



Home Office

# Biometric reuse

Version 5.0

This guidance sets the policy requirements for the reuse of biometric information for immigration and citizenship purposes.

# Contents

Contents.....	2
About this guidance.....	3
In this guidance .....	3
For the purpose of this guidance .....	3
Out of scope .....	4
Contacts .....	4
Publication .....	4
Changes from last version of this guidance .....	4
Introduction: Biometric reuse.....	5
Reuse of previously enrolled biometric information.....	6
Reuse: the general approach .....	6
Eligible cohorts.....	6
Change to visa status.....	7
Replacement of lost or stolen BRPs and BRCs .....	7
Unable to enrol biometric information.....	9
Requirements .....	9
Unable to attend a biometric enrolment event in the UK .....	9
Detained in the UK.....	10
Reduced operational capacity .....	11
Prioritising individuals .....	11
Higher priority individuals .....	11
Lower priority individuals.....	12
Children: safeguarding.....	12
Other urgent requests that do not meet the higher priority criteria.....	12
Requiring new facial image .....	13
Facial image process checks.....	13
Identity: preventing abuse .....	15

# About this guidance

This guidance sets out the circumstances the Secretary of State may consider reusing previously enrolled biometric information from individuals who are in the UK and who make an application for leave or for British citizenship, or who are liable to have their fingerprints and facial image taken under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Biometric reuse will be rolled out incrementally to ensure processes are developed to improve the individual's experience while maintaining public safety.

This guidance will be updated whenever biometric reuse is rolled out to new application categories or where the requirements for biometric reuse change.

## In this guidance

'Official' means:

- immigration, nationality and asylum caseworkers
- immigration and border force officers

'Senior official' means:

- a senior executive officer or above

'Individual' means:

- applicants, claimants, individuals, and dependants

## For the purpose of this guidance

Biometric immigration document means:

- a biometric residence permit (BRP) which is a card issued to foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and granted over 6 months leave to enter or remain
- a vignette that is valid for more than 6 months
- online evidence of an immigration status

Biometric residence card (BRC) means either:

- a card issued to non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who were exercising rights under EU Law – this also includes permanent residence cards and derivative residence cards
- a card issued to non-EEA nationals granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme

## Out of scope

This guidance does not cover biometric information taken for the purpose of issuing a UK Passport or for entry clearance applications made overseas where fingerprint biometrics are required before the individual travels to the UK.

## Contacts

If you have any queries 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 Identity Security Policy Team with your comments.

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 Rules and Forms team.

## Publication

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

- version **5.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **08 February 2024**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to make it clear that we are unable to offer biometric reuse for individuals who are overseas.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Introduction: Biometric reuse

This page tells individuals and officials what biometric reuse means.

Biometrics, in the form of fingerprints and facial images, underpin the current UK immigration system to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. They enable comprehensive checks to be made against immigration and criminality records to identify those who pose a threat to our national security, public safety, immigration controls or are likely to breach our laws if they are allowed to come to the UK.

Biometric reuse is the use of biometric information that was previously enrolled for a previous immigration application or purpose. Fingerprint biometric information will be rechecked against law enforcement fingerprint databases, including the police series of fingerprint databases, Ident1. This is to enable officials to conduct suitability checks on the individual.

The policy aim is to require foreign nationals to enrol their fingerprint biometric information only once so they can be used whenever the individual makes a fresh application. This is intended to reduce the circumstances where individuals are required to attend a biometric enrolment event to enrol their fingerprint biometric information. Guidance on biometric enrolments is set out in: [biometric enrolment](#).

Whenever fingerprint biometric information is reused, it will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes. The policy on the retention and use of biometric information is set out in: [retention and usage of biometric information](#), which includes how biometric information is used and when it must be deleted.

In most circumstances, individuals must enrol a new facial image every time they apply for an immigration or a nationality product, as their face changes unlike fingerprints. However, there are exceptional circumstances where officials will allow facial biometric information to be reused.

Individuals cannot use the application process to update any biographical changes until after their application is decided when they should use the [Update My Details \(UMD\)](#) process.

Biometric reuse is currently unavailable for individuals who are outside of the UK. The infrastructure is not in place to ensure the individual's identity is assured to a reasonable degree of certainty and confirm that the individual who previously enrolled their fingerprints is the same individual who making an application and is seeking to reuse them.

## Related content

[Contents](#)

[Biometric enrolment](#)

[Retention and usage of biometric information](#)

[Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

# Reuse of previously enrolled biometric information

This page tells officials when previously enrolled biometric information can be routinely reused as an alternative to a new biometric enrolment.

## Reuse: the general approach

Individuals who are in the UK and hold a valid biometric residence permit (BRP) or a biometric residence card (BRC) will be allowed to have their fingerprint biometric information reused if they are:

- applying for leave under the [Graduate](#) route
- applying for leave under the [Skilled Worker](#) and [Student](#) routes
- a dependant partner of an individual applying under the above routes
- a dependant child of an individual applying under the Skilled Worker and Student routes
- adults applying individually for settlement on the [Protection](#) or [Innovator](#) routes (as main applicants)
- children applying individually for settlement on the [Protection](#) route
- applying for leave under the [Child Student](#) route
- applying to replace a BRP or BRC following a loss or theft

## Eligible cohorts

Individuals listed in [Reuse: the general approach](#) applying for leave under the Graduate, Skilled Worker, Student, Settlement Protection, Innovator and Child Student routes or Indefinite leave to remain (refugee and humanitarian protection) will not need to attend a biometric enrolment event where they meet the requirements to enable their fingerprints to be reused. However, these individuals **must** still upload a new facial image.

The requirements are as follows:

- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has previously enrolled and retained the individual's fingerprint biometric information or the individual is permanently unable to enrol their fingerprints
- the individual must be in the UK
- individuals must hold a valid BRP or BRC
- must be aged 5 years old or over
- the existing facial photograph stored on the Immigration and Asylum Biometric System **must not** be older than 10 years, or 5 years for individuals aged under 16, at the date the application is made and the individual uploads a new facial image
- **must** use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app (the App)

Individuals who are not able to complete all steps in the UK Immigration: ID Check successfully will be subject to additional checks. This may delay the processing of their application.

Officials **must** require individuals to re-enrol their biometric information, both a facial image and fingerprints, where they are unable to resolve the individuals' identity. This is to ensure their identity can be confirmed by matching their fingerprints against the previously enrolled set.

Individuals who make a successful application and are a visa national will receive a new BRP alongside their eVisa, which contains the fingerprints they previously enrolled and the facial image they provided when using the UK Immigration: ID Check app. Non-visa nationals who make a successful application will only receive an eVisa. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes. Most BRP cards have an expiry date that [does not go beyond 31 December 2024](#).

The facial image captured by the App will be displayed on the individual's eVisa which they can view and share by using the [view and prove your immigration status](#) service and, where issued, on the individual's biometric residence permit.

If the individual's biographical details are incorrect, they **must**:

- notify the [Biometric Immigration Document Management Unit \(BIDMU\)](#) if they hold a BRP card
- request to amend their information by accessing their customer account using the [Update My Details](#) function

## Change to visa status

Where a decision is made to change the status of a non-visa nationality so they are required to apply for a visa before travelling to the UK, officials must contact any affected individuals who are residing in the UK and only hold an eVisa to issue them a BRP card. The individual **must not** be required to reenrol their biometric information.

Individuals who hold a valid eVisa and are visa nationals will need a BRP to provide carriers, such as airlines, with physical proof of their immigration status when travelling to the UK. They should continue to use their eVisa to prove their rights to work in the UK and rent in England.

## Replacement of lost or stolen BRPs and BRCs

Officials will reuse the biometric information of individuals who apply for a replacement BRP or BRC card, where:

- UKVI has retained the individual's fingerprint biometric information
- the information on the face of the card and the chip remains the same as the previous document

- the individual is in the UK
- the individual is aged 5 years or over
- the expiry date of the card remains unchanged
- the facial photograph on the document will not be older than 10 years, or 5 years for cards issued to individuals aged under 16, on the date the replacement card expires
- individuals have not changed their address in the last 6-months

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided when they last enrolled their biometrics. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

Officials must require individuals to re-enrol their biometric information, both a facial image and fingerprints, where they have concerns about the identity or suitability of the individual. This is to ensure their identity can be confirmed by matching their fingerprints against the previously enrolled set.

#### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Retention and usage of biometric information

#### **Related external links**

[Immigration Rules Appendix Graduate](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Worker](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Student](#)

[View and prove your immigration status](#)

[Biometric residence permits \(BRPs\): Report a problem with your new BRP - GOV.UK](#)

[Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details: Overview - GOV.UK](#)



# Unable to enrol biometric information

This page tells officials about the circumstances they can exceptionally reuse the biometric information of individuals who are in the UK and are unable to enrol their biometric information and cannot use the UK Immigration: ID check app.

## Requirements

In most circumstances, where an individual is required to enrol their biometric information, they must do so. Even where they meet the requirements for their fingerprint biometrics to be reused, they will still normally be required to provide a new facial image as part of their application unless it meets the requirements for it to be reused.

Officials can only exceptionally reuse the fingerprint biometric information of individuals, where UKVI still retains their fingerprint biometric information, who are:

- physically unable to attend a biometric enrolment event or use the UK Immigration: ID check app and were previously issued a biometric residence permit (BRP) or a biometric residence card (BRC)
- detained pending removal from the UK and make an application for leave, and a biometric immigration document and officials refuse the application

## Unable to attend a biometric enrolment event in the UK

Officials **must** consider reusing the biometric information, both face and fingerprints, of individuals who are physically unable to attend a biometric enrolment event where other alternative options, including the use of mobile biometric enrolment, are not viable. However, this only applies where UKVI already holds the individual's biometric information, and they continue to resemble the most recent facial image held by UKVI.

Officials must not reuse biometric information where other options set out in the biometric enrolment guidance are available, such as the use of mobile enrolment or deferring the enrolment until a time the individual is able to enrol them. The types of circumstances where biometric reuse would be appropriate include (but are not limited to) where individuals are:

- incapacitated through disability, illness, injury or medical treatment
- lack the mental capacity to cooperate with the enrolment process
- isolated to avoid contact with others to prevent harm, injury or illness

Where an official considers an individual meets the requirements and would benefit from having their biometric information reused, that official must submit a request supported by a senior official to a Senior Civil Servant (Grade 5 or above) responsible for the application route, alongside the options they have explored including any policy advice, for consideration.

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the last facial image they provided as part of their previous biometric enrolment. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

## Detained in the UK

Officials must reuse any previously enrolled biometric information from individuals who make an unsuccessful application while they are detained pending removal. Their reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for biometric retention purposes.

Individuals who are released from immigration detention in the UK and are granted leave must apply for a biometric immigration document upon release and enrol their biometric information.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Biometric enrolment guidance

# Reduced operational capacity

This page tells officials which categories of cases should be prioritised for biometric enrolment or reuse when biometric enrolment services in the UK are operating at severely reduced capacity because of a critical incident or event, such as a pandemic.

Officials **must** consider reusing biometric information where:

- individuals are in the UK
- individuals already hold a biometric residence permit (BRP)
- the facial image printed on the BRP will not be older than 10 years, or 5 years for cards issued to individuals aged under 16, before the leave or card expires
- individuals are aged 5 years or over

Individuals who make a successful application will receive a new card, which contains the fingerprints and the facial image they provided as part of their previous biometric enrolment or an eVisa. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

## Prioritising individuals

When biometric enrolment services are operating at a reduced capacity, officials will need to prioritise individuals for biometric enrolment or reuse. Individuals will be split into 2 cohorts, higher priority and lower priority individuals.

## Higher priority individuals

Officials will prioritise the following groups of individuals for either a biometric enrolment appointment or for biometric reuse:

- fee waiver local authority supported with no leave (overstayer/out of time)
- fee waiver with no leave (overstayer/out of time)
- Article 3 Human Rights claim on medical grounds
- destitute asylum claimants who are accommodated under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and are to be granted leave
- potential victims of trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and any other urgent safeguarding matter
- unaccompanied minors
- babies born in the UK to foreign national parents holding limited leave
- fee waiver with existing recourse to public funds with 3C leave
- aged over 70

All individuals who meet the higher priority criteria will either have their previously enrolled biometric information used to complete their application or be invited to attend a Service and Support Centre to enrol their biometric information. Where an individual has been assessed as vulnerable, you must consider whether biometric enrolment would be preferable to biometric reuse.

## Lower priority individuals

Officials must treat individuals whose circumstances meet the criteria below as lower priority, which includes those with:

- 3C leave (section 3(c) of the Immigration Act 1971)
- where individuals have not raised any safeguarding, destitution or other hardship issues

Lower priority individuals must wait until biometric enrolment appointments become available unless changes to their circumstances means they need to be treated as a higher priority individual.

## Children: safeguarding

Where a member of a household is required to enrol their biometric information and is aged under 16 and is part of a family group, you **must** require at least one adult member of the household to enrol their biometric information at the same time to ensure a responsible adult is available at the event.

Officials must check whether members of the same household have submitted separate applications.

## Other urgent requests that do not meet the higher priority criteria

Individuals in the UK may submit urgent requests if they consider they have compassionate and compelling reasons to be considered for biometric reuse or a priority biometric enrolment. This process is **not** designed for urgent treatment for non-vulnerability reasons.

However, where officials identify individuals who they consider urgently need their application to be processed, they must submit a request supported by a senior official to a Senior Civil Servant (Grade 5 or above) responsible for the application route, alongside the options they have explored including any policy advice, to approve.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Requiring new facial image

This section tells officials about the process for requesting a new facial image when the image provided cannot be printed on a BRP card.

Where an individual fails to submit a digitised facial image that meets the requirements set out in the biometric enrolment guidance and the [digitised photo standards](#), and the BIDMU team notify you they are unable to produce a BRP because the facial image cannot be printed onto the card, officials must write to the applicant using the [initial request template](#) if the individual has not already provided an acceptable facial image.

BIDMU will advise officials whether it receives any further failed images from the individual.

## Facial image process checks

Where officials notify individuals they require a new facial image, the individual will need to log into their UKVI customer account. They will need to sign into Update My Details (UMD) Status Photo Update function to enable them to upload a new facial image enabling officials to complete checks on it to enable it to be printed onto the individual's BRP card.

Individuals aged over 10 are strongly advised to complete all the photo enrolment steps, including the liveness scan, as this will improve the likelihood the new uploaded facial image will be acceptable for printing on their BRP card. Liveness scan should only be skipped where a person may have a medical condition, that could be triggered by the liveness scan.

---

**Official – sensitive: start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

## **Official – sensitive: end of section**

---

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Biometric information: enrolment (sharepoint.com)

[Initial request template](#)

[Follow on reminder \(no photo provided – outside of SLA\)](#)

[Final on reminder \(no photo provided – outside of SLA\)](#)

### **Related external links**

[Biometric information: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK](#)

[Get a passport photo: Digital photos - GOV.UK](#)

# Identity: preventing abuse

This section tells officials what to do if they have concerns about the identity of individuals who have sought to have their biometric information reused.

Where you have concerns about the identity of the individual you **must** refer the case to a senior official and, where necessary, require them to enrol their biometric information. This includes when you have doubts on whether the facial photograph, they have submitted is a true likeness or whether you suspect the documents used to support the application to be either a counterfeit or a forgery.

You can find guidance on examining scanned documents and checking for impostors can be found on the Migration and Borders Guidance platform. You can also find images of authentic documents by checking document image archive.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Scanned documents

Impostors

Document image archive

---

**Official – sensitive: start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.



The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

**Official – sensitive: end of section**

---

**Related content**  
[Contents](#)