



Home Office

Old Blue (hardback style) passports

Version 12.0

This document provides guidance on how His Majesty's Passport Office examiners process the renewal and replacement of Old Blue (hardback style) passports on AMS (Application Management System) and DAP (Digital Application Processing).

Contents

Contents.....	2
About: Old Blue (hardback style) passports	4
Contacts	4
Publication	4
Changes from last version of this guidance	4
Old Blue (hardback style) passports	5
What the customer must provide	5
Old Blue passports: how to process a passport application	7
Old Blue passports: steps to complete	7
Old Blue passports: DAP tasks.....	7
Old Blue passports: application type	9
Old Blue passports: checking the passport record	10
Case noting Old Blue passport details.....	10
Old Blue passports: checking a customer's information	11
Examining the customer's documents and additional information	11
Customer has provided documents and additional information issued after the Old Blue passport.....	11
Customer's parent(s) details	12
Old Blue passports: contacting a referee	13
Contacting the digital referee or paper referee (1 page form).....	13
Contacting the paper referee (countersignature).....	13
Sending the referee a system 200 letter	14
Old Blue passports: referring to your OTL.....	15
When to refer an Old Blue passport application to an OTL.....	15
What the OTL must do with a referred Old Blue application	15
Customer's identity and nationality confirmed.....	16
Customer's identity not confirmed	16
Customer's nationality not confirmed	16
Refusing to issue a new passport	17
Old Blue passports: cancelling the passport	18
Cancelling an Old Blue passport on DAP	18
Cancelling an Old Blue passport on AMS.....	18
Old Blue passports: identity interviews.....	19
DAP: not sending for interview	19

AMS: not sending for interview	20
Sent for interview: customer not required to attend	20

About: Old Blue (hardback style) passports

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office examiners how to process a passport application (submitted in the UK or from abroad) to renew or replace an Old Blue (hardback style) passport on AMS (Application Management System) and DAP (Digital Application Processing).

This guidance does not apply to British national (overseas) BN(O) customers renewing or replacing an Old Blue passport we can find on our records (Main Index, G-Search, Old Blue records and the Hong Kong historic database). Instead, you must refer to the BN(O) guidance.

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 **12.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **23 November 2023**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to tell DAP (Digital Application Processing) examiners they may be able to change the application type in DAP (if this is incorrect) under specific circumstances.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue (hardback style) passports

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office examiners why applications to renew or replace Old Blue passports must be processed as first time adult applications. It includes what the customer must do to renew or replace their Old Blue passport.

Old Blue passports were handwritten and last issued in 1992. Unlike passports today, customers' photos were not kept on the index card record. With improvements in technology and fraud prevention, recent passports are more robust and secure.

HM Passport Office will not accept Old Blue passports as the only evidence of a customer's identity or nationality, as:

- there is a significant risk of identity theft due to:
 - the length of time since we issued the customer a passport
 - the possibility that the customer's appearance may have changed considerably since we last issued them a passport
- these types of passports can be easily forged

You must be satisfied that the customer holds British nationality and the identity they claim by checking their:

- identity documents
- nationality documents
- referee verification

What the customer must provide

The customer must:

- apply as a first time adult
- pay the correct fee
- submit passport photos that must be confirmed by a referee
- provide a referee
- supply the same documents as a first time applicant to confirm their British nationality and identity
- send their Old Blue passport to us (if they have it)
- provide details of their Old Blue passport if this is lost or stolen and they no longer have it

You, the examiner, must be satisfied that the information the customer provides shows they:

- are a British national by birth, descent, adoption, registration, or naturalisation (for example by sending in original nationality claim documents)

- held the claimed identity from birth or from before we issued them an Old Blue passport
- can link their current name to the name on the Old Blue passport (if there has been a change in their personal details)

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: how to process a passport application

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to process a passport application to renew or replace an Old Blue passport and confirm the customer's identity and British nationality.

Old Blue passport applications can be processed on AMS (Application Management System) or DAP (Digital Application Processing).

AMS examiners will have the physical Old Blue passport. DAP examiners will be able to view a scan of the Old Blue passport using the **Documents** tab. The Document Handling Unit (DHU) will scan the Old Blue passport:

- personal details page
- photo page
- page showing the date and place of issue
- any visa page with stamps or information

HM Passport Office's passport system is linked to the Main Index (MI) record and can compare data against passport applications. Old Blue passports are not recorded on MI and cannot be linked to the system.

Old Blue passports: steps to complete

To process a passport application to renew or replace an Old Blue passport, you, the examiner, must complete the following steps:

1. Process the application using the 'first time adult' [application type](#).
2. [Check our passport records](#) for details of the customer's Old Blue passport.
3. [Confirm the information](#) the customer has provided using Home Office records (for example, Main Index, index cards and UK Visa and Immigration records).
4. Ask the customer [for documents](#) to confirm their identity and British nationality.
5. Confirm the customer's identity (and that the identity is still active) using their [referee](#).
6. [Refer the application to your operational team leader \(OTL\)](#), if you cannot confirm identity or nationality.
7. Send the customer for an [identity interview](#) if needed, in line with the Interviews: overview of the interview process guidance.
8. [Cancel the customer's Old Blue passport](#), if you are issuing a new passport.

Old Blue passports: DAP tasks

DAP will create several tasks on an application when a customer applies to renew or replace an Old Blue passport. These tasks will be created based on the first time service type, and if the customer declared the Old Blue passport when they made their application online.

If you are examining an Old Blue passport application on DAP you, the DAP examiner, must complete the tasks created by DAP.

DAP may create a:

- **Customer with a very old passport** task (created when the customer applies and tells us they have an Old Blue passport)
- **Nationality** task
- **Interview appointment** task
- **Documents received** task
- **Passport received for first time application** task
- **Received passport not on Main Index** task

DAP may create other tasks based on the information and the documents the customer provides and you must process these in line with the relevant guidance.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: application type

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff the application type used to process Old Blue passport applications on AMS (Application Management System) and DAP (Digital Application Processing).

You must process the renewal or replacement of an Old Blue passport as a first time application.

If the customer's Old Blue passport is lost or stolen, you must process this as a first time adult. As Old Blue passports do not have an electronic record on Main Index, DCS (Digital Customer Service) will not ask the customer to report a missing Old Blue passport and you, the examiner, must not create an LS (lost and stolen) record.

Customers who apply online using DCS to renew or replace their Old Blue passport are automatically guided to complete a first time adult application based on the previous passport information they provide. Guidance tells customers completing the paper form to apply as a first time customer.

If you receive an application to renew or replace an Old Blue passport, and you are working on DAP (Digital Application Processing), the application type will be first time if the customer has completed their details correctly.

If you, the DAP examiner, need to change the application type (if it is incorrect), you may be able to do so (see DAP: application types). If DAP does not allow you to change the application type or offer the type you need (for example first time), you must transfer the application to AMS (Application Management System).

If a customer applies to renew or replace their Old Blue passport, and you are working on AMS, you must manually change the application type to 'first time adult' if the service type shows renewal or replacement.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: checking the passport record

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to confirm the customer's Old Blue passport details.

You must check the customer's personal details and nationality status on the documents they provide and on their Old Blue passport (if they send it in) against the information recorded on the previous passport application. You must do this by completing a:

- manual index search (MIS) request form
- index card archive search
- Hong Kong database search

If you do not have access to the index card archive search, or the Hong Kong database search, you must ask a colleague with access to complete these checks.

See Manual index search for details of how to complete this search.

Case noting Old Blue passport details

You must case note the:

1. Old Blue passport number and the date and place it was issued.
2. Customer's full name as it appears on the Old Blue passport (if it has been provided) and on the original passport record.
3. Results of your passport record search.
4. Customer's British nationality status, as shown on the passport record and update it (if necessary) to reflect current British nationality laws.

On AMS (Application Management System) at data capture stage, the system will automatically generate a case note saying that the passport record cannot be found on Main Index.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: checking a customer's information

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to confirm a customer's identity and British nationality when they apply to renew or replace an Old Blue passport on AMS (Application Management System) and DAP (Digital Application Processing).

You must confirm the customer's identity and claim to a British passport, by checking the following information:

- the customer's nationality documents (for example, birth certificates, marriage certificates, nationality certificates).
- the information on the passport application (for example, parent details if they are provided, and the details confirmed by the referee).
- the customer's claim matches the information in our passport records.
- UK Visa & Immigration records (if necessary).
- Consular birth records (if necessary).
- the customer is the genuine holder of the identity.
- the customer held the identity before the issue of the Old Blue passport, for example, by providing documents issued before the Old Blue passport was issued.

Examining the customer's documents and additional information

You must check the customer's identity and nationality documents to make sure they are acceptable for passport purposes, using Knowledge Base where necessary.

If a customer can only provide documents or additional information dated after the Old Blue passport was issued, you the examiner, must refer the application to your [operational team leader \(OTL\)](#).

Customer has provided documents and additional information issued after the Old Blue passport

Customers must provide us with documents and additional information issued before their Old Blue passport so we can confirm if they are the genuine holder of the identity.

If the customer has not provided documents or additional information issued before their Old Blue passport, when you have checked the customer's original passport record against their identity and nationality documents and case noted the details, you must:

1. Phone the customer to ask if they can provide any original documents, for example their original short birth certificate if they have provided a full birth certificate.
2. If they cannot provide original documents, ask them to provide additional information to confirm their identity before the Old Blue passport was issued.
3. Case note your conversation with the customer and what they agreed to send.
4. Case note your actions taken so far and your recommendations.
5. Send a letter asking for the original documents or additional information.
6. Complete additional checks (if processing on DAP (Digital Application Processing)), if required.
7. Ask an Enhanced Application Checking (EAC) examiner to complete additional checks (if processing on AMS (Application Management System)) if required.
8. If the customer cannot provide any documents or additional information issued before the Old Blue passport you must case note your decision and refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL).

You, the OTL, must review the application and make a balance of probability decision.

If the customer does provide documents or additional information issued before the Old Blue passport, you the examiner, must continue to process the application in line with this guidance.

If you are examining on DAP the system will automatically send reminders and withdraw the application if the customer does not reply to our letters.

If you are examining on AMS, and the customer does not reply to our letters or telephone calls, follow the withdrawing passport applications guidance.

Customer's parent(s) details

We use the customer's parents' details to help confirm the customer's nationality and identity if needed. If the parents' details are not needed (for example, their nationality is not dependent on their parents, and you are already able to confirm the customer's identity) you must not request the information if it has not been provided.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: contacting a referee

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when and how to contact a referee when you are processing an application to renew or replace an Old Blue passport.

As we process Old Blue passports as first time applications you, the examiner, must always examine the referee. If a referee has not been provided, you must ask the customer to provide one.

You may need to contact the referee to confirm the customer's identity. When and how you contact the referee will depend on the type of referee provided.

Contacting the digital referee or paper referee (1 page form)

You must examine the digital referee or paper referee (1 page form).

You, the examiner, must check the referee. If the referee has answered false (or 'No') to any of the questions you must use the referee guidance to decide if you must:

- reject the referee
- contact the referee for more information
- contact the customer for a new referee
- refer the application for investigation to the Counter Fraud team (CFT)

You do not need to send a system 200 letter to a digital referee or paper referee (1 page form) because the system prompts them to answer questions about the customer's:

- photo
- address
- parental details

Contacting the paper referee (countersignature)

You must examine the paper referee (countersignature).

You must send the paper referee (countersignature) a system 200 letter if you are not sending the customer for an identity interview. We do not send customers for interview when:

- we confirm their Old Blue passport record (because their nationality, identity and entitlement are not in doubt)

- they are over 70 years old (because we do not routinely interview customers over 70 years old unless we have fraud concerns)

Sending the referee a system 200 letter

As a paper referee (countersignature) is not asked the same questions as a digital or paper referee (1 page form), we need additional information to confirm the customer's identity. The paper referee (countersignature) must confirm the details we need by replying to a system 200 letter.

When you have received an acceptable reply, you must:

1. Record their reply in a case note.
2. Scan their reply as a permanent record on the system.

If you have received a reply that is not acceptable, you must contact the referee and ask them to provide further information.

If the paper referee (countersignature) does not respond to our letters or emails, you must:

1. Ask the customer for a new paper referee (countersignature).
2. Complete confirming identity checks again on the new paper referee (countersignature).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: referring to your OTL

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when to refer an Old Blue passport application to an operational team leader (OTL) and what the OTL must do with the application.

You, the examiner must refer an Old Blue passport application to an operational team leader (OTL) if you cannot confirm a customer's identity or nationality.

You, the OTL, must decide if you have enough evidence to confirm the customer's identity and nationality.

When to refer an Old Blue passport application to an OTL

When you have completed all your checks, considered all the information available and case noted your actions and results, you must refer the application to an operational team leader (OTL) when:

- the customer is unable to provide the standard documents used for first time passport applications in the UK and abroad
- the customer cannot provide any documents that were issued before the Old Blue passport
- you are unable to confirm the customer's claim to British nationality
- you are unable to confirm the customer's identity
- you have suspicions or evidence that the application is fraudulent

You must always record a case note on the passport application to explain your recommendations and your reasons for referring the application to your OTL.

What the OTL must do with a referred Old Blue application

You, the operational team leader (OTL), must decide on the examiner's referred application. To do this, you must:

1. Consider the examiner's recommendation.
2. Decide if you have enough evidence to confirm the customer's identity and nationality.
3. Check the application, documents, and additional information.
4. Read the examiner's case notes.
5. Case note your decision about the passport application and either:
 - o return the application to the examiner if your decision is to issue a passport
 - o contact the customer to request alternative evidence or additional information if necessary

- o discuss the application with your local Quality Examination Support team (QuEst)
- o refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT)

Customer's identity and nationality confirmed

If you can confirm the customer is the genuine holder of the identity and is still entitled to a British passport you must case note your decision to issue the passport application and return it to the examiner to issue the passport.

Customer's identity not confirmed

If you are unable to confirm the customer's identity you must consider what additional information or alternative evidence, you can ask for to confirm their identity.

If the customer is unable to provide additional identity documents, you must make your decision based on a balance of probability and case note your decision and your reason for making it.

Customer's nationality not confirmed

If you are unable to confirm the customer's nationality you must consider asking the customer for alternative evidence. If you are unable to decide based on the alternative evidence you receive, you must discuss the application with your local Quality Examination Support team (QuEst) to help you with your decision making, based on a balance of probability.

HM Passport Office will only accept alternative evidence if the customer provides information that we can confirm from government records or other overseas authorities.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Refusing to issue a new passport

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when they must not issue the customer with a British passport when they apply to renew or replace an Old Blue passport.

You, the examiner, must not issue the customer with a British passport if:

- the customer cannot provide enough evidence to prove they are the genuine holder of the identity
- you are unable to confirm the customer's identity or nationality based on a balance of probability
- the customer has lost their claim to British nationality (for example, because of independence legislation)

You, the operational team leader (OTL), must contact the customer to explain the decision not to issue them a passport and explain what will happen next (see refusing and withdrawing passport facilities).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: cancelling the passport

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to cancel an Old Blue passport.

The process you need to follow to cancel the Old Blue passport will depend on whether you are processing the application on AMS (Application Management System) or DAP (Digital Application Processing).

Cancelling an Old Blue passport on DAP

Before you, the DAP examiner, **Submit** all decisions on the tasks, you must manually update the handling instructions using the **Handling instructions** tab in ARD (Application Receive Domain) to instruct the Document Handling Unit (DHU) to cancel the Old Blue passport.

You must:

1. Select **Handling instructions**.
2. Select **Return to alternative address**.
3. Add the customer's address (this can be the same as the return documents address in DAP, if the only extra handling instruction is to cancel the Old Blue passport).
4. Select **Yes** for the question **Should the document be cancelled**.
5. Add a case note explaining the reason for the cancel instruction.
6. Save your update.

ARD will instruct the DHU to physically cancel the Old Blue passport when DAP completes the application (if you have sent the customer for interview, the passport cancellation instruction will not be sent until the interview is completed).

Cancelling an Old Blue passport on AMS

After you, the AMS (Application Management System) examiner, select **Pass for Issue** or **Pass for Interview**, you must:

1. Physically cancel their Old Blue passport (see cancelling British passports).
2. Return it to the customer, along with any other documents they sent us.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Old Blue passports: identity interviews

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when a customer will need to attend an interview and what to do if the customer does not need to attend an interview, when you are processing an application to renew or replace an Old Blue passport.

Customers do not need to attend a standard identity interview, if all the following steps apply:

1. The customer has met all of the documentary requirements in this guidance (for example, they have provided the correct documentation, or the operational team leader (OTL) has confirmed a passport can be issued on balance of probability).
2. We have found the customer's original passport records.
3. The names, date of birth, place of birth and nationality claim details matches the information in the documents the customer sent us.
4. The customer's documents and additional information confirm they have always held the identity.
5. The referee has confirmed the customer's identity.

You must send a customer for an identity interview when:

- you cannot find a customer's passport in our records
- they are included on the Old Blue passport as a spouse or partner of the person that was issued the passport and they are applying for their first British passport

If you have doubts about the customer's identity or suspect potential fraud, you must refer the application to the Counter Fraud team (CFT). If CFT suspects fraud, they may conduct additional checks and an identity interview.

You must select the correct option on the system to send, or not send, the customer to interview. If you are not sending the customer for interview you must add a case note, stating that the customer's identity and nationality details matches HM Passport Office Old Blue records and they do not need to attend an interview.

DAP: not sending for interview

As Old Blue passport applications are processed as first time adults, DAP (Digital Application Processing) will create an **Interview appointment** task.

When you, the DAP examiner, have completed the examination tasks on the application you must then process the **Interview appointment** task.

If the customer does not need to attend an interview, in the Interview appointment task you must:

1. Select **No – interview not required**.
2. Enter the reason why you are waiving the interview.
3. Select **Save**.

DAP will refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL), to approve your **interview not required** decision.

AMS: not sending for interview

As Old Blue passport applications are processed as first time adults, the system may try to automatically send the application into the interview process.

The application will not be selected for interview until you, the AMS (Application Management System) examiner, complete the examination process and select the **Exam complete** button.

If AMS selects the application for interview and the AMS screen shows Going For Interview, and you do not need the customer to attend an interview, you must:

1. Click **Not Interview**.
2. Add a case note to record why the customer does not need to attend an interview.
3. Refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL) to approve your decision for the customer not to attend an interview.

Sent for interview: customer not required to attend

DAP will automatically send the customer an email advising them to contact our Contact Centres to book an interview, if you send the customer for an interview in error.

If the customer contacts the Customer Service Management team (CSMT) because they believe they do not need to attend an interview, CSMT will generate an interview exemption request task to return the application to an examiner.

If you send the customer for an interview in error on AMS (Application Management System), you must recall the application from the interview process and contact the customer.

Related content

[Contents](#)