Prisons & Probation Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Glossary

Definitions of words in italics can be found elsewhere in the glossary.

Adjudication: A disciplinary hearing used when prisoners are accused of breaking prison rules.

Article 3: A section of the *ECHR* that states no one should be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Authorising Officer: The highest-ranking staff member that signs off on a *risk assessment*. They are responsible for reviewing overall *risk and* approving the *escort* and use of *restraints*.

Bed Watch Log: An extended *Person Escort Record* with additional space for long term observations. Usually used for when a prisoner stays overnight in hospital.

Birth Escort: A *hospital escort* during which the prisoner gives birth. It can be known in advance that an escort is for this purpose, for example a planned induction. Or, a prisoner may attend the hospital for another reason but ultimately give birth on that escort.

Branston Registry: A depot used by *HMPPS* to store physical documents.

Central Record: Physical or digital documents held by HMPPS, as opposed to an individual prison.

During Transport: Prisoners are usually transported to hospital in a *prison van* or taxi. During this time, *restraints* may be used.

ECHR: Also known as the **European Convention on Human Rights;** it is a treaty that protects human rights and fundamental freedoms. The special investigation's *Terms of Reference* specifically reference *Article 3*.

Escort: In particular **External Escort**. When prisoners leave the prison site, accompanied by prison staff. For example, prisoners can be escorted to funerals or weddings. See also *Hospital Escort.*

Escorting Officer: The prison staff that are physically present during the *escort.*

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Escorts Framework: Also known as **the External Escorts Policy Framework**. The *policy* governing external *escorts* from 5th January 2026 to present. The Escorts Framework was published, but not implemented, on 30th October 2025.

Ethnicity: *HMPPS* stores the self-defined ethnicity codes of prisoners on the *NOMIS* database. The Ministry of Justice normally groups these into five broad categories: Asian, black, Mixed, white, and Other. These are the groups used throughout the *interim report*.

Final Report: The report to be published upon conclusion of *Phase 2* of the PPO's investigation.

Healthcare: Prisons employ permanent healthcare staff. Where possible, the medical needs of prisoners are accommodated for inside the prison and *hospital escorts* are only used when needed. A member of healthcare staff is required to contribute to the *risk assessment* and the *person escort record*.

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS): The group responsible for carrying out sentences given by the courts. In particular, they run prisons within England and Wales and manage the contracts with private sector prisons.

HMPPS Annual Digest: A yearly compendium of performance data across prisons and probation.

HMPPS Women's Prisons Group: A governmental body that oversee the 10 women's prisons and is overseen by a *prison group director*.

Hospital Escort: The *escort* of a prisoner to and from hospital for medical treatment, appointments, examinations, or other healthcare-related needs. Hospital escorts can last for multiple days if the prisoner is required to stay overnight.

Index Offence: The offence that resulted in a prisoner's current sentence.

Inside the Hospital: *Restraints* used inside the hospital include any restraint in the building, including time spent waiting or moving between buildings. It includes but does not necessitate restraint during a medical appointment.

Interim Report: This report, covering *Phase 1* of the PPO's special investigation.

Local Record: Physical or digital documents maintained by individual prisons. See also *centralised records.*

Method of Onset: The manner in which a birth begins. Can be spontaneous, induced, or caesarean.

NOMIS: Also known as **National Offender Management Information System.** A centralised database operated by *HMPPS* that stores information about prisoners including personal details, sentences, locations and movements.

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Person Escort Record (PER): A document to be completed by prison staff during the *escort.* It is a chronological account of the events, including the application of *restraints*, arriving and leaving locations, and interactions with hospital staff.

Phase 1: The first part of the PPO's special investigation, presented in this *Interim Report*. Phase 1 is mainly concerned with processing historical escort documents to form an evidence base from which patterns can be identified to inform *Phase 2*.

Phase 2: The second part of the PPO's special investigation, to be presented in the *Final Report.* Phase 2 will involve interviews with staff and prisoners to understand pregnant prisoners' experience and the factors that underpin decision making in practice.

PoE Policy: Also known as **The Prevention of Escape – External Escorts Policy.** The *policy* governing external *escorts* from 22nd September 2022 to 5th January 2026. Note that the *Escorts Framework* was published, but not implemented, on 30th October 2025.

Policy: A formal document listing the guiding principles and rules that staff are to follow. The *PSI 33/2015*, the *PoE Policy*, and the *Escorts Framework* are the three policies that governed escorts between 2021 and 2025.

Pregnancy and Mother and Baby Liaison Officer (PMBLO): A prison officer with additional responsibilities around the identification, contact, and support of pregnant prisoners.

Prison Group Director: The individual responsible for overseeing the prisons in a geographical area or specialist estate. The *women's prison group* is one such estate.

Prison Van: A vehicle owned by a prison that is used to transport prisoners during *escorts*.

PSI 33/2015: Also known as **Prison Service Instruction 33/2015 External Prisoner Movement.** The *policy* governing external *escorts* from 9th December 2015 to 22nd September 2022.

Radio Callsign: A designated code used to identify a radio user.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL): Leaving the prison unaccompanied for a short period of time, for a specific reason. Eligible prisoners may be granted ROTL to give birth, for example.

Restraints: The physical apparatus used to restrict the movement of prisoners, including a variety of handcuffs and application methods. The *single cuff* is the most commonly used; one handcuff is applied to the prisoner's wrist, the other to an escorting officer's wrist. An *escort chain* is similar, but with an extended chain to allow prisoners more freedom of movement.

Risk Assessment: A document detailing the security *risks* associated with an escort and specifying the types of *restraint* to be used as well as the number of staff required. *Healthcare* staff contribute to the assessment, and the document is signed off by the *authorising officer*.

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Risks: Any factor that could affect the security of an escort, or the safety of the prisoner, escorting staff, or members of the public. The *risk assessment* is a broad document that helps prison staff to identify factors such as offence, previous escort behaviour, and behaviour in prison.

Self-Declared Pregnant: Prisoners are not required to disclose their pregnancy. A prisoner is self-declared pregnant if they have chosen to do so.

Statistical Significance: A result that is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone, and is therefore likely to represent a real difference, as opposed to normal randomness.

Terms of Reference (ToR): A document defining the purpose, scope, and responsibilities of the PPO's special investigation.

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