



Home Office

DNA policy guidance

Version 4.0

Policy guidance on inviting applicants to volunteer evidence to demonstrate a biological relationship, including DNA evidence.

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About this guidance

This guidance sets out the policy on inviting applicants to volunteer relevant evidence to establish biological family relationships, which may include DNA evidence. It also includes guidance on how to consider any evidence provided.

For the purpose of this guidance:

- 'official' means:
 - immigration, nationality and asylum caseworkers
 - immigration and border force officers
 - passport examiners
 - civil registration caseworker
 - 'senior official' means any official of at least Senior Executive Officer (SEO) grade, or its equivalent
- 'applicants' means applicants, claimants, customers and parents
- 'paternity' refers to establishing who is a natural father for the purposes of determining nationality
- 'biological relationship testing' refers to DNA testing beyond standard paternity testing

The Home Office cannot require that DNA evidence is provided as part of an immigration application. This is reflected in the fact that the department has no specific statutory power to require DNA evidence. Officials can give applicants the opportunity to provide DNA evidence as one of a range of options to prove a relationship, but it is voluntary, and it is the applicant's choice as to whether they wish to provide it in further support of their application. If an applicant chooses not to provide DNA evidence, no negative inferences can be drawn from this. In the absence of DNA evidence, an application must be determined on the basis of the available evidence.

This means that the general ground for refusal in [Part 9 of the Immigration Rules](#) cannot be used in relation to DNA evidence. This is because the Rules state that the Secretary of State can refuse an application for entry clearance, leave to enter or variation of leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom where an applicant fails to produce, within a reasonable time, information, documents or evidence required by the Secretary of State to establish their claim, and DNA evidence cannot be required. Similar Rules in any other parts of the Immigration Rules (for example, [Appendix FM](#) and [Appendix Armed Forces](#)) cannot be relied on either.

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 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 **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **16 March 2020**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Page 6, reference to DNA profile not revealing certain characteristics of a person who provides a DNA sample for testing.

Page 7, guidance on who is entitled to see the results of a DNA test.

Page 8, reference to funding the costs of witnesses

Page 12, new sub-section on accreditation held by DNA testing laboratories.

Page 12-14, updated guidance on collecting the DNA samples covering situations when the Home Office is in the possession of the applicant's identification document and handling children aged under 16.

Page 15, new section to replace DNA: Unavailability of a family member with DNA: Other biological relationships

Page 16-18, advice on DNA test results and checking the authenticity of a DNA test report with the DNA testing laboratory.

Page 20, template amended to inform applicants on how to obtain a DNA test and that we will verify the report with the DNA testing laboratory.

Page 21, template to refer suspicious DNA test reports to laboratories

Page 22, model letters on suitably accredited laboratories.

Page 23-24, model letters on disregarding DNA evidence where the identity of a person who has provided a DNA sample cannot be verified

Page 25, information on essential information.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Get a DNA test](#)

DNA: definition

This page contains information about the definition of DNA, and how it defines each person.

DNA stands for 'deoxyribo-nucleic acid'. It is the chemical that is found in virtually every cell in the body and it carries genetic information from one generation to the next.

Half the DNA in a cell is inherited from an individual's mother and half from the person's father. Siblings inherit different combinations of DNA derived from the same parents and are therefore different from each other. Each new generation of individuals represents a new combination of genetic material from the previous generation.

Except for identical twins, each person's DNA profile is almost unique. The chance of 2 people having identical profile records is less than one in a billion, although the technology available does not yet allow the examination of every single difference between the DNA of different individuals.

It is usually taken by swabbing the inside of the cheek to collect some cells. Analysis of DNA involves examination of specific areas in the DNA sequences that are known to vary widely between individuals. These areas vary in length between different individuals, and the technique of DNA profiling involves analysing and measuring the differences in lengths of these sequences. Aside from sex, a DNA profile does not reveal any other characteristics of the individual it is taken from, such as their race, age or physical appearance.

Related content

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DNA evidence: cannot be required

This section explains that officials **must not** require applicants to provide DNA evidence, for example in connection with amending a birth registration record, making an immigration application or representation or nationality application, or an application for a British passport.

Volunteering DNA evidence

Officials **must not** require DNA evidence, but applicants can choose to volunteer DNA evidence, either proactively or in response to an invitation to submit further evidence. Where applicants choose not to volunteer DNA evidence, no negative inferences can be drawn from this.

As a minimum, applicants who wish to provide DNA samples are advised to follow the standard set out in this guidance, see [DNA: collection standards](#), to ensure they are securely collected before being sent to a DNA testing laboratory that **must** hold accreditation to a suitable International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard, which is usually ISO/IEC17025. Everyone aged over 16 who chooses to volunteer a DNA sample for testing is entitled to have the results of the DNA test to be provided to them or their representative. The test results for children aged under 16 are normally sent to the mother or their legal guardian. Officials **must not** ask individuals to submit their DNA samples directly to the Home Office.

Officials cannot take DNA samples

Officials **must not** take samples of DNA under any circumstance.

Evidence from parents and children

There are often circumstances where an applicant **must** satisfy an official that they are related as claimed to a particular person. This can usually be achieved by providing many different forms of evidence, which may include DNA evidence. However, DNA is sensitive personal information and there is no obligation to provide it.

Officials can give applicants the opportunity to provide DNA evidence as one of a range of options to prove a relationship, but it is voluntary, and it is the applicant's choice whether to volunteer DNA evidence. Where individuals choose not to provide DNA evidence, no negative inference can be drawn from it. There is nothing to stop applicants from proactively offering to supply DNA evidence to the Home Office if they consider it is in their interest, but again, this **must** be entirely voluntary. Children who are aged under 16 may only volunteer DNA evidence, where they have the written consent of the person who has parental responsibility for them.

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DNA: circumstances where officials can invite further evidence

This section tells officials about what to do where they do not have sufficient evidence of a biological relationship to resolve an application. Officials **must** not require DNA evidence, but applicants are free to volunteer DNA evidence where they choose to do so. For some this may be the simplest and most effective option for proving the relationship. **Where applicants choose not to provide DNA evidence, no negative inference can be drawn from that and used in the decision-making process.** Applicants should be made aware of this if you request further evidence.

Inviting further evidence

Where there is insufficient evidence of a biological relationship to decide a case, you **must** write to the applicant to give them an opportunity within a reasonable specified timeframe to volunteer to provide further supporting evidence of a biological relationship that could include:

- offering any other relevant evidence that would prove or disprove the existence of the claimed biological relationship, including DNA evidence
- a declaration of parentage, by the Family Court or High Court under section 55A of Family Law Act 1986 (only if the parties are in the UK), see [Apply for a declaration about whether a named person is the parent of another named person](#), this only applies if all the claimed biological family members are in the UK

Where an applicant is invited to, or volunteers to provide DNA evidence, you **must** advise them:

- that the testing laboratory **must** hold accreditation to a suitable International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard, which is normally ISO/IEC17025 the easiest way of selecting an accredited laboratory is to refer to the list on Gov.UK, see [Get a DNA test](#)
- to show how the DNA samples were collected, we recommend they follow the process set out in this guidance, see [DNA: collection standards](#)
- that they will be expected to meet the costs of obtaining any DNA evidence which they choose to volunteer, including the costs of the individuals that witness the collection of DNA samples

A DNA test usually needs a sample from the person and their immediate biological relations, such as a child and both of their biological parents or other immediate family members, depending on the nature of the relationship the person is seeking to prove. To prove paternity, usually samples from both parents and the child are provided, as this produces more definitive results, although there may be circumstances where this is not always possible, see [DNA: unavailability of family member](#).

The process for collecting bodily samples, such as mouth swabs, is based upon on [regulations 5 and 6 of The Blood Tests \(Evidence of Paternity\) Regulations 1971](#), as amended and is set out in [DNA: Collection standards](#).

Where additional evidence is not volunteered

Where the applicant does not provide any additional evidence within the reasonable specified timeframe, you **must** consider the application based on the evidence available to you. Where the evidence available to you is insufficient to show the applicant's claimed relationship, this **must** be reflected in the decision.

Where DNA evidence is not volunteered

Officials **must not** draw negative inferences where applicants do not provide DNA evidence. Furthermore, any explanations offered **must not** form part of the decision on the application. Instead, officials must weigh up all the evidence provided, including evidence obtained from other sources, such as other parts of the Home Office, identifying that which supports the relationship and any discrepancies, before deciding whether they are satisfied that the relationship is as claimed.

Immigration and asylum

There are many reasons why individuals apply to come or stay in the UK. In some cases, applicants will need to provide evidence of their claimed biological relationship to other family members.

Applicants may apply to enter or stay in the UK based upon their relationship with a person who is either a British citizen or has permission to live in the UK. They will need be to provide you with evidence of their relationship to the person they want to join or stay with.

Generally, the need to request further evidence will only arise when sufficient evidence has not already been provided with the application. This could be for a number of reasons, which may include where we have concerns with the documentary evidence they have provided. Where you can make a decision on whether the claimed biological relationship exists using the evidence already submitted, you **must not** invite the applicant to volunteer to provide further evidence, including DNA evidence.

When the evidence submitted by an applicant is insufficient you may invite them to provide other forms of evidence that could support a claim such as a birth certificate, DNA test results or a UK court order relating to this matter. You will need to explain to the applicant the reasons why you consider the documentary evidence they have already provided is not sufficient.

You **must** pay particular attention to birth certificates submitted by applicants which show there was a re-registration, as this can be an indication of fraud.

There will be some cases where DNA evidence may be volunteered because it will enable a decision to be made quickly or where there is not satisfactory documentary evidence.

General Register Office (GRO)

The GRO is responsible for ensuring that births are correctly recorded in England and Wales. Applicants are expected to provide accurate evidence about the child's parents when registering a child's birth, as incorrect information may adversely affect the child.

Amending the father's details on a birth certificate

A correction can be made to the father's details recorded in a child's birth entry, but this must be done in accordance with the [Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953](#) and the [Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987](#). Before any correction can be made the Registrar General will instruct registration officers to obtain evidence for the purpose of verifying the facts of the case ([regulation 58 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987](#)).

Where an applicant is seeking to prove the man named on a birth certificate is not the child's father, they will need to provide relevant evidence before the Registrar General will authorise an amendment to the details recorded in the birth registration.

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Birth registrations in Northern Ireland and Scotland are the responsibility of the General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRO NI) and National Records of Scotland (NRS), respectively. See [General Register Office for Northern Ireland](#) and [National Records of Scotland](#).

British citizenship and British passports

Applicants may apply for a passport, or to register themselves as a British citizen, on the basis of having a parent who is a British citizen. They may need to provide evidence of their relationship with the British citizen. In many cases, they will be able to prove their entitlement to register as a British citizen without needing to offer DNA evidence.

You **must** pay particular attention to birth certificates submitted by applicants which show there was a re-registration. You **must** invite the applicant to volunteer any evidence they provided to GRO, GRO NI or NRS when they applied to re-register the birth.

When the evidence submitted by an applicant is insufficient you may invite them to provide other forms of relevant evidence that could support a claim including DNA evidence results or a court order.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Apply for a declaration about whether a named person is the parent of another named person](#)

[Get a DNA test](#)

[Regulations 5 and 6 of The Blood Tests \(Evidence of Paternity\) Regulations 1971 Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953](#)

[Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987](#)

[General Register Office for Northern Ireland](#)

[National Records of Scotland](#)

DNA: collection standards

This page tells officials the standards applied to ensure DNA samples are securely collected before being sent to a DNA testing laboratory that **must** hold accreditation to an appropriate International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard, which in most cases will be ISO/IEC17025. The easiest way of selecting a laboratory with ISO/IEC17025 accreditation is to refer to the list at: [Get a DNA test](#).

DNA: Accreditation held by testing laboratories

Where an applicant chooses to use a DNA testing laboratory that holds accreditation to an alternative ISO standard, such as ISO 15189 for medical testing laboratories, or where the applicant volunteers DNA evidence to prove other types of biological relationships; you **must** ask the applicant to obtain a copy of the testing laboratory's schedule of accreditation to demonstrate that its accredited scope includes paternity testing or other relevant biological relationship testing.

It is important that the accreditation of the testing laboratory is awarded by an accreditation body that has demonstrated its technical competence in accrediting testing laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189. This can be determined through the accreditation body being a signatory to the European ([European cooperation for Accreditation – EA](#)) or International ([International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation – ILAC](#)) Mutual Recognition Arrangements.

HM Government's policy on accreditation requires laboratories which are established in the UK, to seek their accreditation from the UK's national accreditation body: [The United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#).

Once the suitability of the accreditation body has been established you can check whether a testing laboratory holds appropriate accreditation for paternity testing by checking with the accreditation body that awarded the accreditation. This information can usually be found on the accreditation body's website.

As a minimum, applicants who wish to provide DNA evidence are advised to follow the [DNA: collection process](#) which is based on [regulations 5 and 6 of The Blood Tests \(Evidence of Paternity\) Regulations 1971](#), as amended. Applicants are advised to show that the collection of the DNA samples was secure and free from tampering.

DNA: collection process

The collection of the DNA samples is observed by an independent witness (such as a representative of the testing laboratory, which includes a 'Sampler' who collects the samples on behalf of the laboratory and certifies the photographs of individuals who provide their DNA samples). They need to be able to confirm the identities of the participants who have chosen to provide their DNA samples to either prove or disprove a blood relationship. The independent witness cannot be a family member or the applicant's representative.

The individual who witnesses the taking of DNA evidence will need to confirm the identities of the parties submitting DNA evidence.

Each person to be tested must provide facial photographs that ideally meets the [HM Passport Office photograph standards](#), or other format that can be validated and certified by the independent witness using the following wording “I certify that this is a true likeness of [title and full name of adult or child who is providing a DNA sample]” on the back of the photograph or where a digital image is provided in the accompanying email.

Except where an individual’s photographic document is held by the Home Office, everyone providing DNA samples aged over 16 **must** provide a photographic document, that includes their name, to the independent witness to confirm their identity, such as:

- passport
- biometric residence permit
- identity card
- Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) card
- National Entitlement Card (NEC)
- photo driving licence

Except where an individual’s documents are held by the Home Office, everyone aged under 16 who is providing a DNA sample **must** provide a photographic document if they have one, otherwise they can use an official document issued by their national authority that includes their name and date of birth, such as their birth certificate.

Individuals whose identity documents are held by the Home Office and have volunteered to provide a DNA sample **must** notify the independent witness before giving their DNA sample. The independent witness **must** include a record of the type of document the individual claims to have sent to the Home Office alongside the person’s name, nationality and date of birth. This information **must** be included along with the results of the DNA test as part of the DNA evidence.

Where the Home Office holds an individual’s photographic identity document it will ask the testing laboratory to send the photograph of the person who provided the DNA sample, which was certified by the independent witness. Digital images **must** be submitted by an email that includes the independent witness’s contact detail alongside a statement certifying the image is the true likeness of the person who provided the DNA sample.

The Official **must** compare the certified photograph against the facial image contained in the identity document held by the Home Office to confirm that identity of the person who provided their DNA sample to the DNA testing laboratory matches the identity of the person in the identity document or if they are aged under 16 on the official document issued by their national authority.

Every person aged over 16 who has agreed to provide a DNA sample **must** provide evidence of their consent in writing to the DNA testing laboratory.

It is good practice for children aged under 16 **not** to provide DNA samples, unless they are in the presence of an adult who **must** provide written consent to the testing laboratory on behalf of a child who is aged under 16. The adult **must** be the child's parent, guardian or someone else who has parental responsibility but cannot be an official or a representative of the DNA testing laboratory who is responsible for collecting or testing the DNA sample.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Get a DNA test](#)

[International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation's \(ILAC\)](#)

[United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#)

[Regulations 5 and 6 of The Blood Tests \(Evidence of Paternity\) Regulations 1971](#)

[HM Passport Office photograph standards](#)

DNA: Other biological relationships

This page tells officials what to do if an applicant wishing to volunteer DNA evidence is unable to obtain DNA evidence from the family member with whom they are seeking to prove or disprove a biological relationship or is seeking to prove other biological relationships.

DNA tests are normally used to establish a biological parental relationship. However, DNA tests against another immediate family member may help to validate a claimed paternal relationship although they will not offer the same level of matching as a direct parental test.

DNA tests can also be used to establish other biological relationships, but applicants **must** check whether a DNA testing laboratory holds suitable accreditation to undertake such DNA testing. Where applicants choose to volunteer DNA evidence other than for paternity testing, they must provide a copy of the testing laboratory's schedule of accreditation to demonstrate that the laboratory is qualified to undertake such testing.

You **must only** accept DNA evidence that shows other biological relationships in exceptional or compassionate circumstances (for example where parents have died or where not to do so would unreasonably disadvantage the applicant, such as it is the only way to prove the applicant's claim). The relative providing the DNA evidence **must** be an immediate relative to the person who is unable to provide a DNA evidence, such as either their parent or a sibling of the deceased relative.

The applicant will be responsible for ensuring the relative they want to provide a DNA sample consents to their request. They **must** also provide you with satisfactory evidence of the relative's familial links to the person who is unable or unwilling to provide a DNA sample. This can include relevant documentary evidence or other evidence that would prove the existence of the relationship.

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DNA: test results

This section tells officials how the DNA testing laboratories will report the results of their tests. Officials must use this evidence when considering the application.

The DNA testing laboratories will provide a descriptive outcome of the results to explain the nature of the biological relationship being tested. They may provide a headline outcome such as “positive” or “relationship proven”.

You **must** carefully read the DNA testing laboratory’s explanation of the headline results, when considering the application. The evidence for a biological relationship result is evaluated as the likelihood ratio for the specified relationship versus the alternative that there is no such relationship. The use of the likelihood ratio approach supports greater transparency and enables the courts to determine the specific nature of the differences of opinion between experts. You **must not** rely on percentages that may be provided by some DNA testing laboratories as the data can be misleading.

Where a test result is **not** recorded as a positive match there may be other possibilities about the nature of the relationship, such as the man tested is not the father but his brother, which standard paternity tests will not address. Where the results do not reflect a result that confirms the claimed biological relationship, you **must** refer the case to a senior official to consider.

Verifying the results

Where you have concerns about the DNA sample collection process or the accuracy of the test report, you **must** verify the results of a DNA test with the testing laboratory by sending a copy of the DNA evidence to the DNA testing laboratory and asking it to confirm whether it issued the report and whether the information contained within the report is accurate. The type of processing that we do on identity and evidence verification is covered in our [Privacy Information Notice](#) (HM Passport Office and the General Register Office have their own [Privacy Information Notice](#)) published on Gov.UK which confirms that we may request information from third parties for the purposes of verifying information supplied in support of an application.

The legal basis for processing special categories of personal data under Data Protection legislation is where the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

Confidentiality

You **must not** disclose the results of any DNA tests provided for the purposes of proving or disproving a biological relationship outside of the Home Office. You **must** only record the results on the applicant’s personal record.

Applying the results

Any decision **must** be based upon the legislation, policy or guidance relating to the application and not simply just the result of the DNA test. The Secretary of State or Registrar General is required to weigh up all the available evidence, including taking into account any explanations provided where there are discrepancies in the evidence provided.

The DNA testing laboratory will send the results of the DNA test to the applicant or the person's representative. Where a copy of the evidence is also sent directly to a Home Office official by the testing laboratory or by the applicant's legal representative, you **must** take care in how you notify the applicant of your decision. In some cases, the results may prove to be devastating to family members who may have always considered they were biologically related to the claimed family member.

You **must** handle such cases with sensitivity as it may not be obvious whether the partner or other family members know of the true relationship and there may be serious repercussions for the mother and child if the information is disclosed, see [where the DNA does not match the claimed father](#).

There may be any number of reasons why a claimed father may not be a child's natural father including the death of the first husband, rape or adultery.

Where the DNA does not match the claimed relationship

Where DNA evidence does not match the claimed father, the official **must** try to establish the truth of the family circumstances as discreetly and sensitively as possible.

Where there is the potential for family members to become victims of domestic abuse you **must** refer the case to a senior official for advice, who may want to take advice from specialist teams.

You **must** disregard any DNA evidence submitted from laboratories that do not hold suitable accreditation. You can only accept DNA evidence from testing laboratories that hold ISO/IEC17025 accreditation or holds ISO15189 accreditation so long as the applicant has provided a copy of the laboratory's schedule of accreditation to show that it is accredited to undertake paternity testing and/ or other relevant biological relationship testing.

Where the DNA test result does not support the claimed biological link to the individual or you cannot accept the DNA evidence, you **must** consider the application using all the other available evidence. You **must** communicate any decision not to accept the family relationship at the earliest possible opportunity to avoid unnecessary distress to the applicant.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Privacy Information Notice](#)

[HM Passport Office and General Register Office - Privacy Information Notice](#)

DNA: letter templates

This section provides officials with model text which you can use or adapt when writing to an applicant to invite them to volunteer evidence, including DNA evidence or when you intend to disregard DNA evidence that was not obtained from a suitably accredited laboratory or did not meet the [DNA sample collection standards](#).

DNA: invitation to applicant to provide further evidence - model text

Officials **must** not just send out letters only inviting applicants to offer DNA evidence. You **must** give applicants alternative options otherwise the letter may be interpreted as requiring DNA evidence:

“You can volunteer any other relevant evidence that may help you to prove your relationship with (Name(s)). This may include any or all of the of the following:

- Court Order – a declaration of parentage, by the Family Court or High Court under section 55A of Family Law Act 1986 (only if the parties are in the UK), see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-c63-application-for-declaration-of-parentage-under-section-55a-of-the-family-law-act-1986> - where the Court has determined paternity. This only applies where the claimed family members are all residing in the UK.
- Any other relevant evidence that could clearly prove/disprove that X is related to Y.
- DNA evidence – it is voluntary to provide such evidence, but we will consider it if it is provided. You will need to fund this from your own resources and obtain the evidence. The DNA laboratory **must** hold accreditation to a suitable International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard accreditation, which is normally ISO/IEC17025. Other ISO standards will only be accepted if you provide a copy of the testing laboratory’s schedule of accreditation which **must** show it is accredited to undertake paternity testing. The easiest way of selecting an accredited laboratory is to refer a laboratory listed at www.gov.uk/get-dna-test. You must not send DNA samples directly to the Home Office as we cannot accept them. If you choose not to provide DNA evidence, we will not draw any negative inferences from this.

If you choose to provide DNA evidence, you are advised to provide evidence that shows the DNA samples were collected as set out in the DNA policy guidance: see: DNA: Collection Standards. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dna-policy>).

You are expected to meet the costs of obtaining any additional evidence you choose to offer.

We may also need to contact the testing laboratory to verify any DNA evidence you choose to provide to confirm that the DNA samples were properly collected and the accuracy of the test results. We may contact the DNA testing laboratory to confirm

that it issued you with the report and that the information contained within the report is accurate.

The Data Protection Act 2018 governs how we use personal data. For details of how we will use your personal information and who we may share it with: see: Privacy Notice for the Border, Immigration and Citizenship system. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-information-use-in-borders-immigration-and-citizenship>). This also explains your key rights under the Act, how you can access your personal information and how to complain if you have concerns.”

DNA: referral to testing laboratory model text

Where you have concerns about the authenticity of a DNA test report, you **must** use or adapt the following model text where you want to check whether a suitably accredited DNA testing laboratory has produced the DNA test report submitted by an applicant to prove a biological relationship.

“We have received a DNA test report from (insert name of applicant) as evidence of a claimed biological relationship. Our published policy guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dna-policy> makes it clear to applicants who volunteer DNA evidence that we may ask the DNA testing laboratory to validate the report.

I should be grateful if you could confirm whether you conducted a DNA test on behalf of (insert name of applicant) and that the attached report accurately reflects the outcome of the test, otherwise we may disregard the DNA evidence submitted by the applicant.”

DNA: unaccredited laboratory model text

You **must** provide applicants who have volunteered DNA evidence from an unaccredited laboratory an opportunity to offer DNA evidence from an accredited laboratory.

Offer applicant opportunity to provide DNA evidence from an accredited laboratory: model text

You **must** use or adapt the following model text where applicants have provided DNA evidence from an unaccredited laboratory and are offering the applicant an opportunity to obtain DNA evidence from a suitably accredited testing laboratory:

“You provided DNA evidence submitted from (insert name of testing laboratory) to prove a biological relationship.

You have not provided sufficient evidence which shows this laboratory to hold appropriate accreditation (i.e. to either ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189 and a schedule of accreditation) for us to take account of the DNA evidence you have provided.

Guidance on volunteering DNA evidence can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dna-policy>. The easiest way to find an accredited laboratory is to use one listed on <https://www.gov.uk/get-dna-test>.

As we cannot accept DNA evidence from a laboratory without suitable accreditation, we cannot accept the DNA evidence that you volunteered. However, we are prepared to give you another opportunity to provide any further evidence, which may include DNA evidence from an accredited laboratory that proves the claimed relationship. If you do want to volunteer further evidence, you must provide it within one within 10 working days of this letter or notify us within 10 working days that you have sought DNA evidence from an accredited laboratory.”

Disregard DNA evidence from unaccredited laboratory: model text

You **must** use or adapt the following text which **must** be inserted into your decision letter where you have disregarded DNA evidence because testing laboratory the applicant chose to use was not suitably accredited and the applicant chose not to volunteer other DNA evidence from a suitably accredited laboratory within 10 working days from the date you sent your earlier letter:

“You provided DNA evidence from (insert name of testing laboratory) to prove a biological relationship.

However, the Secretary of State has not taken account of this evidence as she is not satisfied the laboratory holds suitable accreditation from an appropriate accreditation body to undertake DNA testing. You were provided with another opportunity to provide further evidence, which could include DNA evidence from a suitably accredited laboratory, within 10 working days but no further evidence was received.

The Secretary of State has now considered your application using all the other evidence available to her. She has not drawn any negative inferences where you have not provided any alternative DNA evidence from an appropriately accredited laboratory.”

DNA: insecure sample collection process - model text

You **must** provide applicants who have volunteered DNA evidence but failed to provide sufficient evidence that the DNA samples were collected securely an opportunity to provide evidence that the DNA sample collection process met the policy requirements.

Offer applicant opportunity to provide evidence that DNA samples were collected securely: model text

You **must** use or adapt the following text where applicants have failed to provide evidence that the DNA sample was securely collected and passed to the laboratory for testing:

“You provided DNA evidence submitted from (insert name of testing laboratory) to prove a biological relationship.

The DNA report does not, however, show that the DNA sample was securely collected as (Delete and complete as appropriate)

- you have not provided sufficient evidence that the collection of the DNA samples was witnessed by an independent individual (such as a representative of the testing laboratory, which includes a 'Sampler' who collects the samples on behalf of the laboratory).
- the individual who witnessed the taking of DNA evidence has not correctly confirmed the identities of (name(s) on the report) who submitted their DNA evidence.
- (For people aged over 16) you have not provided a copy of a photographic document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, which included their name, to enable the witness to confirm their identity.
- (For people aged over 16) the Home Office does not hold a photographic document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, to enable officials to confirm the person's identity.
- (For people aged under 16) you have not provided a copy of a photographic document or other official document issued by their national authority that includes the name and date of birth, such as their birth certificate of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample to enable the witness to confirm their identity.
- (For people aged under 16) the Home Office does not hold a photographic document or other official document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, to enable officials to confirm the person's identity.
- you have not provided facial photographs of (name(s)) that were validated and confirmed by the independent witness.
- you have not provided written consent from (name(s)) who provided DNA evidence.
- you have not provided written consent from (name(s)) who has parental responsibility for (name(s)) who is/ are a child/ children aged under 16.

Guidance on volunteering DNA evidence, how to find an accredited laboratory and collection standards can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dna-policy>.

In order to take the DNA evidence into account, please could you provide us with further evidence of the collection process or notify us that you are volunteering fresh DNA evidence that follows our published collection standards. If we have not heard from you within 10 working days, the Secretary of State will consider the application using all the other evidence available to her."

Disregard DNA evidence where DNA sample collection is insecure: model text

You **must** use or adapt the following text which **must** be inserted into your decision letter where you have disregarded DNA evidence because the applicant failed to provide evidence that the DNA sample that was tested was securely obtained within the 10 working days you gave them from the date of your earlier letter:

You provided DNA evidence from (insert name of testing laboratory) to prove a biological relationship.

However, the Secretary of State has not taken account of this evidence as you have not provided satisfactory evidence of the collection process to show the DNA samples were securely collected before being sent to a DNA testing laboratory as:

(Delete and complete as appropriate)

- you did not provide sufficient evidence that the collection of the DNA samples was witnessed by an independent individual (such as a representative of the testing laboratory, which includes a 'Sampler' who collects the samples on behalf of the laboratory).
- the individual who witnessed the taking of DNA evidence did not correctly confirm the identities of (name(s)) who submitted their DNA evidence.
- (For people aged over 16) you did not provide a copy of a photographic document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, which included their name, to enable the witness to confirm their identity.
- (For people aged over 16) the Home Office does not hold a photographic document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, to enable officials to confirm the person's identity.
- (For people aged under 16) you did not provide a copy of a photographic document or other official document issued by their national authority that includes the name and date of birth, such as their birth certificate of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample to enable the witness to confirm their identity.
- (For people aged under 16) the Home Office does not hold a photographic document or other official document of (name(s)) who provided a DNA sample, to enable officials to confirm the person's identity.
- you did not provide facial photographs of (name(s)) that were validated and confirmed by the independent witness.
- you did not provide written consent from (name(s)) who provided DNA evidence.
- you did not provide written consent from (name) who has parental responsibility for (name(s)) who is/ are a child/ children aged under 16.

You were provided with another opportunity to provide further or alternative evidence within 10 working days, but no other evidence was received.

The Secretary of State has therefore considered your application using all the other evidence available to her and is not satisfied that you are related to the sponsor/ applicant as you have claimed. She has not drawn any negative inferences where you have not provided further evidence on the DNA sample collection process."

Related content

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DNA: retention of data

This section tells officials about what information they need to retain from any DNA evidence that is volunteered by applicants and the length of time such information should be retained.

Essential information

To enable officials to consider DNA evidence they only require the following information:

- the overall test result (likelihood of paternity/ paternity index) that determines the extent of the biological relationship
- the personal details of the participants whose DNA samples were tested, including their names, dates of birth, photographs, addresses etc;
- the contact details of the DNA testing laboratory and the test reference number to enable officials to confirm the results with the laboratory, if necessary
- evidence that the testing laboratory holds accreditation to suitable International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard and a copy of the schedule of accreditation to show that the laboratory is accredited to undertake paternity or other relevant biological relationship testing if the DNA testing laboratory is accredited to a standard other than ISO/IEC17025 i.e. ISO 15189
- evidence on how the DNA samples were obtained and sent to the DNA testing laboratory

Where applicants submit DNA evidence that includes data which is not essential to the biological relationship, officials **must** immediately redact or delete this unnecessary information. Non-essential information may include:

- the DNA alleles, which are a set of numbers that relate to the genetic link to each parent, **unless** the results **do not** show a positive match (often presented in a table)
- other information about the individuals that do not relate to describing a family relationship
- other services outside the scope of the biological relationship test relevant to the case

This should be undertaken by taking a copy of the report and covering up data that is not required to enable a decision to be made on the applicant's biological relationship. You **must** return the original report to the applicant or their representative.

Retention of DNA evidence

Where officials accept DNA evidence that is provided by applicants they **must** only record the overall result of the evidence on the person's case-notes.

However, where officials decide to reject DNA evidence offered by applicants, they **must** record also their reasons for rejecting the evidence. This will either be on the basis that the testing laboratory does not hold suitable accreditation, or the official was not satisfied that the DNA samples were obtained in a manner that was free from any risk of contamination or tampering.

Except for General Register Office (GRO), reports on the DNA evidence provided by applicants **must** only be retained for up to 180 days after a case is finally concluded, which includes any appeals. However, GRO will retain volunteered DNA evidence for up to five years after a birth-entry is corrected or a reregistration is made.

Afterwards any paper records or electronic copies of the DNA evidence **must** be destroyed or deleted. Information recorded on the applicant's case-notes will be retained in line with other biographic information.

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