Support Unit

## Pre-Arrivals

## Poggio

## NSE Foreword

As the Head of Location North East Italy I would like to offer my congratulations on your assignment to Italy.

You will shortly be receiving an email from the National Support Element (NSE) team to inform you of what actions you need to complete in order to prepare for the start of your assignment. This process will require you to fill out a plethora of forms for various departments, it is imperative that you read everything and complete the forms in a timely manner to ensure you receive the relevant supportability clearances before you move. These supportability checks are vital to ensure that both you, and any family members, can be looked after here in Italy.

Early engagement at every step is critical as this can be a lengthy process; please follow the guidance given by your current HR Centre and the team at the NSE. This pre-arrival booklet should lay out much of the information you need, however if there is something, we have not covered then please send us an email and we will endeavour to get you the answer.

Team NSE comprises of the JNCO J1, Host Nation Liaison Officer (HNLO) and the Community Liaison Officer (CLO). During your assignment Team NSE will be responsible for in-processing, service administration, appraisals, changes in personal circumstances, some career and manning advice/guidance, local Host Nation Support, Community Support and eventually out-processing as you move on to future assignments. The Team has a wealth of knowledge and no question is too small so please engage with the Team at the earliest opportunity.

You will be allocated a sponsor, who will where possible, have similar family circumstances to you. They will be available to answer any questions you have throughout the process and will aid in your first weeks in Italy; this will include assisting with base passes, vehicle registration, insurance and general orientation.

Your sponsor, Team NSE and the community will support you throughout,

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Accommodation

There is no purpose-built Service accommodation at Poggio Renatico. Accommodation is sourced by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) around the city of Ferrara, which is 12 miles from the military base.

Your entitlement and personal status are the deciding factors for the type of accommodation you are allocated. Consideration will be given to preferences but there is moderate difficulty acquiring housing so specific requests may not always be available. You will be housed in an available property that meets your entitlement and most suits your needs.

Unaccompanied SP will tend to be housed within the walls of Ferrara, whereas Accompanied SP may be outside the city walls. The properties within the walls tend to have less outdoor space and those outside the walls are usually larger but have a longer commute (approx. 5-10 minute drive) to the centre of town and schooling, making a car a necessity.

A few families have found they have had delays in moving into accommodation in Ferrara for a variety of reasons. Therefore, please be aware you may have to spend time in a hotel until suitable housing is allocated.

Further information on accommodation and DIO can be found in the 'Poggio Accommodation' booklet.

## Pets

Northern Italy is a very pet friendly part of the world and well-behaved dogs are generally welcome everywhere. From public transport to restaurants it is common to see dogs out with their owners.

You need to inform DIO staff if you intend to bring pets with you. This is because some contracts with Landlords state that they do not wish to have pets in their property. DIO would advise you to make yourself familiar with the requirements of being a pet owner in SFA as per JSP 464 Vol 1, Part 1, Chapter 6.

For more information, read the 'Poggio Pets' booklet.

## Healthcare

You are required to register with HEALIX prior to your overseas assignment to conduct medical pre-screening which will measure the risk of you or your family requiring additional medical support whilst overseas. Medical screening is required for all family members who will be residing in Italy (including children in boarding school who will be accompanying you over the holidays).

Your primary healthcare during the assignment will be delivered by Host Nation providers, we utilise English speaking GPs and Dentists within Ferrara with assistance provided by the HNLO alongside HEALIX.

Secondary care, which includes referrals for hospitals and outpatient clinics, is coordinated by HEALIX to ensure the process is authorised and coherent with UK NHS standards.

Of note, the MOD aims to provide care of parity to the NHS, however this is not always achievable and the standards and availability of healthcare provision in Italy is variable. Expectations and the limitations of healthcare provision should be understood by all SP and their families prior to assignment.

For further information of healthcare provisions in Italy, see the 'Poggio Health' booklet.

## Education

All SP wishing to send their children to schools in the EJSU area of responsibility must ensure that they have read the education policies and EJSU information.

Poggio Renatico does not have an Education Officer, and so any queries with regards to Education should be addressed through the NSE. The main options for schooling are briefly detailed below, further information, including official school reports, on schools in Ferrara can be requested through the CLO and through the 'Pogaio Education' booklet.

If you have received a posting/assignment order for any location within EJSU, even if you are already serving overseas, you are required to contact the Families Section at Abbey Wood (DESDSCOM-FamSec-Gp@mod.gov.uk.) They will provide a family travel pack with all the information regarding clearances that includes a personal assessment on the suitability of your child to be educated in Italy.

## Vehicles

Since the military community is spread out among various locations, with schools and housing located in Ferrara and the base in Poggio Renatico, a car is a necessity. For families with children in school, having two cars is highly recommended to allow flexibility in day to day tasks such as the school run.

Bringing a car from the UK is often the most convenient option as you won't need to sell/store your current car and you can bring some essentials with you to have on your first day in country as your belongings may arrive after you have arrived in Italy. You may be able to buy a car from a leaving GBR member but this relies on someone leaving at the right time that is willing to sell their car at a price within your budget. You will not be able to buy a car through a normal second hand garage as you are not registered as a resident of Italy.

On arrival in Italy cars are required to be Armed Forces Italy (AFI) registered. This takes place at the Motor Vehicle Registration Office (MVRO) in Vicenza, a U.S military base. Only personnel who have completed the MVRO process and receive an AFI driver's license are permitted to drive their personal vehicle, therefore, spouses and dependants will be required to attend the registration process.

After completing the registration process, you will be eligible for tax free fuel rations for one car. Fuel cards are accepted at 2 Italian petrol station chains, AGIP and ENI and are not valid outside of Italy.

In this area of Italy, you must carry snow chains and winter tyres are recommended (but only compulsory on certain roads) during the period of 15 November to 15 April as well as many other places within Europe. A winter tyre is one marked M\&S, MS, M+S (for mud and snow), or with the three peak or snowflake symbol. Note that 'All-Weather' tires marked with M\&S are also acceptable.

You will also need to carry extra equipment in your car, such as reflective jackets for all passengers, a warning triangle and first aid kit. You will need headlight converter stickers and your car must display a GB sticker, even if you have a GB identifier on your number plate. Find more information here.

Serving SP stationed outside of the UK can additionally benefit from tax-free car sales through companies such as Forces Cars Direct and directly from dealerships. In addition to saving the UK VAT, there are significant discounts which could save you thousands when purchasing a new car during your assignment. There are strict rules associated with export and import of vehicles that should be understood prior to making a purchase, more details can be found here.

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## HIGHWAY CODE TESTING

Overseas Postings. Personnel assigned / posted overseas are required to take the Highway Code Test on arrival, in accordance with these Regulations and underpinned by any additional theatre-specific instructions. The Highway Code Test shall remain valid for 5 years, however, if returning back overseas following break of more than 12 months, then the specific overseas Highway Code Test shall need to be retaken. Please ensure this is completed prior to your arrival in NE Italy.

Highway Code Training - link to the European and UK HCT.

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## Removals

Agility Logistics are contracted to move SP and their dependant's personal effects to their new assignment overseas. Registration with Agility Logistics with details of your move should be completed as soon as you receive your Assignment Order, you can apply without knowing the delivery address in Italy as this can be added later.

Regardless of the type or size of property being moved into, SP are limited to a cubic metre allowance based upon SLA to which the service person is entitled to in accordance with housing regulations:

The Furniture Movement Service (FMS). For accompanied personnel moving from SFA or privately owned/rented accommodation and Single homeowners moving between privately owned or rented accommodation you are entitled to FMS. The maximum volume that may be moved at public expense under FMS is up to 67.92 Cubic Metres (CuM). Under FMS a contractor packs the belongings, moves it to the new residence and unloads it.

Self-Pack Service (SPS). This service is primarily intended for use by single nonhomeowners and unaccompanied personnel and involves you packing your own boxes then having them moved under Service arrangements. Accompanied personnel may also use this service in certain circumstances. The maximum volume for SPS is 6 CuM (1078 Kg ).

Alternatively, you may make your own arrangements and claim back your costs up to a set MOD limit; you can find further information in JSP 752 Ch. 12, Sect 04.

The Agility Logistics Website holds all the regulations and has FAQs relating to the removals process and we strongly recommend reading through those documents. If you have any further questions or concerns, contact your current PSF or the NSE.

## Travel

With the introduction of Overseas Private Vehicle Provision (OPVP) the way in which you travel to an Overseas Posting has changed. The aim of OPVP is to assist Service Personnel (SP) permanently assigned to or from an overseas location with access to a private motor vehicle. It replaces the vehicle provision in previous LOA policy. OPVP Options. Eligible SP may use the OPVP provision in one of the following ways:
a. To contribute towards administrative and vehicle depreciation costs when selling and buying a vehicle. The SP must be able to demonstrate that two separate financial transactions have taken place. Or;
b. To contribute towards the charges incurred (up to the capped rate) when required to cancel a vehicle lease agreement. Or;
c. To contribute towards the cost (up to the capped rate) of privately shipping one vehicle to and from the permanent overseas assignment location.

See JSP 752 Ch 9 Sect 4 for more details or contact your losing Unit HR Ctr.

## Finances and Banking

You will have the option to open an Italian bank account on arrival. In order to enter contracts with phone/internet companies and Tele Pass (automatic toll road payment), an Italian bank account is required to start a direct debit. Additionally, the NATO finance department prefer a Euro account for expenses.

Most UK credit/debit cards are accepted in Italy and it is also possible to withdraw cash from a large network of cash point machines, although a bank charge is often applied. Therefore, it is highly recommended to talk to your bank about the options available. There are also lots of options to open an account with companies such as Monzo, Revolut and Transferwise which have little to no fees for transactions outside the UK, you can find more information here. Please be aware that your fuel ration card payments will be billed in USD, therefore an account that doesn't charge for purchases, withdrawals and transactions is extremely useful to avoid fees every time you pay for fuel.

## Stores

Your losing unit should fully kit you on posting to DACCC. You will be issued extra clothes for this posting and it is recommended to visit stores as early as possible as some kit may be made to order. Clothing supplies are available to order whilst in Italy; however this process is slow so it is recommended to obtain your entitlement in the UK.

The daily working uniform is PCS. It is recommended to get a mixture of light weight and heavy weight for the summer and winter.

You will be issued No 7s (Warm Weather No 2s); however these are not worn, so you will only require the khaki long sleeve shirts for the Mess Dress. You will also be issued No 6s (Warm Weather No 1 uniform) and No 8s (Warm Weather No 5 uniform), however, there are very few occasions where they will be worn.

No 1 Uniform is worn for the Remembrance Day parade and for ceremonies. The British community organise two Dining in Nights for NATO each year: celebrating the Battle of Britain and Burns Night. The dress for these events is often mess dress so you may also require No 5 uniform or equivalent.

For more information on the NATO Clothing Entitlements, the NATO DIN can be sent on request.

For tailoring and alterations, the U.S Army Base in Vicenza has an Alterations shop where personnel can get minor tailoring done to uniform, such as rank slide changes. However, they are unable to mount Service Medals; this will be needed to be completed in the UK.

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## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND CURRENCY REQUIREMENTS

## RAF MOD 90

If your RAF ID is due to expire before the end of your tour here, we highly recommend you renew it prior to posting.

## NATO Security Certificate

You must request a NATO Security certificate from you current unit on receipt of an assignment order. Once you have received it, a copy must be sent to the NSE prior to arrival in order to ensure that the relevant paperwork is raised.

If you do not have a NATO Security Clearance valid for 12 months, you cannot be issued with a NATO ID.

## Medical and Dental

There is no MAME qualified SMOs in Italy, therefore for those who require annual Aircrew Medicals you will visit SHAPE in Belgium or a base in the UK every year. Therefore, it is highly recommended to complete an Aircrew Medical before you leave the UK to have as much currency as possible.
Regular Medical and Dental check-ups can be conducted in Italy.

## IRT Currency

You will conduct IRT Mod 1-3 each year in order to hold the readiness status of the DACCC. The course is called NMSC (NATO Military Skills Course) and is a tri-service course for those in NATO posts to cover IRT (and Army/RN equivalents).

The course is one week long and you will go to SHAPE in Belgium to do it. You will need to be NMSC current to deploy on Exercise. The UKNMSC Poggio Renatico representative is responsible for booking UK personnel onto NMSC courses.

## RAFFT

There isn't a PTI based in Italy and therefore you will conduct the RAFFT each year on NMSC. When possible the EJSU PTI may visit Poggio Renatico to conduct RAFFT, however this is not guaranteed. Therefore, on arrival, please ensure you have at least 6 months of RAFFT currency.

## ALLOWANCES

JSP 752 is the policy document for expenses and allowances. Depending on your personal situation, the following may be attributable:

## Local Overseas Allowance (LOA)

The aim of LOA is to contribute towards the necessary additional local cost of day-to-day whilst serving overseas. This is attributable depending on your personal circumstance. You receive LOA for the length of your posting to Italy. Up to date rates can be found on the JPA portal.

## Home to Duty Travel (HDT)

Depending on where your accommodation is in relation to your place of work, this is an allowance which assists with the costs of travelling in your personal vehicle to work on a daily basis. It is paid at a mileage rate. You will be informed of your entitlement when you arrive in Italy.

Get You Home (Overseas) (GYH (O))
For those eligible personnel on a 12 month or longer assignment there is an entitlement for Get Your Home Overseas Warrants, which helps towards the cost of returning home to see family and friends. The entitlement is for 1 return warrants per 12-month period and will be renewed on the anniversary of the arrival date on assignment. Further information with regards to GYH (O) can be found within JSP 752, Chapter 9 -however, upon submitting your first GYH (O), the NSE will be available to assist.

## Voluntary Separated in Different Theatre

SP who undertake a permanent voluntarily Unaccompanied Assignment in a different Theatre to the UK family home will be eligible for LSA Level 1 from the 1st day of the assignment. (LSA paid to those voluntarily separated does not count towards the accumulation of separated service to progress through the LSA level thresholds).

## LEAVE

Definitive leave regulations are in JSP 760.

## Relocation Leave

You are entitled to 10 working days Relocation Leave if assigned in from the UK or a theatre other than NW Europe; this leave may be taken either in the UK or at your new overseas location depending on accommodation arrangements. LOA is not payable for periods of relocation leave spent overseas prior to the assignment in date.

## Annual Leave Allowance

All SP are entitled to 38 days annual leave. In recognition of the extra Public Holidays (PH) taken across Europe, all SP within the EJSU AOR are credited with an extra 4 days to accommodate these PH. These days will be added to individual leave records by NSE staff on a pro rata basis according to your assignment date to the end of the current leave year.

## Travelling Time

Travel time credit of leave. In order to compensate those SP who spend a significant amount of time travelling when proceeding on leave a re-credit of leave may be granted to SP. Travel time will be permitted under the following conditions:

The journey is to a registered address (NOK, parents or privately maintained home), or booked accommodation if using Respite.

- The leave period must be for a minimum of five working days (not including any days to be credited).
- The journey must be beyond the borders of the country of assignment.
- In any period of leave, no more than one day will be credited to leave accounts for SP stationed within NEW, and two days for SP stationed outside of NWE.
- Travel time claims will be limited to a maximum of three per year for each SP. Whilst not restricted to specific periods, this is designed to compensate for travel for normally recognised block leave periods (Easter, Summer, and Christmas).
- The policy applies to SP only.

Leave is to be applied for as normal via JPA; on return from leave SP should request to their NSE to re-credit their JPA leave balance with the appropriate permitted travel time. If the request for travel time is in connection with Respite Provision, confirmation of the accommodation booking will need to be supplied to the NSE.

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## STATE BENEFITS (UK)

## Child Benefits

If you are in receipt of Child Benefit and remain eligible under current DSS rules, you may continue to claim using your BFPO address. Advice is contained in Form FB. 5 Social Security Services Families Going Abroad or by writing direct to:

DSS, (Child Benefit Centre)
Washington
PO Box 1
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
NE88 1AA.
It is important to keep a note of your Benefit reference number in order to quote it on all correspondence. For further information please follow the link to the UK Government website:

## National Insurance Credits

Eligible personnel are able to claim Class 1 National Insurance Credits which count towards entitlement to the basic State Pension, bereavement benefits and some other state benefits.

Spouses of SP attract recognition within the tax system by virtue of accompanying overseas on assignment. The application form is available online and is completed towards the end of your accompanying overseas tour. You must complete the form and get the Head of Location to complete 'Part 2' certifying you are eligible for the credits. It must be completed before you leave and submitted within the particular tax year you return to the UK.

## Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

 JSA and ESA are provided when someone is unemployed and looking for work (JSA), ill or disabled (ESA) and offers financial support to spouses and older dependent children (up to 21 years old) of SP when returning from overseas tours.Entitled persons will be deemed to have satisfied the requirement to have paid sufficient NI contributions in any previous tax year before their overseas assignment on processing of the NI credits form.

Entitled persons, who leave employment to follow their partner/parent overseas, will not be refused JSA/ESA on the grounds of voluntary unemployment.

Entitled persons will be able to claim JSA/ESA immediately on return to the UK instead of the usual requirement of 3 months residency in the UK.

For further information please use the following links here and here.

## SUMMARY

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The following is not an exhaustive list of the requirements for your move; please follow the guidance given by your current PSF and the team at the NSE.

| Accommodation and Pets |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| F1132 | Complete and send to DIO |
| Pet travel application | Process can take up to 4 months |
| Education |  |
| Contact DSCOM Families section | For families pack |
| Contact CEAS | For more information about school provisions |
| Healthcare |  |
| Register with HEALIX | Pre-screening process can be lengthy, complete ASAP. |
| Vehicles |  |
| UK driver's license | Valid for assignment |
| IDP | 1968 IDP |
| V5C |  |
| Car Insurance | Must cover you for the drive through Europe and for approximately 2-3 weeks after you arrive |
| Green Card | Check with insurance provider |
| Snow Chains | Mandatory from 15 November to 15 April |
| Winter Tyres | Recommended (but only compulsory on certain roads) during the period of 15 November to 15 April |
| Carried in the Car | Reflective jackets for all passengers, a warning triangle and first aid kit |
| Must be displayed | Headlight converter stickers and a GB sticker |
| Travel and Removals |  |
| Register with Agility | ASAP |
| Book flights or apply for PAP | With current PSF at least 6 weeks before travel |
| Banking and Finance |  |
| Multi-currency card/account | Talk to current bank provider about options available and consider the use of a travel account. |
| Change of address | Inform bank provider of change of address |
| Documents and Currencies |  |
| Passport | Valid for at least 6 months |
| Travel insurance | For leave travel outside country of assignment |
| RAF MOD 90 | Valid for assignment |
| NATO Security Clearance | Request ASAP |
| RAFFT | At least 6 months currency |

