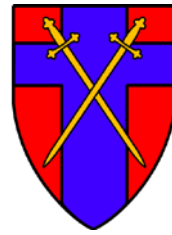




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See Distribution

Our Reference: HQ BFG 01-11-03

Date: 05 January 2016

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## **EMERGENCY CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS [ECArr]**

1. This policy aims to ensure the safety of all children<sup>1</sup> by stating the ECArr process. It applies at all times in the AOR, but clarity is particularly important for UWOs and during Deployments. Head of BFSWS (for JRT / CRT), the RMP / SIB and UWOs have agreed to work from this same policy and flow-chart. This letter amends the May 2015 ECArr Revised policy by principally reflecting the changes to the BFSWS CRT – JRT referral process and contact details and is effective immediately.

### **Summary of Policy and Principles**

2. ECArr will mostly be employed to fill a temporary and often unexpected gap in care of the child. Engaging the correct decision-maker is the key to ensuring safe, appropriate action is taken.

3. Decisions, to care for and accommodate a child safely are primarily a **parental**<sup>2</sup> responsibility. Units, Stations and Garrisons are to maintain schemes encouraging the parent to register viable ECArr decisions with UWOs, naming those who agree to care for their child in emergencies.

4. ECArr includes policy for situations where children will be at risk, due to the absence of the parents or of a workable decision from the parents, in that the child lacks suitable supervision, accommodation or care. Where there is no viable parental decision covering ECArr, the **only decision-maker** about the children's placement is **BFSWS** (CRT-JRT). BFSWS is a last resort, but one for which it has contractual responsibility and the authority to make necessary and timely care decisions.

5. Until a parent becomes fully able to articulate his/her parental decision for local action, a solution for example might be to fly a UK-based relative to BFG the next day to meet care needs. In this case, however, for the immediate time-period between reporting the situation and UK relatives' arrival, BFSWS is responsible via CRT / JRT for deciding how to meet care needs.

6. ECArr also minimise the period for which **duty personnel** remain tied into overseeing the child, on responding to the initial emergency. RMP or UWOs are not to decide on the child's placement and cannot be chosen or tasked to the 'carer' role, even in 'silent hours'. They are to return to normal duty as soon as possible after responding to the initial call-out and as shown below, having ensured the engagement of decisions-makers. Their further permitted involvement is limited to supporting the decision-makers (parent or BFSWS) by implementing decisions; e.g. arranging transport for child(ren) to the selected carer(s).

### **Policy Details guiding Actions at the Scene**

7. The sequence of ECArr actions is described below with key principles underlined. On the later flow-chart the sequence is also numbered for ease of use. On both, **green** reads as parental responsibility / action options and **red** as JRT / CRT responsibility and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this policy, 'child' means one or more 'children' - ECArr arrangements must ensure care of **all** affected children.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this policy, 'parent' is used to mean BOTH parents, where consultation is possible in a **viable** time-frame.

- a. **Child Protection**<sup>3</sup>. [CP – Children’s Act 2006, **Section 47**]. CP cases or suspected CP cases must be brought immediately to the attention of BFSWS through its Joint Response Team [JRT – silent hours] or Central Referral Team [CRT – working hours]. The Team decide about the needs of the child[ren] involved and action they will take. The Team is to be contacted<sup>4</sup> on Civ: (0049) 0800 724 3176 ONLY. A Police Protection Order (PPO) action works alongside CRT-JRT action. NB. Children present at scenes of domestic violence must initially be considered within this category.
- b. **Parents**. Where there is no **Section 47 Emergency Protection Order (EPO) or PPO** issue, deciding who should care for any child[ren] directly affected by their current emergency is then fully the responsibility of the parent present. Duty staff must help parents explore all options as shown on the attached flow chart; options deliberately exclude a parent absent on operations or exercise, as timeframes for contacting them usually preclude it. In advance of emergency situations, Units are expected to do everything possible to create and maintain records of parental ECarr wishes<sup>5</sup>, including getting their authority to ask Home-Start or SSAFA with CRB-cleared volunteers for assistance. In an emergency, Duty Staff can at once implement their wishes in support of ‘an existing parental decision’. In an emergency, an able parent who refuses to nominate a carer is to be reported for CoC action. Where neither parent is positioned to make a decision, the situation is to be reported to **JRT / CRT** at once.
- c. **British Forces Social Work Service** [CRT / JRT]. When all parental avenues of choice on the flow chart have been explored and failed, JRT or CRT is immediately responsible for decisions to place the child[ren] involved. JRT / CRT is to be contacted immediately on telephone numbers in (a) above. The Team decide about the needs of the child[ren] involved and action that they will take to meet those needs. Whether JRT attends at the scene, or not, is a further decision for the JRT. However, it must be articulated to duty personnel at the scene; JRT / CRT decisions regarding the child(ren) may be issued by telephone if events allow. All involved are to log details of telephone decisions.
- d. **Other individuals present**. As shown above, only the parents of the affected children, or BFSWS via JRT / CRT are authorised to make decisions on who is to care for the children, or where. Those present may be called upon by JRT / CRT to confirm that the parent remains unable to make necessary decisions for him/herself. Those present may then be requested by JRT / CRT to assist, by carrying out local activity needed to support or implement JRT / CRT decisions in placing the child[ren] in the most timely and effective way. This may include transport requests.
- e. **Command Duty Staff** are not to fill the temporary care gap beyond the shortest possible time it takes them to help implement care decisions of Parents or JRT / CRT. In the unlikely event that Duty Staff cannot get a workable decision either from the parent or JRT, within one hour, they are to report the matter upwards immediately to their Duty Field Officer (DFO); where it should then be reported at once to the Staff Duty Officer (SDO) HQ BFG who is to call the Hd of Service BFSWS for action. The Hd of Service is to be contacted though JRT / CRT.
- f. **Duty staff making any ECarr referral to CRT / JRT** are later to send a Quality Control Report sheet (Annex A – Compliments and Comments) in working hours to SO2 G1 Com Sp A.

## Conclusion

8. The main aim is to keep children safe, but Command duty staff must remain available for duty calls elsewhere. Where all viable avenues regarding parental decisions prove fruitless, BFSWS, CRT-JRT is then solely responsible for making timely decisions on the appropriate placement of the affected children.

<sup>3</sup> CP. Not everyone at an ECarr scene will be trained in CP or CRB cleared; concerns are to be clarified by calling CRT / JRT asp.

<sup>4</sup> NB. **OTHER telephone numbers** for CRT-JRT **NO LONGER APPLY**.

<sup>5</sup> Local CoC is encouraged to choose its own terminology for such Schemes – e.g. ‘Trusted Friend’, ‘Home Rat’, etc

{Original Signed on DII(F)}

C JONES  
C2 MSF  
for Comd BFG

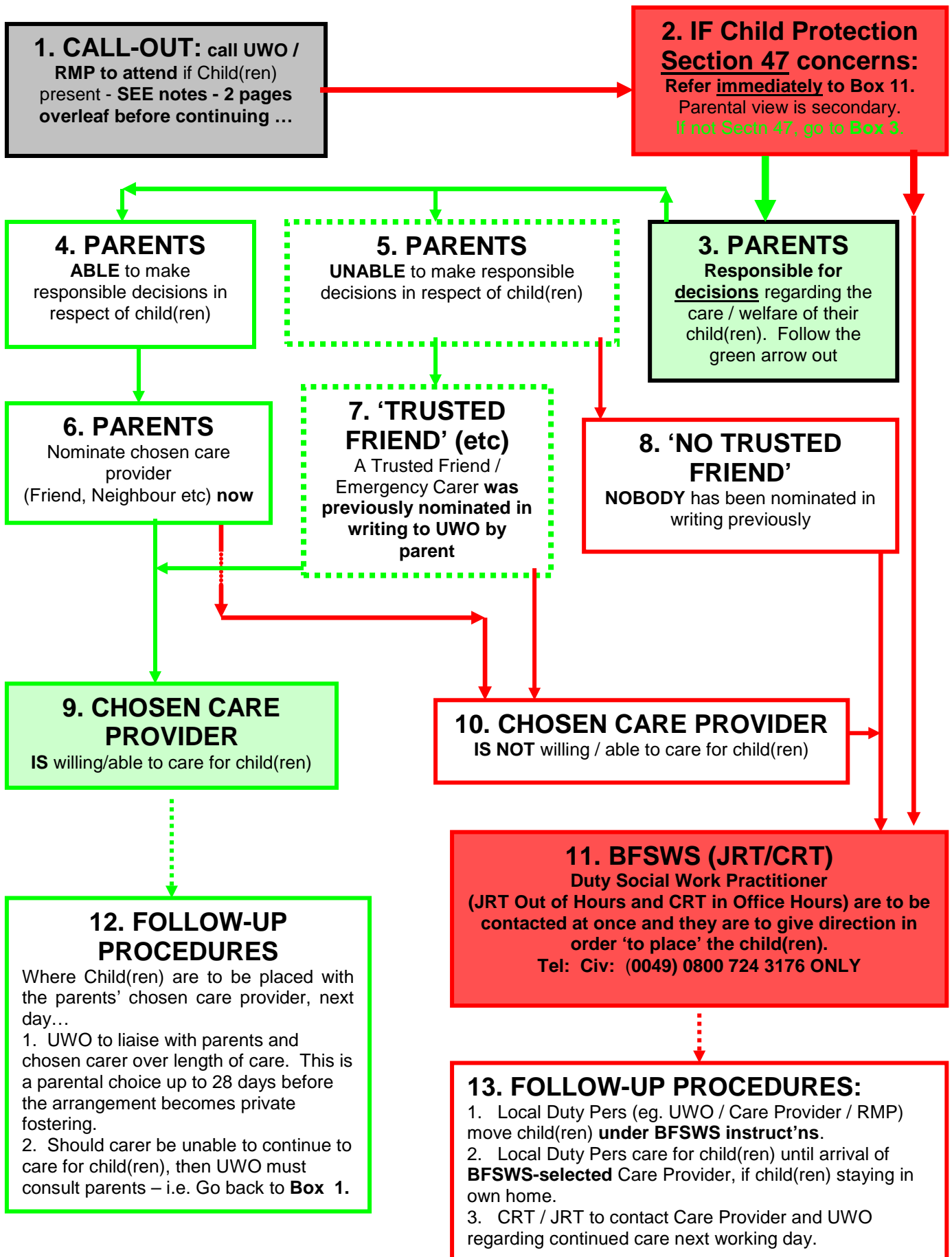
**Distribution:**

Dir BFG HS – e.g. for all Med Centres, CPN, Health Visitors and out-of hours Duty Staff folders  
SO2 G1 Westfalen Garrison – for DFO, HSO, GWSO and unit UWOs  
SO2 J1 EJSU – for Area Welfare Officer  
DPM – for RMP/SIB and JRT/CRT police personnel  
SO2 Cas-Comp HQ BFG – for SDO folder  
Head of Service BFSWS – for BFSWS's JRT/CRT personnel and all Social Worker Practitioners  
Ass Dir HQ SCE – for Schools and SENCOS  
SCE-Early Years Strategic Manager  
Dir AFF BFG  
Dir HiVE  
Dir Home-Start BFG  
Dir RELATE BFG  
VDM – SSAFA FH

**Copy:**

DCOS and Independent Chair BFG Safeguarding Board  
Chief G1  
PSO(G) for AWS  
SO1 Safeguarding

**EMERGENCY CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS (ECarr)  
FLOWCHART – JAN 16**



## NOTES IN SUPPORT OF ECarr FLOW CHART – SEE THE NUMBERS ON BOXES

1. **Box 1: Callout – Background Information:** There will be occasions when Emergency Care Arrangements (ECarr) for children need to be provided, including overnight accommodation. Here, **'Emergency' is a situation in which the child(ren), within the AOR, cannot be cared for by either parent AND an immediate solution is required which involves other adult(s) temporarily taking responsibility for parental or carer functions.** This may have many facets; e.g. an 'emergency' may be in or out of working hours; it may involve a child who does not appear on the G1PSI system, a child visiting from UK or from an F&C nation, or one who holds a non-UK passport. Many factors may cause this situation but, even if parents are the direct cause of the problem or could have avoided the situation arising, this will be irrelevant to the primary issue of meeting immediate needs in safeguarding all affected children. Any possible need for subsequent action between the Authority and the parents is secondary, including payment and disciplinary proceedings; **the primary aim is to meet the child(ren)'s immediate needs.**
2. Similarly, in circumstances involving German civil authorities, i.e. the police or the Jugendamt, the needs of the child(ren) will still be paramount. In the absence of parental choice, BFSWS is responsible for immediate decisions, liaison, contact and ensuing actions – **box 11**.
3. **Box 1:** At Call-out, neither parent may be available. If one is present and able to make decisions before having to leave, he/she should do so; or the one present may be unable to make valid decisions. **The flow chart** should be followed as a guide on who is responsible for decisions and actions in all cases. It is clearly organised into a **Green part** and a **Red part**, from many boxes there will be two choices, depending on the circumstances, following either a green or a red arrow (**Parents = green boxes; BFSWS = red boxes**). There are **4 principles which need to be followed along with their sequence of application:**
  - a. **Section 47 / Child Protection / Emergency Protection Order (EPO) issues** debar parents from choice in the care of their child(ren); the care responsibility falls immediately to BFSWS - JRT or CRT (**Box 2; red boxes 2 and 11**). If there is a lack of understanding, call CRT-JRT for clarification.
  - b. Thereafter, in more 'ordinary' emergencies, **decisions** to ensure the care of a child are primarily a **(green) parental** responsibility. Follow **Boxes 3,4,5,6,7,9**. However, if after being fully explored by those present and proving not possible – **Boxes 8,10 lead to:**
  - c. **BFSWS** in its statutory role then immediately assumes responsibility for **decisions** needed to 'place' the affected child(ren) with qualified people and thereby ensure proper safety / safeguarding of the child(ren) – **Boxes 11, 13**. BFSWS '1 hour response' can include telephone requests to Duty Staff present at the scene – N.B '1 hour response' may not necessarily mean JRT-CRT will attend the scene.
  - d. **Those at the scene are not to take on decision-making and responsibilities, as these properly lie with parents or BFSWS.** The role of those at the scene, such as the UWO / RMP, can be to give practical support which implements decisions taken by a parent or BFSWS. Thereafter however, if in practice any action to safeguard the child(ren) should fail or be patently ineffective, those present are to immediately notify the Chain of Command via Duty Field Officers or Gar SOs2 G1– then to G1 Community Support A at HQ BFG in working hours, or SDO BFG in silent hours and seek advice. SDO may call the Head of Service BFSWS for action.
4. **Box 3: Parents' Decisions:** there are a series of options which parents may have from here. Ideally this would conclude satisfactorily at **box 9** with a parent choosing another adult locally to care for their child(ren). The assumption is of a parent able to articulate a valid decision, before having to be absent from the child(ren). This flow-chart then considers the circumstances and options when this does not work.
5. **Box 4: Parent is able to make responsible decisions.** If **box 4** applies, go to **boxes 6 + 9**.
6. **Box 5: Parents are unable to make responsible decisions.** Re-read paras. 3b and 3c above.

There may be many reasons for an inability to make responsible, sensible and practical decisions which technically may be described as 'not having mental capacity', including the effects of drink and drugs. In the event of doubt, as there will probably be no time to call in professional medical or psychiatric advice, the only remaining option for emergency services present is likely to be that you make an honest judgment based on 'the balance of probability', your experience and common sense. In this eventuality you are to record the basis on which you concluded that the parent(s) or their proposed childcare provider(s) did not have 'mental capacity'. This is the extent of your decision-making powers as the senior person present. If **box 5** applies, go to **box 7**.

7. **Box 6 and Box 7**: Both circumstances are within the parental choices. In **box 6** the parent is still able to make a choice which may lead on asking friends / neighbours / contacts to help with the child(ren). In **box 7**, a parent may not be present, or not have 'mental capacity', but those on the scene have access to written parental authority which specifies an individual who has already agreed to take the child(ren) in an emergency situation. In an ideal world this leads to:

8. **Box 9**: the person nominated by the parent is able and willing to care for the child(ren) as requested, with nobody present having any significant doubts as to this choice. Now re-read Para 3d.

9. **Box 8 and Box 10**: Both boxes deal with the circumstances when either the parent has recorded no choice in advance of an emergency, or the parental choice proves unworkable for whatever reason. If there is no possibility of a parent making another choice within the time available, this means that the primary option of parental responsibility has been completely exhausted. The responsibility then falls to (red side) **BFSWS** for decisions and actions as per paragraph 3c above.

10. **Box 11**: Having found that all parental options have been examined and are unworkable, **JRT / CRT becomes the only ECarr solution**. JRT / CRT are to be contacted at once and only they now have the authority to place the child(ren), but first need to clarify why all parental options have failed. JRT / CRT will arrange for the child(ren) to be placed using Lists available to them. Be prepared to relay basic information there and then. Now re-read paragraph 3d above.

11. **Box 12 and Box 13**: Both boxes refer key personnel to actions for **follow-up, usually the following day**, with the focus being clarity on any continuing carer needs. The return of a hospitalised parent or the arrival of a relative, usually called over from the UK, may be part of this stage. The return of a serving spouse from Ops overseas, to give childcare support, will only be considered by the Command in the most extreme circumstances but does not avoid **Box 11** action. **Box 12** solutions: UWO / RMP may consider it appropriate to inform BFSWS of an incident which was resolved locally. Neither **Box 12** nor **Box 13** should ever be construed to indicate that emergency staff present are to be made responsible for ECarr decisions on the placing of children; decisions lie either with the parents or with BFSWS only.

12. **IF NONE OF THE ABOVE APPLY**. Immediate action – see paragraph 3d above. On the next working day, to ensure that your interim overnight measures for safeguarding the child(ren) are properly supported, and that policy and procedures are reviewed:

- a. BFSWS staff should take up the matter with their Head of Service or Service Director.
- b. RMP/SIB involved are to inform their CoC and include the DPM at HQ BFG.
- c. UWO is to inform the CoC immediately and include SO2 G1 Com Sp A at HQ BFG.

**EMERGENCY CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS (ECarr) – COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS  
ON REQUESTS TO JRT / CRT:  
Unit Welfare Officer's / RMP / Referring Agency's QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

**For Follow-Up / Reporting, send to: SO2 G1 Community Support A, HQ BFG.**

Reporting relates to the context of extant ECarr policy. Following the improved measures promulgated for ECarr<sup>6</sup>, UWOs inform SO2 G1 Com Sp Pol at HQ BFG of **ALL** events in which ECarr action has been requested of the CRT – JRT. This is achieved using the proforma below. It should be completed and submitted direct, unless your CoC directs otherwise, as soon as possible but within 5 working days of such events. This will support Quality Assurance and ensure timely G/J1 follow-up if needed. Both Compliment and Comment are sought to ensure balanced audit and understanding.

Use of this sheet in 'WORD' will ensure boxes expand to take the text you wish to insert.

Sender Name / Rank .....	Sender Appointment e.g. UWO .....	Sender Unit Name / Bks Location .....
Sender Tel Number .....	Sender – other contact details .....	Sender e-mail address .....@.....
DTG – Start of Event .....	Initial contact with (Delete one): CRT / JRT on Tel: .....	CRT / JRT – name of person dealing with you: .....
<b>1.</b> Event – What was the issue first presented to you as ECarr?  <b>2.</b> Why could neither parent give you their decision on naming a childcarer?  <b>Eg.</b> Parent 1 away on Ops; Parent 2 – unconscious/hospital No record of 'Trusted Friend' etc	<b>3.</b> Event – Who did you speak to there and when? What did you request of JRT / CRT?  <b>4.</b> Key points: further discussion / issues with JRT / CRT ?	<b>5.</b> Event – What decision / action was taken for the <u>immediate care needs</u> of the child(ren)? On whose authority?  <b>6.</b> Who then did what, and when?
<b>7.</b> Subsequent Action / Issues? Any remaining Issues? (If any.)	<b>8.</b> Your comment on: Viability of Decisions <u>in this case</u> . (If any.)	<b>9.</b> Your comment on: Policy and Procedures, <u>as a system</u> . (If any.)
<b>ADDITIONAL POINTS → CONTINUATION SHEET...</b>	Signed  .....	Dated  .....

<sup>6</sup> ECarr – first promulgated to Garrisons by UKSC/J1/3300 for UWOs, RMP and BFSWS 17 Dec 09.