



Home Office

# Confirming identity: checking a signature is genuine

Version 4.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to check a person's signature is genuine if we do not hold a record of their signature on Main Index

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# About: Confirming identity: checking a signature is genuine

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to check a person's signature is genuine.

Staff must use this guidance when they need to check a person's signature is genuine. For example, when we need to complete confirming identity checks on the application or the signature is from a person who:

- has given additional authorisation and consent
- is a third party applying on behalf of an intended passport holder
- is a countersignatory or digital referee and we have asked them to confirm something is writing

## 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 **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **27 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.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Confirming identity: how to check a signature is genuine

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to check a signature is genuine.

If HM Passport Office guidance tells you, the examiner, to check a signature is genuine you must compare the signature given in a letter or paper application form to the person's signature held in our records.

1. On the passport issuing system:
  - click on the link to the person's latest passport record
  - open Main Index (MI) and manually find the person's current passport record
2. Compare the wet signature given on the letter or paper application form against the signature held on our MI application records.
3. Check all the person's MI application records for a signature if their signature is not printed on their latest passport.

## When there is no signature on Main Index

If you need to check a person's signature is genuine and there is no signature on MI, of they do not hold a British passport you must:

1. Check the address they provided against internal and external reference sources to verify the person's address.
2. Case note the checks you made and the outcome.
3. When you have verified the address, you must write to them asking them to send in [extra evidence of their identity](#).
4. Scan any letters and supporting evidence as a permanent record.

## Extra documents to confirm signature is genuine

You must ask for extra documents (scans or photocopies are not acceptable) to confirm the person's signature, if you cannot confirm it on MI (see Application Management System (AMS) letter templates 513, 200 and 201). You must ask them to send 1 identity document which has their signature, for example:

- valid signed passport (UK or foreign)
- EEA member state identity card
- Current EEA or UK photo's driver's licence card
- National identity card with a photo of the holder

If they are unable to send in 1 identity document, they must send in 2 alternative documents (issued in the last year) that confirm their name and address. Alternative documents used for identity purposes should not be easily obtained by a third party and can include:

- bank statement
- gas or electricity bill
- a letter from their employer
- government issued official letters (for example, child benefit, pension statements)

You must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team if your checks show the signature is not genuine.

## Returning the documents

We will return the person's documents direct to them (not the person who applied for the passport) by Royal Mail 2<sup>nd</sup> class mail unless they:

- pay for Secure Delivery
- provide a pre-paid return envelope
- send us an uncancelled British passport
- ask us to return the documents with the child's supporting documents

You must return any uncancelled British passports to the holder using our secure delivery services.

## Related content

[Contents](#)