



Home Office

Authorisation and consent: needed to issue a passport

Version 2.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when to ask for extra authorisation from another person or organisation before we issue a passport

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About: Authorisation and consent: needed to issue a passport

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about customer consent and additional authorisation or consent they need to process passport applications. It tells them:

- when we need official authorisation to issue a passport
- when we need consent to process a customer's request (for example, to cancel a passport) or their passport application
- when we need additional consent to process the customer's application or request
- when we will not ask for additional consent to process the customer's request

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 the 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 **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **28 November 2023**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to include a transfer to AMS instruction, when the wrong person gives consent for a 16 or 17 year old.

Related content

[Contents](#)

When we need authorisation for a passport

This section tells HM Passport Office staff when to ask for extra authorisation from another person or organisation before we issue a passport.

We will need official authorisation (for example, from a third party) for some applications before we can issue a passport to the customer.

When there is a caveat

Parents or other interested parties (for example, the Police or other law enforcement agencies) can ask HM Passport Office not to issue a passport for a child or vulnerable adult. If we agree to their request, we will create a caveat, to prevent a passport being issued without the correct authorisation.

HM Passport Office will not automatically issue a passport or cancel an existing passport, if there is a caveat in place or we are aware one has been requested. You (the examiner) must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT), if:

- you can see there is a caveat in place
- the customer asks us to put a caveat in place
- you cannot see a caveat is in place, but the customer tells you they have requested a caveat
- the customer tells you they are in the process of getting court order to prevent a passport being issued

CFT will liaise with the Child Protection and Safeguarding team (CPST) to get the appropriate authorisation to issue a passport depending on their investigation.

When someone holds power of attorney

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a document that grants the holder power to make certain decisions on behalf of the person named in the document. Only people over 18 years old can hold LPA and they must register the document with the Office of the Public Guardian to make it valid.

There are 2 types of LPA, [property and finance](#) and [health and welfare](#). The [Office of the Public Guardian](#) may grant either or both LPAs to a third party depending on the person's circumstances. The LPA will provide details about the types of decisions the holder can make on behalf of an individual.

A third party representative, who claims they have LPA, must provide it to support the application. You must [check with the LPA in the UK](#) or the correct issuing office abroad if you have doubts about the document or the application.

Property and finance

Someone who holds LPA to manage a person's property or finance can use it at any time; whether the person has the mental ability to deal with their affairs or not.

Health and welfare

Someone who holds LPA to manage a person's health and welfare can use it when the person does not have the mental ability to manage their affairs.

You must ask for additional confirmation from a Doctor or health service professional if a customer only provides an LPA which is for the health and welfare of the intended passport holder. The letter must confirm the intended passport holder cannot make the application themselves because of their incapacity.

When the intended passport holder is a ward of court

In the UK, a British citizen child (up to the age of 18 years), ordinarily resident in the UK, can be made a Ward of court if they are considered to be at significant risk of harm or abuse. The court will become the legal guardian of a ward of court and no decisions for or about the ward can be made unless the court provides their consent.

Someone who is a ward of court (including a foreign court) cannot give their own consent to issue a passport, only the court can authorise a passport. HM Passport Office must have authorisation from the court, in the form of a court order, naming a guardian we can issue the passport to, before we issue a passport.

You must refer passport applications for a ward of court to the Child Protection and Safeguarding team through your local CFT.

When a child or young adult travels for employment abroad

There are regulations relating to the employment of children and young people which can affect our authority to issue a passport.

If the child is travelling overseas for employment purposes, we need authorisation, in the form of a licence, from a Magistrates court sitting in the area the child lives.

Unless a license has been granted, no child is allowed to go outside the United Kingdom for the purpose of:

- singing
- playing sports (for example, football)
- performing
- taking part in any broadcast or recording to be used in a film for public exhibition

Amateur athletes, who go abroad with responsible sporting organisations, do not need a Magistrates licence provided the contests are not put on for personal financial gain.

Where we told a child is or may be travelling abroad for employment, you must tell the customer to get a licence before we issue a passport, and they travel. They can get more advice from their Local Education Authority.

When there is a court order authorising the passport

You must accept a court order that says the Court of Protection (England and Wales), Guardianship Court (Scotland) or Office of Care and Protection (Northern Ireland) believe it is in the best interests of the intended passport holder that a passport should be issued. The order will name the third party or nominate a deputy to apply for the passport.

You can also accept Specific Issues court orders made under section 8 of the Children's Act 1989 which may authorise us to:

- issue a passport for a child (for example if a passport has been lost and the parent's confirmation cannot be given)
- change a child's name

There may be occasions where the customer is 16 or 17 years old and subject to a court order. A court order is still required for any customers aged 16 or 17 years old who are still under the care of Social Services. When we have confirmed consent for a 16 or 17 year old, subject to a court order, we will request additional fees if needed (for the difference between a child and adult passport) and issue a full adult passport.

England and Wales

The [Court of Protection](#) in England and Wales has the power to create court orders about a person they consider does not have the mental capacity to make their own decision at that time.

Scotland

The [Guardianship Court](#) has the power to create a [Guardianship Order](#) which appoints an individual to make decisions and act for an incapable person on an on-going basis.

Northern Ireland

[Office of Care and Protection](#) has the power to create an order to appoint a 'controller' to deal with the day-to-day management of an individual's (also known as 'patient') affairs.

Overseas court orders

Courts overseas will also have the authority to issue court orders on behalf of their residents. You must consider any court order issued in the jurisdiction where the intended passport holder is living. You must refer any cases of doubt to your Operational Team Leader (OTL) to consider the application as a whole.

Consent and authorisation for Collective passports

To safeguard (protect) the children named on a collective passport HM Passport Office must make sure we have parental consent and official authorisation from the group organisation before we issue it. We must have signed:

- authorisation from the group Leader or Deputy leader named on the collective passport application
- consent from the child's parent or legal guardian (who holds PR)

HM Passport Office must get additional authorisation from the school or organisation before we issue a passport. We must make sure we check the details with an independent person (for example, the Head teacher) and not with the lead adults named on the application form. We must check the names of the leaders and children included on the collective passport, when:

- we receive the collective passport application
- a lead name is changed or added
- a child's name is added or removed from the collective passport

You (the Collectives examiner) must refer the child's details to CFT for potential referral to CPST if their details show on a watchlist entry.

How we authorise a detainee's passport application

Detainees will include:

- British nationals held in the UK
- British nationals (not British citizens) held in the UK, before they are transferred to their country of origin
- British nationals (including British citizens) held overseas who are being repatriated to the UK

The detainee must consent to their passport application before a passport is issued. Before issuing a passport for a detainee, HM Passport Office must consider if the:

- intended passport holder has consented to their application
- new passport will be stored securely

Detained in the UK

Before we issue a passport to a detainee in a prison or remand centre in the UK, we must contact the prison Governor and ask them to confirm where we must send the new passport.

Detained overseas

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) must ask the prison Governor to confirm where the document will be held if the intended passport holder is detained overseas. If we do not receive a reply from an overseas prison Governor, we can continue to issue the passport to the intended passport holder; the passport will be held by the FCDO until the holder can securely store it.

If the detainee refuses to consent to the application

If the detainee is leaving or returning to the UK and refuses to consent to their passport application an Emergency Passport will be authorised without the consent of the detainee, by the:

- Home Office Extraditions team on behalf of the Home Secretary if the detainee is in the UK
- FCDO when they confirm the detainee has no grounds for appeal and:
 - they have a request from the relevant law enforcement agency
 - there is a court order requiring the travel document

Who authorises a diplomatic or official observation or passport

HM Passport Office must have official UK government authorisation to issue a customer with a Diplomatic or Official passport or a standard passport with a diplomatic or official observation.

The customer must provide official authorisation depending on what kind of passport they require, for example official authorisation can be a:

- supporting letter from the customer's home department (for example, the Ministry of Defence or FCDO Human Resources) confirming their entitlement to a passport or observation
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO) form (known as Annex A in FCDO guidance)

You can read guidance about who can authorise diplomatic or official observations or Diplomatic or Official passports in the Diplomatic and Official passports guidance.

You (the person dealing with the application) must check the correct government official has given authorisation for the passport or observation. You must case note

the application, recording your decision to accept or reject the authorisation documents and scan them onto the application as a permanent record.

Who authorises a Specimen passport

HM Passport Office will check any request for a specimen passport before we agree to issue one.

The Document Technology team authorise requests from other UK government departments and foreign governments.

The Reputation Management team authorise requests for specimen passports for entertainment purposes (for example, as a prop in a television program, theatre or film production).

The person requesting the specimen passport for entertainment purposes must complete and sign the passport application (give consent) on behalf of the character. There is no requirement for the character to sign or consent to the application.

Related content

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Consenting to a passport application

This section explains to HM Passport Office staff who can consent to a passport application.

HM Passport Office needs consent from the intended passport holder, a parent, legal guardian or nominated third party representative before we issue a passport. You, the examiner, must make sure you:

- check the declaration section of the application to see who completed the application
- have the appropriate consent in every situation

Checking the declaration relationship field

We ask the customer to declare their relationship to the intended passport holder in the **Relationship** field when they complete the application declaration.

If the person who completes the declaration is:

- a third party, you must ask for more information and evidence to confirm they are the most appropriate person to apply
- the parent or guardian, you must check they have parental responsibility or legal guardianship

The customer applying on behalf of a child may make a mistake and:

- enter 'child' instead of parent, mother, father or legal guardian
- enter the correct relationship (for example, mother or father) but enter the child's name in the **Name** fields
- leave the relationship field empty (on a paper application form)

If the person named in the **Declaration** field is shown in the **Parents** field as parent 1 or 2, you can accept the relationship (subject to confirming their parental responsibility).

If the person named in the **Declaration** field has not given confirmation, they are the child's legal guardian (for example, they may be a third party, not named as one of the parents or the name recorded is the child's), you must:

- investigate their relationship to the child
- [get consent from someone who does have parental responsibility](#)

Consent from customers who are 16 years old or above

For passport purposes, anyone who is 16 years or older can consent to their own passport application.

You, the examiner, can accept the intended passport holder consented to their application if they confirmed online, they completed their application, or they signed a paper application. Customers may print their signatures or write in a foreign script (for example, Chinese, Arabic or similar).

You must consider if the customer will need additional consent or a third party to apply on their behalf, if they:

- are the [subject of a caveat](#)
- have a physical or mental disability that prevents them from applying
- are [subject to a court order](#)
- are a [UK or overseas detainee](#)

If the customer is not yet 16 years old

You must not issue an adult passport to a child under 16 years old.

If the customer needs their passport before they turn 16, a person who holds parental responsibility or legal guardianship must send a letter of consent and you must only issue a child's passport valid for 5 years.

If the customer can wait for their passport until they turn 16, they can consent to their own application unless they are unable to due to a physical or mental disability.

You must follow How to deal with customers of different ages if the customer is within 3 weeks of their 16th birthday and completed the application as an adult.

When to ask for extra consent for young adults aged 16 and 17 years

Children are not legally classed as adults until they are 18 years old. However, you can accept applications from 16 and 17 year old customers without the consent of an adult with parental responsibility, unless:

- a parent or carer provides evidence (such as a court order or letter from their doctor) showing the young adult is not capable of making such a decision for themselves
- the young adult is subject to [a court order until they are 18 years old](#)
- the young adult is asking to [change the gender](#) on their passport

If the wrong person gives consent for young adults aged 16 and 17 years

The wrong person may give consent on a passport application in some situations, for example:

- a parent giving consent for a child aged 16 or 17 years old
- a parent giving consent for a child when the child turns 16 during the application process

If the wrong person has given consent on the passport application, you must:

1. Transfer the application to AMS (Application Management System) if you are working on DAP (Digital Application Processing), because we do not yet have the functionality to send a declaration or consent form using DAP.
2. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made.
3. Send letter 993 to the person who the passport is for. When you create the letter, you must make sure you update the addressee to show the name of the person who the passport is for. The letter:
 - shows the customer's full name and date of birth and a declaration
 - asks the customer to check their name and date of birth is correct and to read and agree to the declaration

You must only accept the response by post, as the letter must have a 'wet' signature. When you get the letter back, you must:

1. Confirm the identity of the person applying (for example, comparing signatures or asking for identification if no signatures are available to compare)
2. Take the balance of fee if required.
3. Keep the letter as a permanent record (for example, Digital Application Processing (DAP) will automatically keep the scanned letter, examiners working on the Application Management System (AMS) must scan the letter).
4. Deal with the application as an adult application, in line with current guidance.
5. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made.

If you cannot confirm the identity of the person applying because they cannot provide the documents we normally request, you must send a guidance referral and ask for advice.

Consent for children aged 0 to 18 years

You must get consent for a passport application from someone with legal or parental responsibility (PR) if the intended passport holder is a child age 0 to 15 years or a young adult (16 or 17 years old) who is subject to a court order or who wishes to [change the gender](#) on their passport.

You must ask the customer for written and signed consent from someone who has PR or guardianship for the intended passport holder, if the customer does not have it or [we have agreed to a caveat](#). We must check the additional consent is genuine and may have to ask the person providing additional consent for identity evidence. The person providing consent must:

- have parental responsibility
- be the legal guardian
- be acting in place of a parent or guardian
- be a [social service manager \(if the child is in care\)](#) of the local authority

You must request the consent from everyone with parental responsibility or guardianship, if:

- there is a [court order](#) which states everyone with parental responsibility must give consent to the application
- a child (up to the age of 16 years) has a [change of name](#)
- a young adult (16 to 17 years old) is subject to a court order, and they want to:
 - change their name
- a child or young adult (up to the age of 18 years) wants to [change the gender](#) on their passport

Unless we are told there is a court order, or we are aware the child does not live with their parent we will assume only the parents are likely to hold PR. You must ask the customer to send in consent from everyone who holds PR if you believe other people may have PR or guardianship of the child.

Consent: when the parent is a child or young adult

Children and young adults, who need consent for their passport application from a parent or guardian, can consent to their own child's passport application, if:

- they hold parental responsibility for the child
- there are no court orders which prevent them from giving their consent

Related content

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When we need additional consent

This section tells HM Passport Office staff when to ask for additional consent from a parent, guardian or responsible adult before we can issue a passport. It also explains how customers must send us this additional consent.

If you need additional written consent to process a passport application (for example, when we need consent from someone who has parental responsibility), you must contact the customer and ask them for the necessary consent in writing. The consent letter must include a 'wet' signature; a 'wet signature' is handwritten and not computer generated.

When you receive the additional consent, you must check it is genuine before you agree to issue the passport. If you cannot confirm the signature using our records, you must ask the person who gave the additional consent for documents to confirm their identity. We will not tell the customer that we may need to contact the person who gave their consent for more information.

The customer must send letters of consent by post (not email) to allow us to verify (check) the consent is genuine. We will exceptionally accept a scanned, emailed copy of the letter with the authority of a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) only if:

- the passport is needed for urgent compassionate reasons

If the person providing additional consent needs to send additional documents because we cannot confirm their signature from our records, they must give us the documents at the public counter (for counter applications) or by post.

Consent to change the gender on the passport

The customer must consent to any change to the gender shown on the passport. HM Passport Office will accept the customer's consent, if:

- they are an adult (18 years and older) and have completed the application themselves
- they are an adult (18 years and older) and are unable to complete the application themselves and it is completed by a responsible adult
- the intended passport holder is under 18 years, and we have the signed consent of everyone with parental responsibility or [legal responsibility](#)
- there is a court order which agrees to the gender change

Consent to change a name

A customer who is 16 years or older will consent to their change of name by completing the application declaration.

Consent to change a child's name: aged 0 to 15 years

The requirement to get consent from everyone with PR or legal guardianship is defined in case law and the judgement given by the Court of Appeal on case Re P (1997) 2 FLR 730 which related to a change in surname. See 'The legal basis for consent' in the Names: change of name passport applications, guidance.

To make sure we are consistent, our approach to consent and parental responsibility applies to all child changes of name regardless if this is a change in forename or surname. If the child has a change of name, everyone who holds parental responsibility (PR), or legal guardianship must give their consent to the change of name before we issue a passport in the new name. Without their consent we must ask for a court order specifically allowing the child's change of name.

You must ask for additional [signed consent](#) from everyone who holds parental responsibility or legal guardianship if the customer has not already provided it with the application unless there are safeguarding concerns. For example, we will accept both parents have consented to the change if both parents signed the change of name deed or 1 parent signed the change of name deed and the other applies for a passport in the new name using the document.

You can accept a court order allowing the change of name if the customer cannot provide consent from everyone who holds parental responsibility for the child.

Consent to change a young adult's name (16 and 17 years old)

Customers aged 16 and 17 can change their name without parental consent unless there is a court order or caveat that prevents this.

You must ask for consent from everyone who holds parental consent, if:

- we are made aware there is a court order in force which requires everyone with parental responsibility to consent to the application
- there is a caveat in force which shows a parent or guardian has objected to the change of name
- the parent or guardian changed the intended passport holders name before they turned 18 years old

Third parties who consent to a change of name

If a third party completes the application for the intended passport holder and there is a change of name, the third party must send:

- evidence to confirm their own identity and show they are the most appropriate person to apply on behalf of the intended passport holder; and,
- change of name evidence for the intended passport holder; and,
- evidence from an independent third party to confirm the intended passport holders change of name

Consent for young adults who are subject to a court order

Before we issue a passport, HM Passport Office must get additional consent from someone who holds parental responsibility or legal guardianship for them, if a 16 or 17 year old is the subject of a court order. In most cases this will be:

- a parent or guardian with [parental responsibility](#)
- the social services manager (for [children in care](#))

You must ask for additional consent if you are aware the customer is subject to a court order; when you receive the additional consent you [must check it is genuine](#).

As the 16 or 17 year old is considered a minor in law, the passport and any supporting documents must be returned to the person who gave the additional consent. See [Delivery and collection consent](#). You must let the customer know you are returning the passport to the person who gave additional consent, but you do not need to ask their permission to do so.

Consent for children who are in care

Social services departments are normally only entitled to apply for passports for a looked after child when they have legal guardianship.

The Director of Children's Services must consent to the passport application and provide a letter of authorisation confirming how social services has legal responsibility for the child before HM Passport Office will issue a passport to the child. You must ask the Director of Children's Services to send in a letter consenting to the child's application if they did not complete the application.

A parent with PR must give their consent for the child's passport if social services do not have parental responsibility (see Parental responsibility: children in local authority care). Social services can apply for a passport if they are acting in place of a parent because the parent is missing or is unable to give their consent.

Consent to cancel a lost or stolen passport

Customers, whose passports are lost or stolen, must report the loss to HM Passport Office using [GOV.UK](#) or by sending in an application for a replacement passport.

HM Passport Office will not replace a lost or stolen passport, until they receive the consent of the customer to cancel it.

For adult passports, the passport holder must report the loss or theft of their passport. If a third party representative reports the loss or theft, they must provide evidence they are the most appropriate person to make the report.

Young adults aged 16 and 17 years, can report their passport lost or stolen without parental consent, unless they are the subject of a court order.

Parents or guardians of children under 16 years or young adults subject to a court order must give us confirmation of the loss from the person who originally applied for the lost (or stolen) passport. We do not need confirmation from the original person if the old passport has already expired or has been cancelled on Main Index (for example it has been recovered).

HM Passport Office will need additional confirmation and consent, if:

- the person who originally consented to the old passport has not declared it lost or stolen
- we are aware there is a dispute about who should hold the child's passport between the parents (who hold PR) or legal guardians

The Lost and stolen passport guidance gives information on reporting and replacing a lost or stolen passport.

Consent to cancel a valid passport

A customer may send in a valid passport and ask HM Passport Office to cancel it, because they no longer need it. For example, if the passport holder has died or is a frequent traveller or Diplomatic service member and no longer needs their additional passport.

The passport holder must give us their signed consent before we cancel the passport physically and on Main Index. If the passport holder cannot give their consent then a parent (with PR), legal guardian or a nominated third party must give their consent and provide evidence to prove they are entitled to give consent on behalf of the passport holder (for example a death certificate if the passport holder is deceased).

Consent to upgrade a child's application

To safeguard (protect) children HM Passport Office will not upgrade passport applications for children, until the application and documents have been with us for 5 working days or more (working days are defined as Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays). The 5 days begins when Sopra Steria Ltd receive the customers documents.

Requests from customers to upgrade a child's application must only be considered if they fit the requirements described in the tiered application service guidance.

The request to upgrade a child's passport can only come from the person who applied for the application. We must be certain we are dealing with the correct person when we speak to the customer.

Consent from the customer to share DNA test results

DNA testing is not a legal requirement for passport purposes. The customer may choose to provide DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) test results to us to support their passport application or ask us to arrange a test.

For the customer to share the DNA test results with HM Passport Office you must get signed consent from the customer or someone with parental responsibility for the child. Verbal consent is not enough for our purposes. You must case note and scan the consent onto the application (as a permanent record).

If one of our Local Service offices arranges a referral for a child to a DNA testing company, the testing company must get written parental consent during the appointment booking process.

If a third party accompanies the child to the DNA appointment, they will also need to take a copy of the consent with them. We will not allow the DNA test to take place without the correct parental consent.

Related content

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[Lost, stolen and recovered examiner guidance](#)

[Lost, stolen and recovered team guidance](#)

When not to request additional consent

This section tells HM Passport Office staff when not to ask for additional consent from a parent or legal guardian

You must refer to the Safeguarding: consent issues guidance and not ask for additional consent from a parent or legal guardian, if you discover they:

- have been violent or abusive to the child, other parent or legal guardian
- have a restraining order or prohibited steps order preventing or restricting them from contacting the child, other parent or legal guardian
- are in prison

When not to ask for additional consent: overseas PR laws

When a child is born or lives and spends most of their time (known as habitually resident) in a country or territory other than the UK, you must check if the person applying for a passport has parental responsibility (PR) under that country's or territory's laws.

You must check:

- the individual country (or territory) information held in Knowledge Base to understand who will hold PR for the child. For example, if the child is resident in Hong Kong or Macau you must check the Hong Kong or Macau Knowledge Base pages as these are territories of China and the laws differ
- the Country of birth: islands, places, and territories guidance if you are given a country (or territory) of birth that you do not recognise (for example Tokelau) to help you to find the relevant Knowledge Base page.

There may be times when a parent applying for a child born (or habitually resident) overseas has PR under UK law but due to overseas laws where the child was born (or is habitually resident) they:

- do not have PR in that country or territory
- have PR in that country but they also need the consent of someone else with PR, but they cannot get it

For example, if the child's mother does not have PR due to the overseas law and she cannot provide the father's consent because they are not in contact, or he refuses to give consent.

In these cases, you must consider if you have any safeguarding concerns, and deal with the application using the Safeguarding: consent issues guidance.

If you do not have safeguarding concerns, the action you take will depend on if the child has changed name or gender.

Child has changed name or gender

If you have no safeguarding concerns and the child has changed name or gender, you must continue to ask [for additional consent from all those with PR](#). However, if the person making the application has PR under UK law but they do not have PR in the country where the child was born (or is habitually resident) and they could not get the consent of all those with PR, you must follow the guidance as if the child has not changed name or gender (below).

Child has not changed name or gender

If a child has not changed name or gender, and the person making the application has PR in the UK but not in the country of the child's birth (or habitual residence), or the person needs to get additional consent, you must:

1. Not ask the person making the application to get a court order or the consent of the other person.
2. Send a guidance referral to the Quality and Examination Support team (QuESt).

QuESt will discuss the case with a senior manager to decide what action you must take.

Related content

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