Post Office Check & Send applications

Version 7.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how we and Sopra Steria Limited deal with Post Office Check & Send applications

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About: Post Office Check & Send applications

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about the Post Office Check & Send service. It explains:

- the different types of Check & Send service the Post Office offers customers
- how we (and Sopra Steria Limited) deal with Check & Send applications
- how to deal with Post Office errors

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 **7.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **30 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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Passport Check & Send services

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office about the different Check & Send services the Post Offices provides and what checks they do on applications.

Some United Kingdom Post Offices can check a customer's passport application and forward it to an HM Passport Office. This is called a Check & Send service.

The Post Office charges an extra fee for this but it is not a guaranteed service. Post Office Limited (POL) staff and the customer's POL receipt will tell customers the service is not guaranteed.

Different types of Check & Send services

There are 2 different types of POL Check & Send services:

- a paper application form Check & Send service.
- a POL (tablet) application service:
  - for all UK application types
  - filled in by POL staff on a tablet

Check & Send service: Post Office clerk checks

To see what checks a POL clerk must do, you must refer to:

- Paper application: how a customer applies guidance, for paper Check & Send applications
- Digital Check and Send tablet: how a customer applies guidance, for applications made using the digital tablet service

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How we deal with Post Office Check & Send applications

This section tells HM Passport staff how we and Sopra Steria Limited deal with Post Office Check & Send applications.

Sopra Steria Limited (SSL) will get all passport applications and post first. They will deal with Post Office Limited (POL) Check & Send applications before they deal with applications sent directly from customers. After SSL have finished their checks, they will send POL applications to us.

How we deal with Check & Send applications

The turnaround target for Check & Send service is the same as our standard turnaround targets for applications of that type.

If a customer uses the paper Check & Send service, we will deal with the application on AMS (Application Management System). If a customer uses the digital Check & Send service, we will deal with the application on DAP (Digital Application Processing).

You, the examiner, must check the application for POL errors, regardless of whether it is on AMS or DAP.

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How to identify a Check & Send application

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to check if an application is a Post Office Check & Send application.

We need to know if the customer sent their application using the Check & Send service, as we may need to give them a refund if the Post Office made an error.

How to identify a paper Check & Send application

If a customer applied using a paper Check & Send service, the application will be a paper form and have a Post Office Limited (POL) barcode at the top of the form.

How to identify a digital Check & Send (tablet) application

Examiners working on Digital Application Processing (DAP) will know an application is digital Check & Send (tablet) because they will be given the Check & Send fee refund option in relevant tasks.

If the application transfers to the Application Management System (AMS), DAP will add a case note, see: Digital Check & Send tablet: how a customer applies.

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Check & Send service: how to identify Post Office errors

This section tells HM Passport Office staff why we need to identify Post Office Limited (POL) errors, how to identify POL errors and what to do if there is a POL error.

Customers who use the Check & Send service pay an extra fee. If you, the examiner, find a Post Office error, you must deal with it immediately so the customer can claim a refund of their Post Office fee.

You must examine Check & Send applications to check if, the:

- customer's photos are acceptable
- customer has provided the correct documents
- countersignatory's details are correct
- fees are correct
- customer has filled in the application form correctly (if it's a paper application)
- service type is what the customer needs

Post Office photo errors

If a customer applied using the Post Office Limited (POL) Check & Send service and their photo is not acceptable, you must:

1. Check the table to see if the reason is included.
2. Follow dealing with POL errors guidance (if POL made an error).
3. Follow If it is not a POL error guidance (if POL did not make an error).

Error code	Reason	Check & Send services affected
P1	No photo or only 1 photo	Paper application only
P2	Background not acceptable	Any Check & Send application
P3	Not showing neutral expression	Any Check & Send application
P4	Not full face or looking at camera	Any Check & Send application
P5	Subject not in centre or too high, too low, too big or too small	Any Check & Send application

P6	Eyes covered; hair, frames, glare	Any Check & Send application
P7	Red-eye	Any Check & Send application
P8	Head tilted to the side, back or front	Any Check & Send application
P9	Both photos certified	Paper application only
P10	Certification unacceptable	Paper application only
P11	Not in focus	Any Check & Send application
P12	Unacceptable shadows	Any Check & Send application

Post Office missing document errors

If a customer has applied using the Check & Send service, the POL clerk will check they have sent the listed documents for their chosen application type. You must:

1. Check the table for the listed documents.
2. Follow dealing with POL errors guidance (if POL has made an error).
3. Follow If it is not a POL error guidance (if POL have not made an error).

POL clerks do not receive nationality or parental responsibility training. They will not know if the documents can determine parental responsibility or a customer's nationality. POL errors only apply if listed documents for the chosen application type are missing.

Error code	Reason	Check & Send services affected
M1	Birth or adoption certificate	Any Check & Send application
M2	Marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate	Any Check & Send application
M3	Previous passport	Any Check & Send application
M4	Parent's marriage certificate	Any Check & Send application
M5	Mother or Father's birth certificate or passport	Any Check & Send application
M6	Decree absolute or change of name document or dissolution certificate	Any Check & Send application
M7	Naturalisation or registration certificate	Any Check & Send application
M8	Translation of foreign document	Any Check & Send application
M9	Photocopy document	Any Check & Send application

M10	Laminated document accepted incorrectly	Any Check & Send application
M11	Usage of name evidence	Any Check & Send application

Post Office countersignature errors

If a customer has applied using the Check & Send service and the countersignature is not acceptable, you must:

1. Check the table below to see if the reason is included.
2. Follow dealing with POL errors guidance (if POL has made an error).
3. Follow If it is not a POL error guidance (if POL has not made an error).

Error code	Reason	Check & Send service affected
C1	Countersignature (known less than 2 years)	Paper application only
C2	Countersignature (no passport number given)	Paper application only
C3	Countersignature (no 'capacity known as' included)	Paper application only

Post Office service type and fee errors

If a customer has applied using the Check & Send service and the service type is not correct, you must:

1. Check the table below to see if the reason is included. If there is an incorrect service type but the fee is correct, see: application form errors).
2. Follow dealing with POL errors guidance (if POL has made an error).
3. Follow If it is not a POL error guidance (if POL has not made an error).

Error code	Reason	Check & Send service affected
F1	Underpayment	Paper applications
F2	Overpayment	Paper applications
F3	Concessionary passport fee taken	Paper and digital tablet applications

If the customer is due a fee refund

There may be times when the Post Office will charge the customer the wrong fee (for example, charging a full fee for a concessionary passport).

If a customer applied using the Check & Send service and is due a refund, you must:

1. Fill in an EX/FIN01 form.
2. Send the EXFIN01 form to your local finance team (finance will deal with the refund on your behalf).
3. Add a case note to the application recording what you have done and the decision you made.

Post Office application form errors

If a customer applied using the Check & Send service and the application form is not acceptable, you must:

1. Check the table below to see if it's included.
2. Follow dealing with POL errors guidance (if POL has made an error).
3. Follow If it is not a POL error guidance (if POL has not made an error).

Error code	Reason	Check & Send service affected
S1	Parent's details section blank or incomplete (section 4)	Paper application only
S2	Countersignature section blank or incomplete (section 10)	Paper application only
S3	Declaration section blank (section 9)	Paper application only
S4	Child's signature blank (section 6)	Paper application only
S5	'More Information' (section 8) no explanation of how passport was damaged	Paper application only
S6	Signature outside the box (sections 6, 9, 10)	Paper application only
S7	Section 3/3c incomplete	Paper application only
S8	Acceptance of overseas forms	Paper application only

Other Post Office errors

The Customer Service Liaison team (CSLT) will deal with other Post Office errors they or Sopra Steria Limited (SSL) find.

Post Office errors with no matching code

If you see an error that does not appear to be covered by this guidance or, have a concern about Post Office advice given to a customer, you must email the details to the Post Office Issues inbox for further advice (using your team mailbox).

You must not send a refund letter to the customer (in this circumstance) unless the Post Office Issues team tell you to.

Dealing with Post Office errors: DAP applications

If you have confirmed there's a POL error with a DAP (Digital Application Processing) application, you must:

1. Follow the DAP Post Office check and send refunds guidance.
2. Wait for the customer to send in new photos or documents.

Dealing with Post Office errors: AMS applications

If you have confirmed there's a POL error with an AMS (Application Management System) application by checking the POL error table, you must:

1. Issue [a POL refund letter](#) and include the correct error code (for example, if it's a paper photo and the customer did not have a neutral expression, the code is P3).
2. Pigeonhole the application while you wait for new photos, documents, fees or application form.

Replacing Check & Send applications with a new form on AMS

If you need to ask the customer for a new paper application form for a POL Check & Send application (for example, because you need a new countersignatory) you must:

1. Use the AMS barcode on the new paper form (known as an SE04) to replace the original POL barcode (we do not use POL barcodes when we replace a Check & Send application).
2. Fill in the AMS generated examiner return form.
3. Re-box the application for return to SSL.
4. Wait for SSL to process the application (SSL will scan the replacement form as a direct postal application, resolving any duplicate POL fee issues).
5. Clear the 'fee tab' warning as gratis (needing second authorisation when SSL return the application by following warnings on AMS guidance).
6. Proceed with the application.

If it is not a POL error

If the application is more complex and we need more documents it's not classed as a POL error, (for example, when we need the customer's grandparents' documents), you must send the correct AMS or DAP letter to ask the customer for photos, documents, application form or fee.

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How to choose the correct Post Office refund letter

This section tells HM Passport Office examiners what refund letter they must send when the Post Office has made an error.

If the customer needs to claim a refund from the Post Office, you must make sure to send them the correct Post Office error letter.

DAP applications: Post Office refund letter

If the Post Office has made an error, you, the Digital Application Processing (DAP) examiner, must follow the DAP Post Office check and send refunds guidance. DAP will automatically select the correct customer letter.

AMS applications: Post Office refund letter

If the Post Office has made an error, you, the AMS (Application Management System) examiner, must send a Post Office refund letter to the customer. You must:

1. Check what Check & Send service the customer used.
2. Send the correct POL refund letter, even if you can resolve the issue without asking the customer for more information or documents.
3. Examine the application asking for any missing information or documents.

Post Office refund letter: paper Check & Send

If a customer is eligible for a Post Office Limited (POL) refund and they applied using the paper Check & Send service, you must send them AMS letter:

- 461 (if POL made an error that's not photo related)
- 462 (if POL made an error with the photo)

Post Office refund letter: digital Check & Send (tablet) service

If a customer is eligible for a POL refund and they applied using the Digital Check & Send (tablet) service, you must send AMS letter:

- 467 (if POL made an error with the photos)
- 468 (if POL made any other error (for example, they sent us the documents in the incorrect format, for example a laminated document)

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DAP: Post Office Check & Send refunds

This section tells HM Passport Office staff working on Digital Application Processing how to deal with applications if the customer is entitled to a refund.

When you, the Digital Application Processing (DAP) examiner, deal with a Post Office Check & Send application on DAP you must:

- view the task and decide if you need to contact the customer for a new photo or document
- decide if the customer is entitled to a refund of the Check & Send fee

DAP: how to refund the Check & Send fee (photo standards)

If a customer is entitled to a refund of the Check & Send fee because their photo does not meet our standards and the Post Office should have identified the error. You must select **yes** when asked, 'Should this Check & Send customer get a refund from the Post Office?' on the **Photo standards** tab.

DAP will automatically:

- tell the customer they are entitled to a refund of the Check & Send fee in the email, telling them to upload a new photo
- send the customer a letter they can take to the Post Office to get their refund
- show the refund question to the examiner on the first photo rejection only. This means the refund letter is only issued once to the customer

DAP: how to refund the Check & Send fee (documents)

If a customer is entitled to a refund of the Check & Send fee because their document is not suitable (for example, it's a photocopy or damaged), you must:

1. Send an email to the customer asking for a new document.
2. Select **yes** when asked, 'Should this Check & Send customer get a refund from the Post Office?' on the **Send an email** tab.
3. Select all the reasons the document is unacceptable.

DAP will automatically:

- tell the customer they are entitled to a refund of the Check & Send fee in the email telling them to send the document
- send the customer a letter they can take to the Post Office to get their refund

- provide the application data to the Supplier Management team who work with the Post Office to resolve disputes about refunds

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How the Post Office deals with a refund

This section tells HM Passport Office examiners about the Post Office Check & Send refund process.

If the Post Office has made an error, customers can claim a refund of their Post Office Check & Send fee. To get a refund, the customer must:

- return to the Post Office branch they used, with their:
  - refund letter
  - Post Office receipt
- quote their reference number at the Post Office

If a customer does not have their Post Office receipt, the Post Office clerk will search for a record of the Check & Send transaction. If they find the record, they will refund the Check & Send fee. If they cannot find a record, the clerk can decide if they can refund the fee.

How the Post Office refunds the Check & Send fee

If the Post Office agrees to refund the customer's fee, they will do it in the same way it was paid. For example, if the customer paid by debit card, the Post Office will refund it back to the same card.

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How the Post Office deals with Check & Send questions

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how Post Office staff deals with questions for Check & Send applications.

Using the dedicated Post Office Limited (POL) helpline number, POL staff will call the Customer Service Management team (CSMT), if:

- POL guidance does not cover the problem
- the customer has a laminated document and they want to know if we will accept it

POL staff must not call CSMT to check the progress of an application. If a Post Office contacts CSMT inappropriately, CSMT must log and report it to the Post Office issues inbox.

How the Post Office deals with laminated documents

POL will not accept laminated birth, naturalisation or registration certificates. If a customer wants to send us a laminated document as a supporting document, the POL clerk must call CSMT using the dedicated POL Helpline number.

CSMT will:

- check if we can accept the laminated document
- tell the POL clerk if we can or cannot accept the laminated document

If CSMT says we cannot accept the laminated document, the POL clerk will not accept it.

How to deal with Post Office questions

If you, the examiner, get a call directly from a Post Office staff member, you may speak to them (if they pass the Data Protection checks). You must tell them to contact the Customer Service Management team using the dedicated POL helpline number for future questions.

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