

Passport policy - Concessionary Passports

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Introduction

On 19th May 2004 the Home Secretary announced the intention to introduce a scheme to grant free concessionary passports to all British Nationals who were born on or before 2 September 1929.

This scheme is an extension of the free one-year passports granted to World War II veterans wishing to attend 60th Anniversary Commemorative Events in 2004 and 2005 and, in addition to former HM Forces members, is intended to recognise those adults who also made a contribution to the overall war effort in a non-military way.

On 13th October 2004, the Home Secretary announced that the scheme would be implemented from Monday 18th October 2004 and from that date all British Nationals who were born on or before 2nd September 1929 are eligible for ten year passports free of charge.

Eligibility

Those eligible for concessionary passports are all British Nationals who qualify by virtue of their date of birth. British National is defined for this purpose as: British Citizen, British National (Overseas), British Overseas Territories Citizen, British Overseas Citizen, British Protected Person, and British Subject.

British Citizens who acquired their citizenship by registration or naturalisation, and who meet the age qualification, will be eligible regardless of the date on which they acquired their status.

Examination procedures

In all cases the normal examination procedures will apply in establishing eligibility and identity. Fully completed application forms and relevant documentation will be required.

Staff should be aware that some former veterans, their spouses and/or carers may submit free one-year passports which were obtained to attend commemorative events in 2004. These passports are identifiable by the vignette in the back of the passport which states "This passport is valid for 12 months. Issued by the UK Passport Service to enable the holder to attend a Second World War 60th anniversary commemorative event."

These passports were occasionally exceptionally issued without the need for documentation to confirm identity and/or without an acceptable countersignatory. Applicants for free ten-year passports submitting these passports will be required to produce full documentation and fully completed application forms with an acceptable countersignatory in order to establish their identity and eligibility.

System changes/training

The system will show the standard application fee of £77.50 with a concessionary refund of -£77.50. Where secure delivery is requested, the system will show a fee of £3 with a concessionary refund of -£3, leaving a total of £0.

Fees will be recalculated whenever the date of birth is modified, and the date of birth cannot be changed once the fee is marked as OK in examination.

Application routes

Those eligible for concessionary passports may apply for standard passports only. Jumbo passports cannot be applied for under this scheme but are available on payment of the full fee.

Applications may be made by post, through the partners Check & Send service, and by appointment at the regional office counters.

Customers applying for the Premium or Fast Track services at the counter will pay the difference between the fee for the service requested and the standard passport fee e.g. Premium Service (£129.50) minus standard fee (£77.50) equals the fee payable £52.

The only exception to this would be for someone applying at the counter on compassionate grounds when the Tiered Application Service (TAS) policy guidance in these cases should be applied.

Applications made via the Post Office Ltd Check & Send service will still attract the £8.17 handling charge.

Those eligible for concessionary passports who have applied by post or through partners and who wish to have their applications upgraded can do so, if it is possible, but only on payment of the upgrade fee which will not be refundable.

EPA applications

Online applicants will be able to complete their applications and submit these without having to complete a credit card transaction; they would simply leave this blank. The IPS website has been updated to reflect this.

Refunds

It has been agreed that anyone who is eligible for a concessionary passport but who applied between 19th May 2004 (the date the Home Secretary announced the scheme) and 18th October (the implementation date), would be entitled, on request, to a refund of the standard passport fee paid.

Customers will be advised to contact the Adviceline for the address of the regional office to which they should write requesting a refund and an automated process for dealing with refunds is being prepared for use by regional finance sections and customer services sections.

Applications received after the implementation date but with the standard fee paid will be identified as an overpayment and the normal refund procedures should be followed in these cases.

Cases in the system at implementation may be passed for issue if in order and, if the fee has been paid, the examiner should enclose a letter (obtainable from Finance sections) with the supplementary documents submitted explaining that the customer's passport will be issued in a few days, they are eligible for a refund, and this will follow shortly.

The case should then be referred to Finance section to affect the refund.

Applications from those resident overseas

Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) have agreed that applications from those eligible may be submitted at their posts abroad.

Consular staff will examine the applications and submit the application forms with photographs and a copy of the previous passport to the Liverpool office who have agreed to have these put on the system and authorise the issue.

The passports will be issued via the regional office and transported by courier to and from the Liverpool office. FCO will despatch the new passports to the

relevant post abroad who will cancel the existing passport when handing over the new passport on collection by the customer.

Partnership arrangements

Post Office Ltd will take in concessionary passport applications through the Check & Send service but will continue to take the £8.17 handling charge.

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