

Landlords' guide to checking immigration documents

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1. Checklists and golden rules

Introduction

This guidance is intended to help landlords conduct necessary document checks to establish whether a person has a right to rent in accordance with the Immigration Act 2014. Further guidance for landlords on their duties under the Act on operating the scheme can be found at the website [here](#).

This is not a comprehensive guide to all immigration documents but provides the information needed to identify and understand the greater majority of documents that are likely to be encountered.

Details of countries in the European Union and in the European Economic Area can be found [here](#).

Three golden rules



Obtain

- Obtain original versions of one or more acceptable documents.



Check

- Check the document's validity in the presence of the holder.



Copy

- Make and retain a clear copy, and record the date the check was made.

List A - acceptable documents for right to rent checks. If you see these documents when taking in a tenant, there is no need for a repeat check.

| List A | Seen? | Date |
|---|-------|------|
| Group 1 – Acceptable single documents | | |
| 1. A passport (current or expired) showing that the holder is a British citizen, or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the 'right of abode' in the UK. | | |
| 2. A passport or national identity card (current or expired) showing that the holder is a national of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. | | |
| 3. A registration certificate or document (current or expired) certifying or indicating permanent residence issued by the Home Office, to a national of the European Economic Area or Switzerland. | | |
| 4. A 'permanent' residence, 'indefinite leave to remain', 'indefinite leave to enter' or 'no time limit' card issued by the Home Office (current or expired), to a non-EEA national who is a family member of an EEA or Swiss national. | | |
| 5. A biometric 'residence permit' card (current or expired) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named has 'indefinite' leave in the UK, or has 'no time limit' on their stay in the UK. | | |
| 6. A passport or other 'travel document' (current or expired) endorsed to show that the holder is either 'exempt from immigration control', has 'indefinite' leave in the UK, has the 'right of abode' in the UK, or has 'no time limit' on their stay in the UK. | | |
| 7. An immigration status document (current or expired) containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person has 'indefinite' leave in the UK or has 'no time limit' on their stay in the UK. | | |
| 8. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen. | | |

Notes:

Group 2 – Acceptable document combinations.

| 1. Any two of the following documents when produced in any combination. All documents in List A, Group 2, must be dated to show they were issued within the specified date shown, eg: within the last three months. The document must contain the name of the prospective tenant. | | Seen? | Date |
|---|--|-------|------|
| i. | A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents. | | |
| ii. | Evidence (identity card, document of confirmation issued by one of HM forces, confirmation letter issued by the Secretary of State) of the holder's previous or current service in any of HM's UK armed forces. | | |
| iii. | A letter from HM Prison Service, the Scottish Prison Service or the Northern Ireland Prison Service confirming the holder's name, date of birth and that they have been released from custody of that service in the 6 months prior to the check. | | |
| iv. | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check from an officer of the National Offender Management Service in England and Wales confirming that the holder is the subject of an order requiring supervision by that officer; from an officer of a local authority in Scotland confirming that the holder is the subject of a probation order requiring supervision by that officer; or, from an officer of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland confirming that the holder is the subject of an order requiring supervision by that officer. | | |
| v. | A current full or provisional photocard UK driving licence. | | |
| vi. | Benefits paperwork issued by HMRC, a UK Local Authority or Job Centre Plus, on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions or the Northern Ireland Department for Social Development, issued within the 3 months prior to the check. | | |
| vii. | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check signed by a representative of a public authority, voluntary organisation or charity which operates a scheme to assist individuals to secure accommodation in the private rented sector in order to prevent or resolve | | |

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|-------|---|--|--|
| | homelessness. This letter must confirm the holder's name, and the address details of the prospective tenancy which they are assisting with obtaining for the holder. | | |
| | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check by a UK government department or Local Authority and signed by a named official (giving their name and professional address), confirming the holder's name and that they have previously been known to the department or local authority. | | |
| viii. | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check confirming the holder's name signed by the person who employs the holder (giving their name and business address) confirming the holder's status as employee and employee reference number or their National Insurance number. | | |
| ix. | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check from a British passport holder who works in (or is retired from) an acceptable profession as specified in the list of acceptable professional persons at Annex A. The letter should confirm the holder's name, and confirm that the acceptable professional person has known the holder for longer than three months. This letter should be signed by the acceptable professional person giving their name, address, passport number, profession and place of work (or former place of work if retired), how long they have known the holder and in what capacity. | | |
| x. | A letter from a UK police force confirming that the holder is a victim of crime and has reported a passport or Home Office biometric immigration document stolen, stating the crime reference number, issued within the 3 months prior to the check. | | |
| xi. | A letter issued within the 3 months prior to the check from a UK further or higher education institution confirming the holder's acceptance on a current course of studies. This letter should include the name of the educational establishment, as well as the name and duration of the course. | | |
| xii. | Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate (criminal record check) issued within the 3 months prior to the check. | | |
| xiii. | A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents. | | |

Notes:

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List B – Acceptable documents establishing a time-limited statutory excuse. You will need to conduct further checks at a later point.

All documents in List B must be valid (not expired) at the time of the right to rent check. You may have to check again as follows

- a) one year, beginning with the date on which the checks were last made, or
- b) before the expiry of the person’s leave (immigration permission) to be in the UK, or (whichever is longer from a or b)
- c) on the expiry of a person’s permission to stay in the UK as shown on their biometric residence permit).

| List B | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse is established | | |
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| | | |
| | Seen? | Date |
| 1. | A current passport or other ‘travel document’ endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK for a time-limited period. | |
| 2. | A current biometric ‘residence permit’ card issued by the Home Office to the holder, which indicates that the named person is permitted to stay in the UK for a time limited period. | |
| 3. | A current ‘residence card’ (including an accession residence card or a derivative residence card) issued by the Home Office to a non-EEA national who is either a ‘family member’ of an EEA or Swiss national or has a ‘derivative’ right of residence. | |
| 4. | A current immigration status document issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK for a time-limited period. | |
| 5. | In the case that the person has an ongoing application with the Home Office, or their documents are with the Home Office, or they claim to have a permission right to rent, an email from the Landlords Checking Service providing a “yes” response to a right to rent request. This will only be sent to the landlord by the Landlords Checking Service. | |

Notes: Including date for follow up check.

Step 2: Checking the validity of documents

When you are checking the validity of the documents you must ensure that you do this in the presence of the holder. This can be a physical presence in person or via a live video link. In both cases you must be in possession of the original documents.

You are not expected to be an expert in any or all of the various passports and identity documents that you might see. It is not possible to give comprehensive details of all travel and identity documents but there are some features in many documents that any person can look for and which may give you confidence that the document is likely to be genuine. Further detailed guidance on inspecting British passports can be found [here](#).

Further information on checking EEA passports/ID cards can be found on the [Prado website](#)

If you believe a British passport may have been altered or used by someone fraudulently you can report it to HM Passport Office by email: oiu@hmppo.gsi.gov.uk. Other documents suspected to be fraudulent can be reported to [Crimestoppers](#).

Most international travel documents contain security features such as holographic images, watermarks and images that fluoresce under ultra violet light. Laminates are used to make it difficult to change information printed on the documents and high quality and expensive printing processes are used. Take time to look at the document properly by feeling it, tilting and turning it to see how it reacts. Consider whether the printing is blurred. Forged documents may be deliberately battered and dog-eared to provide an explanation for their poor quality.

It is recognised that forged documents are difficult to detect and that those who use them are setting out to deceive. If you are given a false document, you will only be liable for a civil penalty if it is **reasonably apparent** that it is false. This means that a person who is untrained in the identification of false documents, examining it carefully, but briefly, and without the use of technological aids could reasonably be expected to realise that the document in question is not genuine.

In other cases, it is equally likely that documents may be used by imposters. Where a person presents a document and it is reasonably apparent that the person presenting the document is not the person referred to in that document, even if the document itself is genuine, you may be liable to a penalty.

You will not be able to rely on a statutory excuse if you knew that the documents were false or did not rightfully belong to the holder.

Step 3: Retaining evidence

You must keep a record of every document you have checked. This can be a hardcopy or a scanned and unalterable copy, such as a jpeg or pdf document. You should keep the copies securely for the duration of the person's tenancy and for a further 12 months after the tenancy ends. By doing this, you will be able to provide evidence that you have complied with the law if we find that someone is, or has been living at your property who does not have a right to be in the UK. This will provide you with what is known as a "statutory excuse" which is an excuse provided for in law to prevent landlords from being penalised in cases where it subsequently transpires that the tenant is disqualified from renting property.

You must also make a record of the date on which you conducted your check. This can be by either making a dated declaration on the copy made or by holding a separate record, securely, which can be shown to us upon request to establish your statutory excuse.

Where documents are encountered that are not described here the Home Office Landlords Helpline can offer general advice on understanding immigration documents but cannot verify individual documents or disclose any details of a persons immigration status The Landlords Helpline can be contacted by telephone on **0300 069 9799**.

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2. Acceptable documents for right to rent checks - List A

List A - Group 1 documents

The following documents will provide you with a continuous statutory excuse because there are no restrictions on the rights of the holder to be in the UK and to rent

- 1. A passport (current or expired) showing that the holder is a British citizen, or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the 'right of abode' in the UK.**

A person with the right of abode in the UK has the right to live and rent in here without restriction. A passport stating that the holder is a 'citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' will only be acceptable if it includes the words: 'holder has the right of abode in the United Kingdom'.

You may accept an expired passport for these nationalities to establish the right to rent.

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Examples of British passports

Most passports will look like one of these examples. You will need to check the 'nationality' or 'citizenship'.



2. A passport or national identity card (current or expired) showing that the holder is a national of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

All nationals from EEA countries and Switzerland, with the exception of Croatia, are free to live and rent in the UK. Special transitional controls have applied to Croatian nationals since 1 July 2013.

You may accept an expired EEA or Swiss passport to establish the right to rent if it clearly shows that the prospective tenant is a national of an EEA country or Switzerland.

5. A biometric ‘residence permit’ card (current or expired) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named has ‘indefinite’ leave in the UK, or has ‘no time limit’ on their stay in the UK.

Permission to reside in the UK for a variety of purposes; validity, purpose of residence and any restrictions attached to residence are indicated on the card.

The card's design is set by European Union (EU) regulation. It is a standard credit card size (86mm x 54mm) and will look similar to identity cards issued by other EU countries. The card is made from polycarbonate plastic and contains a chip to make it more secure against forgery and abuse.

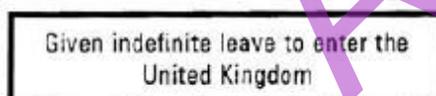
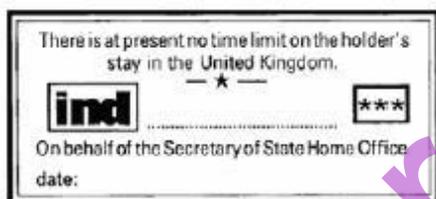
The diagram shows two views of a biometric residence permit card. The left view shows the front of the card with a digital image of the holder (1), name (2), valid until date (3), place and date of issue (4), type of permit (5), remarks (6), unique card number (7), and holder's signature (8). The right view shows the back of the card with a biometric chip (9), holder's gender (10), date and place of birth (11), nationality (12), remarks (13), and machine readable zone (MRZ) (14).

1. Holder's digital image
2. Holder's name
3. Valid until – the date the card expires. This date is at the end of the time the holder is allowed to stay; or five or 10 years if the holder has been given permission to settle in the United Kingdom (known as indefinite leave to remain)
4. Place and date of issue – this is the UK followed by the date the card was issued
5. Type of permit – this is the immigration category the holder is in (for example, STUDENT)
6. Remarks – these are the immigration entitlements for the length of the holder's stay, and may continue on the back of the card
7. ZU1234567 – unique card number
8. Holder's signature
9. Biometric chip
10. Holder's gender
11. Holder's date and place of birth
12. Holder's nationality
13. Remarks – this is a continuation of immigration entitlements for the length of time of the holder's stay (see 6 above)
14. Machine readable zone (MRZ) – this area allows information printed on the card to be read quickly by machine

6. A passport or other 'travel document' (current or expired) endorsed to show that the holder is either 'exempt from immigration control', has 'indefinite' leave in the UK, has the 'right of abode' in the UK, or has 'no time limit' on their stay in the UK.

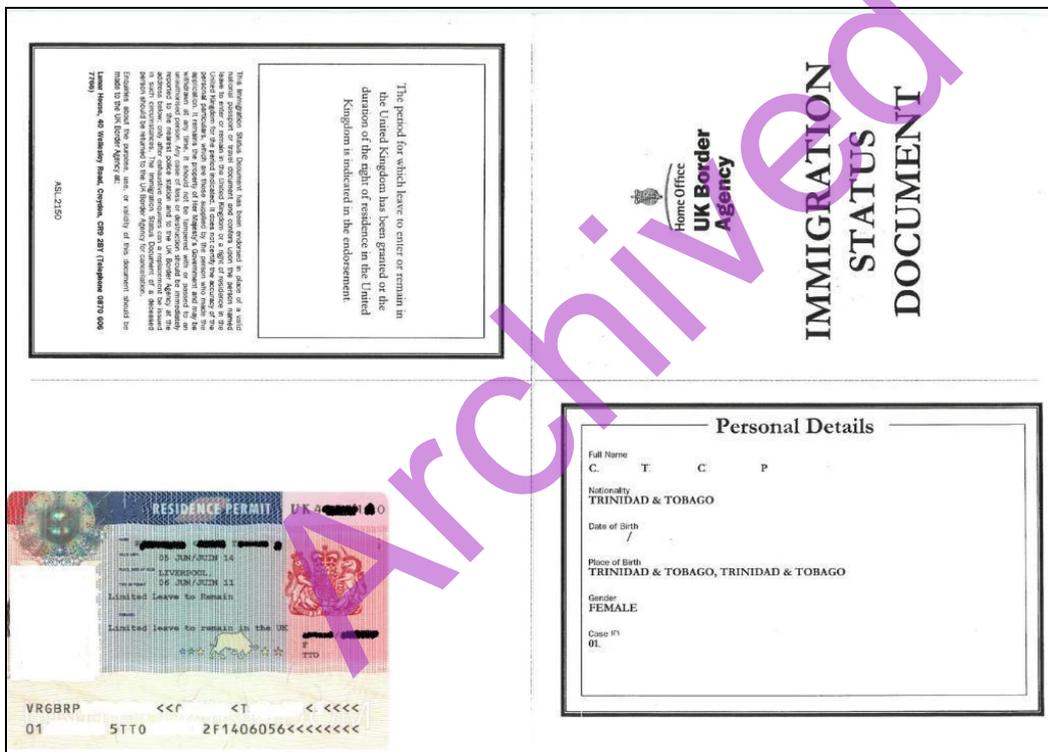


The examples shown below are no longer issued but may be found in some old passports and are still valid whether or not the passport is expired.



7. An immigration status document (current or expired) containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person has ‘indefinite’ leave in the UK or has ‘no time limit’ on their stay in the UK.

A valid Immigration Status Document (ISD) contains a UK Residence Permit endorsement (see the section on UK immigration documents, stamps and endorsements). It also has a section providing further details of the holder’s status and personal details. You should note that we no longer issue ISDs. They were replaced by biometric residence permits in 2012. There will however, be Immigration Status Documents in circulation.



8. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen.

You should check that the A4 certificates describe the holder as a British citizen, as indicated below.

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HOME OFFICE
British Nationality Act 1981

Certificate of naturalisation

ss. 4

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by the British Nationality Act 1981, hereby grants this certificate of naturalisation to the person named below, who shall be a

from the date of this certificate

Full name

Place or birth (if different)

Date of birth

Place and country of birth

Issued on the application of the Secretary of State
HOME OFFICE LONDON

Signature of Secretary of State

Date

Signature of Applicant

#548846

This certificate does not confer the status of the general population, which are those required by the person who signs the application.
Any unauthorised alteration may render this certificate invalid.


HOME OFFICE
British Nationality Act 1981

Certificate of registration

ss. 4

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by the British Nationality Act 1981, has registered the person named below as a

Full name

Place or birth (if different)

Date of birth

Place and country of birth

Issued on the application of the Secretary of State
HOME OFFICE LONDON

Signature of Secretary of State

Date

Signature of Applicant

#161006

This certificate does not confer the status of the general population, which are those required by the person who signs the application.
Any unauthorised alteration may render this certificate invalid.


British Nationality Act 1981

Certificate of naturalisation

ss. 4

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by the British Nationality Act 1981, hereby grants this certificate of naturalisation to the person named below, who shall be a

from the date of this certificate

Full name

Place or birth (if different)

Date of birth

Place and country of birth

Issued on the application of the Secretary of State
HOME OFFICE LONDON

Signature of Secretary of State

Date

Signature of Applicant

009576

This certificate does not confer the status of the general population, which are those required by the person who signs the application.
Any unauthorised alteration may render this certificate invalid.


British Nationality Act 1981

Certificate of registration

ss. 4

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by the British Nationality Act 1981, has registered the person named below as a

Full name

Place or birth (if different)

Date of birth

Place and country of birth

Issued on the application of the Secretary of State
HOME OFFICE LONDON

Signature of Secretary of State

Date

Signature of Applicant

002667

This certificate does not confer the status of the general population, which are those required by the person who signs the application.
Any unauthorised alteration may render this certificate invalid.

List A – Group 2

- 1. A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents.**

You must only accept the original of a full UK birth certificate or adoption certificate, which must include the names of the holder and at least one of their parents. In some cases, a full birth certificate will only provide details of one of the holder's parents, and this will also be acceptable in providing you with a statutory excuse.

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LEAVE TO ENTER FOR SIX MONTHS:
EMPLOYMENT AND RECOURSE TO
PUBLIC FUNDS PROHIBITED

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
* (****) *
20 SEP 1996
HEATHROW (*)

Other passport stamps

Where people have extended their stay for any reason they may have stamps such as these. Examples of passport stamps below may show an expiry date but others show that a period of stay has been granted from the date shown.

Leave to remain in the United Kingdom, on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds is hereby given

until

.....
on behalf of the Secretary of State
Home Office

Date

Leave to enter for/until
.....
to work as/with
.....
Changes must be authorised
No recourse to public funds

Leave to remain in the United Kingdom, on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds is hereby given

until.....
The holder is not to engage in employment paid or unpaid other than with.....

.....
and is not to engage in any business or profession without the consent of the Secretary of State for the Home Department

.....
on behalf of the Secretary of State
Home Office

Leave to enter for/until
.....
No recourse to public funds
Work (and any changes) must be authorised