



Home Office

Biometric information: introduction

Version 6.0

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About this guidance

This guidance gives you an introduction to biometric information.

This guidance gives you:

- a background to biometric information:
 - what it is
 - how it is used
- information on biometric immigration documents (BIDs), residence cards (biometric format) and the process for getting them
- information about the different types of application and the validation process for these applications.

An individual's biometric information which is relevant for the purpose of this guidance is a digital photograph of their face, and a scan of their fingerprints taken on a glass screen, no ink is used.

The definition of biometric information (sometimes just called biometrics) for immigration purposes is in section 15 of the UK Borders Act 2007 as amended by Immigration Act 2014, which standardised the definition of biometric information across the Immigration Acts.

It is information about a person's external physical characteristics such as fingerprints and the features of a person's eye. This definition can be extended by order to cover internal features as long as they can be measured externally.

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 the Identity Security Policy Team.

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 **6.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **19 November 2019**

Changes from last version of this guidance

- revision to the section 'People who are unable to enrol their biometrics'
- guidance transferred to the new template

- revision to the section 'Short Stay Permits'

Related content

[Contents](#)

Safeguard and promote child welfare

Biometric information - archive

Background to biometric information

This page gives you the background to the enrolment of biometric information for immigration purposes.

Legislative background

The [UK Borders Act 2007](#) provides legislative powers that allow the Home Office to issue 'biometric immigration documents' (BID).

There are currently two types of BID, biometric residence permits (BRP) and short stay permits (SSP).

Since 2008 there has been a requirement for people subject to immigration control, who are applying for leave exceeding 6 months must also apply for the issue of a BRP and register their biometric information as part of that process.

SSP were introduced on 18 March 2015 to cover people applying from within the UK to extend their leave to a total of 6 months or less.

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008 \(as amended\)](#) set out the legal basis for taking biometric information from people making an application for a BID.

From April 2015 it is a requirement for citizenship applications and some applications for evidence of a right to reside under EU law (see below) to provide biometric information.

Part IIA of the British Nationality (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (as amended) sets out the legal basis for taking biometric information from people who are applying to be registered or naturalised as a British citizen.

The Immigration (Provision of Physical Data) Regulations 2006 (as amended) set out the legal basis for taking biometric information from non-EEA nationals with an entitlement to enter or remain in the UK by virtue of an enforceable EU right or of any provision made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

Related content

[Contents](#)

External links

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008](#)

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#)

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) \(Amendment No. 2\) Regulations 2009](#)

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

[The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012](#)

[Biometric residence permits](#)

[The Immigration Act 2014](#)

Definition of residence card (biometric format)

This page tells you what is meant by the term residence card (biometric format) in this guidance.

In this document the term residence card (biometric format) relates to:

- residence cards
- derivative residence cards
- permanent residence cards

These cards are documents issued to non-EEA nationals and give them a right to reside in the UK because of an enforceable European Union law right or any provision made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. They are issued under the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006 ('the EEA Regulations').

The Home Office began issuing residence cards (biometric format) as a standalone biometric card format, requiring the enrolment of biometric information as part of the application, in April 2015. Before that, residence cards were issued in vignette format either placed in an existing passport or as a standalone document. Both the old and the new format residence cards have the equivalent legal status.

Residence cards

Residence cards are issued by the Home Office to the non-EEA family members of EEA nationals who are exercising Treaty rights in the UK. For example, the non-EEA spouse of an EEA national who is working in the UK can apply to the Home Office for a residence card to evidence their right to reside in the UK under EU law.

Permanent residence cards

Permanent residence cards are issued to non-EEA family members of EEA nationals who have resided in the UK with their EEA family member and in compliance with the EEA Regulations for a continuous period of 5 years or more.

Derivative residence cards

Derivative residence cards are issued to non-EEA nationals who have what is referred to as a 'derivative right of residence' in the UK, based on their relationship with an EEA national or a British citizen, for example, the non-EEA carer of an EEA national.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Biometrics and nationality applications

This page tells you why applicants for registration or nationalisation as a British citizen must submit their biometrics.

Anyone applying for registration or nationalisation as a British citizen must provide their biometric information as part of their application. This information is used to verify the identity of the applicant and is checked against any previous biometric enrolments including the fingerprint records held by the police.

Children under 18 applying for registration as a British citizen must also enrol their biometric information. Children under the age of 6 do not need to provide fingerprints, but must have a digital photo taken of their face.

Biometric information taken as part of citizenship applications is only held until notification has been received from the relevant local authority that the person concerned has attended their citizenship ceremony.

Applicants will not be issued with a new biometric residence permit, but will be allowed to retain their current BRP while their application is decided.

Arrangements will be made for the cancellation of the biometric residence permit (BRP) once British citizenship is granted.

Where a person who holds a BRP is granted British citizenship they are required to return their BRP to the Home Office. It should be sent to:

Freepost RRYX-GLYU-GXHZ
Returns Unit
PO Box 163
Bristol
BS20 1AB

Failure to return a BRP to the Home Office following a grant of British citizenship may result in the issuance of a financial penalty.

Related content

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What a biometric immigration documents (BID) is

A BID is a document which was introduced in 2008 as one secure and easily verified proof of permission to be in the UK which helps to reduce identity abuse. They currently come in two forms, biometric residence permits (BRP) and short stay permits (SSP).

Short stay permits (SSP)

Non-EEA nationals who are making an in-country application to extend their stay in the UK for a cumulative period of 6 months or less will have to apply for a SSP. The Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2015) require applicants to enrol their biometric information in the same way as non-EEA nationals who are applying for BRP within the UK.

Although, the SSP will look similar to the BRP it will have a different title and will not be issued to anyone whose cumulative leave exceeds 6 months.

Anyone making an in-country application for cumulative leave for 6 months or less will need to apply for an SSP from 18 March 2015.

Biometric residence permits

A person automatically makes an application for a BRP when they make an application for leave for longer than 6 months or apply for entry clearance for longer than 6 months. The permit is proof of any right of the holder to work or study in the UK depending on the leave that they have.

The holder is not required to carry their permit at all times, but they must show it at the border, together with their passport, when they travel outside of, and when return to, the UK. If the application is made in within the UK there will be no endorsement in the passport. If the application is made overseas, and is successful, the applicant will be given a short term 30 day vignette in their passport. This is to enable them to come to the UK so that they can collect their BRP from an allocated Post Office. The BRP will be the evidence of their lawful stay in the UK. For more information please see: [Overseas biometric roll-out](#).

A BRP is valid for the duration of the person's limited leave, or for up to a maximum of 10 years. However, in the case of a child or young person up to 16 years old, the maximum duration of the permit is 5 years only, after which the child or young person must apply for a replacement permit if they still have existing permission to stay in the UK. For example, a child of 14, issued with a BRP of the maximum length, will when they reach 16 have held the BRP for 2 years. They have a further 3 years left before having to apply for a replacement BRP.

The BRP or SSP shows the holder's immigration status and entitlements whilst in the UK. They are a highly secure standalone polycarbonate card, containing the holder's

biometric information and immigration status in a tamperproof chip embedded in the BID.

The information contained in the chip is an individual's facial image, biographical information and two finger scans.

The biographical information:

- name
- nationality
- date of birth
- place of birth

In addition, BIDs include details of the conditions of the holder's leave, such as whether they have any right to work or access public funds.

Both documents use biometric technology to lock a person into a single identity. When an application for a BID is made biometric information identifiers are collected in the form of a digitalised facial image and 10 dry electronic finger scans. This information is stored on the immigration and asylum biometric information system (IABS) held by the immigration fingerprint bureau (IFB).

The benefits of BIDs include that they:

- allow the Home Office to strengthen border control and lower the risk of unauthorised entry to the UK
- help enforcement staff detect people who are in the country illegally, or abusing the system through identity fraud
- allow employers, landlords and public service providers (such as DWP and the NHS) to determine the holder's leave and to check entitlements to make sure those who are here illegally do not receive benefits and other privileges of living in the UK:
 - if an employer wants to verify a BID, employers should use the Right to Work Check Service - the Home Office aim to verify the document within 6 hours

For individuals, BIDs make it easier to:

- provide proof of their immigration status in the UK
- prove their identity safely and quickly where and when required
- access employment, because potential employers can use the permit to check a future employee's identity and employment status quickly and easily

Applying for a BID is part of the leave process. Biometric information enrolment must take place before the case can be concluded. This is so you can check the applicant's details against the Home Office's existing databases and link the biographical details provided in the current application against any unique biometric information provided in previous applications to the Home Office.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Direct family members of EEA nationals
Extended family members of EEA nationals
Family members with retained rights of residence
Derivative rights of residence

Biometric resident permits overseas roll-out

Previously, successful applicants for entry clearance would be able to evidence their leave through a vignette in their passport. Under the new process applicants for entry clearance of over 6 months will have to apply for a biometric resident permits (BRP) as part of their application. Their BRP will be their evidence of any leave granted. There will be a phased introduction of this change.

A successful applicant will be issued with a 30 day short term biometric entry clearance visa to allow them to come to the UK to collect their BRP. The visa will start from the date the applicant gave in their application form that they would travel to the UK. They will also receive a decision letter which will tell them which Post Office they must collect their BRP from. It will also tell them what to do if they are unable to collect their BRP.

Collecting the BRP

The applicant should collect their BRP within 10 days of their arrival in the UK. If they fail to collect their BRP they may be liable to sanctions for non-compliance. These are set out in the code of practice.

The applicant will be allocated the Post Office branch from which they can collect their BRP, during the application process.

If the applicant wants to collect their BRP from a different Post Office to the one specified in the decision letter, that is the Post Office branch that they were allocated during the application process, they must contact the Post Office to do this. They will have to pay a fee for this service. The Home Office will only rearrange collection of the BRP if the need for rearrangement of the BRP is as the result of Home Office error.

If the applicant does not travel within the validity of the 30 day short term biometric entry clearance they will need to apply for another 30 day short term biometric entry clearance to travel to the UK. This will be done under the transfer of conditions process.

Third party collection

The applicant is expected to collect their own BRP. There will be very few exceptions. Third party collection can be requested by:

- people under the age of 18 unable to collect their BRP at the same time as their parent or legal guardian collects their BRP
- people who are medically incapable of attending a post office to collect their BRP

Unaccompanied minors

Anyone who is under the age of 18 who wants to collect their BRP from the Post Office and is not collecting it at the same time as a parent or legal guardian will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

A responsible adult is defined as an adult who, for the time being, takes responsibility for the child. An example of this would be a teacher at a boarding school who has specified pastoral care for that child. The need for an unaccompanied minor to be accompanied by a responsible adult when they come to collect their BRP will be made clear in their decision letter.

Related content

[Contents](#)

External links

[The Immigration Act 2014](#)

[Transferring a visa to a new passport: ECB17](#)

[Code of practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#)

Process overview

This section tells you about the possible processes for the applicant to enrol their biometric information. This is only applicable to applications made in the UK.

For guidance on how to enrol biometrics overseas please see: [Enrolling biometrics overseas](#)

In this section the term residence card (biometric format) relates to residence cards, derivative residence cards and permanent residence cards. For more information please see: [Definition of residence card \(biometric format\)](#)

An applicant can enrol their biometric information at any of the places below, depending on what type of service they want to use and the type of application they are making:

Place of enrolment	Type of service
Post Offices which allow applicants to enrol their biometrics	Standard route application – this is the only route that can be used by applicant's applying to become British citizens or applying for a residence card (biometric format)
Home Office biometric information enrolment centre	Premium application appointment service
Location of applicant's choice for example: at the applicant's home or place of work.	Super premium application appointment service

Enrolment at a premium service centre requires an appointment, but Post Office enrolments do not. See: [Enrolling at Post Offices](#).

Standard route application process

- application received and fee processed (if applicable)
- application data entered into case system
- application validated:
 - correct application form
 - mandatory documents submitted
 - photographs submitted
- applicant identified as required to provide biometric information
- biometric information notification letter sent to applicant, or handed to asylum applicants, in most cases
- applicant attends at a Post Office (no appointment necessary)
- biometric information captured, applicant leaves the Post Office
- biometric information data electronically transmitted to Home Office
- biometric information results verified
- application considered and decision made (whether to grant or refuse)
- passport and documents returned to applicant with decision

- biometric residence permit issued to successful applicants by secure delivery to the address provided

For a list of participating Post Offices, see related link: [Post Office branches](#)

Apply on Line (AOL) standard route, application process

This route is not available to people applying for a residence card (biometric format), or applications for naturalisation as a British citizen.

- application and fee processed online
- application form printed
- application data entered into case system
- application validated:
 - correct application form
 - mandatory documents submitted
 - photographs submitted
- applicant identified as required to provide biometric information
- biometric information notification letter sent to applicant
- applicant attends at a Post Office
- biometric information captured, applicant leaves the Post Office
- biometric information data electronically transmitted to Home Office
- biometric information results verified
- application considered and decision made (whether to grant or refuse)
- passport and documents returned to applicant with decision
- biometric residence permit issued to successful applicants by secure delivery to the address provided

Apply on Line (AOL) premium application process

This route is not available for residence card (biometric format) applications or applications for naturalisation as a British citizen.

- application and fee processed online
- premium appointment booked online and the application is electronically routed to the relevant premium service centre
- application form printed
- application data entered into case system
- applicant arrives at the premium service centre reception (having passed through security)
- application checked by reception for the following and a ticket is issued:
 - correct application form
 - mandatory documents submitted
 - photographs submitted
- biometric information captured and results verified (finger scans and photograph)
- application considered and decision made (whether to grant or refuse)
- applicant leaves the premium service centre (with documents)

- biometric residence permit issued to successful applicants by secure delivery to the address provided

Premium application process

This route is not available for residence card (biometric format) applications or applications for naturalisation as a British citizen.

- applicant makes a premium service centre appointment (booked online)
- applicant arrives at the premium service centre reception (having passed through security)
- application checked by reception for the following and a ticket issued:
 - correct application form
 - mandatory documents submitted
 - photographs submitted
- applicant pays application fee
- application data entered into case system
- biometric information captured and results verified (finger scans and photograph)
- application considered
- decision made (whether to grant or refuse)
- applicant leaves the premium service centre (with documents)
- biometric residence permit issued to successful applicants by secure delivery to the address provided

Super premium application process

This route is not available for residence card (biometric format) applications or applications for naturalisation as a British citizen.

- applicant requests super premium service (by telephone)
- relevant forms are emailed to the applicant
- appointment is made - if the applicant is eligible (booked by telephone)
- application and documents collected from applicant by courier
- mobile enrolment team (MET) perform pre-appointment checks and consider the application premium service centre check that the application is likely to be approved before MET go to take the biometric information)
- MET arrive at the applicant's location to enrol biometric information
- biometric information captured and results verified (finger scans and photograph)
- MET leave the applicant's location and return to base
- biometric residence permit issued to successful applicants by secure delivery to the address provided

Non-biometric applications granted leave on or after 1 December 2012

This route is not available for residence card (biometric format) applications or applications for naturalisation as a British citizen.

To comply with our European Union (EU) obligations only one format of document is issued in-country by the Home Office to those from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland (except EEA and Swiss dependants) to confirm their permission to stay for a period which, together with any preceding period of leave, exceeds 6 months.

Anyone given permission to stay in the UK for over 6 months on or after 1 December 2012 must obtain a biometric residence permit. This makes sure the following will be issued with a BRP if they are successful. Those who:

- applied before a biometric requirement existed in their immigration categories
- still have an application, appeal, judicial review or valid reconsideration in progress on that date

If you grant an unresolved application in a non-biometric immigration category on or after 1 December 2012 you must:

- send the applicant a biometric residence permit (BRP) legacy letter, using the version for your business area, at their correspondence address
 - the letter states that leave has been granted but the letter is not evidence of leave and biometric information must be enrolled.
 - for a list of the [letters for each business area](#)
- enclose a copy of the biometric residence permit application form (BRP version 12/2012), state the full postal address to which the form needs to be returned on the letter
- when the application form is returned, send a biometric notification letter and continue as for standard route

If the applicant does not respond to the request within the timescale specified in the letter, you must follow standard local processes for sending reminders and, if they still do not respond, sanctions for non-compliance.

Related content

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Biometric residence permit (BRP) legacy letters

This page tells you when, and what, biometric residence permit (BRP) legacy letter to send to an applicant.

The information on this page does not apply to anyone who falls within the scope of the EEA Regulations.

You must send a BRP legacy letter to those applicants who either:

- made an application for leave to remain before 1 December 2012, prior to a biometric requirement existing in that category, and have that application approved after that date
- have had their appeal against the refusal of such an application allowed after 1 December 2012

Each business area has created a version of the letter that reflects local business practices and contains the correct return address for the biometric residence permit application form (BRP version 12/2012). You must send a copy of this form with the letter.

You must use the correct letter for your work area. These letters are based on a master template, see Biometric residence permit letter – legacy. For work areas where the template has been uploaded to DocGen, you must use the DocGen template to create the letter. The correct letter template will be specified in your local process guidance. You must personalise the letter as appropriate for the applicant you are sending the form to.

For temporary migration cases, you must use the ICD.4569 letter template on DocGen.

For asylum cases, you must use the following letter templates on DocGen, based on the type of leave you are granting:

- Grant of asylum: ASL.2167
- Grant of discretionary leave: ASL.2168
- Grant of humanitarian protection: ASL.2169
- Grant based on family/private life: ASL.4571

Related content

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Whether to issue a biometric residence permit or a UK residence permit

This page tells you how to decide if you should issue a biometric residence permit (BRP) or a UK residence permit (UKRP), which is a vignette (sticker) affixed to a passport.

The information on this page does not apply to anyone who falls within the scope of the EEA Regulations.

Queries can arise about whether applications should, if successful, be issued on a BRP or a UKRP. The guidance below clarifies what action to take in these cases.

In order to comply with our European Union (EU) obligations only one format of document is issued in-country by the Home Office to those from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland to confirm their permission to stay for a period which, together with any preceding period of leave, exceeds 6 months.

From 1 December 2012 anyone from outside the EEA or Switzerland, given permission to stay in the UK for more than 6 months is required to obtain a biometric residence permit.

A UK residence permit will still be produced in the exceptional circumstances below (these will mostly be considered by specialist teams):

- amendments to entry clearance errors
- persons exempt from immigration control
- civilian component - status confirmation only (leave as civilian staff is granted on a BRP)
- curtailment consideration case types – this is covered by local guidance
- representatives of overseas businesses (BUS) under European Community (EC) Association Agreement – ILR, Romanian and Bulgarian nationals only, this is covered by local guidance

Related content

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People who must enrol their biometric information

This page tells you who must enrol their biometric information.

On this page the term residence card (biometric format) relates to residence cards, derivative residence cards and permanent residence cards. For more information please see [Definition of residence card](#)

Residence Cards (Biometric Format)

Non- European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who apply for a residence card (biometric format), issued under the EEA Regulations to show they have a right of residence under EU law on or after 6 April 2015 will have to enrol their biometric information in order for their applications to be considered.

Biometric Resident Permits (BRP)

In order to comply with our European Union (EU) obligations only one format of document, a BRP, is issued in-country by the Home Office to those from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland to confirm their permission to stay for a period which, together with any preceding period of leave, exceeds 6 months.

All such applicants are required to enrol their biometric information (fingerprints and facial image) as part of the application. If a foreign national does not comply with a requirement of these regulations, the Secretary of State may:

- refuse or reject their immigration application for leave
- vary or cancel their existing leave
- refuse to issue a biometric residence permit
- issue a civil penalty notice

However, the Secretary of State can consider imposing an immigration sanction on a person, who has already been subject to a civil penalty notice, if, after a period of 90 days the migrant continues in their non-compliance.

Where the person has been recognised as a refugee, stateless person, where the person is in need of humanitarian protection (or a dependant of such an applicant) or cannot be removed from the UK on human rights grounds the sanctions imposed for non-compliance will be limited to the issue of a civil penalty notice and refusal to issue a biometric immigration document. This is because to refuse or disregard the person's leave application for non-compliance would conflict with the UK's international obligations.

People who apply for a replacement biometric resident permit (BRP) also have to re-enrol their biometric information.

Short Stay Permits

A Short Stay Permit (SSP) is a form of biometric immigration document that is issued under the Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008, as amended. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) issue SSPs to non-EEA nationals who are granted limited leave to remain in the UK for a cumulative period of six months or less. The document looks very similar to a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) but will state on the front side at the top of the card; 'SHORT STAY PERMIT'.

Biometric data (facial photograph and fingerprints) is required to be submitted and captured as part of the application process, in the same way as it is for a BRP.

Who is eligible for an SSP?

Any non-EEA national who is subject to immigration control and makes an application for further leave to remain and who has been granted limited leave to remain for a cumulative period of six months or less.

Any Entry Clearance holder who was granted leave to enter for a period of six months or less whose documents are lost or stolen while they are in the UK and makes a successful application for a transfer of conditions.

Any Entry Clearance holder who was granted leave to enter for a period of six months or less who identifies an inaccuracy on their visa whilst in the UK which was not the holder's fault.

Evidence of status

SSPs are biometric immigration documents for the purposes of demonstrating a right to work or right accommodation in the UK. However, employers and landlords must check the SSP to establish whether the holder is eligible to work or rent accommodation in the UK.

Maximum period of leave for an SSP

The maximum period of leave for an SSP is six months. However, this is cumulative which means that when a person has been granted a further period of leave in the UK and the total periods of leave exceeds six months, you **must** issue the person with a biometric residence permit (BRP).

For example, a person is granted leave on a visa for four months but needs to extend their leave by up to a further two months. In such circumstances the additional two months leave must be issued on an SSP.

If they are granted further leave to remain which takes them beyond six months, they must be granted the further leave on a BRP.

Where a person has been granted leave on a visa for six months and the travel document that contains the visa is lost or stolen while they are in the UK, they may

make an in-country application for a transfer of conditions. If granted, you **must** issue them with an SSP that shows the period of leave granted for this stay in the UK. It cannot be used to replace a long-term visitor's visa, which must be obtained from overseas.

Replacing lost or stolen SSPs

If a person loses their SSP and has more than three months leave remaining they **must** apply for a replacement document. However where their remaining leave is less than three months, they do not need to apply for a replacement SSP unless they plan to travel outside of the UK and return before the expiry date of their SSP. They can make an application for a replacement SSP via the GOV.UK biometric residence permits lost or stolen-damaged page on the website. See the link: [Biometric residence permits \(BRP\): If your BRP is lost or stolen](#).

Nationality applications

Under part IIA of the British Nationality (General) Regulations 2003 (as amended in 2015) all applications for registration or naturalisation as a British citizen must provide their biometrics. If the person fails to comply with this requirement their application will be rejected.

Biometric information enrolled overseas

Biometric information has been taken overseas for some time as part of standard identity checks undertaken before a decision is made on an applicant's application. If that application is successful and they have been granted entry clearance for a period longer than 6 months they will have to collect their BRP in country from a previously specified post office. The requirement for applicants to enrol their biometric information in the UK is not dependent on whether they were subject to such a requirement overseas.

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People who do not have to enrol their biometric information

This page tells you about the types of applicants who are not required to have some or all of their biometric information taken because they are exempt from immigration control or are excused from some requirements.

The information in this section only applies to applications made in the UK.

A person who is exempt from immigration control, for example, diplomat cannot be required to give their biometric information or apply for a biometric residence permit.

The following people are not required to give finger scans as they are excused from this requirement:

- children under the age of 5 (at the date of application, not at the date of enrolment):
 -
 - up to the age of five the Home Office only requires a digitised image of the child's face
 - there is no upper age limit for biometric information to be taken
- amputees with one or no fingers:
 - a biometric verification caseworker must check all of these applicants
 - you must obtain the finger scans from applicants with two or more fingers
 - you must not record these applicants as amputees
- applicants who are medically unable to provide finger scans:
 - this could be because of a medical condition such as severe arthritis where it is impossible to obtain finger scans of a suitable quality the biometric verification caseworker must make these exceptions when they apply
 - you must record the reasons on the (BRP) database
 - applicants must provide a letter from a clinician registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) detailing the medical condition
 - the evidence that the applicant had provided would be sent to the caseworking team considering the application

These people must still have a photograph taken of their face and the usual photograph standards will still apply. See [Passport photograph requirements](#).

Exceptions are not made for cultural or religious reasons. However, hats or head coverings are permitted when worn for religious reasons, provided the full facial features are clearly visible.

You must make every effort to provide privacy when this is requested or is appropriate.

Related content

[Contents](#)

IDI - persons exempt from control

People who are unable to enrol their biometric information

This page tells you about the process to follow if a person claims they cannot submit their biometric information for health reasons.

On this page the term residence card (biometric format) relates to residence cards, derivative residence cards, and permanent residence cards. For more information please [Definition of residence card \(biometric format\)](#)

This is only applicable to applications made within the UK.

If an applicant cannot enrol their biometric information because of disability or other medical condition they may qualify for mobile biometric enrolment. You will need to consult your senior caseworker for advice. Each case will be assessed on a case by case basis.

If an applicant is not eligible for mobile enrolment

There may be situations where it is decided that the applicant cannot submit their biometric information, but it is not considered a suitable case for mobile enrolment. Examples of this would include:

- if the applicant has a terminal illness
- if the applicant is in a coma
- if the applicant is considered, because of mental illness, to be a risk to either themselves or other people

If the senior caseworker or senior manager within the operational team, who must be a HEO or above is satisfied that it:

- would be difficult for an applicant to enrol in the near future
- is not possible for the Post Office mobile enrolment team to make a visit

then you can:

- defer the requirement to enrol biometrics until a later date
- exceptionally validate the application (see paragraph below for further details about what this means)
- explore options to capture a facial image of the applicant, as a minimum biometric. If necessary, this can be of a lower standard than we would normally enrol

A decision to exceptionally validate an application does not mean that the applicant is exempt from providing biometrics. It means that they have been issued leave, but we have been unable at present to issue a BRP because we cannot obtain any biometric information (face or fingerprints). Biometrics must be enrolled at the

earliest opportunity when the applicant is able to do so, even if it is only their facial image.

You must tell the applicant of the decision and update CID, by following your own operational guidance instructions.

If you consider the application and refuse it, you can issue the refusal. In circumstances where leave must be granted, you may want to consider issuing a civil penalty and refusing to issue the BRP. If you approve the application, you must make sure the decision letter clearly states it is not proof of the applicant's immigration status. If public authorities need evidence of the applicant's status they can request confirmation from Status Verification, Enquiries and Checking (SVEC) in UK Visas and Immigration.

If the applicant is eligible for mobile enrolment

If it is decided that it is a suitable case for mobile enrolment, then a referral to the mobile enrolment requests mailbox must be made. Identity operations will consider the request and, if required, will contact the applicant to request further medical information. This will include a letter from a clinician registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).

The applicant will need to sign a declaration. As part of the decision making process a full risk assessment will be undertaken.

If the decision is taken that the applicant is eligible for mobile enrolment identity operations will inform the Post Office mobile enrolment team who will enrol the applicant's biometric information. Once the mobile enrolment has been completed CID notes are added and the case owner is informed.

Related content

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People who have been detained

This page tells you the process to follow if an applicant is unable to enrol their biometric information because they are in prison or have been detained under immigration powers.

You can exercise discretion and postpone taking an applicant's biometric information if they cannot enrol their biometric information because they are in prison.

Where removal or deportation is imminent you can consider the case and:

- if you refuse it you can do this without taking biometric information
- if you approve the case, it is likely they will be released and their biometric information can then be taken as normal

You must not grant the case without consulting the area which is considering the individual's removal or deportation from the UK.

Exceptionally validating an application for leave before biometrics have been provided

Regulation 8 of [The Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008](#) allows you to exercise a measure of discretion on behalf of the Secretary of State as to where, how and when the biometric information must be provided.

If you use this discretion you must consider the application for leave to remain on its particular merits, and if necessary, ask the applicant to book an appointment to provide biometric information for a biometric immigration document, if you intend to grant leave.

If the applicant is detained in prison and the decision is taken to grant the case they must provide their biometrics when they are released from prison.

If the applicant is detained under immigration powers and the decision is taken to grant them leave then they will likely be released from detention and they can provide their biometrics in the usual way.

Considering applications from non-EEA nationals claiming to have a right of residence under EU law before biometrics have been provided

[The Immigration \(Provision of Physical Data \(amendment\) Regulations 2015](#) allows you to exercise a measure of discretion as to where, how and when the biometric information must be provided.

If you use this discretion you must consider the application on its particular merits.

If the applicant is in prison and the decision is taken to approve their application they must provide their biometrics when they are released from prison.

If the applicant is detained under immigration powers and the decision is taken to approve their application then they will likely be released from detention and they can provide their biometrics in the usual way.

For more information on how to consider applications from people wishing to have a document confirming their right to reside in the UK under European Union (EU) law please see related links.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Direct family members of EEA nationals

Extended family members of EEA nationals

Family members with retained rights of residence

Derivative rights of residence

External links

[UK Borders Act 2007](#)

[The Immigration \(Provision of Physical Data\) Regulations 2006](#)

Application types

This section tells you the different types of applications an applicant can make.

There are three types of application:

- super premium
- premium
- standard

Applicants for a residence card (biometric format) or naturalisation as a British citizen can only use the standard application type.

Super premium applications

This section tells you about super premium applications and how an applicant can book their biometric information enrolment appointment.

For details on which applications are eligible for the super premium services please see [using the premium service](#)

The service can also be used if, for whatever reason, an applicant has had to apply for a new passport. Instead of transferring their conditions to a new UK Residence Permit (UKRP), they would instead apply for a BRP using application form TOC (Transfer Of Conditions).

Super premium service facilities

In addition to standard services, the super premium service provides a number of additional facilities:

- application forms and documentation are collected by a government mail courier
- Home Office staff will visit the applicant to enrol their biometric information:
 - at a location of their choosing
 - at a convenient time and date for them (between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday)
 - with a minimum of 48 hours' notice following initial contact
- a caseworker will make a decision on their application within 24 hours of the biometric information enrolment (subject to IT availability and the correct documents being enclosed with the application)

Applying for the super premium service

If an applicant wants to use this service they will need to apply for it and pay a fee. For more information on this please see related links

Premium applications

This section tells you how premium applicants book their biometric information enrolment appointments.

If an applicant wishes to have their application considered under the same-day premium service at a premium service centre, they must first book an appointment using the online booking service and make an application in person. When an applicant books their appointment they will be told they must provide their biometric information. This is a premium service and the applicant will have to pay a premium fee.

When the appointment is made they will be given a booking reference number. If they provide a mobile number, they are sent a system auto-generated text reminder 48 hours before their appointment.

Services at premium service centres are:

- by appointment only – the applicant must book an appointment before they come to any premium service centre - an exception to this is Croydon premium service centre where a walk-in service is offered for transfer of conditions (TOC) applications only
- only available for certain types of application - for more information, see [Premium service centres](#)

If the application is straightforward, the applicant will normally receive a decision on the same day as their appointment. If the caseworker cannot make a decision on that day (for example because the application requires further enquiries), they must decide the application on the next working day or as soon as possible afterwards.

The Home Office cannot guarantee a decision within 24 hours, but the vast majority of applications are decided within this time. If there is likely to be any delay in deciding the application, the caseworker must tell the applicant when they attend their appointment.

The seven [premium service centres](#) are in:

- Belfast
- Cardiff
- Croydon
- Glasgow
- Liverpool
- Sheffield
- Solihull (Birmingham)

Booking an appointment

Applicants must only book one appointment. Family appointments are only for people who are applying as a family unit under one application. They must not book a family appointment for a group of unrelated people.

Groups of students or employees making separate applications must not book a family appointment, even if they are living at the same address. They must book separate individual appointments. If a group of unrelated people book and attend a family appointment, they will be told to re-book their appointments separately.

Applicant cancels their premium application enrolment appointment

If a person calls one of the customer contact centres to cancel their appointment, the call agent will ask them to make another appointment.

If the applicant does not want to make another appointment they can request a refund by emailing PSC Appointments Refunds

Failure to attend a premium application enrolment appointment

If an applicant fails to attend their appointment they will have their visa and premium fee refunded to them unless the customer contacts the Home Office within 5 days of their original appointment.

They will need to explain why they did not attend the original appointment and request an additional appointment.

Unsuccessful premium service centre enrolments

Once the enrolment appointment is over and the applicant has left the premises, if it is discovered that the enrolment has been unsuccessful, you must telephone the applicant to explain what has happened.

You must tell the applicant they must make another appointment at the premium service centre to re-enrol their biometric information.

If it would be inconvenient for the applicant to re-enrol at the same premium service centre, you must contact another premium service centre to arrange a re-enrolment appointment.

For example:

- an applicant enrolled at Sheffield but the enrolment was unsuccessful
- the applicant lives in London
- the Sheffield premium service centre will contact Croydon premium service centre to see if they can enrol the applicant at the Croydon premium service

centre - the applicant will not have to pay another fee if the fault for the non enrolment lies with the Home Office

Enforcement assistance at premium service centres

This page tells biometric information enrolment staff and caseworkers at the premium service centres when you must consider whether it is necessary to ask for enforcement assistance.

You may require enforcement assistance if the biometric information identification reveals the person is of interest to enforcement in their claimed or revealed identity.

The situations may include:

- a failed asylum seeker or an overstayer in another identity
- an illegal entrant who has entered in breach of a current deportation order or is the subject of:
 - an exclusion order
 - a decision to exclude
- an absconder from prison or an immigration detention centre
- someone subject to removal directions and awaiting removal in another identity
- someone released on bail in another identity
- someone who has gained leave to enter or remain by verbal deception in a previous application
- someone attempting to gain leave to remain by deception in their current application

You must take action in line with your local enforcement guidance. The enforcement office will make a decision on how to go forward.

Official sensitive – start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official sensitive – end of section

Standard applications

In this section the term residence card (biometric format) relates to residence cards, derivative residence cards and permanent residence cards. For more information please see related link

A person automatically makes an application for a BID when they make an application for leave within the UK.

Anyone applying for a residence card, permanent residence card or derivative residence card must enrol their biometric information as a condition of that application.

Once a standard route application has been received and validated, the applicant is sent a biometric information notification letter (except for asylum cases where the letter is handed to the applicant).

The letter tells them they must enrol their biometric information as part of the application process. It tells them they can enrol their biometric information by visiting a participating Post Office.

This is a walk-in service and the applicant does not have to book an appointment. Applicants can enrol their biometric information at any participating branch.

Applicant has not enrolled at a Post Office

If the main applicant has not enrolled at a Post Office within 15 working days of the date of the biometric information notification letter, you must send them the rejection warning letter to warn them their application may be rejected. You must include the language leaflet that explains the letter's importance. This is written in the 10 most common languages spoken by non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants. To view the code of practice or download the leaflet, see related link: Biometric information leaflet.

You must choose the relevant opening paragraph on the letter which relates to failure to enrol at a Post Office.

The rejection warning letter tells the applicant they must enrol at a Post Office, within 10 working days of the date of the letter. If they do not, you must reject the application because the applicant has not complied with the requirement to provide their biometric information. Once the decision is made to reject the application the applicant may be given a refund on the fee paid.

If the applicant resubmits their application after it has been rejected, send a new biometric information notification letter to them. This tells them to enrol their biometric information and the biometric information of any dependants included on their application.

A new calendar event on CID is auto-populated with the date by which the applicant must attend at a Post Office.

If the applicant resubmits the application but does not attend at a Post Office to enrol their biometric information within 15 working days, you must follow the process above.

Dependants have not enrolled at a Post Office

This page does not apply to anyone who falls within the scope of the EEA Regulations or is applying to become a British citizen.

If the main applicant has enrolled their biometric information within 15 working days of the date of the biometric information notification letter, but their dependant has not you must do the following:

- send a rejection warning letter to the dependant
- reject the dependant's application if they do not enrol their biometric information at a Post Office within the timescale stated on the warning letter

If it is a dependent child under 16 who has not supplied their biometric information, you must make sure the warning letter names the responsible adult who must be present when they attend their biometric enrolment. This must be a person aged 18 or over who is either the child's parent, legal guardian, or a person who has responsibility for the child at that time, such as a member of staff at the child's school, this information must be supplied on the application form.

Post Office staff will request identification from the responsible adult which they will check against the details given on the application form. Acceptable forms of photo identification are:

- UK passport
- UK photo card driving licence
- national passport
- national identity card
- biometric immigration document (BID)

If the dependent child has applied as a member of a family group and one of the parents is the responsible adult, you can accept the parent's biometric information notification letter as evidence of their identity if none of the above is available. The reason for this is the main applicant will have sent their supporting documents with their application to the Home Office and so the above documents may be unavailable.

If the child's parent is not applying as part of the same family group as the dependant, or the responsible adult is someone other than the parent, they must provide one of the above forms of identification.

Mobile biometric enrolment for people who cannot attend a Post Office

The Post Office provides a mobile biometric enrolment service to applicants who are unable to enrol their biometrics at a participating Post Office.

To be eligible for this service, the applicant must be either:

- undergoing medical treatment in hospital
- unable to leave their private residence

The applicant must:

- tell the Home Office they cannot enrol their biometrics at a Post Office - they must do this by one of the following:
 - at the time they submit their application

- after they have received their biometric notification letter
- provide evidence of any medical condition that prevents them from attending a Post Office

If the applicant has provided suitable information with their application to confirm they cannot enrol their biometric information at the Post Office, you must request a mobile biometric enrolment by emailing Mobile Enrolment Requests. This email is only for internal use and you must not give it to applicants or their representatives.

If the applicant has contacted the Home Office using the appointment exceptions email address, ID operations (Sheffield) will respond and manage this request.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Validation

This section tells data processors and caseworkers how biometric information enrolment affects the process of validating an application.

This section does not apply to anyone who falls within the scope of the EEA Regulations or is applying to become a British citizen.

Application requirements

This section does not apply to applications made under the EEA regulations or to anyone who is applying to become or be registered as a British citizen. For information on those applications please see related links

Application requirements are those which form an essential part of the process for applying for a biometric immigration document (BID).

BID application requirements

To satisfy the application requirements, a person must:

- apply (or re-apply) for a BID when they are required to do so by regulations made under section 5 of the 2007 Act, see [UK Borders Act 2007](#)
- surrender any requested documents connected with immigration or nationality when this is required as part of the issue of a BID - requested documents would include a passport or travel document:
 - the guidance says a passport, or other acceptable travel document, must be submitted on the application
 - there is nothing that actually specifies it must be a 'valid' passport, taking 'valid' to mean current or unexpired
 - the BID must match the passport but the BID stands alone from the passport
- provide their BID, if they are already in possession of one, when they submit a valid application:
 - if they do not, you must request it from them and hold the application until it is received
 - you must invalidate applications where the 'outgoing' BID has not been provided as the return of the BID is mandatory, except where the person has reported the loss or theft of their BID
- follow any specified process for the application set out by an authorised person - this may include making and attending an appointment at a specified time, date and place to enable a photograph to be taken and a record of their fingerprints to be registered

Invalid applications

This section tells you what action to take when a person submits an application that requires biometric information enrolment but is invalid for a reason other than not complying with the biometric information requirements.

For more information see related links:

- Specified application forms and procedures
- EEA applications
- Chapter 6: General information

Validation and biometric information enrolment

This page tells you what validation procedures apply when the applicant has sent a valid form and enrolled at a Post Office.

A standard route application is valid if:

- the application meets the normal validation requirements
- the applicant attends at a participating Post Office to enrol their biometric information within 15 working days from the date of their biometric information notification letter - no appointment is needed to enrol at a Post Office.

For more information on validation procedures and the specified application forms, see: Specified application forms

You must send a warning letter to applicants, after the 15 day period has passed, if they have not attended at a Post Office to enrol their biometric information.

If the applicant does not attend at a participating Post Office, after the further warning period, set out in the warning letter, you must reject their application.

Once a valid application has been made it cannot be rejected. If the applicant fails to meet the requirements of the Rules of the route they have applied under the application must be refused.

If mandatory documents, such as passports or previously issued biometric resident permits (BRPs), are not submitted with the application it would not immediately be invalidated. Instead you would request all documents required.

You must not immediately cancel a BRP or residence card (biometric format) simply because an application has been rejected. For more information about rejected applications, see: Invalid applications.

Related content

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