



Home Office

Collecting passports and documents from the counter

Version 3.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office public counter staff how to deal with customers who ask to collect their passports and supporting documents from the counter.

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About: Collecting passports and documents from the counter

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office, public counter examiners how to deal with customers who ask to collect their passports or documents from the counter.

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 **3.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **29 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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Collecting from the counter

This section tells HM Passport Office public counter staff when a customer or third party can collect passports or documents from the counter.

A person may need to collect their documents or new passport from the public counter because:

- they have applied for a passport that must be collected from the counter
- the higher executive officer (HEO) counter manager agreed the customer can collect their new passport when they applied for the fast track service
- they have applied using the standard service, but their application has been upgraded and they must collect their passport to meet their travel date
- they have applied using the standard or counter service, but they need their documents back straight away

Counter staff must check the passport data is showing on the Main Index (MI) before handing the passport to the customer (or a third party).

If the passport data is not on MI, you, the counter collections clerk, must raise an incident on IT Now, unless you have been told about a delay updating Main Index by your manager.

You must not hand a passport to a customer if the data is not showing on the Main Index.

Who can collect from the counter

The customer or a suitable alternative person can collect from the counter. A suitable alternative person is:

- a third-party, which may include but not be limited to a:
 - courier
 - friend
 - relative
- a parent (when collecting a child passport)

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Collecting a passport and supporting documents

This section tells HM Passport Office public counter staff, how to make sure the person collecting a new passport and customer's supporting documents is authorised to do so.

You, the public counter staff, must carry out basic identity checks, before handing over any passports or supporting documents.

If a person arrives at the counter to make a collection, you must ask them to confirm:

- the passport holder's full name
- the passport holder's date of birth (if known)
- if they are collecting their own passport or one issued to someone else

Checking the identity of the passport holder

If the customer is collecting their own passport, you must:

1. Check that the customer resembles the photograph on the new passport.
2. Provide the customer with a receipt for the passport they are collecting and ask them to sign it.
3. Attach the receipt to the counter collect report provided by the local print room.
4. Compare the signature with the image on the previous cancelled passport:
 - if there is no previous passport, compare the signature with the collection receipt

Checking the identity of a parent or third party

You must ask the person to confirm their identity by providing official documents, if the person is collecting:

- a child passport
- an adult passport on behalf of someone else (third party)

The identity documents must include their full name, date of birth and photograph. These may include, but are not limited to a:

- passport
- driving licence
- government or privately issued identity card

Third party collector

If a third party is making the collection on behalf of the customer, in addition to the checks above, you must also ask them to provide signed consent from the customer to allow them to collect the passport or supporting documents.

The signed consent must be dated and can be either:

- written
- a scan of a letter, sent by email

You must not hand over the customer's passport or supporting documents to a third party unless you have signed consent from the customer.

If a third party is collecting the passport on behalf of the customer, you must:

1. Check the signature on the statement of consent:
 - matches the signature held on the passport application, for paper applications (see Delivery addresses for passports and documents guidance)
 - belongs to the applicant who completed the online declaration, for online applications (see confirming identity guidance)
2. Provide the customer with a receipt for the passport they are collecting and ask them to sign it.
3. Attach the receipt to the counter collect report provided by the local print room.

When you confirm that the details provided match those on the passport, hand over the passport and any supporting documents provided to the collector and ask them to check the details.

You must tell the collector that the customer is required to sign the passport on the observations page, in black ball point pen.

Collecting a child passport

If a person arrives to collect a child passport, in addition to the checks above, you must also ask them to provide the child's:

- name
- date of birth (if known)

A child's passport must only be collected by the person who has:

- parental responsibility
- been given signed consent to collect it, from the person with parental responsibility (see, Authorisation and consent)

If the person arrives to collect a child passport, in addition to confirming the collector's identity, you must:

1. Check the name and date of birth given against those on the passport.
2. Provide the collector with a receipt for the passport they are collecting.
3. Ask the person to:
 - sign the receipt
 - complete the child collection form inside the collection pack
4. Attach the receipt to the counter collect report provided by the local print room.
5. Check if the application was made online or by paper. For:
 - paper applications, compare the signature with the signature given at section 9 of the application form (in line with confirming identity guidance)
 - online applications, check that the person collecting the passport is the person who completed the declaration online (in line with confirming identity guidance)
6. Hand the passport and any supporting documents to the person and ask them to check the passport details are correct, before leaving.

You must not hand over the child's passport or supporting documents if the:

- signature given does not match the signature on section 9 of the application form
- person collecting the passport is not the person who completed the online declaration
- person collecting the passport does not have signed consent from the person who:
 - signed section 9 of the application form
 - completed the online declaration

If you have doubts about the person collecting a passport

You must inform the counter manager immediately if:

- you have any doubts about the identity of the person collecting the passport
- the person tells you the personal details on the passport do not match those on the application

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Collecting supporting documents only

This section tells HM Passport Office public counter staff about handing over supporting documents only, to the customer or a third party.

When a customer makes an application for a passport, they must send additional supporting documents with their application. We usually return the customer's documents when we complete their application.

In some circumstances, the customer may need to collect their supporting documents from the counter, before we complete their application. This could be if:

- they have applied using the standard service, but they need one or all of their supporting documents back
- they have applied using the counter service, but they need their documents back straight away

If a customer or third party arrives at the counter to collect the customer's supporting documents, you, the public counter staff, must ask them which service the customer used to make their application.

Premium service applications

If the customer made an application using the Premium service, we will return their documents only when we have finished our checks and completed their application (see tiered application service guidance).

Standard or Fast Track applications

If the customer asks us to return their supporting documents early and they have made an application using the Standard or Fast Track service, you must:

1. Consider their request to return the documents in line with the Delivery addresses for passports and documents guidance.
2. Get a signed statement from the customer, either in writing or scanned and sent by email:
 - asking us to return their supporting documents
 - authorising a third party to collect their documents
3. Check the signature on the statement:
 - matches the signature held on the passport application, for paper applications (see Delivery addresses for passports and documents guidance)
 - belongs to the applicant who completed the online declaration, for online applications (see confirming identity guidance)
4. Ask the customer or third party for the customer's:
 - full name
 - date of birth

5. Check the Application Management System (AMS) to find out which examination team are dealing with the application.
6. Contact the examination team by telephone and ask them to bring the supporting documents to the counter.
7. Give the signed statement to the examiner and ask them to scan the statement onto the system.

You must check the details given by the customer (or third party) match those on the supporting documents. When you confirm the details match those on the documents, you can hand them over.

If you have any doubts about the identity of the collector, you must tell the counter manager straight away.

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Delay updating Main Index

This section tells HM Passport Office counter staff how to deal with applications when there has been a delay in adding passport information to Main Index (MI).

If the Local Print Room (LPR) supervisor has an issue with Stock Manager, (for example, a system outage, failure or repeated chip encoding failures), it can delay passport data transferring to Main Index (MI).

If the passport data has not been transferred to MI, the LPR supervisor will:

- not release any passports from LPR until MI has updated
- raise an incident via the agreed route
- tell the counter manager the:
 - number of passports affected
 - name and date of birth from each passport not added to MI
- check MI regularly (at least every 30 minutes) to make sure the passport data has added before releasing passports

This may delay customers collecting their passports; however, the passport record must be on MI to make sure the customer does not have problems using it (for example, during border or identity checks).

When you, the counter manager receive notice from the LPR about delayed passports you must:

1. Give counter collection staff the list of passports affected.
2. Add a case note to each affected application to explain the data has not been transferred to MI.
3. Contact the customer by phone (or email, if there is no phone number or the customer does not answer) to apologise and explain there may be a delay.

If the passport is ready to be collected when the customer arrives at the office, counter collection staff must check the passport data is on MI before handing the passport to the customer.

If the passport is not ready or the data is not on MI when the customer arrives at the office, counter collection staff must:

- apologise for the delay
- arrange a new appointment if needed (for example, for Digital Premium Service customers)

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