



Home Office

# Biometric reuse

**Version 3.0**

This guidance sets the policy requirements for the reuse of biometric information for immigration and citizenship purposes.

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# About this guidance

This guidance sets out the circumstances the Secretary of State may consider reusing previously enrolled biometric information from individuals who make an application for leave or for British citizenship, or who are liable to have their fingerprints and facial image taken under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Biometric reuse will be rolled out incrementally to ensure processes are developed to improve the individual's experience while maintaining public safety.

This guidance will be updated whenever biometric reuse is rolled out to new application categories or where the requirements for biometric reuse change.

## In this guidance

'Official' means:

- immigration, nationality and asylum caseworkers
- immigration and border force officers

'Senior official' means:

- a senior executive officer or above

'Individual' means:

- applicants, claimants, individuals, and dependants

## For the purpose of this guidance

Biometric immigration document means:

- a biometric residence permit (BRP) which is a card issued to foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and granted over 6 months leave to enter or remain
- a vignette that is valid for more than 6 months
- online evidence of an immigration status

Biometric residence card (BRC) means either:

- a card issued to non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who were exercising rights under EU Law - this also includes permanent residence cards and derivative residence cards
- a card issued to non-EEA nationals granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme

## Out of scope

This guidance does not cover biometric information taken for the purpose of issuing a UK Passport.

## Contacts

If you have any queries about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Identity Security Policy Team with your comments.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **3.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **18 July 2022**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

Biometric reuse is now available under the Private Life and Settlement Family Life routes.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Introduction: Biometric reuse

This page tells individuals and officials what biometric reuse means.

Biometric reuse is the use of biometric information that was previously enrolled for a previous immigration application or purpose. Fingerprint biometric information will be rechecked against law enforcement fingerprint databases, including the police series of fingerprint databases, Ident1. This is to enable officials to conduct suitability checks on the individual.

The policy aim is to require foreign nationals to enrol their fingerprint biometric information only once so they can be used whenever the individual makes a fresh application. This is intended to reduce the circumstances where individuals are required to attend a biometric enrolment event to enrol their fingerprint biometric information. Guidance on biometric enrolments is set out in: biometric enrolment.

Whenever fingerprint biometric information are reused, they will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes. The policy on the retention and use of biometric information is set out in: retention and usage of biometric information, which includes how biometric information is used and when it must be deleted.

Individuals must enrol a new facial image every time an individual applies for an immigration or a nationality product as they change unlike fingerprints. However, there are exceptional circumstances where officials will allow facial biometric information to be reused.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Biometric enrolment

Retention and usage of biometric information

# Reuse of previously enrolled biometric information

This page tells officials when previously enrolled biometric information can be routinely reused as an alternative to a new biometric enrolment.

## Reuse: the general approach

Individuals who hold a valid biometric residence permit (BRP) or a biometric residence card (BRC) will be allowed to have their fingerprint biometric information reused if they are applying:

- for leave under the [Graduate](#) route from 1 July 2021
- for leave under the [Skilled Worker](#) and [Student](#) routes from 14 December 2021
- for leave under the [Private Life](#) and [Settlement Family Life](#) routes from 20 June 2022
- to replace a BRP or BRC

## Graduate, Skilled Worker, Student, Private Life, Settlement Family Life routes and Indefinite leave to remain (refugee, humanitarian protection or Discretionary Leave)

Individuals applying for leave under the Graduate, Skilled Worker, Student, Private Life, Settlement Family Life routes or Indefinite leave to remain (refugee, humanitarian protection or Discretionary Leave) will not need to attend a biometric enrolment event where they meet the requirements to enable their fingerprints to be reused. However, these individuals **must** still upload a new facial image.

The requirements are as follows:

- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has previously enrolled and retained the individual's fingerprint biometric information or the individual is permanently unable to enrol their fingerprints
- individuals must hold a valid BRP
- must be aged 5 years old or over
- the existing facial photograph stored on the Immigration and Asylum Biometric System **must not** be older than 10 years, or 5 years for individuals aged under 16, at the date the application is made and the individual uploads a new facial image
- **must** use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app (the App)

Individuals who are not able to complete all steps in the UK Immigration: ID Check successfully will be subject to additional checks. This may delay the processing of their application.

Officials **must** require individuals to re-enrol their biometric information, both a facial image and fingerprints, where they are unable to resolve their identity. This is to ensure their identity can be confirmed by matching their fingerprints against the previously enrolled set.

Individuals who make a successful application and are a visa national will receive a new BRP alongside their eVisa, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided as part of their previous enrolment. Non-visa nationals who make a successful application will only receive an eVisa. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

The facial image captured by the App will be displayed on the individual's eVisa which they can view and share by using the [view and prove your immigration status](#) service and, where issued, on the individual's biometric residence permit.

## Change to visa status

Where a decision is made to change the status of a non-visa nationality so they are required to apply for a visa before travelling to the UK, officials must contact any affected individuals who are residing in the UK and only hold an eVisa to issue them a BRP card. The individual **must not** be required to reenrol their biometric information.

Individuals who hold a valid eVisa and become a visa national will need a BRP to provide carriers, such as airlines, with physical proof of their immigration status when travelling to the UK. They should continue to use their eVisa to prove their rights to work in the UK and rent in England.

## Replacement BRPs and BRCs

Officials will reuse the biometric information of individuals who apply for a replacement BRP or BRC card, where:

- UKVI has retained the individual's fingerprint biometric information
- the information on the face of the card and the chip remains the same as the previous document
- the individual is aged 5 years or over
- the expiry date of the card remains unchanged
- the facial photograph on the document will not be older than 10 years, or 5 years for cards issued to individuals aged under 16, on the date the replacement card expires
- individuals have not changed their address in the last 6-months

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided as part of their previous biometric enrolment. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

Officials must require individuals to re-enrol their biometric information, both a facial image and fingerprints, where they have concerns about the identity or suitability of the individual. This is to ensure their identity can be confirmed by matching their fingerprints against the previously enrolled set.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Retention and usage of biometric information

### **Related external links**

[Immigration Rules Appendix Graduate](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Worker](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Student](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Private Life](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Settlement Family Life](#)

[View and prove your immigration status](#)



# Unable to enrol biometric information

This page tells officials about the circumstances they can reuse the biometric information of individuals who are unable to enrol their biometric information.

## Requirements

Officials can only reuse the biometric information of individuals, where UKVI still retains their fingerprint biometric information, who are:

- physically unable to attend a biometric enrolment event and were previously issued a biometric residence permit (BRP) or a biometric residence card (BRC)
- detained pending removal from the UK and make an application for leave, and a biometric immigration document and officials refuse the application

## Unable to attend a biometric enrolment event

Officials must consider reusing the biometric information of individuals who are physically unable to attend a biometric enrolment event where other alternative options, including the use of mobile biometric enrolment, are not viable.

Officials must not reuse biometric information where other options set out in the biometric enrolment guidance are available, such as the use of mobile enrolment or deferring the enrolment until a time the individual is able to enrol them. The types of circumstances where biometric reuse would be appropriate include (but are not limited to) where individuals are:

- incapacitated through disability, illness, injury or medical treatment
- lack the mental capacity to cooperate with the enrolment process
- isolated to avoid contact with others to prevent harm, injury or illness

Where an official considers an individual meets the requirements and would benefit from having their biometric information reused, that official must submit a request supported by a senior official to the Head of Immigration Checking and Enquiry (ICES), or their appointed deputy, for consideration.

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided as part of their previous biometric enrolment. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

## Detained

Officials must reuse any previously enrolled biometric information from individuals who make an unsuccessful application while they are detained pending removal. Their reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for biometric retention purposes.

Individuals who are released from detention and are granted leave must apply for a biometric immigration document upon release and enrol their biometric information.

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Biometric enrolment guidance

# Reduced operational capacity

This page tells officials which categories of cases should be prioritised for biometric enrolment or reuse when biometric enrolment services are operating at severely reduced capacity because of a critical incident or event, such as a pandemic.

Officials must consider reusing biometric information where:

- individuals already hold a biometric residence permit (BRP)
- the facial image printed on the BRP will not be older than 10 years, or 5 years for cards issued to individuals aged under 16, before the leave or card expires
- individuals are aged 5 years or over

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided as part of their previous biometric enrolment or an eVisa. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

## Prioritising individuals

When biometric enrolment services are operating at a reduced capacity, officials will need to prioritise individuals for biometric enrolment or reuse. Individuals will be split into 2 cohorts, higher priority and lower priority individuals.

## Higher priority individuals

Officials will prioritise the following groups of individuals for either a biometric enrolment appointment or for biometric reuse:

- fee waiver local authority supported with no leave (overstayer/out of time)
- fee waiver with no leave (overstayer/out of time)
- Article 3 Human Rights claim on medical grounds
- destitute asylum claimants who are accommodated under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and are to be granted leave
- potential victims of trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and any other urgent safeguarding matter
- unaccompanied minors
- babies born in the UK to foreign national parents holding limited leave
- fee waiver with existing recourse to public funds with 3C leave
- aged over 70

All individuals who meet the higher priority criteria will either have their previously enrolled biometric information used to complete their application or be invited to attend a Service and Support Centre to enrol their biometric information. Where an individual has been assessed as vulnerable, you must consider whether biometric enrolment would be preferable to biometric reuse.

## Lower priority individuals

Officials must treat individuals whose circumstances meet the criteria below as lower priority, which includes those with:

- 3C leave (section 3(c) of the Immigration Act 1971)
- where individuals have not raised any safeguarding, destitution or other hardship issues

Lower priority individuals must wait until biometric enrolment appointments become available unless changes to their circumstances means they need to be treated as a higher priority individual.

## Children: safeguarding

Where a member of a household is required to enrol their biometric information and is aged under 16 and is part of a family group, you **must** require at least one adult member of the household to enrol their biometric information at the same time to ensure a responsible adult is available at the event.

Officials must check whether members of the same household have submitted separate applications.

## Other urgent requests that do not meet the higher priority criteria

Individuals may submit urgent requests if they consider they have compassionate and compelling reasons to be considered for biometric reuse or a priority biometric enrolment. This process is **not** designed for urgent treatment for non-vulnerability reasons.

However, where officials identify individuals who they consider urgently need their application to be processed, they must submit a request supported by a senior official to the Head of Immigration Checking and Enquiry (ICES), or their appointed deputy, to consider reusing their biometric information or prioritising a biometric enrolment.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Identity: preventing abuse

This section tells officials what to do if they have concerns about the identity of individuals who have sought to have their biometric information reused.

Where you have concerns about the identity of the individual you **must** refer the case to a senior official and, where necessary, require them to enrol their biometric information. This includes when you have doubts on whether the facial photograph, they have submitted is a true likeness or whether you suspect the documents used to support the application to be either a counterfeit or a forgery.

You can find guidance on examining scanned documents and checking for impostors can be found on the Migration and Borders Guidance platform. You can also find images of authentic documents by checking document image archive.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Scanned documents

Impostors

Document image archive