

Passport policy - Applicants who are unable to write

Introduction

Illiterate applicants

Applicants with learning and writing difficulties

The Mark "X"

ePassport examiners' procedure

Introduction

Applicants unable to write or who have learning or writing difficulties because of a disability may have their application completed by another person.

Illiterate applicants

Where an applicant is unable to write, the thumbprint in the signature box of the application form may be accepted, providing a letter confirming the reason(s) the applicant is unable to sign/write is submitted from a responsible person i.e. relative, Doctor, countersignatory, etc. The countersignature is **not** required to witness the thumb print.

Applications for renewal of a passport require a letter confirming the reason(s) the applicant is unable to sign/write, as in above.

The observation '**THE HOLDER IS NOT REQUIRED TO SIGN**' should be entered on the passport.

Applicants with learning and writing difficulties

Where a person is unable to complete the application form due to a disability or has learning or writing difficulties a thumb print is not required. In such cases, the declaration should be signed by a person completing the form on the applicant's behalf. This may, for example, be a parent, spouse, Social Services Officer, Doctor, Warden, etc. who should explain at section 8 of the application (or in a covering letter) that the applicant is disabled or has writing difficulties, and the form has been signed on behalf of the applicant. Examiners should take particular care to ensure that the signature is not reproduced in the passport.

Apart from where a printed signature or a signature in Oriental script has been provided, uncheck the 'print signature' box on the system and the observation

'THE HOLDER IS NOT REQUIRED TO SIGN' will be automatically entered in the signature box. There is no need to additionally add the observation on page 32 of the passport.

Care should be taken when dealing with these types of application and the personal details should be checked carefully, as when an application form is completed by a third party, errors can occur.

The mark "X"

"X" in the signature box, even if witnessed, is not evidence of identity and should not be accepted in lieu of a thumb print. The mark may, however, be accepted (if witnessed) as a formal declaration equal to a parent's signature where the application for a passport is for a child under the age of 16 years. It may also be accepted in the place of a thumb print/printed signature etc. in applications for amendment, renewal/replacement of an existing passport provided there is no reason to doubt the applicant is the rightful holder.

Doubtful applications should be referred to a line manager.

ePassport Examiners' procedure

Background

This note has been produced to provide guidance to online application examiners in the event of the intended passport holder, the applicant, or the person providing consent being unable to sign.

The statement on the passport relating to the holder not being required to sign remains the same.

1st Adult Application

In the case of a first time application from an adult the system will identify that the applicant is unable to sign. The applicant should provide a witnessed thumb print on the form in lieu of a signature. They should also produce a letter of explanation about why the applicant cannot sign the form. The letter can be from the applicant if they completed the application form, alternatively the letter should be from the person who completed the form on the applicants behalf.

Adult Extension, Renewal, Replacement

The system will identify that the applicant is unable to sign. The applicant should 'make your mark' on the form. The mark may take the form of a 'mark' or a thumb print. Either can be accepted. The applicant should also produce a letter of explanation about why the applicant cannot sign the form. The letter can be from the applicant if they completed the application form, alternatively the letter should be from the person who completed the form on the applicant's behalf.

1st 16/17 year old

Where the 16/17 year old is unable to sign the declaration the system will identify that the applicant is unable to sign. The applicant should provide a witnessed thumb print on the form in lieu of a signature. They should also produce a letter of explanation from a responsible adult, such as countersignature, medical practitioner, school teacher, parent, or carer, who is aware of the circumstances and can confirm most of the information on the application form.

Where the parent is unable to provide consent on the form the parent's witnessed thumb print or mark will suffice.

16/17 year old Extension, Renewal, Replacement

The system will identify that the applicant is unable to sign. The applicant should 'make your mark' on the form. The mark may take the form of a 'mark' or a thumb print. Either can be accepted. The applicant should also produce a letter of explanation from a responsible adult, such as medical practitioner, school teacher, parent, or carer, who is aware of the circumstances and can confirm most of the information on the application form.

Where the parent is unable to provide consent on the form the parent's witnessed thumb print or mark will suffice.

1st 0 – 15 year old.

Where the child's signature is normally required but the child is unable to sign no signature will be required on the form.

Where the parent (applicant) is unable to sign the form the applicant should provide a witnessed thumb print on the form in lieu of a signature. A letter of explanation about why the applicant cannot sign the form should also be provided. The letter can be from the applicant if they completed the application form, alternatively the letter should be from the person who completed the form on the applicant's behalf.

0 – 15 year old Extension, Renewal, Replacement.

Where the child's signature is normally required but the child is unable to sign no signature will be required on the form.

Where the parent (applicant) is unable to sign the form the applicant will make their 'mark'. The mark may take the form of a 'mark' or a thumb print. Either can be accepted. The applicant will also need to produce a letter of explanation about why the applicant cannot sign the form. The letter can be from the applicant if they completed the application form, alternatively the letter should be from the person who completed the form on the applicants behalf.

