

DCS Assessment of Support Needs

Information Leaflet

Please read this information before completing OES form 101

1. What is DCS Confirmation of Supportability and why is it required?

All children **aged 0-18** years of age require confirmation of their support needs before accompanying their parent on an overseas assignment. Defence Children Services' (DCS) assessment of support needs is part of the overarching MOD Assessment of Support Needs for Accompanied Assignments Overseas process¹. To gain confirmation of supportability, there must be evidence that a child's support needs can be met in the overseas location.

DCS Confirmation of Supportability is required:

- so the overseas Local Command and school/setting understand what a child's support needs are and whether they can be met in the overseas location;
- so schools and settings have early knowledge of a child's needs, to prepare for, and ensure, a smooth transition;
- so parents have the chance to understand the variability of provision in overseas locations, and not be disadvantaged as the result of an overseas assignment.

2. Do all children require DCS Confirmation of Supportability?

All accompanying children from 0-18 years, moving to any overseas location, require DCS Confirmation of Supportability. This includes children not yet in education. Confirmation of supportability is issued for the duration of the Assignment Order, therefore, supportability needs to be re-confirmed for any extension period.

If a child is **not** accompanying parents on an overseas assignment and is accessing educational provision in the UK, an assessment of support needs is not required. For example, if a child is at boarding school in the UK or residing with a guardian.

The DCS assessment of support needs also forms part of the overall overseas assignment procedures co-ordinated through the Families Section and/or DBS. They will seek evidence that 'DCS Confirmation of Supportability' has been given prior to completing all necessary arrangements.

3. How far in advance of an assignment can the process for gaining DCS Confirmation of Supportability start?

The assessment of support needs can be carried out **no more than 6 months** prior to an assignment. Children's additional needs may change significantly within this timeframe, which may impact their supportability. If there are exceptional circumstances, please contact the DCS school/setting or OES team² directly.

We encourage all families to engage with this process at the earliest possible time prior to their assignment (preferably at the beginning of the 6-month window), to avoid any delays.

¹ [MOD Policy Assessment of Support Needs for Accompanied Assignments Overseas.pdf](#) ;

² RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk

4. How long does the assessment of support needs take?

DCS's assessment of support needs can take up to 12 weeks in total, depending on individual circumstances.

As long as parents engage in the process early, with the required information fully completed and submitted, the assessment of support needs should take no longer than 3 weeks for the majority of children. For children requiring a multi-agency assessment of support needs overseas (MASO), this may take up to an additional 9 weeks.

N.B. During school closure periods (e.g., summer holidays) DCS's assessment of support needs may take longer than described above, as we are unable to gather further essential information from sending and receiving schools at this time.

5. Finding a school place

In most locations it is important to have a confirmed school place before an assessment of support needs can take place. This is so that provision in the receiving country can be considered.

In some locations, such as the USA, a school place will not be offered before families arrive in location. In these circumstances, information about your address and school district will enable DCS to process your application.

Important - it is the parents' responsibility to source a school place in the overseas location.

Locations supported by DCS schools/settings: If a child will be attending a DCS school/setting, parents are to make contact with the school directly and follow their admissions process (including DCS assessment of support needs). Further information can be found on each DCS school/setting's website.

All other locations: The MOD do not approve independent schools overseas. If the assignment is to an overseas area **not** supported by a DCS school/setting, Service personnel should liaise with the gaining Command and/or the current role incumbent. They may have advice on schools in the area and/or provide details of where service children have attended in the past.

Please note:

- The impact of different education systems
You will need to fully research the local educational provision in the location of your overseas assignment and ensure you are content that the provision on offer is suitable for your child's needs. Many schools overseas (which are not DCS schools) will follow a different curriculum to the UK. Therefore, it is important that you are aware of any curriculum differences. Please be aware that year group ages may also vary as well as school starting ages.
- The impact of transitional phases of education during and after an assignment
This may include moves from Early Years provision to Primary School, Primary School to Secondary School or Secondary to Post 16 Education. You will also need to consider the educational impact of transition back to the English education system (or devolved administration equivalent) at the end of assignment. This includes transfer into a critical stage of education course which may include public examinations.

If you require further guidance, contact the OES team² directly. Further information about overseas education can also be found in JSP 342³.

³ [JSP 342 Part 1 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

6. How to find out what services are available overseas to support my child's additional needs?

MOD provided DCS Schools/Settings publish their Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) provision on their individual websites or upon request. International Schools should also be able to provide details of their SEND provision on their individual websites or upon request.

It is important to note Education, Health & Care Applications/Assessments Plans (and/or equivalent devolved administration statutory plans) are **not** maintained overseas. You may wish to engage with the SENDCo at your current school to discuss the implications of this for your child.

7. How to start the process

Once parents have chosen a school (where this is possible), the first step is for them to complete the OES Form 101 which can be obtained by contacting the Families Section⁴ or DBS⁵ or online via the gov.uk website. Individual forms need to be completed for each accompanying child aged 0-18. Parents are to ensure the form is fully completed, dated, and signed by the **Serving/Civilian Person**. DCS assessment of support needs cannot be processed without this information.

8. Next steps

Locations supported by DCS schools/settings: If the assignment is to an overseas area supported by DCS schools/settings (including 0-3 year-olds - Early Years, and 3-5 year olds - Foundation Stage), the OES Form 101 must be sent directly to the school/setting, (*unless you are transferring from Northern Ireland*), see individual school website for further details.

If you are transferring from **Northern Ireland** all forms must be returned to the Overseas Education & Supportability (OES) team².

For school age children (5-18), you will also need to request that your child's current school completes OES Form 102 and returns this to the DCS school/setting directly (cc'd parents – for information).

For non-school age children (0-5), you will need to request that your child's current provision (child minder, nursery or early years setting) completes OES Form 103 and returns to the DCS school/setting (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then you, as the parent, need to complete this form and return it to the DCS school/setting as above.

All other locations: If the assignment is to an overseas area **not** supported by a DCS school/setting then the OES Form 101 must be sent directly to the OES team².

For school age children (5-18) you will need to request that your child's current school completes OES Form 102 and returns this to the OES team² (cc'd parents – for information).

For non-school age children (0-5) you will need to request that your child's current provision (e.g., child minder, nursery or early years setting) completes OES form 103 and returns to the OES team² (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then you, as the parent, need to complete this form and return it to the OES team².

These forms are required to establish current academic progress and any additional support being provided. We use this information to assess and confirm your child's support needs.

⁴ UKSTRATCOM-DefSp-DSCOM-FamSec@mod.gov.uk

⁵ DBSCivPers-ResourcingTeam1@mod.gov.uk

9. Elective Home Education (EHE):

If you are currently home educating or wish to do so in the overseas assignment location, you need to make contact with the OES team, and they will arrange an EHE Advisory Discussion between yourself and an OES Education Adviser.

Parents will also need to complete the OES Form 101 and send it directly to the OES team². If parents state that they are intending to electively home educate whilst overseas, then a multi-agency assessment of support needs overseas (MASO) will be initiated (also see Defence Instruction Notice EHE 2023DIN01-105)⁶.

MOD Policy Assessment of Support Needs for Accompanied Assignments Overseas¹ states that a multi-agency assessment is required for all proposed Elective Home Education overseas. This is because overseas Commands have overall responsibility for all family members. In the UK, children who are electively home educated have access to a range of agencies, who are responsible for meeting support needs. In an overseas location, there may be limited or no access to external agencies. In this situation, Commands need advice from education, welfare and medical specialists so they are confident individual needs can be met and they understand their responsibilities for the family.

For school age children (5-18), currently attending school you will need to request that your child's current school complete OES Form 102 and return this to the OES team² (cc'd parents – for information).

For school age children (5-18), currently in EHE OES Form 104 will need to be completed by the parent with the prime responsibility for coordinating and delivering EHE. The form should be returned to the OES team².

For non-school age children (0-5) you will need to request that your child's current provision (e.g., child minder, nursery or early years setting) complete OES Form 103 and return this to the OES team² (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then you, as the parent, need to complete this form and return it to the OES team².

These forms are required to establish current academic progress and any additional support being provided. We use this information to assess and confirm supportability overseas.

10. Will additional information be required?

Further information may be requested directly by the DCS school/setting or OES team depending on the child's individual needs and their current stage of education. What additional information is required will be determined once the OES Form 101 and OES forms 102, 103 or 104 (or equivalent) and all accompanying documents have been received. The DCS school/setting or OES team may contact parents or the current school to gather additional information, as needed.

11. What sort of information will be considered as part of the DCS Assessment of Support Needs?

We will look at all the information provided by your child's current school to make an informed assessment of support needs. This may include, but is not limited to, assessment records, school reports, information about any additional needs your child has, safeguarding records and any reports from external agencies involved with your child.

⁶ [2023DIN01-105-Elective Home Education Overseas.docx](#)

All this information helps us to build a rounded picture of the support your child may need in the overseas location. It also helps to ascertain whether additional agencies, such as social care or medical professionals, need to be involved in the wider supportability assessment.

We will also look at the impact on your child if your posting coincides with a Critical Stage of their education (e.g., GCSE or A-Level). How this will impact on their opportunity to complete internationally recognised qualifications needs to be considered carefully. It is very challenging to transfer schools mid-way through an examination programme due to differences in qualifications and curriculums and can have an impact on whether your child will be able to gain the qualifications they will need in later life.

The MOD assumes responsibility for entitled family members when moving overseas and needs to ensure best safeguarding practice is followed, where possible. If a school holds safeguarding records for your child, DCS may facilitate the transfer of these records, where appropriate, to the new school.

12. Why would a MASO be required?

Beyond UK borders, different countries, states and regions may have their own regulations governing safeguarding, social care, additional needs provision and elective home education. This may mean that the level of provision and support available in Local Authorities or UK schools is not always as readily available in all overseas Local Commands and areas.

Therefore, as per MOD Policy¹ a multi-agency assessment of support needs overseas (MASO) may be required wherever:

- There is a safeguarding concern.
- A person has multiple low-level needs or there are a number of agencies involved in meeting these needs (for example a person is receiving care and support from local authority/equivalent services; has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP); or
- Has significant need in one area which may be supportable but may impact on another area of need/areas of need (for example a medical need impacting on social care and/or child's education), on family life or the undertaking of the assignment/transfer.
- Where parents are considering Elective Home Education.

MASOs will be raised through the OES team and will involve multi-agency Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and overseas Commands/Decision Makers. For additional information about MASOs please see the MASO Leaflet 107.