



Home Office

Returns by UK Letter

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Contents

Returns by UK Letters	1
About this guidance	2
How do we know if a country accepts a UKL?	3
What to consider when preparing a United Kingdom letter	4
Nationality checks	5
Information required on the United Kingdom letter	6
Completing a United Kingdom letter	7
Biodata form	8
Using a United Kingdom letter in transit	9

About this guidance

This guidance provides information on using UK letters to facilitate returns including enforced removals.

Where available, the person's original travel document (usually their passport) must always be used for enforcing their removal. Where this is not available, people can be returned, removed or deported on the following types of document:

- an Emergency Travel Document (ETD)
- a United Kingdom letter (UKL)
- a Chicago Convention Letter (CCL). This is also known as a Chicago convention document (CCD)

Emergency travel documents (ETDs):

- where there is no passport available, certain countries require that they issue an ETD for the return of their nationals
- ETDs are issued by the relevant Embassy, High Commission or Consulate
- ETD re-documentation processes are managed by Returns Logistics in the Home Office
- guidance on making applications for ETDs and the individual requirements for countries is available from the Returns Logistics Horizon page documentation

United Kingdom letters (UKLs):

- a number of countries accept return of their nationals on UKL
- UKLs are produced by the relevant Home Office by the casework or enforcement team
- the UKL re-documentation process is managed by Returns Logistics in the Home Office.
- there is guidance on using United Kingdom letters below

For information on whether UKLs or ETDs are used for removal to a particular country, see the Country returns documentation guide.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email: Returns Logistics Customer Feedback or use the Returns Logistics contact list.

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.

How do we know if a country accepts a UKL?

There are no formal agreements about the use of a UKL and their acceptance depends upon the integrity practised by the UK in its use of the document. A country's willingness to accept the return of their nationals on a UKL may change at any time.

Returns Logistics must be notified immediately if information is received suggesting a country may have stopped accepting UKLs. Returns Logistics can then negotiate to re-instate the UKL process or secure an ETD process.

To check which document you need to enforce the removal, you must refer to the Country returns documentation guide. This tells you whether UKLs or ETDs are used for removal to a particular country.

What to consider when preparing a United Kingdom letter

You must maintain the highest possible standards in both the production and use of a UKL. They must be completed as fully and comprehensively as possible.

UKLs containing insufficient or no information or evidence to justify the person's claimed nationality can cause potential problems and may impact on the Home Office's ability to remove someone using UKLs in the future.

You must follow the guidance below when considering the use of a UKL for removal purposes.

Initial action

This is what you must do:

- each individual use of a UKL must be referred to and authorised by Her Majesty's inspector (HMI) or senior executive officer (SEO) and recorded on the case file
- check the receiving state accepts a UKL by referring to the country returns documentation guide
- refer to country information and guidance to check if advice of the removal, if prior notification is required, has been sent to the relevant:
 - Embassy
 - High Commission
 - Consulate
 - Representative

Nationality checks

This is what you need to do:

- if there is any doubt about the person's nationality and identity do not assume the CID identity and/or nationality is correct, you must test and review the information provided at the documentation interview
- if there is emerging evidence of a different nationality and you cannot fully evidence a claimed nationality, you must not use a UKL
- if there is any doubt about the person's nationality and identity, do not use a UKL
- if the person is likely to dispute their nationality or identity on arrival at their destination, do not use a UKL unless there is persuasive documentary evidence - driving licences and birth certificates do not themselves prove nationality
- if you do not have sufficient information or evidence linking the person to that country, before you use a UKL, you must obtain it by interviewing the person - you can also check either:
 - port and Home Office files and other Home Office records
 - with other agencies, for example police, prison service or social services who may have had contact with the individual and hold or can confirm evidence of identity or nationality

Other considerations

This is what else you must consider:

- do not make reference to details of the person's immigration history or time in the UK
- a fully completed Bio-data form must be attached to all UKL removals. This helps to demonstrate to the authorities in the receiving state that the UK has taken reasonable steps to establish the person's nationality and identity
- any copies of previous passports must be included with the UKL
- if the person has not signed the Bio-data form you must state why and provide information on the UKL in the section provided and in the 'Observation/Remarks section'

Information required on the United Kingdom letter

You must provide the information below as part of the minimum requirements for removal using a UKL:

- personal details, including name, nationality, date of birth
- precise place of birth
- language and dialect (tribe and clan if applicable)
- last address in country of origin (village, nearest town or province)
- parents' full names, dates and place of birth (if deceased, date and place of death)
- parents' address in country of origin (if not available, uncles, aunts or guardians)
- details of any identity card (ID) or passport details which support nationality or identity
- reference, and attach, any available evidence, including any copies of previous passports

If the above details are unknown, you must arrange a documentation interview to satisfy this requirement. For more information see Returns Logistics guide to compiling and checking applications for emergency travel documents (ETD).

When you complete the form for the UK letter you must **not** enter the:

- reasons for removal
- person's immigration status in the UK (for example refusal of asylum or illegal entry)

Completing a United Kingdom letter

Once a person exhausts their appeal rights and there are no outstanding barriers to removal, you must produce a UKL locally to facilitate removal action.

It is the responsibility of the port or the Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team to make sure the UKL is completed in line with the instructions below.

To produce a UKL, you must:

- select the form ISE.325 (UKL) from the document generation tool on CID:
 - complete all the fields that CID does not populate
 - use Arial 12-point typescript
 - do not hand write on any part of the form other than where a signature is needed
 - you must print the document on vellum coloured, woven conqueror paper

- complete a new document and shred the original if you make a mistake - You must not use correction fluid or manual adjustments
- glue a recent passport sized photograph of the returnee to the UKL, do not use staples:
 - you must place a Home Office date stamp across the top left of the photograph
 - this must not cover the personal details on the form or the person's image on the photograph

- do not fold or hole punch the UKL
- do not enter the reasons for removal, or the person's immigration status in the UK, for example refusal of asylum or illegal entry, onto the UKL
- take 2 copies of the Bio-data form and supporting identity documents:
 - place one copy on file and attach the other to the UKL with a paperclip (do not staple the documents together)
 - if original identity documents are not available use copies if you have them

Biodata form

You should fully complete the Biodata form, providing the following information as part of the minimum requirements for removal using a UKL:

- personal details, including name, nationality, date of birth
- precise place of birth
- last address in country of origin (village, nearest town or province)
- parents' full names, dates and place of birth (if deceased, date and place of death)
- parents' address in country of origin (if not available, uncles, aunts or guardians)
- details of any identity (ID) card or passport details which support nationality or identity
- refer to and attach any available evidence, including any copies of previous passports

If the above details are unknown, you must arrange a documentation interview to satisfy this requirement.

Using a United Kingdom letter in transit

The purpose of a UKL is to make a direct removal where available. If there are no direct flights, the UKL can be used in transit.

When removal has to be made using a transit country, you must advise the authorities in that country well in advance of the impending removal.

The process you must follow is:

- in cases where there are specific concerns, or advice or assistance is needed, ports or the Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team must get advice or the assistance of the local Immigration Liaison Manager (ILM) (formerly known as airline liaison officer) well in advance
- before removal you must examine the country specific interim operational instructions (IOIs) to find out if advance notification is required by the authorities in the respective country including any transit country
- Immigration Enforcement International can provide ILM advice, and you must inform IEI of all in transit removals passing through ILM locations.

