



Home Office

Home Office issued documents

Version 7.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue.

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About: Home Office issued documents

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue and what they must do with them.

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 **3 October 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

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Home Office issued documents

This page tells HM Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue, what they look like and what they must do with them.

United Kingdom Visas & Immigration (UKVI) (formerly the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA)) issue a number of documents to foreign nationals in the course of their work on behalf of the Home Office, for example, the Secretary of State for the Home Department. These documents may be sent to HM Passport Office with applications for passports, either where the holder of the document has gained British citizenship or accompanying an application for the holder's child.

ILR, ILE and NTL

A customer may send you evidence to confirm they are settled in the UK, for example:

- Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)
- Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE)
- No Time Limit (NTL)

You must check a customer's ILR, ILE or NTL on UKVI's systems, in line with the British citizenship guidance.

UKVI settlement letters

If you receive a Home Office letter showing the customer (or their parent) was settled in the UK, and the letter includes a dependent, UKVI have confirmed that the dependent was granted settlement on the same date.

You must check all UKVI settlement letters on UKVI's systems, to confirm they are genuine.

Application registration cards

These are credit-sized cards given to asylum seekers. They show the persons photograph, name, date of birth, sex and nationality, together with a Home Office reference number. Clearly if the holder of this card has now obtained asylum, or British citizenship, they are no longer an asylum seeker.

When examiners are clear to issue a passport to the holder of an application registration card (ARC) submitted with the application, they should return the card to CEBU, PO Box 222, Liverpool, L69 2TY, with a short note confirming a British passport has now been issued.

Immigration status document

At present, the Home Office does not issue UK Residence Permits in Home Office Travel Documents. Instead they will issue an immigration status document. There are 3 different immigration status documents, all covering different needs. These are:

- Refugee Status - when the person named on the document has been recognised by the Secretary of State as a refugee (as defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol)
- Discretionary Leave - when the Secretary of State has granted the person named on the document leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for a reason not covered by the Immigration Rules, in accordance with Home Office Asylum Policy Instruction on Discretionary Leave
- Humanitarian Protection - when the Secretary of State has granted the person named on the document leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for a reason not covered by the Immigration Rules, in accordance with the Home Office Asylum Policy Instruction on Humanitarian Protection

In each case the document will be endorsed with a vignette showing a scanned image of the individual's photograph, plus their residence status (including any conditions attached to their residence). It is acceptable as evidence of a parent's immigration status at the time the document was issued.

Examples of these documents are kept in Knowledge base.

Home Office travel documents

For how to deal with Home Office travel documents see Travel documents issued by UK government offices.

Biometric residence permits for foreign nationals

Because the permit will be held only by those with a time limit on their stay, the introduction of these documents will not for the present affect the way in which we deal with passport applications from foreign nationals.

Biometric residence permits: what they look like

The permit's design is set by European Union (EU) regulation. It is a standard credit card size (86mm 54mm). The physical card contains a chip to make it more secure against forgery and abuse. A copy of the permit may be found in Knowledge base.

Details of the security features on the permit can be found in Knowledge base. The biometric residence permit verification helpline on 0300 123 4699 is available for employers and other government departments, to verify whether the format is valid. This service should not be used routinely but only in cases where there is doubt over the authenticity of the permit.

Biometric residence permits: what are they

Since 25 November 2008 the Home Office has been changing the way it issues permission to stay in the United Kingdom. Biometric residence permits for foreign nationals will replace the vignettes previously placed in passports however, both vignettes and permit cards will remain in circulation for the foreseeable future.

If a foreign national must give biometrics as part of their permission to stay, this will be scans of all 10 fingerprints and a digital photograph. Children under six will not need to provide fingerprints.

The permit is proof of the holders right to stay, work or study in the UK. It can also be used as a form of identification, for example if they wish to open a bank account in the UK.

The permit for foreign nationals is not a travel document. Therefore, if the holder travels abroad, they will still need to hold a passport issued by their country's government. They will need to take both their permit and their passport as evidence that they are entitled to return to the UK.

Biometric residence permits: who are they issued to

Biometric residence permits are issued to nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area who are granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom, as either a student or on the basis of marriage or partnership.

More immigration categories will switch from vignettes to permit cards at a later date on a rolling programme. The roll out of these permits will be phased according to the immigration category under which the migrant is granted leave to stay in the UK.

Anyone who applies for an extension of stay as a student or on the basis of marriage or partnership after 25 November 2008 will be required to apply for a biometric residence permit for foreign nationals.

Biometric residence permits: ILR

UKVI started issuing biometric residence permits on 25 November 2008, to those with indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the UK, and so they may form part of the evidence of ILR for the application if required.

A permit with a validity of 5 years or 10 years will be acceptable as evidence of ILR.

The holder's immigration conditions are shown on both the front and the back of the permit. In addition, the permit will be valid for the time specified in the conditions of stay.

For children born before the introduction of the new UK biometric residence permits, the parent will still be required to provide usual evidence that they had ILR at the time of the child's birth (see: [ILR, ILE and NTL](#)).

Biometric Residence Permits: naturalised customers

Foreign nationals have to be free of immigration conditions when they apply for naturalisation (and normally for 12 months before that) in addition to meeting the requirements on residence in the UK.

Therefore, it will be some time before any holders of the biometric residence permits will be in a position to be naturalised and apply for their first British passport.

You must refer to the CID checks on naturalised guidance if you receive an application from a naturalised customer.

Biometric residence permits: out of date permits

Where an application is received and the British or foreign national's biometric residence permit or foreign passport clearly shows that the immigration conditions have lapsed, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Once it has been established that the passport holder's immigration conditions have lapsed by inspecting the immigration stamp entered on the passport.
2. Continue with standard procedures.
3. Return the passport bearing lapsed time conditions to the passport holder (in all cases).

Biometric residence permits: returning permits

Permits issued by UK immigration authorities and forwarded to HM Passport Office as part of a passport application should be returned by secure delivery in the same way that any valid British passport will be returned. Where the customer is resident overseas follow the posting passports and documents guidance for returning the document to the customer.

Where permits are sent to us by a third party, they should be returned to UKVI in line with the storage, retention and destruction guidance.

Found permits should be sent to:

Returns Unit
Freepost RRYX-GLYU-GXHZ
PO Box 163
Bristol
BS20 1AB

Biometric residence permits: dealing with customer questions

Members of the public making any enquiries about the biometric residence permit, including those wishing to report the loss of the permit, should be referred to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Related content

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