



Home Office

# Urgent government business or compassionate travel

Version 8.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to deal with passport applications for customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons

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# About: Urgent government business or compassionate travel

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to deal with customers who urgently need a passport for:

- urgent government business
- compassionate reasons

If a customer urgently needs a passport for other reasons (for example, they have booked a last minute holiday), they may be able to:

- apply using the Online Premium service or the Fast Track service (if they have not already applied for a passport)
- have a standard upgrade or a service delay upgrade using the Expedited Service (if they have already applied for a passport and we are offering these services)

## 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 Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

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 Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **8.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **26 September 2022**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to reflect the change in our sovereign from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to His Majesty King Charles III.

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# Passports for urgent government business or compassionate reasons

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the service we offer customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons.

Some customers urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. Providing they meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria, we may:

- accept an Online Premium or Fast Track application without an appointment (if the customer has not already applied for a passport)
- process their application as quickly as possible within the timescales shown in the tiered application service guidance (if the customer has already applied for a passport using the standard service)

Although we will try to quickly process the customer's application, we cannot guarantee we'll be able to issue them with a passport in time for when they need it. This is because:

- applications for children usually need to be on the system for 5 working days (unless there's exceptional circumstances)
- we need evidence from the customer to show they have urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- we'll only issue a fully valid passport when:
  - we've confirmed the customer's nationality, identity and entitlement
  - we're satisfied there's no safeguarding concerns

If we cannot do all our standard identity checks (for example, we cannot interview the customer), we may consider:

- doing alternative identity checks (for example, we may complete additional checks on a countersignatory or digital referee)
- issuing a restricted validity passport (only if the customer's claim to British nationality is not in doubt and there are no concerns with their identity after we've completed extra checks)

## Criteria for urgent government business or compassionate service

We'll only consider applications for customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons if they meet all of the following criteria:

- they live in the UK (or they usually live overseas but are currently in the UK and can provide a UK address)
- they need a passport in the next:
  - 7 days (only if their passport is stolen and they have pre-booked travel)
  - 4 weeks (only if they are member of the Armed Forces)
  - 2 weeks
- they meet the criteria for urgent government business or compassionate reasons and can provide evidence to show it

Overseas customers who have not already applied but urgently need a passport for travel, must contact the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to discuss their circumstances and options available (for example, an Emergency Travel Document).

## **Fees for urgent government business and compassionate reasons**

The customer must pay the standard application fee if they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. If they've already paid a Fast Track or Premium fee, we'll refund the service element of it (see Passport fees).

## **Child applications: online Premium service**

The online Premium service is not available for child applications. We will only accept an application under the Premium service if a child must travel urgently for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. We will try to process the application as quickly as possible but cannot offer the Premium service guarantee as we must:

- not relax any rules or checks in place for child applications
- take extra care when dealing with Premium service requests for children

Before you agree to process a child application under the Premium service, you must:

- have evidence to show the customer has urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- have approval from a higher executive office (HEO) when the application has been with us for less than 5 working days
- not relax any rules or checks in place for child applications and make sure you carry out any additional checks
- be satisfied there's no safeguarding or vulnerability concerns

## **Child applications: Fast Track service**

The Fast Track service is available for some child applications. We may accept an application that does not meet the criteria for the Fast Track service if the child

needs to travel urgently for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. Before you agree to accept the application, you must:

- have evidence to show the customer has urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- have approval from a HEO (if the application has been with us for less than 5 working days)
- be satisfied there's no safeguarding or vulnerability concerns

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# What we accept as urgent government business

This section tells HM Passport Office staff what we accept as urgent government business.

Urgent government business is for members of the UK national or local government who need a passport for urgent government business travel, such as:

- responding to an international crisis
- taking up (or attending) a posting abroad
- transporting a prisoner

Members of the UK national government include:

- Members of Parliament (MPs)
- members of His Majesty's armed forces who meet both of the following criteria:
  - they did not apply using the forces application route
  - they are due to deploy in the next 4 weeks (they must apply using the usual Armed Forces application process if they are due to deploy in more than 4 weeks' time)
- members of the Diplomatic Service
- members of other departments of state, for example, the:
  - Home Office
  - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
  - Ministry of Defence
- athletes representing:
  - the UK
  - Jersey
  - Guernsey
  - Isle of Man
  - a British Overseas Territory

Members of local government include:

- police officers
- local councillors
- social services staff (for example, with children in care)

HM Forces personnel who need to travel urgently must apply at our Peterborough office. You must follow Forces guidance when dealing with these applications.

## Evidence for urgent government business travel

Customers must provide evidence to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business. It must:



- be from an official government department and on official letter headed paper
- confirm the customer's name and occupation
- confirm the customer needs a passport for urgent government business
- be signed

You must be aware, depending on the reason for travel, a customer may not be able to provide evidence to show why they urgently need a passport (for example, if they are travelling on a peace keeping mission). In these cases, the customer must still provide evidence from an official government department or office that confirms they urgently need a passport, even if it does not give the reason why.

## How to deal with evidence for urgent government business

You must consider the evidence a customer provides to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business on a case by case basis and be satisfied that it's genuine. For example, you may accept a signed letter by post or by email, (including a PDF) is genuine if:

- it's on official letter headed paper and is from an official government:
  - email address (as we expect emails from other government departments to come from a GOV.UK email address)
  - postal address
- you spoke with an official at the department and they confirm the letter is genuine (if you had concerns with the evidence)

If the customer has not provided evidence, the evidence is not signed or it's not on official letter headed paper, they must provide new evidence.

If you have any concerns the evidence is not genuine, you must discuss it with your operational team leader (OTL). The OTL will:

- try to verify the person
- try to speak to the person who signed a letter to confirm it was them who signed it
- decide if the evidence is genuine

If the OTL thinks the letter is not genuine and you cannot accept it, you must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team.

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# What we accept as compassionate reasons

This section tells HM Passport Office staff what we accept as compassionate reasons.

We consider the following as compassionate reasons why a customer may urgently need a passport:

- they need to travel because they (or a relative or a friend) has a serious illness or had an accident
- they need to travel because a relative or friend has died
- they need to travel abroad for medical treatment (this does not include cosmetic surgery, for example, rhinoplasty)
- they have travel arranged by a charitable or religious organisation
- they are the victim of a crime that resulted in the theft of their passport and have pre-booked travel within 1 week
- they work, or are about to start work, in an industry that requires them to have a passport (this includes, but is not limited to, those working off-shore or in the haulage or aviation industry)
- they need a passport for identity reasons (for example, to apply for a mortgage or, open a bank account or apply for a job) and do not have any other identity documents they can use
- they already submitted an overseas application and they need a passport to access health or social care or because their visa is about to expire

We do not consider the following as compassionate reasons why a customer may urgently need a passport:

- last minute holidays
- business travel (except customers who work, or are about to start work, in an industry that requires them to have a passport)
- weddings or honeymoons
- lost or expired passports

We cannot provide a complete list of every compassionate reason why a customer may urgently need a passport. If you have any doubts, you must send a guidance query to Guidance and Quality, Operating Standards.

## Evidence for compassionate reasons

Customers must provide evidence to show they urgently need a passport for compassionate reasons, for example:

- a letter to show they need to travel because a relative or friend has died, including:

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- evidence of the relationship to the deceased
- the death certificate (or a photocopy of it)
- other evidence that a higher executive officer (HEO) agrees you can accept (if the customer does not have, or cannot provide, a death certificate)
- an original letter from a doctor, a hospital, a Foreign, Commonwealth & Development official, a minister of religion, the police or a person acting in an official role that confirms they need to travel for compassionate reasons – the letter must:
  - be on letter headed paper
  - be signed
  - include the customer's name
  - include the name of the person who is ill or has died
  - the relationship between the customer and the person who is ill or has died
- a signed and dated letter from an employer (or prospective employer) that:
  - includes the company's name, address, email address and phone number
  - confirms an offer of employment (if the customer is about to start work)
  - confirms what the customer's job role is (or will be)
  - confirms the customer needs a passport for their job role
- a signed statement from them that confirms they need a passport for identity reasons and a letter, agreement or contract from an organisation that shows they are doing something to suggest they need a passport to prove their identity, for example, from a:
  - bank or building society that shows they are trying to open a bank account
  - mortgage application that shows they are trying to buy a property
  - rental agreement that shows they are trying to rent a property
- evidence to show their passport is stolen, such as a police report or crime reference number and evidence of pre-book travel (in cases when a customer is the victim of a crime and has pre-booked travel within 1 week)

We can accept faxes and emails if:

- there's no time to provide an original letter (for example, if the customer arrives in person because they need the passport the same day and they did not know they had to provide an original letter)
- you can verify the email address online

## How to deal with evidence for compassionate reasons

When you get the evidence to show a customer urgently needs a passport for compassionate reasons, you must:

- consider it on a cases by case basis and be satisfied it's genuine, for example, you can accept an email from a hospital to confirm a patient is ill overseas, if you:
  - have done external checks (for example, to verify a person or hospital exists)
  - are satisfied the email is genuine
  - are satisfied with the link between the customer and patient

- check any travel bookings were made after the change in circumstances (for example, if a customer's relative is in hospital, you must check they made the travel booking after the relative's hospital admission date)

If you have any concerns the evidence is not genuine, you must discuss it with your operational team leader (OTL). The OTL will check the evidence and:

- try to verify the person who provided it, using external sources
- try to speak to the person who provided it
- decide if the evidence is genuine

If the OTL thinks the letter is not genuine and you cannot accept it, you must ask the customer for new evidence.

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# How customers tell us they urgently need a passport

This section tells HM Passport Office how customers tell us they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons.

If a customer urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, they can either:

- visit an Application Processing Centre (APC) in person, with an application form
- visit the [passport advice and complaints page on GOV.UK](#) and either:
  - phone Teleperformance (TP)
  - fill in an online enquiry form and send it to TP

## How TP deal with requests for urgent passports

When Teleperformance (TP) speak with a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, they will:

- deal with the call in line with their own guidance
- discuss the customers circumstances and check if they meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria

If the customer does not meet criteria, TP will discuss other alternatives that may be available them, for example:

- making an application using a guaranteed service (the online Premium service or the Fast Track service) or the standard service
- checking if a standard upgrade or service delay upgrade is applicable (if the customer has already made an application)
- telling the customer to contact the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to discuss their circumstance and options available (if they are overseas)

If the customer meets the criteria, the action TP will take depends on if they have already applied for a passport.

## Customer meets criteria for urgent passport: has already applied

If the customer meets the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria and they have already applied for a passport, TP will:

- fill in an Emergency Travel Request Application (ETRA) referral form with the customer's details
- tell the customer:

- to keep their supporting documents until HM Passport Office contact them (if they have not already sent us their documents to us)
- what evidence they must send to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, including the email address they must send it to
- if they do not provide evidence to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, HM Passport Office will continue to deal with their application using the standard service
- HM Passport Office will try to process their application as quickly as possible but cannot guarantee they will receive their passport in time for when they need it by
- notify HM Passport Office a customer urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons by creating an email and:
  - putting 'EXISTING' and the name of office in the **Subject** field - the name of the office is where the application is at (if it's on the Application Management System (AMS)) or the office closest to where the customer lives (if it's on Digital Application Processing (DAP))
  - attaching the ETRA referral form to the email
  - sending the email to the HM Passport Office mailbox at the office where the application is at (if it's on AMS) or the office closest to the customer (if it's on DAP)

## Customer meets criteria for urgent passport: has not already applied

If the customer meets the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria and they have not already applied for a passport, TP will:

- fill in an ETRA referral form with the customer's details
- send them an email with:
  - a magic link (a link issued by our secure server that allows them to make an online application which HM Passport can easily identify)
  - the email address where they must send their evidence that shows they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- tell them:
  - what evidence they must send to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, including where to send it
  - to send the evidence as soon as they have sent their application
  - not to send any other supporting documents until HM Passport Office contact them
  - HM Passport Office may contact them by phone or email if they need more information
  - HM Passport Office will try to process their application as quickly as possible but cannot guarantee they will receive their passport in time for when they need it by
- notify HM Passport Office a customer urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons by creating an email and:

- putting 'NEW' and the name of the office that's closest to the customer (or another office it's more suitable for the customer) in the **Subject** field
- attaching the ETRA referral form to the email
- sending the email to the HM Passport Office mailbox at the office closest to the customer (or another office if it's more suitable for the customer)

## When a customer applies using a magic link

If a customer applies online (using the magic link), their application will:

- be directed to the office closest to them or another suitable office (depending on what office the customer chose when discussing the request with TP)
- go on to AMS

The Digital Customer Services team will produce a report 3 times a day that show when a customer submitted their application using a magic link and will send it to the mailbox of the office that will deal with application.

Each office is responsible for checking their mailbox and dealing with the application.

## When a magic link does not work

If a customer contacts TP because their magic link does not work, TP will send them another one.

If a customer contacts the urgent and compassionate team because their magic link does not work, you must tell your higher executive officer (HEO).

You, the HEO, must:

1. Send the customer a new magic link.
2. Contact Home Office Digital when stocks of magic links are low.

## When a customer cannot apply online using a magic link

If a customer cannot apply online, TP will:

- ask the customer what office they can attend
- email the counter manager at the office to let them know a customer urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons but cannot apply online

The counter manager must contact the customer to check they meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria. If they do, the counter manager will arrange an appointment at the office for the customer to complete an application.

If a customer is applying for a first-time adult passport and is not exempt from interview, they must attend the appointment in person.

## Urgent and compassionate office email addresses

The email addresses for each office are:

- Belfast
- Durham
- Glasgow
- Liverpool
- London
- Newport
- Peterborough

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# When an examiner gets a request for an urgent passport

This section tells HM Passport Office staff what to do when they get notification about a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons.

You, the examiner, may receive details about a request for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, as:

- TP sent the request on an Emergency Travel Request Application (ETRA) referral to your office mailbox
- the Digital Customer Services team sent it on a report to your office mailbox

You must regularly check your office mailbox for new requests.

When dealing with a request for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, you must:

1. Immediately log the details of the request on the urgent and compassionate applications tracker.
2. Allow 2 days for the customer to send us:
  - their application (if they do not already have an application)
  - evidence that shows they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons

When you get the customer's application and evidence, you must refer to How to process an application for an urgent passport. If the customer does not send you the application or evidence, you must:

1. Phone the customer (or email them using the correct urgent and compassionate email template if you cannot phone them) to tell them to send:
  - an application using the magic link TP sent them (unless they already have an application in progress)
  - evidence that shows they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons to your office mailbox
2. Allow a further 2 days for the customer to send the application or evidence
3. Update the urgent and compassionate applications tracker to show when you tried to contact the customer.

When you get the customer's application and evidence, you must refer to How to process an application for an urgent passport. If the customer does not send you the application or evidence, you must:

1. Phone the customer (or email them using the correct urgent and compassionate email template if you cannot phone them) to tell them we will deal with the application as part of the standard service.
2. Update the urgent and compassionate applications tracker to show the outcome.

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# How to process an application for an urgent passport

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to process an application for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons.

How we process an application for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons depends on if the application:

- is on the Application Management System (AMS) – this means the application has:
  - always been on AMS
  - previously been transferred from Digital Application Processing (DAP) to AMS
- DAP

You must be aware, if the application is on:

- AMS, it will be because the customer either:
  - already had an application in progress and later told us they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
  - made an application using a magic link because they did not already have a passport application in progress and urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- DAP, it will be because the customer already had an application in progress and later told us they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons

Regardless if the application is on AMS or DAP, you must:

- try to issue the passport within 24 hours of receiving the customer's evidence that shows they have urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- record the progress and outcomes of each application on the urgent and compassionate applications tracker

## Application for urgent passport is on the Application Management System

When dealing with an application on the Application Management System (AMS) for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, you must:

1. Record updates, progress and outcomes on the urgent and compassionate applications tracker, throughout the examination process.

2. Check the customer's application and evidence to make sure they meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria. If they do not, you must refer to Customer does not meet criteria for urgent passport.
3. Ask for approval to deal with the application under the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria.
4. Refer to When you need supporting documents for an urgent passport (if the customer has not sent their supporting documents).
5. Carry out additional checks if the passport is for a child and their application has not been on the system for at least 5 working days.
6. Refer to Additional passports if the customer tells you they need to keep their passport on them until they get their new passport (as in some cases, they may qualify for an additional passport).
7. Process the application in line with current guidance to confirm identity, nationality and entitlement. If a customer cannot meet our usual application requirements, you must refer to Customer cannot meet usual application requirements.
8. Refer to Returning supporting documents on live applications for information on what to do and tell the customer if they ask us to return their foreign passport during the application process.
9. Refer to When to refer an application for an urgent passport to the CFT for what to do if:
  - you have fraud or identity concerns
  - there's a watchlist or Facial Matching match
  - the system has not done a Facial Matching check or automatic watchlist checks
10. Scan on to the system the:
  - evidence that shows why the customer urgently needs a passport
  - application for a U&C exception form (in cases when a child urgently needed a passport and their application has not been on the system for at least 5 working days)
11. Refer to When you ready to issue an urgent passport (when you have completed examination and are ready to issue a passport).

## Application for urgent passport is on Digital Application Processing

When dealing with an application on Digital Application Processing (DAP) for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, you must:

1. Check the customer emailed you the evidence to show they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. If they have not, you must ask them to email it to you.
2. View the customer's documents on screen in DAP and make sure:
  - the customer sent all the documents we need to process their application
  - DAP shows the documents have been validated

If the customer does not meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria, you must refer to Customer does not meet criteria for urgent passport.

If the customer meets the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria and DAP shows their documents have been validated, you must ask a DAP user with the Customer Service Liaison team (CSLT) role to:

- transfer the application from DAP to AMS (in line with the DAP to AMS transfers guidance)
- create a Telephone Enquiry Bureau (TEB) sheet when the application is in AMS, and add a note to it to explain:
  - why you transferred the application to AMS
  - where the customer's documents are
- complete a Sopra Steria Limited (SSL) return form using the application details on AMS
- put the TEB sheet and SSL return form in a plastic wallet
- send the plastic wallet to SSL and tell them to release the application to 'Awaiting Examination' for your location (SSL will send the application to your team)

When the application is transferred to AMS, the CSLT in the office where the AMS application is will automatically receive the customer's documents from the Document Handling Unit (DHU) or Document Management Service (DMS).

When CSLT receive the documents, they must check if the customer's application is still ongoing (this means it has not been passed for issue, withdrawn, failed or, refused). The CSLT will then:

- send the documents to the examiner processing the application on AMS (if the application is still ongoing)
- physically cancel the customer's old passport, print an address label and return the documents and old passport to the customer (if the application is not ongoing)

## When the application for an urgent passport is transferred to AMS

When the application has been transferred from DAP to the Application Management System (AMS), you must:

1. Continue to record updates, progress and outcomes on the urgent and compassionate applications tracker, throughout the examination process.
2. Ask for approval to deal with the application under the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria.
3. Refer to When you need supporting documents for an urgent passport (if the customer has not sent their supporting documents).
4. Carry out additional checks if the passport is for a child and their application has not been on the system for at least 5 working days.

5. Not process the application and instead wait for CSLT to send you the customer's documents if any of the following apply:
  - you have concerns with the application and need to see the physical documents
  - you could not clearly view the documents on screen in DAP
6. View the customer's documents on screen in DAP and use them to help you process the application (unless you need the physical documents and are waiting for CSLT to send them to you). You must:
  - not save or email documents from the DAP screen
  - only print documents from the DAP screen if they are documents you need to scan on to AMS
7. Refer to Additional passports if the customer tells you they need to keep their passport on them until they get their new passport (as in some cases, they may qualify for an additional passport).
8. Process the application in line with current guidance to confirm identity, nationality and entitlement. If a customer cannot meet our usual application requirements, you must refer to Customer cannot meet usual application requirements.
9. Refer to Returning supporting documents on live applications for information on what to do and tell the customer if they ask us to return their foreign passport during the application process.
10. Compare the customer's photo on the current application with the one on the old passport (shown in the Photo & sig tab) to help confirm their identity. This is because you will not be able to view the customer's old passport on the DAP screen.
11. Compare the customer's details on their old passport using Main Index with the details on the current application. This is because you will not be able to view the customer's old passport on the DAP screen.
12. Refer to When to refer an application for an urgent passport to the CFT for what to do if:
  - you have fraud or identity concerns
  - there's a watchlist or Facial Matching match
  - the system has not done the Facial Matching check or automatic watchlist checks
13. Add a case notes to show:
  - all the actions and decisions you made and why
  - if you waited for CSLT to send you the documents, rather than viewing them in DAP (for example, if you had concerns with the application or could not clearly view the documents on the DAP screen)
  - the documents you have seen that have been validated in DAP
14. Check what documents you need to scan on to AMS that we need to keep a permanent record of. Print them from the DAP screen and ask SSL to scan them on to AMS. You must also scan the Application for a U&C exception form (on cases when a child urgently needed a passport and their application has not been on the system for at least 5 working days).
15. Refer to When you are ready to issue an urgent passport (when you have completed examination and are ready to issue a passport).

## Virtual examination quality checks on urgent passport applications

The operational team leader (OTL) must complete quality assurance checks when an examiner deals with an application on AMS but uses the documents from the DAP screen.

You (the OTL) must:

1. Open the urgent and compassionate applications tracker.
2. Select:
  - 5 applications in the first week (for examiners who are new to the virtual examination process)
  - 1 application a week (for examiners who have been using the virtual examination process longer than 1 week)
3. Log in to AMS for the applications you selected.
4. Check the applications in line with this guidance to make sure the examiner:
  - added the correct case notes
  - scanned the documents we need to keep as a permanent record on to the system
  - dealt with the documents and application correctly

## Approving a request for an urgent passport

You must get approval from a higher executive officer (HEO) to issue a passport for a customer who urgently needs it for urgent government business or compassionate reasons.

The HEO will only approve the request if:

- the customer meets the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria and provided the correct evidence to show they do
- there's are no safeguarding (child protection) concerns

To ask a HEO to approve the request, you must:

- verbally ask them or email them (if the passport is for an adult or it's for a child whose application has been on the system for at least 5 working days)
- fill in the Application for a U&C exception form and email it the HEO (if the passport is for a child whose application has been on the system for less than 5 working days)

You, the HEO, must:

1. Check if the customer meets the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria.
2. Consider if there's any safeguarding concerns.
3. Decide whether to approve or decline the request.
4. Tell the examiner dealing with the application:

- if you have approved or declined the request
- to update the urgent and compassionate applications tracker with your name to show you approved the request and so show what evidence you received (as the examiner must record this information in the case note)

## When you need supporting documents for an urgent passport

Customers will need to provide the correct supporting documents if they did not provide them:

- as part of an application they already made and since told us they urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- they made a new application using a magic link because they need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons (as Teleperformance will have told them not to send their supporting documents)

If you need the customer's supporting documents, you must:

1. Phone the customer to tell them what supporting documents you need.
2. Decide if the customer must bring their supporting documents to the office or if they must post them to you. This will depend on how quickly the customer needs their passport.

If the customer will:

- bring their documents to the office, you must agree the date and time they will bring them (so you can arrange to collect them)
- post their documents, you must tell them the address to post them to

## When to refer an application for an urgent passport to the CFT

If you deal with an application for a customer who urgently needs a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons and:

- you have fraud or identity concerns or a watchlist or Facial Matching match, you must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT)
- the system has not done a Facial Matching check or any automatic watchlist checks, you must refer the application to the facial matching team

If you contact the CFT by email, you must re-box the application into an exception folder and store it securely on your team.



## Customer cannot meet usual application requirements

Some customers who urgently need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons may not be able to meet our usual identity requirements (for example, they cannot provide all of the documents we need or attend an interview). In these cases, we will consider issuing a restricted validity passport with:

- 1 years-worth of validity (if the customer needs the passport for identity reasons)
- 2 years validity (if the customer needs the passport for travel reasons)

We may also consider renewing a restricted validity passport with another one if a customer needs it for urgent government business or compassionate reasons. This is a rare exception as you must always try to issue a fully valid passport.

When considering issuing a restricted validity passport, you must get approval from a HEO. If the HEO agrees you can issue a restricted validity passport, you must:

1. Refer to the restricted non-standard validity passports guidance for how to issue a restricted (non-standard) validity passport.
2. Tell the customer what they must do when they reapply so we can issue a fully valid passport (if you renew a restricted validity passport with another one).
3. Refer to Returning supporting documents on live applications for information on what to do and tell the customer if they ask us to return their foreign passport during the application process.
4. Add a case note to show all of the actions and decisions you made.
5. Update the urgent and compassionate applications tracker to show you issued a restricted validity passport.

## When you are ready to issue an urgent passport

When you are ready to issue a passport to a customer who urgently needs it for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, you must:

1. Make sure you added any observations you need to.
2. Make sure you use the correct validity (if you are issuing a restricted validity passport).
3. Add a case note to record all of the actions and decisions you made, including:
  - the reason why the customer urgently needs a passport and the evidence received that shows it
  - the name of the HEO who approved the request for an urgent passport
  - if you examined the documents using DAP, including what the documents were and that you were satisfied with them
4. Record the progress and outcome of the application on urgent and compassionate applications tracker.
5. Return the customer's documents (if you have them).

6. Consider if the customer must attend a passport interview as part of the application process.

If the customer does not need to attend an interview as part of the application process, you must:

1. Consider the best way to issue the passport taking into account the customer's circumstances. For example, you must use:
  - Royal Mail Special Delivery Guarantee through your local print room or through local print in another site (if the customer needs their passport within the next 7 days)
  - central print (if the customer does not need the passport within the next 7 days)
  - local print (if the customer wants to collect the passport)
2. Tell the customer they will receive their passport soon and how they will receive it (for example, by secure delivery or Royal Mail special delivery).

If the customer must attend a passport interview as part of the application process, you must:

1. Pass the application for interview.
2. Send an email to the Plymouth and Portsmouth interview offices with the customer's application number to tell them they need to attend an urgent passport interview. The Plymouth and Portsmouth interview offices will contact the customer within 24 hours to arrange an interview.

## Customer wants to collect their passport

If the customer wants to collect their passport because as we cannot meet their needs using our secure delivery providers, they can collect their passport from the public counter.

You must contact your local urgent and compassionate team in the office the customer wants to collect their passport:

- to check if they can collect the passport
- for how to deal with counter collections (as this is different across sites)

## Customer does not meet criteria for urgent passport

If a customer does not meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria, you must:

1. Consider if they are eligible for an alternative service, such as a:
  - standard upgrade
  - service delay upgrade (using the Expedited Service)
2. Phone them (or email them using the correct urgent and compassionate email template if you cannot contact them by phone) to tell them:

- they do not meet the urgent government business or compassionate reasons criteria
  - if they meet the criteria for a standard upgrade or service delay upgrade (using the Expedited Service)
  - we will try to process their application as quickly as possible
3. Decide if you must:
    - refer their application to the upgrades or Expedited Service team (if the customer is eligible for either of these services)
    - deal with their application using the standard service
  4. Add a case note to show the actions and decisions you made.
  5. Update the urgent and compassionate service tracker to record the progress and outcome.

## Urgent and compassionate applications tracker

We need to keep a record of the reasons why a customer needs an urgent passport on the urgent and compassionate service tracker. You must update the tracker to show details of each application you deal with, including the progress and outcome.

If you need to update the tracker (or view the information on it) but do not have access, you must ask someone who does.

### Related content

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