



A word of warning from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK

What is the FCO?

From www.fco.gov.uk:

'The purpose of the FCO is to work for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world. We do this with some 16,000 staff, based in the UK and our overseas network of over 200 diplomatic offices.'

The advice below was issued by the UK Foreign Office in relation to the services they can provide British citizens. For those of you that live outside the UK, you should check with the relevant authorities in your country before you leave to make yourself aware of the help and support you can expect, and probably more importantly, the stuff they won't do for you if you get in trouble.

A word of warning (and useful advice) from the Foreign Office for British Citizens:

This is produced by the British Foreign Office who have specifically asked us to draw your attention to it after a number of teams contacted them for help that they cannot give.

British consular staff cannot:

- Get you out of prison, prevent the local authorities from deporting you after your prison sentence, or interfere in criminal or civil court proceedings;
- Help you enter a country, for example, if you do not have a visa or your passport is not valid, as we cannot interfere in another country's immigration policy or procedures;
- Give you legal advice, investigate crimes or carry out searches for missing people, although we can give you details of people who may be able to help you in these cases, such as English-speaking lawyers;
- Get you better treatment in hospital or prison than is given to local people;
- Pay any bills or give you money (in very exceptional circumstances we may lend you some money, from public funds, which you will have to pay back);

- Make travel arrangements for you, or find you work or accommodation; or
- Make business arrangements on your behalf.

British consular staff can:

- Issue replacement passports;
- Provide information about transferring funds;
- Provide appropriate help if you have suffered rape or serious assault, are a victim of other crime, or are in hospital;
- Help people with mental illness;
- Provide details of local lawyers, interpreters, doctors and funeral directors (see Note 1);
- Do all we properly can to contact you within 24 hours of being told that you have been detained;
- Offer support and help in a range of other cases, such as child abductions, death of relatives overseas, missing people and kidnapping;
- Contact family or friends for you if you want; and
- Make special arrangements in cases of terrorism, civil disturbances or natural disasters.

NOTE 1

Neither the Government nor the relevant British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate can make any guarantee in relation to the professional ability or character of any person or company on the list, nor can they be held responsible in any way for you relying on any advice you are given.

See the Foreign Office website for full details. <http://www.fco.gov.uk>