



Home Office

Withdrawing passports and passport facilities

Version 14.0

His Majesty's Passport Office guidance on withdrawing passports and passport facilities (services)

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About: Withdrawing (removing) passports and passport facilities

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff about withdrawing passports and passport facilities (services) including:

- what it means to withdraw passports and passport facilities
- when we may withdraw passports or passport facilities
- what you must consider before withdrawing passports or passport facilities
- options that may allow a customer to keep, renew (or replace) their passport
- what to do if withdrawing a passport will cause problems for the customer
- how to withdraw a passport

You must use this guidance when you need to:

- refuse an application to renew (or replace) a passport
- withdraw a live passport

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 HM Passport Office's Guidance team.

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 the Guidance team.

Publication

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

- version **14.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **6 May 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated:

- to tell examiners when they must contact a customer to tell them we will withdraw the application if they do not apply for naturalisation or registration
- with a change of process for sending an offline letter to the customer
- to tell examiners how to withdraw a passport when the application is not live
- to tell examiners to:
 - o send the case to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) when the customer asks us to resend letter 605

- o check the customer has provided the correct supporting documents
- o remove references to the Application Management System, Document Management Service, Sopra Steria Ltd and DXC

Related content

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Withdrawing passports and passport facilities: considerations

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff why we withdraw passports and passport facilities (services) and what may happen if we incorrectly withdraw passports or passport facilities. It includes information about refund and compensation requests (when we withdraw passports or passport facilities).

We issue, refuse and withdraw passports at the discretion of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in line with the [issuing, withdrawal or refusal of passports written ministerial statement](#) and the Royal Prerogative guidance. We will only renew (or replace) a customer's passport or allow them to keep it, when they meet all the following criteria:

- we are satisfied with their identity
- we are satisfied they are a British national (in line with [nationality legislation](#))
- there are no other reasons why we must not issue them with a passport (for example, safeguarding (protection) or vulnerability concerns)

We may refuse an application to renew (or replace) a passport or withdraw a live passport:

- on [identity grounds](#)
- on [nationality grounds](#)
- on [entitlement grounds](#)

In some cases, we will make decisions using a balance of probability (for example, when a customer cannot provide us with the standard documents we need).

You must not confuse withdrawing passports and passport facilities (services) with withdrawing passport applications:

- withdrawing passports and passport facilities is when we withdraw a passport we issued to the customer (or refuse to renew or replace their passport) because we issued it in error (for example, because they do not have a nationality claim)
- withdrawing passport applications is when we withdraw an application (for example, because the customer could not provide the documents we need)

If you need to refuse an application for a first British passport, you must refer to [refusing passports and passport facilities](#).

Withdrawing passports and passport facilities incorrectly

If we incorrectly withdraw a passport or passport facilities, customers may:

- make a complaint, for example, through:
 - o the Customer Services Management team
 - o their MP
 - o an ombudsman
- take legal action, for example, through a Judicial Review

The case 'R v the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs ex parte Everett (1998)' explains the Secretary of State must have a general policy for withdrawing passports and passport facilities. We must:

- have reasonable grounds to withdraw passports or passport facilities
- withdraw passports and passport facilities fairly
- give customers enough information about why we decided to withdraw their passport or passport facilities so they can challenge our decision (for example, if it was based on wrong information)
- consider exceptional circumstances that allows the customer to keep, renew (or replace) their passport

Before deciding to withdraw a passport or passport facilities, we must:

- consider each case on its own merits
- take care to correctly apply the guidance
- make sure the reason we need to withdraw a passport or passport facilities is:
 - o correct
 - o reasonable
 - o fair
- be able to clearly show why we are withdrawing a passport or passport facilities

HM Passport Office Litigation team will work with the Government Legal Department to deal with legal challenges from customers who had their passport or passport facilities withdrawn. If they need more information to deal with the legal challenge, they may contact the person (or team) who dealt with the application.

Withdrawing passports: refunds and compensation

You must refer to passport fees and compensation guidance for when we will consider refunds and compensation, when we withdraw passports or passport facilities.

When CFT are aware of a passport issued in error

There may be times when the Counter Fraud team (CFT) receive:

- information that a British passport was issued for a customer who does not have a claim to British nationality
- an application from an examiner who has fraud concerns about the nationality claim for a customer who supplied their British passport as part of an application

If the Counter Fraud officer have no suspicions or evidence the customer committed an offence or was dishonest and are satisfied they made their original passport application in good faith, they must:

1. Not withdraw (or revoke) the customer's passport.
2. Refer the case to an operational team leader (OTL), who will deal with the customer in line with this guidance.

You, the OTL, must deal with the customer in line with this guidance.

Related content

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Withdrawing passports and passport facilities: identity

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff how to deal with withdrawing passports and passport facilities (services) on identity grounds and applies to passports we already issued to the customer. If you need to refuse an application for a first passport, you must refer to [refusing passport applications and passport facilities](#).

We must be satisfied with the customer's identity (see Royal Prerogative guidance) and may refuse an application to renew (or replace) a passport or withdraw a live passport, when we:

- suspect the customer applied fraudulently or have doubts about their identity
- do not have fraud concerns or doubts but we cannot confirm the customer's identity, for example, using:
 - o the documents they gave us
 - o other evidence to support their identity (for example, countersignatories)

Withdrawing passports: if there's fraud or identity concerns

You may suspect a customer fraudulently obtained their passport, when:

- they send it as part of their own renewal or replacement application
- they send it as part of another application (for example, their child's passport application)
- you check their passport record when dealing with another application (for example, when checking a child's parent's or sibling's passport record)

If you suspect a customer fraudulently obtained their passport, you must:

- check:
 - o the details of any previous passports we issued, to see if there are identity concerns
 - o how the customer has a nationality claim (as the nationality claim will be in doubt if the customer's identity is in doubt)
 - o if there is evidence someone else's entitlement to a British passport relies on the customer having their passport (that you have concerns with)
- refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL) to see if they agree there's fraud or identity concerns
- not withdraw the customer's passport if the OTL agrees there's fraud or identity concerns
- complete additional checks and decide if you need to **Refer for investigation**

The CFT deal with customers who got their passport fraudulently, in line with their own guidance.

Related content

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Withdrawing passports and passport facilities: nationality

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff about withdrawing passports or passport facilities (services) on nationality grounds. It applies to passports we already issued to the customer. If you need to refuse an application for a first passport, you must refer to [refusing passport applications and passport facilities](#).

We must be satisfied with the customer's claim to British nationality (see Royal Prerogative guidance). If we are not, we will not renew (or replace) a customer's passport or allow them to keep it.

We may find we, Immigration Departments in British overseas territories or the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (who dealt with overseas passport applications before 1 April 2014) issued the customer a passport in error, because a customer does not have a nationality claim, when:

- we get the passport as part of:
 - an application to renew or replace it (so there will be a live application on the system)
 - another application, for example, when a parent sends it with their child's application (so there will not be a live application on the system)
- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) tell us we issued it in error, for example, when they:
 - refuse an application for the Right of Abode
 - ask the Quality and Examination Support team (QuEST) to confirm on what basis we issued a passport and they tell us the customer's mother was married to someone other than their biological (natural) father
- the Counter Fraud team (CFT) are told about it

If UKVI tell QuEST about a passport we issued in error, QuEST will contact the office that issued it and ask them to deal with it in line with this guidance.

What to consider before withdrawing a passport

Before we withdraw a live passport or refuse an application to renew (or replace) it, we must carefully consider:

- [how to handle the case](#) (if you suspect the customer got their passport fraudulently, you must refer the application to the CFT)
- [options that may allow the customer to keep, renew or replace their passport](#)
- [the effect on the customer, if we withdraw their passport](#) or refuse an application to renew (or replace) it
- [what we can do to help the customer](#), if the reason we issued the passport in error was our fault

Handling the case

When dealing with a passport that we issued in error because a customer does not have a nationality claim, we must:

- be satisfied the customer did not get their passport fraudulently (if you suspect they did, you must refer the application to the CFT)
- consider all the facts about the case
- check previous passport records to see if there is evidence the customer does not have a nationality claim (for example, if they were granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after their child was born)
- consider if the customer meets the Windrush scheme criteria
- check UKVI systems to see if any decisions made by them are different to the decisions we made
- check what evidence we need to confirm the nationality claim
- consider if we can make decisions using a balance of probabilities
- make sure we have English translations of foreign documents
- not send letters to customers to tell them we may need to withdraw their passport or refuse their application to renew (or replace) it, without speaking to them first, as:
 - o they may be upset
 - o we can explain the situation to them
 - o we need to check how it may affect them if we withdraw their passport, or refuse their application to renew (or replace) it
 - o consider what to tell them when we contact them
- make sure any letters we send to the customer:
 - o clearly and correctly explains why we issued their passport in error
 - o are scanned on the system (if there is a live application)
 - o are clearly recorded in the case notes (or passport notes if there's no live application)
- make sure all case notes and passport notes clearly show:
 - o why we issued a passport in error
 - o the actions and decisions we made (with reasons)
 - o what we considered when making a decision
 - o when we sent a letter to the customer, what it was about and the delivery reference number
 - o when we tried to contact the customer by phone
- check if the customer gave information or evidence to suggest a family member has a passport that relies on them having a passport we issued in error - the person who identified the error will deal with all affected cases, as we must:
 - o use this guidance for each family member who we issued a passport in error to
 - o deal with each case together (so we contact each customer in the same period of time)
 - o only reveal information to the person who has the correct consent
- consider contacting the Quality, Examination Support team (QuEST) using the QuEST referral process, if you have concerns about reputational damage to HM Passport Office, for example, when:

- o the customer had their passport several years or we renewed it several times, before we found the error
- o we issued a passport that the customer used to build a life for themselves (for example, they moved to the United Kingdom)

Options that may allow a customer to keep their passport

Providing we're satisfied the customer did not get the passport fraudulently, we must consider options that may allow them to keep it or renew (or replace) it. For example:

- can they provide other evidence to confirm their nationality claim
- can we make a decision using a balance of probabilities
- can they naturalise or register as a British national with UKVI – if there's no route to naturalise or register now but there was at the time the error was made, UKVI:
 - o may accept an application to register or naturalise
 - o will still assess if the customer met the good character test using their current circumstances
- do they have a claim:
 - o through any other means (for example, through their other parent or because of where the parent is domiciled (see legitimisation and domicile))
 - o to another type of British nationality (for example, British national (overseas))

Effect on the customer if we withdraw their passport

We must consider the effect on the customer (and anyone else who we issued a passport to based on the customer having their passport) if we withdraw their passport or refuse an application to renew (or replace) it, for example:

- if they:
 - o are in the UK or overseas
 - o are renewing their passport because they made travel arrangements (for example, a family holiday)
 - o have urgent or compassionate travel arrangements (as we may consider a restricted validity passport)
 - o are currently using their passport for travel or they need it to return to the country where they live
- do the laws (or regulations) in the country where they live mean they need to keep their passport on them at all times
- do they qualify for another country's citizenship or can they get a travel document elsewhere
- will they become stateless (not considered a national by any country under its laws, as defined by the 1954 United Nations Conventions relating to the status of a stateless person)
- will it take time for them to get (or regain) another nationality
- will it affect their:
 - o residency status in the UK
 - o employment
 - o access to other services (for example, public funds, health care or housing)

- will they be put at risk (for example, not being able to prove who they are or will it leave them stranded)
- do they have family members who may be affected (for example, is their residency or nationality status dependent on the customer having a British passport)

Supporting the customer

If we need to withdraw a passport or refuse an application to renew (or replace) it because we issued the customer a passport in error (and not because they got it fraudulently), we must consider what we can do to help them. For example, if they need a passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons, we may be able to issue a:

- restricted validity passport
- Emergency Travel Document

If you find a passport issued in error

If you, the examiner, find we issued a customer a passport in error because they do not have a nationality claim, you must discuss the case with an operational team leader (OTL) to see if they agree.

You, the OTL, must:

- check if we issued the passport in error (and how the error happened), by looking at the:
 - o application record
 - o case notes and passports notes
 - o customer's evidence and supporting documents (if there are any)
- check UKVI systems to see if:
 - o there is evidence to show the customer does not have a claim (for example, if they were granted ILR after their child was born)
 - o any decisions made by them that affect the customer's entitlement to a passport (for example, if a customer has retrospectively been granted ILR)
- check if there is evidence to confirm the customer has a claim by another means, for example, do they have a claim:
 - o through their other parent
 - o to another type of British passport (for example, a British national (overseas) passport)
 - o because they have registered or naturalised (if they have you must follow the guidance in [Customer has evidence of British nationality](#))
- if the customer meets the Windrush criteria (if they do, you must deal with the case using the Windrush guidance)
- consider if there are any risk indicators or fraud concerns that mean you must refer the case to CFT

You must also consider if there are any family members who are no longer entitled to a British passport because their nationality was dependent on the passport we issued in error. This is because we must deal with all of the cases at the same time.

When you have gathered all the information you need, you must discuss the case with the QuEST to check if they agree we issued the passport in error.

If QuEST agree we issued the passport in error, you (the OTL) must keep (and deal with) the application in line with this guidance (see [Dealing with a passport issued in error](#)).

If QuEST agree we did not issue the passport in error, you, the OTL, must:

1. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to explain the actions and decisions you made.
2. Tell the examiner why we did not issue the passport in error and:
 - o to deal with the application, in line with current guidance
 - o not to withdraw passport facilities from the customer

Dealing with a passport issued in error

Before we contact the customer to tell them about the error and ask them for more documents, we must check if they have a route to register or naturalise.

The customer may not need to register or naturalise if they can provide evidence to confirm their nationality claim but checking before we contact them, means:

- we know what options they have before we contact them
- customers will not make an unnecessary application to register or naturalise

Although we will check if a customer has a route to register or naturalise, we cannot guarantee their application will be successful. UKVI can only assess and process an application to register or naturalise when the customer submits it.

In all cases, if the customer does not appear to have a claim to British nationality and you have confirmed (as far as you are able) the passport was issued in error, you, the OTL, must:

1. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to say:

Passport issued in error as the customer does not have a British nationality claim because [include reason why]. Before we contact the customer about the error, we are checking to see if they have a route to register or naturalise.

2. Check if the customer has a route to register or naturalise on the basis they would automatically have become British because of one of the reasons in the [Refusal on nationality grounds: exceptions to consider](#) guidance.

If the customer has a route to register or naturalise, you must send the appropriate letter in the [Refusal on nationality grounds: exceptions to consider](#) guidance.

If the customer does not have a route to register or naturalise, you must ask UKVI if there's another route the customer can use. To do this, you must:

1. Complete section 1 of the UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment form.
2. Send it to your local QuEST team and ask them to send it to UKVI using their QuEST mailbox.
3. Add a case note (or passport note if the application is not live) to show the actions you have taken.

When QuEST send the UK Visa & Immigration registration or naturalisation assessment form by email, they must permanently delete it from Outlook.

UKVI will:

1. Consider if there is a route for the customer to register or naturalise, including if:
 - o there is no route for them to register or naturalise now but there was at the time the error was made (in such cases, UKVI will still carry out the good character test on the customer's current circumstances)
 - o they qualify for discretionary registration as a British citizen under section 4L of the British Nationality Act 1981 or as a British overseas territory citizen under section 17I of the British Nationality Act 1981
2. Respond to the QuEST mailbox, to let them know:
 - o if the customer can apply to register or naturalise
 - o if they need more information to help them decide if the customer can apply to register or naturalise
 - o how the customer can apply and what they must pay (if they can apply)
 - o why the customer cannot apply (if they cannot apply)

When UKVI sends a response to the QuEST mailbox, you (the QuEST officer) must check it. If UKVI confirms:

- the customer can (or cannot) make an application to register or naturalise you must:
 - o send the response to the OTL dealing with the case
 - o permanently delete the response you got from UKVI and sent to the OTL from Outlook
- they need more information to help decide if the customer can apply to register or naturalise, you must:
 - o ask the OTL dealing with the case for the information
 - o update 'UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment' form with the information and return it to UKVI (using your QuEST mailbox)

When you, the OTL, received the response from QuEST to tell you if the customer can (or cannot) apply to register or naturalise, you must refer to When you have checked if there's a route to register or naturalise.

When you have checked if there is a route to register or naturalise

When you have checked if there is a route for the customer to register or naturalise, you must:

1. Add a case note (or passport note, if it is not a live application) to show if the customer has (or does not have) a route to register or naturalise.
2. Check if the customer has provided the appropriate supporting documents.
3. Contact the customer by phone to discuss their case.

If the customer:

- does not answer, you must refer to Phone contact: no answer from the customer to deal with the application.
- does not respond to your attempts to contact them, you must refer to No contact with customer

If the customer answers, you must:

1. Tell the customer we issued their passport in error and apologise. Explain why they do not have a claim.
2. Ask the customer if they can send you evidence that confirms they have a claim, in the next 28 days and:
 - o ask them why, if they tell you they cannot send evidence
 - o tell the customer you may need to withdraw their passport (or refuse to renew or replace it) if they cannot send evidence that confirms their claim
3. Tell the customer (if you have established they have a route to register or naturalise):
 - o they can apply to register or naturalise if they cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim
 - o if their application is successful, they must send you their naturalisation or registration certificate and they will be able to keep, renew or replace the passport
 - o you may need to withdraw their passport (or refuse to renew or replace it) if they decide not to register or naturalise or are not eligible to
4. Ask the customer:
 - o how it would affect them, if you were to withdraw their passport (or refuse to renew or replace it) (see [considerations: effect on the customer if we withdraw their passport](#))
 - o if they are a citizen of another country or have any foreign passports
5. Tell the customer you will send them a letter to explain the situation.
6. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to show:
 - o What you told the customer (if applicable)
 - o all the actions you have taken and the decisions you made (with reasons)
 - o how it will affect the customer if we were to withdraw or refuse to renew or replace their passport (if you spoke to the customer)

- o you have sent the case to the Exceptions Handling team to send offline letter 605
- 7. Select task **Unable to print and post letter** to send the case to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) using DAP: print and post letters or forms guidance.

If the customer tells you, they:

- already naturalised or registered or can provide evidence to confirm their claim, you must refer to [customer has evidence of British nationality](#)
- cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim and has not already registered or naturalised, you must refer to [customer cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim](#)
- want to register or naturalise you must refer to [customer wants to register \(or naturalise\)](#) (only if you have already established the customer has a route to register or naturalise)
- cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim and you have asked them if they want to apply to register or naturalise but they do not want to, you must refer [how to withdraw a passport](#)

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Customer has evidence of British nationality

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff how to deal with customers who we issued a passport to in error (as they do not have a nationality claim) and who tell us they can provide evidence to confirm their claim or have registered (or naturalised).

If a customer tells us they have evidence to confirm their claim, we will give them 28 days to provide it (from the date we sent them the letter). If we do not receive it after 14 days, we will try to contact the customer to remind them to send it.

You, the operational team leader (OTL) must:

1. Not withdraw the customer's passport (or refuse their application to renew or replace it).
2. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to explain that:
 - o we previously issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o the customer is sending evidence to confirm their claim (or their registration or naturalisation certificate)
3. Electronically and physically store the application in your team if it is a live application (or create a reminder if it is not) while you wait for the evidence (or registration or naturalisation certificate).
4. Contact the customer if you do not receive the evidence (or naturalisation or registration certificate) after 14 days from the date we sent letter 605. Tell them to send it in the next 14 days.

If you do not get the evidence (or naturalisation or registration certificate) after 28 days, you must refer to [Customer does not send evidence or registration certificate](#).

When the customer sends evidence of British nationality

When you receive the customer's evidence of British nationality (for example, descent claim documents or registration (or naturalisation) certificates, you must check if the customer now has a claim.

Customer has a claim: live application

If the customer has a claim to British nationality and it is a live application, you must:

1. Add a case note to the live application and a passport note to the record for the first passport we issued, to explain the customer:
 - o provided evidence to confirm their claim (or registered or naturalised)
 - o is entitled to a passport
2. Issue the passport (in line with current guidance).

3. Permanently delete the UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment form from Outlook (if you have it).

Customer has a claim: no live application

If the customer has a claim and it is not a live application, you must:

1. Tell the customer they can keep their passport.
2. Add a passport note to explain, the customer:
 - o has provided evidence to confirm their claim (or has registered or naturalised)
 - o is entitled to keep the passport
3. Return the passport to the customer (if you have it).
4. Permanently delete the UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment form from Outlook (if you have it).

Customer cannot send evidence to confirm their claim

If a customer tells you they cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim or the evidence they give does not confirm it, you must refer to [customer cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim](#).

Customer does not send evidence or registration certificate

If a customer does not send you the evidence of their British nationality within 28 days of when you sent them the letter, you must send reminders (in line with the timescales in the withdrawing passport applications guidance).

If the customer still does not respond, you must take action to withdraw their passport (see [how to withdraw a passport](#)).

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Customer cannot provide evidence to confirm their claim

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff what to do if we issued a passport in error because the customer does not have a nationality claim and they cannot provide evidence to confirm the claim or have not registered (or naturalised)

Providing there is no evidence the customer definitely does not have a claim and there's no evidence to suggest they got their passport fraudulently, you, the operational team leader (OTL) must refer to supporting documents not available guidance, to consider:

- what alternative evidence the customer can provide (to confirm their claim)
- if we can decide their claim using a balance of probabilities (OTLs make decisions on a balance of probabilities)

Claim using a balance of probabilities: live application

If you (the OTL) are satisfied the customer has a claim using a balance of probabilities and it is a live application, you must:

1. Tell the customer you will renew (or replace) their passport, because you are satisfied they have a claim.
2. Add a case note to the application to explain:
 - o we previously issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o you are satisfied the customer has a claim, including the reason why and the evidence you used
3. Issue the passport (in line with current guidance).
4. Permanently delete the UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment form from Outlook (if you have it).

Claim using a balance of probabilities: not a live application

If you (the OTL) are satisfied the customer has a claim using a balance of probabilities and it is not a live application, you must:

1. Tell the customer they can keep their passport because you are satisfied they have a claim.
2. Add a passport note to the record, to explain:
 - o we previously issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o you are satisfied the customer has a claim, including the reason why and the evidence you used
3. Return the passport to the customer (if you have it).
4. Permanently delete the UK Visa & Immigration: registration or naturalisation assessment form from Outlook (if you have it).

Customer has no claim using a balance of probabilities

If you (the OTL) decide the customer does not have a claim using a balance of probabilities, you must:

1. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live passport application) to explain:
 - o we previously issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o you are satisfied the customer does not have a claim, including the reason why
2. Refer to:
 - o [customer registering \(or naturalising\)](#), if you have previously established the customer has a route to register or naturalise
 - o [how to withdraw a passport](#), if you have previously established the customer does not have a route to register or naturalise

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Customer wants to register or naturalise

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff what to do when we issued the customer with a passport in error (as they do not have a nationality claim) and they want to register or naturalise.

Customers may apply to register (or naturalise) to keep their passport (or renew or replace it) when all the following apply:

- the customer has not already registered (or naturalised)
- we issued the passport in error, as the customer does not have a nationality claim
- we considered other options that may allow the customer to keep their passport (or renew or replace it), for example:
 - o we asked the customer for evidence to confirm their claim
 - o we considered the customer's claim using a balance of probabilities (only in cases when they could not provide enough evidence to confirm their claim and there is no evidence to suggest they do not have a claim)
- we have already established the customer has a route to register or naturalise

If you have established the customer does not have a route to register or naturalise, you must refer to [how to withdraw a passport](#).

When the customer applies to register (or naturalise) and are waiting for the outcome of their application, we will:

- keep the passport application open (if it is a live application)
- allow the customer to keep the passport (if it is not a live application)

When the customer wants to register or naturalise

Providing you have established the customer has a route to register or naturalise, you (the operational team leader (OTL)) must:

1. Tell the customer:
 - o the letter we previously sent provided details of how to apply to register or naturalise
 - o they must include a copy of our letter with their registration or naturalisation application
 - o we can send the letter again if they do not have it
 - o if their application is successful, they must send us their naturalisation or registration certificate, when they get it
 - o to let you know if UKVI tells them they are not eligible to register or naturalise

- o they can keep their passport (if it is not a live application) or you will keep their renewal or replacement application open (if it is a live application) while we wait for the outcome of their registration or naturalisation application
 - o we will hold onto their documents until they contact us with the outcome of their registration or naturalisation application
 - o we will withdraw their passport and cancel it if they do not register or naturalise, are not eligible to register or naturalise or do not send us their nationality certificate
2. If the customer does not have their letter:
 - o add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to tell the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) to resend letter 605
 - o follow DAP: print and post letters or forms guidance
 3. Check UKVI systems every 14 days to see if the customer has made an application. You must be aware, registration applications made by post will take longer to show on UKVI systems.
 4. Wait 3 months from the date that UKVI received the customer's application before completing the UK Visa & Immigration: passport issued in error, customer has applied to register or naturalise referral form and emailing it to your local Quality and Examination Support team (QuEst).
 5. If the customer has not applied within 3 months of us advising them of the need to register or naturalise you must:
 - contact the customer by phone to confirm if they have applied or intend to apply within the next 3 months
 - o advise the customer you will withdraw the application if they have not applied or do not intend to apply within the next 3 months (if it is a live application) and you will cancel the passport (if we have the passport in our possession)
 - o follow [how to withdraw a passport](#) if the passport is not in our possession
 - o tell the customer you will send them a letter to explain the situation and what you have discussed
 - o send them a letter using a tracked delivery method
 - o add a case note to show what letter you sent, when and how you sent it, including the delivery reference number
 - o return any supporting documents to the customer (if there are any)
 - o not send letters to customers to tell them we will withdraw their passport or refuse their application without speaking to them first
 6. Add a case note (or passport note if the application is not live) to show the actions you have taken.

QuEst will forward your request to UKVI and ask them to expedite the registration application if possible.

When an OTL or QuEst sends the UK Visa & Immigration: passport issued in error, customer has applied to register or naturalise referral form by email, they must permanently delete it from Outlook.

If it is a live application, you must then:

1. Add a case note to the application, to explain:
 - o we issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o the customer has applied to register (or naturalise)

- o you will keep the application open while you wait for the outcome of the registration (or naturalisation) application
- 2. Electronically and physically store application in your team while you wait for the outcome of the naturalisation (or registration) process.
- 3. Keep in regular contact with the customer to check the progress of their registration (or naturalisation application). If you lose contact with the customer, you must refer to [how to withdraw a passport: when a customer does not respond, or you lost contact with them.](#)

If it is not a live application, you must:

1. Add a passport note to the record to explain:
 - o we issued the customer with a passport in error
 - o the customer has applied to register (or naturalise) and is keeping their passport while we wait for the outcome of their application
2. Return the passport to the customer (if you have it)
3. Keep in regular contact with the customer to check the progress of their registration (or naturalisation) application. If you lose contact with the customer, you must refer to [how to withdraw a passport: when a customer does not respond, or you lost contact with them.](#)

Outcome of the registration (or naturalisation) application

When a customer applies to register or naturalise, UKVI may accept or reject their application.

When the customer has registered or naturalised

When the customer has registered or naturalised they must send us their certificate.

If it is a live application, you must:

1. Check the UKVI system if you suspect the registration (or naturalisation) certificate is not genuine. If it is not genuine, you must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT).
2. Add a case note to the live application and a passport note to the first passport record to:
 - o explain the customer has registered (or naturalised) and sent you their certificate
 - o record the customer's British nationality status shown on their certificate
 - o show you can renew (or replace) their passport
3. Renew (or replace) the passport (in line with current guidance).
4. Return the customer's supporting documents (if you have any).

If it is not a live application, you must:

1. Check the UKVI system if you suspect the registration (or naturalisation) certificate is not genuine. If it is not genuine, you must refer the application to CFT.

2. Add a passport note to the record to:
 - o explain the customer registered (or naturalised) and sent you their certificate
 - o record the customer's British nationality status as shown on their certificate
 - o show the customer can keep their passport
3. Return the passport to the customer (if you have it).
4. Return the customer's supporting documents (if you have any).

If UKVI reject the registration (or naturalisation) application

If the customer applies to register or naturalise but UKVI (or an overseas territory) reject their application (for example, because they are not eligible) we will take action to [withdraw their passport](#).

Prioritising the registration or naturalisation process

If the customer has applied to register (or naturalise) because we issued their passport in error and they ask us to speed up their application, we can ask UKVI if they can prioritise it. You must:

1. Tell the customer, you:
 - o will make enquiries with the relevant department to see if we can speed up their application
 - o cannot guarantee the relevant department will be able to prioritise their registration or naturalisation application
2. Raise a guidance query with QuEST to tell them:
 - o the customer has applied to register (or naturalise) because we issued them with a passport in error
 - o the customer has asked us if their registration or (naturalisation) application can be prioritised and the reason why

QuEST will ask UKVI if they can prioritise the application.

Related content

[Contents](#)

How to withdraw a passport

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff how to withdraw a passport (or refuse an application to renew or replace it) when we issued the customer with a passport in error as they do not have a nationality claim (and not because there's evidence to suggest they got their passport fraudulently).

You, the operational team leader (OTL) must only withdraw a passport (or refuse to renew or replace it) when all the following apply:

- we issued the customer with a passport in error, as they do not have a nationality claim
- you have considered the full facts about the case
- you have discussed the case with the Quality and Examination Support team (QuEST)
- you checked the customer does not have a claim through other means, for example:
 - through their other parent
 - a claim to another type of British passport (for example, a British national (overseas) passport)
- you have spoken to the customer and sent them a letter to explain the situation
- you asked the customer for evidence to confirm their claim, but they could not provide it
- you considered the claim using a balance of probabilities (only in cases when there was no evidence to confirm the customer does not have a claim)
- the customer has not naturalised (or registered) or they do not qualify to, or do not want to
- you have carefully considered how withdrawing the passport (or refusing an application to renew or replace it) will affect the customer
- you have checked with QuEST and they agree we need to withdraw a passport (or refuse to renew or replace it)

Before you take any action to withdraw a passport, or refuse to renew or replace it, you must consider:

- the effect it may have on them (you will have already done this when you first contacted the customer to tell them we issued their passport in error)
- if a customer had a genuine expectation that we would renew their passport (for example, as they have a family holiday planned)
- how long a customer had their passport and how many times we renewed it

How to withdraw a passport: when it will affect the customer

There may be times when we issued the customer a passport in error but:

- they had a genuine expectation that we would renew it (for example, they had applied in good faith and were unaware of the error)
- they had it for several years (or we renewed it several times) before we found we issued it in error
- withdrawing it could have a significant impact on them

You must not withdraw the passport (or refuse to replace it), if the customer:

- has had their passport for several years (or we renewed it several times) before we found we issued it in error
- tells you any of the following:
 - o they had a genuine expectation we would renew or replace their passport (for example, they applied in good faith and were unaware of the error)
 - o they do not have a foreign passport or the citizenship of another country and are unable to claim another country's citizenship
- they will become stateless
- they are using the passport for travel (for example, they have already booked travel)
- they are out of the country and need their passport to return to their home country
- have urgent or compassionate travel
- it will affect their residency status, employment or access to other services (for example, health care, public funds or housing)
- need to keep their passport on them at all times (for example, because of the laws or regulations in the country where they live or they need it to prove their identity)

Instead, you must:

- not withdraw the passport (or refuse to renew or replace it)
- raise a guidance query with QuESt to ask for advice
- include all supporting evidence with your referral

QuESt will:

- consider if the customer can have a restricted validity passport (or Emergency Travel Document if they are overseas) if they give us evidence they:
 - o need a travel document to allow them to return home
 - o need the passport for urgent government business or compassionate reasons
- contact the Passport Policy team, to consider if the customer can keep their passport (or renew or replace it) because of:
 - o legitimate expectation (when a customer has a genuine expectation that we will renew their passport)
 - o administrative recognition (when we made the error and the customer has no other claim to British nationality, but they had their passport for a long time and used it to build a life for themselves)
- discuss the case with a senior leader within their team, to see if it is appropriate to ask UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to consider granting the customer

indefinite leave to remain (legally settled status) in the UK. We will do this when both of the following apply:

- o we cannot allow the customer to keep their passport
- o the customer is living in the UK but does not have any immigration permission that allows them to stay

How to withdraw a passport: no effect on the customer

How we withdraw a passport will depend on, if:

- a customer sent it as part of:
 - o their own renewal or replacement application (so they have a live application)
 - o another application, for example, with their child's application (so they do not have a live application)
- we lost contact with them

In contact with customer: application is not live

When you must withdraw a passport but you do not have a live application for it (for example, if you have identified the passport was issued incorrectly when examining a siblings application) you must contact the customer by phone to:

- tell them you need to withdraw their passport because we issued it to them in error (as they do not have a claim) and they:
 - o could not provide evidence to confirm their claim
 - o have not registered (or naturalised) do not qualify to or decided not to
- tell them:
 - o to return the passport in the next 28 days so you can cancel it and if they do not, you will cancel it on ours and UKVI's records (if you do not already have the passport)
 - o you will cancel the passport on ours and UKVI's records (if you already have the passport)
- tell them you will send them a letter to explain the situation

If the customer:

- tells you they want to make a complaint you must refer to the complaints handling guidance
- mentions withdrawing their passport will cause them problems, you must refer to how to withdraw the passport: when it will affect the customer

If the customer did not mention withdrawing their passport will cause them problems, you must:

1. Add a passport note to the record to explain all the actions you have taken and the decisions you made (with reasons).
2. Return any support documents to the customer (if there are any).

3. Use the withdrawal of passport facilities offline comms to send the customer a letter explaining the actions taken.

Cancelling the passport on the system

We will cancel the passport on the system:

- if we already have it (and told the customer we will cancel it)
- as soon as we get it (if the customer had it and sends it to us within 28 days)
- 28 days after we asked the customer to return it to us (if the customer has it and does not return it)

If you already have the passport, you must:

1. Cancel the passport using 'revoke' on the system.
2. Add a passport note to the record to explain the actions and decisions you made.
3. Cut up the passport and send it to confidential waste.

If you do not already have the passport, you must:

1. Wait 28 days for the customer to return the passport to you.
2. Cancel the passport using 'revoke' on the system:
 - o when you get it (if the customer sends it within 28 days)
 - o after 28 days (if the customer does not return it)
3. Send the passport to confidential waste (when you get it).
4. Add a passport note to the record to explain the actions taken and decisions you made with reasons.

In contact with the customer: application is live

You must contact the customer by phone to tell them, you will:

- not renew (or replace) their passport, because we issued the previous one in error (as they do not have a claim) and they could not provide evidence to confirm their claim, have not registered (or naturalised), do not qualify or decided not to
- send them a letter to explain the situation
- return their supporting documents (if there are any)
- keep the fee for administering the application
- cancel their old passport

If the customer:

- tells you they want to make a complaint you must refer them to the complaints procedure guidance.
- mentions refusing to renew (or replace) their passport will cause them problems you must refer to how to withdraw the passport: when it will affect the customer

If the customer does not mention refusing to renew (or replace) their passport will cause them problems, you must:

1. Refuse the renewal (or replacement) application on the system.
2. Cancel the old passport using 'revoke' on the system and send it to confidential waste.
3. Add a case note to show the actions you have taken and decisions you made (with reasons).
4. Return any supporting documents to the customer.
5. Select **I cannot do this application - Unable to print and post letter** to send the case to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) using DAP: print and post letters or forms guidance.

How to withdraw a passport: not in contact with the customer

If you tried to contact a customer but they did not respond (or you lost contact with them) and they did not previously mention withdrawing their passport will cause them problems, you must:

1. Cancel the passport using 'revoke' on the system
2. Refuse the renewal (or replacement) application (if the customer sent a renewal or replacement application).
3. Send the old passport (if you have it) to confidential waste.
4. Send any supporting documents to archive.
5. Add a case note (or passport note if it is not a live application) to show:
 - o the actions taken and decisions made (with reasons)
 - o you have sent the case to the Exceptions Handling team to send letter 605
6. Use the:
 - o **I cannot do this application – Unable to print and post letter** option if the application is live to send the case to the Exceptions Handling team (EHT) using DAP: print and post letters or forms guidance
 - o withdrawal of passport facilities offline letter if the application is not live to send the customer a letter explaining the actions taken

If the customer previously mentioned that withdrawing their passport will cause them problems, you must follow the guidance in [How to withdraw a passport: when it will affect the customer](#).

This is because you must refer the application to QuEST who will decide what to do after discussing the case with:

- Passport policy to decide what action to take
- a senior leader within their team

Asking UKVI if a customer can be granted ILR

If we issued a customer with a passport in error but we cannot allow them to keep it, we may be able to ask UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) if it is appropriate to grant the customer indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the UK.

We will usually do this when the customer is living in the UK and they have had the passport (that we issued in error) for such a period of time that it will significantly affect their life in the UK if we withdraw it.

QuESt will discuss these cases with a senior leader on their team to decide if this is applicable. If it is agreed it is appropriate to contact UKVI, QuESt will refer the customer's details to a dedicated contact in UKVI to ask them:

- if it is appropriate to grant the customer ILR
- what the customer must do (if UKVI tell us they can grant them ILR)

The customer must pay the correct fee for their ILR application. However, they will be able to claim the cost back from HM Passport Office. Any reimbursements must be agreed by the grade 7 officer in QuESt.

If the customer tells us they cannot afford to pay for their ILR application, QuESt will discuss possible solutions with a senior leader on their team and the dedicated contact in UKVI.

Related content

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Withdrawing passports facilities: other reasons

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff how to deal with withdrawing passports and passport facilities (services) for reasons other than identity or nationality. It applies to passports we already issued to the customer. If you need to refuse an application for a first passport, you must refer to refusing passport applications and passport facilities.

We must be satisfied there are no reasons (other than identity or nationality):

- not to renew (or replace) a passport
- to withdraw a live passport

The Royal Prerogative guidance provides a list of specific reasons why someone may not be able to hold a passport.

Related content

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