

Passport policy - Customer Call Back

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Introduction

This policy provides details of a change in the way phone calls will be dealt with in response to examiner letters.

Summary

Letters produced by examiners on the system will no longer have the examiner's direct line telephone number and the majority of calls in response to letters will be handled by the regional Telephone Enquiries Bureau (TEB). Where the TEB operator cannot deal with the query they will advise the customer that the examiner dealing with the application will return their call within 4 hours. A search sheet will be generated that will be handed to the examiner within one hour of the call. Examiners will be expected to return the majority of such calls within an hour of receiving the search sheet. All calls must be returned within 4 hours from the time the customer contacted the Identity and Passport Service (IPS).

Background

Following a successful pilot at the Liverpool office, it is intended that routine calls in response to examiner query letters will be dealt with by the staff of the TEB in each Regional Office. Calls that cannot be resolved by the TEB staff will be transferred to the examiner who raised the query via a TEB search.

Roll out of Customer Call Back started with the Peterborough office on 1 October 2007 as an extension to their successful trials of a similar process with calls transferred from Teleperformance. Other offices rolled out during November and December 2007.

Out of office calls will receive an answer phone message informing the customer of the office opening times.

The aim of the policy is to:

- remove unnecessary call interruptions to examination teams, allowing examiners to complete their work in a more focused uninterrupted manner
- improve customer service as simple queries are dealt with quickly, whilst allowing time for examining staff to prepare when dealing with more complicated calls
- improve the utilisation of Telephone Enquiry Bureau staff
- improve productivity.

Process

Examiners letters will no longer show their direct line telephone number but have a generic 0845 number that will take the caller to the regional TEB.

All telephone queries will be routed through the regional TEB, including postal examiners, counter examiners, evening shift examiners and Examiner Quality Consultants (EQCs). The TEB operator will be expected to resolve the majority of queries, with the exception of those detailed below.

The TEB operator will have access to the caller's application through the system and will be able to view the application, case notes and letters. Where possible the TEB operator will resolve the query and case note the outcome. If this results in the application being clear for issue, for example by taking a mandate of a balance of fee, the TEB operator will need to contact the examiner by raising a TEB search form to inform them the query is now clear.

Where the TEB operator is unable to resolve the query they will advise the caller that they will make arrangements for someone to call them back within 4 hours. A TEB search form is raised which must be passed to the Examination Support clerk who will locate the file and pass the search and file to the examiner or, in their absence, their line manager within 1 hour. The line manager will be responsible for ensuring the call back takes place within the 4 hours.

The examiner must call back the caller within the 4 hour deadline (calculated from the time the call was received by TEB) and case note the outcome in line with current case noting policy. In the majority of cases it would be expected that a call back is made within an hour.

TEB Search forms must not be left on a desk, but passed to an appropriate member of staff. Where the member of staff is unavailable it must be passed to a line manager.

Exceptions

Where it is clear that the call is in response to an **urgent** request to phone IPS made by an examiner, the TEB operator will transfer the call to the examiner concerned, or if unavailable, a colleague.

A complex case that requires a draft letter may include the examiner's direct line number.

There will be no change to FIU policy and procedures, there will be no changes to the direct line telephone number of FIU letters, and calls will continue to be made direct to the regional FIU department. Any calls received by TEB where the case is in FIU must be transferred. The same applies for letters from Common Sampling teams.

There will be no change to Lost, Stolen and Recovered (LSR) team policy and procedures. Letters sent by the team will retain the direct line telephone number and calls will continue to be made directly to them as is the current policy.

Calls regarding complex cases that fall outside the remit of PO3 examiners will be transferred to the examiner dealing with the case, or a team colleague in their absence.

Where calls are received late in the working day the Call Back may be made the following day (up to 4 working hours from receipt of call)

Evening shift teams will need to operate outside of the 4 hour deadline, with searches being left during the day for evening shift teams to call back customers on commencement of their shift. It is essential however that any TEB enquiry sheet requiring a Customer Call Back is dealt with immediately the shift commences. They must not be left until later in the shift, unless a special request has been made by the customer designating a time of call back.