community or family connection, may remain at risk and be isolated and unsupported. The statutory duty of care, often only extends to an assessment of need, and not always the provision of immediate services.

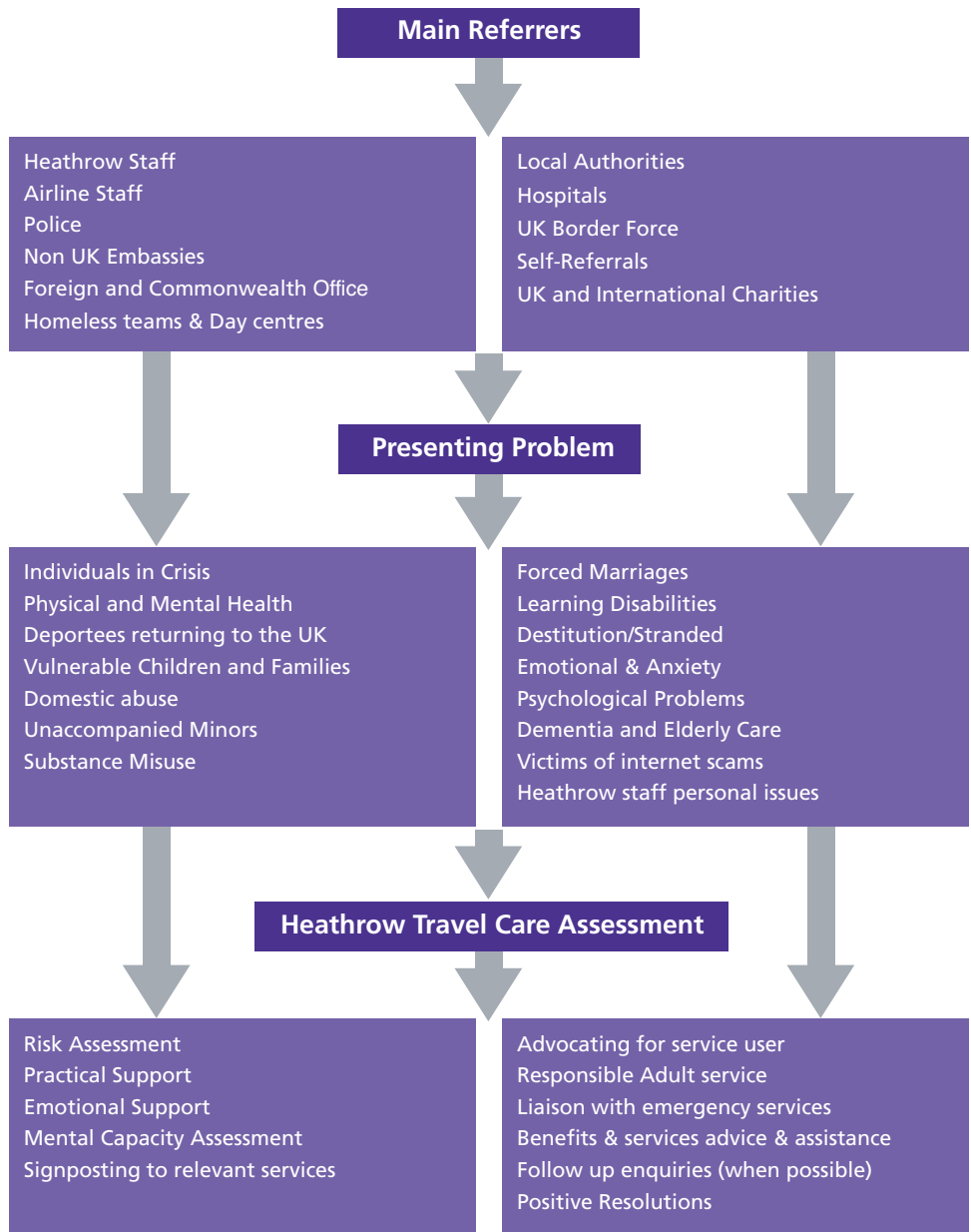
The Local Authority that covers Heathrow airport is the London Borough of Hillingdon. However, many people returning after a long absence from the UK do not have an established local connection in Hillingdon, and as such may not be eligible for services there.



Crisis Social Work



Referral Pathways



What We Do

Every year, we work with thousands of people with diverse and often complex, multiple needs:

- Carrying out comprehensive Social Work assessments helping to balance individuals' rights with risk. In the case of British nationals resettling in the UK, our planning may start long before their arrival in order to help them make informed, realistic choices and adequately prepare for their return.
- Frequently we work with distressed people, often at pivotal moments of crisis in their lives. We are able to provide vital emotional support enabling them to explore their situation in a non-judgemental environment, plan for their futures, manage transition and make positive life decisions.
- Providing specialist advice, advocacy, and direct assistance on a range of issues including mental health, domestic violence, substance misuse, overseas reconnections, benefit application and housing.
- When necessary we raise concerns and take the appropriate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our service users and to reduce the risk of harm to members of the public or airport staff.
- We maintain strong and successful working alliances with numerous partner agencies both locally and internationally in order to provide a holistic and seamless service for our service users. These include the Police, Heathrow Airport Limited, Airlines, Embassies, Prisoners Abroad, Children and Families Across Borders, Refugee Action and many more.
- Signposting and making onward referrals to statutory health, social services and voluntary sector agencies, on occasion providing outreach services to accompany and advocate for service users attending appointments and interviews and bridge the gap back into services.
- Heathrow Travel Care Social Workers often act as 'Responsible Adults' to assist children and young people or unaccompanied minors being detained or interviewed by the UK Border Force Agency (UKBA) and by SO15 Counter Terrorism Command division of the Metropolitan Police, to ensure that their best interests are upheld.



Training and Mentoring

As a highly respected agency with an exclusive insight in our field of airport Social Work the Heathrow Travel Care team is increasingly in demand to host student placements, provide presentations about our unique service and to offer training on key issues such as mental health and humanitarian response.

With a commitment to nurturing the next generation, we have provided short term mentoring placements for a number of Social Work students who, with our service users' consent, have been able to shadow our work and benefit from our knowledge and expertise.

Heathrow Travel Care have shone a spotlight on issues such as stress awareness, mental health and trauma support, exhibiting at events such as the inaugural HAL Wellbeing Roadshow. We have hosted our first, widely attended and well received, Airport Conference raising awareness on some of the hidden issues affecting vulnerable people at Heathrow such as domestic violence, forced marriage, FGM and witchcraft.

We continue to develop training packages and speak at seminars and conferences locally and worldwide.



Solutions for Rough Sleepers



In partnership with leading London homeless charities and Heathrow Police, Heathrow Travel Care has developed a Rough Sleepers Outreach Project.

Assertive Outreach Workers regularly monitor the airport terminals during the night to identify people sleeping rough. They are offered initial advice and directed to further assistance for housing, detoxification, employment, medical services, the benefits system and other support services.

Taking referrals from members of the public, airport staff, the Police and partner agencies, we work together to try to build relationships with individuals, combining regular contact with an approach that challenges damaging lifestyles and offers realistic solutions. The project focuses on proactively reconnecting people with existing services for which they may be already eligible therefore encouraging rough sleepers to move off the airport.

Outcomes for individuals are appropriately shared with Police ensuring that the small minority of rough sleepers who are not eligible for services, do not wish to engage with services or who may be involved in anti-social behaviour (for example begging,

problematic use of alcohol or drugs) are challenged. In this way, we help people to access appropriate support, which also enables the wider airport community to maintain a safe environment.

Anonymised data collected from this Project is used to demonstrate the need for further homeless services in West London. The Heathrow Rough Sleepers Strategy Group, facilitated by Heathrow Travel Care, meets regularly to monitor, inform and feed into planning for the Heathrow Outreach operation.



Social Work Advice to the FCO

Our Advice Project with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Consular Directorate addresses the difficulties faced by distressed and/or vulnerable British Nationals who choose to stay overseas or are returning to the UK via Heathrow and other ports, from abroad.

Two Heathrow Travel Care Social Workers have been seconded as Specialist Advisors to the FCO and are based at their main offices in Westminster, London, UK. They offer advice and support to British Consular Staff (in London and abroad) and thereby:

- Assist in the process of helping vulnerable people return to the UK to access services / support as soon as possible
- Assist with finding solutions to situations overseas; enabling the person(s) to remain overseas if this is their wish
- Reduce preventable homelessness and health deterioration (both physical and mental) social exclusion, risk to children, crime and disruption to the operation of UK airports (particularly Heathrow)
- Promote eligibility and enable access to UK services in advance wherever possible (formal and informal).

Often the Specialist Advisors will work in partnership with colleagues to make a referral to the Crisis Social Work team at Heathrow Travel Care. This enables a professional assessment on arrival, an option to meet flights on the basis of risk and work towards “safe-enough” planning.

A significant part of this work involves offering advice to FCO staff to support British Nationals who have travelled, lived, worked or retired overseas and need extra assistance. Their work covers a broad spectrum including but not limited to: mental health, physical health, hospitalisations, deportations, older people, child safeguarding, child abduction, trafficking, destitution and prisoners.

They are also involved in working with the Forced Marriage unit to offer advice which supports people who have been (or are at risk of being) forced into marriage abroad, against their will. This includes planning for returning to the UK to seek refuge.

Our advisors contribute and deliver Consular training to staff both in the UK and overseas. They develop and maintain working partnerships in the UK and abroad. They have worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to produce and update relevant publications and policies for use by the FCO and the public to address travel-related social care issues.



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Emergency Planning and Response

Why Initial Humanitarian Assistance at Heathrow?

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a legal obligation on Local Authorities to plan for and respond to human welfare issues following an emergency. The co-ordination of Initial Humanitarian Assistance at Heathrow (sometimes called Initial Trauma Support or Crisis Support) has been delegated to Heathrow Travel Care as local experts.

Evidence exists to support claims that traumatic stress can trigger long-term mental distress or 'psychiatric injury'. Any litigation for these damages is based on the 'foreseeability' of the risks. Businesses with a common law 'duty of care' must be able to show that they have identified and assessed significant risks and taken reasonable steps to reduce these risks.

Planning and preparedness

Heathrow Travel Care is an established and trusted stakeholder within the Emergency Planning structure at the airport and beyond. We are members of the Heathrow Joint Crisis Planning Group and the Reception Centres Working Group. Heathrow Travel Care attends the Hillingdon Local Resilience Forum. Our ongoing planning cycle is informed by lessons learnt in the UK and globally, including evidence from our own practice (both exercises and responses).

Response to an emergency

We maintain a 24/7 emergency on-call roster. Should a major incident occur affecting Heathrow Airport, the Heathrow Travel Care emergency response would be triggered by Heathrow Airport Limited.

In partnership with key airport responders, including Chaplains, we will assess the potential for human distress and the options for delivering an initial response based on evidence of what is needed. We can then deploy appropriately experienced / trained Emergency Response Volunteers / staff as required.

Heathrow Travel Care has an established capability to support airlines and other local businesses in an immediate post-event situation. This may be working together in Reception Centre's for up to 24 hours, or while that business assembles its own 'Go Team' or similar welfare-support function.

Following the Initial Humanitarian Response, any longer term remaining risk / need would be handed over appropriately (e.g. to London Borough of Hillingdon teams, or via a Humanitarian Assistance process). Depending on our resources at the time, we may remain engaged with the appropriate Crisis Management / Business Recovery teams to offer advice and support as the situation progresses.

Interested in becoming an Emergency Responder for Heathrow Travel Care or just want further information? Please get in touch using the details on the reverse of this brochure.



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www.heathrowtravelcare.co.uk

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TRI v3 0217

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