



Home Office

**Immigration Removals, Enforcement and Detention  
General Instructions**

# **Identity management (Enforcement)**

**Version 4.0**

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# About this guidance

This guidance tells Immigration Enforcement officers about how they may determine an encountered person's true identity. This includes taking, storing and sharing the person's fingerprints.

## 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 Enforcement Policy.

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 **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **24 May 2024**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

Age dispute cases who are referred for prosecution.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Fingerprinting (enforcement cases)

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers who they may fingerprint for immigration purposes and the procedures for taking fingerprints.

## Page contents

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- [Fingerprints: requests for expert statements](#)

## Powers to fingerprint

The powers relevant to Immigration Enforcement, to fingerprint for immigration purposes arise from either:

- [paragraph 18\(2\) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#) – this must be used for identity purposes only to determine if they are known to the Home Office (for example, when someone is located or encountered during an operational visit)
- [Section 141 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#) – this should be used for general immigration purposes (for example raising new records, processing existing immigration cases, and to fingerprint family members and dependents of a known offender) whilst processing immigration functions

## Paragraph 18(2) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act

Powers under paragraph 18(2) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act must only be exercised where it is necessary to **identify** the individual to determine if they are an immigration offender or known to the Home Office by checking against existing records, (for example, when someone is located or encountered during an operational visit).

[Paragraph 18\(2\) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#), gives those authorised to do so, a power to take fingerprints of a person who is detained or liable to be detained under [paragraph 16 of schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971](#) as amended (the 1971 Act). [Paragraph 2\(4\) of schedule 3 to the 1971 Act](#) states:

'In relation to detention under sub-paragraph (2) or (3) paragraphs 17 and 18 of schedule 2 to this Act shall apply as they apply in relation to detention under paragraph 16 of that schedule'.

Paragraph 16(2) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act (as amended), states that if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a person is someone in respect of whom directions may be given under paragraphs 8 to 10A or 12 to 14 of [schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#), they may be detained pending:

- a decision whether or not to give such directions
- their removal in pursuance of such directions

## Section 141 of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999

[Section 141 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#), as amended, gives those authorised to do so a power to take fingerprints for **immigration** reasons from the following specified categories:

- a person, who, on arrival in the UK, fails to produce a valid passport with photograph or some other document satisfactorily establishing his identity and nationality or citizenship
- any person refused leave to enter the United Kingdom but temporarily admitted under [paragraph 21 of schedule 2 to Immigration Act 1971](#) (the 1971 Act) if an immigration officer reasonably suspects that they might break any condition imposed on him relating to residence or reporting
- any person in respect of whom the Secretary of State has decided either:
  - to make a deportation order
  - [section 32\(5\) of the UK Borders Act 2007](#) (automatic deportation of foreign criminals) applies
- any person who requires leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom but does not have it
- any person detained under [paragraph 16 of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#) or arrested under [paragraph 17 of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#)
- any person who has made a claim for asylum
- any person who is a family members of any of those above, or a dependant of someone subject to a deportation order

Fingerprinting under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, also introduced a number of [safeguards for taking fingerprints from children](#) or [vulnerable adults](#), and for the [retention and disposal of fingerprints](#).

## Summary: when to use each power

The table below summarises, which of the fingerprinting powers should be used within some of the main immigration actions (this list is not exhaustive):

| Scenario   | Paragraph 18(2) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act | Sections 141-143 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 |
|--|---|---|
| to establish identity  | Yes   | No  |
| to raise a new immigration record                                      | No  | Yes   |
| to process an existing immigration record                              | No  | Yes   |
| to require attendance for fingerprinting                               | No  | Yes   |
| to fingerprint family members and dependants                           | No  | Yes   |
| to retain the fingerprints after positive identification has been made | No  | Yes   |

## Procedures for fingerprinting

Those authorised to take fingerprints are:

- a police constable
- an immigration officer
- a prison officer
- an officer of the Secretary of State authorised for the purpose
- a person who is employed by a contractor, in connection with the discharge of the contractor's duties under a detention centre contract.

You must take fingerprints as soon as possible after establishing that a person and any family members or dependants is / are liable to be fingerprinted.

Fingerprints may be recorded by either:

- [ink and paper](#) method onto an IFB1 form
- [electronic scan](#) using:
  - police livescan
  - Home Office livescan
  - Morpho Rapid

Where you have fingerprinted a person under either the powers in the 1971 Act or the powers in the 1999 Act, it is policy to comply with the relevant parts of the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) codes of practice](#) provisions on fingerprinting as modified by the [Immigration \(PACE Codes of Practice No 2 and amendment\) Direction 2000](#) and the [Immigration \(PACE Codes of Practice\) Direction 2013](#).

## Ink and paper

If you take fingerprints on an IFB1 form (using the ink and paper method), you must:

- tell the applicant they are to be fingerprinted and explain that it is normal procedure
- where prints are being taken under section 141 of the 1999 Act, give the applicant form IS.86 which explains:
  - their liability to be fingerprinted
  - why they are to be fingerprinted
  - when the fingerprints will be destroyed
- fully complete the written details on form IFB1 (do not use any other form) including the reason for taking fingerprints and if they are required for a [Eurodac](#) search and the Eurodac category
- check fingerprint quality and that form IFB1 has been completed correctly, if fingerprint quality is inadequate destroy and take another set
- do not make or keep copies of the IFB1 form

You must transmit them via a 'cardscan' workstation (where available) ensuring you have fully completed all demographic details. If cardscan is not available, send the form by internal post or 1st class recorded delivery within 24 hours to IFB, who will scan the fingerprint form into IABS.

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## Electronic scans

Fingerprints taken using police livescan units should be solely for the searching or verification against fingerprints already recorded on the IABS. Scan results are not recorded or saved on the IABS

Home Office livescan units are non-mobile units (generally office based) and are suitable for taking fingerprints for immigration purposes (under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999). Fingerprints taken on these units are saved and recorded on the IABS once the scan has been transmitted. All demographic details must be completed in full before electronically transmitting the scans to the immigration fingerprint bureau (IFB).

Morpho RapID units are mobile units used by (for example) by immigration and compliance (ICE) teams. See Morpho RapID for more details.

## Taking fingerprints to establish identity: paragraph 18(2)



Fingerprints taken to establish identify of an individual under paragraph 18(2), must be taken on either form IFB1 or a Morpho RapID unit. Local files must be minuted to the effect that a search has taken place and the result.

You **must** send any IFB1s to IFB for searching, with a clear indication that they have been taken under paragraph 18(2) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act so that they can be processed appropriately and deleted immediately after checks have been made.

## Attendance for fingerprinting: s.142 of the 1999 Act

Normally, those subject to fingerprinting are fingerprinted immediately so that fingerprint results are known when considering service of papers and detention.

However, under [section 142 of the 1999 Act](#), they may be required to attend at a specified place for fingerprinting. The person must be given a period of at least 7 days in which to attend). Where this is necessary, form IS.96 (or equivalent) must be used. Those who fail to comply may be arrested without warrant by a police constable or immigration officer (IO), unless the requirement has ceased to have effect. Before such a person is released, their fingerprints can be taken, if necessary by moving them first to an appropriate place to do so.

In family cases, with a child under the age of 5 years, a note must be placed on the appropriate CID 'calendar event' to remind the reporting centre officer that once the child has reached 5 years of age, they must be fingerprinted as soon as possible. In these circumstances, officers must bear in mind Home Office policy on children and reporting. If it is possible for members of the local family team to fingerprint the child during an invited family returns process meeting or a welfare visit, using a mobile fingerprinting kit, this is to be preferred to the setting up of a required one-off reporting event.

Should the family be reported and confirmed as missing at a later stage, IFB fingerprint records will be the best means of identification for the Missing Persons Bureau, who will lead the investigation to trace the family.

## Fingerprinting dependants: s.141 of the 1999 Act

[Section 141 \(group F\) of the 1999 Act](#) allows for the fingerprinting of an individual who is a family member of, or dependant of, someone who falls into one of the categories A-E as defined within section 141.

Section 141(13A) of the 1999 Act defines a person as a 'family member' of another individual on the basis that they do not have a right of abode, indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK in their own right, and they are either:

- the individual's partner
- the individual's child
- any other child who is living in the same household and under the care of the individual
- the parents of the individual, where the individual is a child

- an adult dependant relative of the individual

Section 141(14) of the 1999 Act defines a person as a 'dependant' of another individual on the basis that they do not have a right of abode, indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK in their own right, and they are either:

- the individual's spouse
- the individual's child (child is defined here as under 18)

If any family members or dependants are juveniles, or have been recognised as being vulnerable, you must refer to the guidance on [Fingerprinting juveniles](#) and [Fingerprinting vulnerable adults](#) respectively.

## Fingerprinting juveniles: safeguards

For the purposes of this guidance, a juvenile is any person below 18 years of age.

It is Home Office policy to defer fingerprinting a child until 5 years of age, when their fingerprints will become fully developed.

Fingerprints may not be taken from a person between the ages of 5 and 16 under s.141 of the 1999 Act unless in the presence of an adult (18 years or older) who may be:

- the child's parent
- the child's guardian
- a person who, for the time being, takes responsibility for the child (see 141(3) and (4) of the 1999 Act), but who is **not**:
  - an officer of the Secretary of State, that is, a Home Office employee,
  - a police officer
  - a prison officer
  - a person employed under a detention centre contract
  - a person authorised by the Secretary of State to take fingerprints

In all cases the decision to fingerprint the child must be confirmed by a chief immigration officer (CIO) (or other suitably designated person depending on the type of 'authorised person' who is to take the fingerprints) ([section 141 \(12\) of the 1999 Act](#)). See also details of the [Police 'appropriate adult scheme'](#).

In accordance with [section 141\(13\) of the 1999 Act](#), where it is reasonably believed that a person is between the age 16 and 18, they can be fingerprinted without the presence of a responsible adult and without the necessary authorisation. The exception to this is for vulnerable persons who are reasonably believed to be between the ages of 16 and 18, who require authorisation to fingerprint and the presence of a responsible adult, irrespective of age, in line with [Fingerprinting vulnerable adults guidance](#).

Force must not be used to take the fingerprints of a pregnant woman, child or young person under the age of 18. See also: [Use of force when taking fingerprints](#) and guidance on use of force and restraint.

**It is policy to adopt the above safeguards for all fingerprints, whether taken under the 1999 Act or paragraph 18(2).**

Any person aged 14 years and above who has claimed asylum or made an irregular crossing of the UK border from outside the EU must be fingerprinted under the [Eurodac regulation](#).

CIOs may only refuse to authorise the taking of fingerprints in exceptional circumstances, identified below, and must refer to an Inspector grade or above if refusing authority:

- where there is a serious health risk to either the child or a member of staff
- if the child is distressed

Where a deferral of fingerprinting is made, arrangements must be made to fingerprint the child as soon as possible thereafter.

## Fingerprinting vulnerable adults

For the purpose of this guidance, a vulnerable adult, as defined by the Department of Health, is a person

‘who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation’

In line with standard Home Office policy, a person is considered an adult once they reach 18 years of age.

Whilst neither [section 141 of the 1999 Act](#), nor the [PACE codes of practice](#), cover the fingerprinting of vulnerable adults for immigration purposes, the Human Rights Act 1998 places a positive obligation on Home Office staff to take reasonable action, within their powers, to safeguard the rights of individuals who may be at risk.

As part of the Home Office duty of care towards vulnerable adults, it is policy to apply the same procedure when fingerprinting vulnerable adults as when fingerprinting juveniles between 5 and 16 years of age and dependants. Fingerprints may not be taken from a vulnerable adult unless in the presence of an adult (18 years or older) who is that person’s parent or a family member, guardian, care worker or other person who, for the time being, takes responsibility for the care of that person. In the latter case, that person may not be a person authorised to take fingerprints, see [procedures for fingerprinting](#). As in the case of fingerprinting juveniles between 5 and 16 years of age, the decision to do so must be confirmed by a chief immigration officer (CIO) or other suitably designated authorised person, and all other safeguards and considerations applied (see above).

## Police ‘appropriate adult scheme’

The police maintain a local list of appropriate adults and it may be possible to arrange for a person listed under the appropriate adult scheme to attend a local police station in the following circumstances:

- where a lone vulnerable adult or juvenile is unexpectedly encountered during an enforcement operation and needs to be fingerprinted for immigration purposes, in addition to an initial welfare interview being held at the local police station
- where the police have detained a vulnerable adult or juvenile without Immigration Enforcement presence and inform the Home Office that there is an immigration interest and that person needs to be fingerprinted for immigration purposes

## Use of reasonable force when taking fingerprints

[Section 146 \(1\) of the 1999 Act](#), as amended by [paragraph 5 of schedule 1 of the Immigration Act 2014](#), states that:

‘an immigration officer exercising any power conferred on him by the Immigration Acts may, if necessary, use reasonable force’.

However, immigration officers (IOs) must not exercise their power to use reasonable force (see Use of force guidance ) unless they have been trained in its use and the person has already been arrested or detained.

**Only those IOs designated to exercise the existing power of arrest and the powers of entry, search and seizure are suitably trained.**

Trained officers must make every attempt to gain compliance of the individual before exercising the use of reasonable force. The use of force must only be as far as necessary to obtain the fingerprints and it must also always remain proportionate.

## Fingerprinting of corpses

Under no circumstances may officers agree to fingerprint corpses using the [Morpho RapID](#) equipment, or lend the equipment for police officers to use themselves.

Police officers who require post mortem prints to be checked against the IABS database must take them themselves, using ink and card or a police digital unit, and submit them to IFB. They must contact IFB before they submit the fingerprints.

## Fingerprints: requests for expert statements

In cases where an individual is suspected of having multiple identities, an expert statement may be required to confirm that suspicion, especially where the decision may be taken to prosecute.

Where suspect an individual has multiple identities, you must make a request for an expert statement by email to IFB mailbox giving full details of all identities used by the suspect. IFB will arrange for fingerprint experts to prepare and forward to the relevant crime intelligence team expert witness statements for all prosecution cases.

Fingerprint experts will only prepare statements if they have hard copies of the IFB1 form for all identities used by the suspect. It is therefore imperative that all IFB1 forms are sent to IFB as soon as possible. In the case of an urgent request for a statement where the IFB1 form is still at the port or enforcement office, courier the form to IFB.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Fingerprint checks with other agencies

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers who they may share fingerprint data with and the processes for doing so.

For general guidance and standards for sharing data with other agencies, see [Data sharing in enforcement cases: standards of operational practice](#).

## Page contents

[Eurodac](#)

[Five Country Conference \(FCC\) Data Sharing Protocol](#)

[Section 20 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#) allows for information held by the police to be supplied to the Secretary of State for the purposes of immigration control. It has been agreed with the police that immigration officers have access to the police biometric database for such purposes.

Fingerprints of foreign nationals routinely taken for immigration purposes must be searched through the police biometric database known as IDENT1 where one of the following criteria is met:

- anyone who has made an asylum claim in their own right
- a dependant, aged at least 5 years of age, of a person who has made an asylum claim
- anyone who has had an enforcement decision served on them (for example, service of RED.0001 or IS.96)
- anyone who is refused leave to enter at port
- anyone who is taken to police custody
- anyone who has consented to their fingerprints being checked

Officers with access to livescan or cardscan can request that fingerprints are also searched against IDENT1 via that system. Note that all asylum seekers over the age of 16 are routinely searched against IDENT1, although the check requires this to be manually verified on livescan or cardscan at enrolment. If the search results in a positive match against the police database, an automatic email response will be returned to the requesting officer's or team's mailbox.

On receipt of a PNC200 request form, Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) will email the Police National Computer (PNC) report to a PNC authorised officer on a specific email inbox. You will be automatically emailed any 'no match' results. Any other request, such as a search by Interpol or a foreign immigration service, must be authorised by a chief immigration officer (CIO) and made through IFB in the first instance.

## Eurodac

The Eurodac system is a Europe wide fingerprint database which was established by community regulation supporting the Dublin II Regulation and therefore forms part of

European Community asylum law. The fingerprints of all asylum applicants from the age of 14 are recorded on Eurodac. The Eurodac Regulation was adopted to establish a computerised central database of fingerprint images, as well as the electronic means for European Union (EU) member states to transmit and store fingerprint images and to receive results from the central unit database based in Luxembourg.

Eurodac identifies:

- those over the age of 14 who have applied for asylum in a member state after 15 January 2003
- certain categories of those who enter illegally or are found on the EU territory unlawfully after 15 January 2003, these are included because they may also be subject to the provisions of Dublin if they later claim asylum

Comprehensive checks and quick responses from Eurodac (maximum 24 hours) will result in a greater proportion of UK applicants being identified and returned to other EU states under the provisions of the Dublin Convention.

The possible match or 'hit' identified by the Eurodac central unit will be transmitted automatically to IFB, who will manually verify that it is a match. The results of the Eurodac searches are then automatically emailed to the location code where the fingerprints were taken and to third country unit (TCU). It will be TCU's responsibility to inform the office where the application was made, obtain the file and take appropriate action under the Dublin mechanisms leading to the applicant's transfer. For further information see Third country cases: Referring and handling.

Should IFB be required to scan on any sets of fingerprints, form IFB1 must be fully completed with the individual's correct demographic data, reason for fingerprinting and correct Eurodac category code (should a Eurodac search be required).

The appropriate UK Eurodac category must be clearly marked on the fingerprint form (IFB1) as follows:

| <b>UK Eurodac category</b> | <b>UK definition</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Category 1 (mandatory)     | Asylum (main applicant and dependants) 14+ years old   |
| Category 2 (mandatory)     | Apprehended in connection with irregular crossing of UK border from outside EU territory. Non-asylum 14+ years old |
| Category 3 (discretionary) | Encountered illegally present in UK. Non-asylum 14+ years old  |

Eurodac data cannot be used for prosecution action against an applicant who is a Eurodac match. The data can only be used for the sole purpose of supporting the application of the Dublin convention and its successor, Dublin II.

Under no circumstances may immigration officers (IOs) carry out checks against Eurodac on behalf of the police.

## Five Country Conference (FCC) Data Sharing Protocol

[The Five Country Conference \(FCC\) Data Sharing Protocol](#) is an agreement between the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States of America to share and match data in certain circumstances.

Requests to check for a data match may be made through the Biometric case Management Team (BCMT). Any request must be based on good reason to suspect that there may be a match that would assist in the decision to remove or in the redocumentation process. Criteria to be considered includes:

- applicant admits having been to another FCC country
- applicant admits connections to another FCC country (having some form of status, having resided there, or having applied for a visa to travel there)
- applicant is suspected of having been to another FCC country
- applicant has suspected connections to another FCC country
- applicant's language or accent suggests they have been out of country of origin for longer than claimed, and in an FCC country during the intervening period
- applicant's knowledge of country of origin is poor suggesting they have not been there for some time, but in an FCC country instead

## The Biometric Case Management Team (BCMT)

The Biometric Case Management Team (BCMT) will:

- act as a central point of contact between UK Visas and Immigration or Immigration Enforcement and their international counterparts
- examine the data received then pass it to the relevant decision maker, with suggestions for possible actions, on a results pro-forma
- provide additional information on request
- assist with witness statements evidencing the fingerprint match for any appeal proceedings

### Related content

[Contents](#)



# Storage and destruction of fingerprints

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers how to store fingerprint data, their responsibility to keep the data secure and when to destroy the data.

All hardcopies of fingerprints must be held in the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB). Originals or copies of prints must not be attached to the Home Office file.

If you find original or copies of prints attached to a file, you must send these to IFB in a sealed envelope for correct filing, enclosing a covering note explaining where they were found.

Fingerprints taken under [paragraph 18 \(2\) of schedule 2 to the 1971 Act](#), as amended, are to confirm identity only, and must be deleted immediately once the identity check has been made. See [Taking fingerprints to establish identity](#).

See retaining and destroying biometric information for further details on the retention and destruction of fingerprints.

## Related content

[Contents](#)

# Using Morpho RapID units

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the use and storage of Morpho RapID mobile fingerprint devices.

The guidance in this section ([Using Morpho RapID units](#)) must be followed as a matter of course and applied firmly but not rigidly. All decisions need to be made on a case by case basis so there is scope for departing from this guidance at officers' discretion in limited exceptional circumstances. Officers must not forget their obligation to act in a proportionate and reasonable way consistent with human rights principles.

Establishing identity is a key objective on enforcement operations, and a mobile fingerprint device allows for biometric checks to be completed, enhancing the quality of investigations. Biometric information allows officers to make more accurate and informed decisions about a person's identity and immigration status.

Mobile fingerprint devices do not capture and record fingerprints. Templates of fingerprints are transmitted to the Immigration Asylum Biometric System (IABS) database and a search is made against existing records. A response is transmitted back to the unit indicating whether a possible match has been found. A fingerprint expert does not verify the results of these searches.

There are 2 typical scenarios in which a Morpho RapID unit can be used during an enforcement operation:

- Use of Morpho RapID: exploratory examination (see below)
- Use of Morpho RapID: administrative interviews (see below)

## **Use of Morpho RapID: exploratory examination**

On arrival at any premises or location, you may seek the voluntary cooperation of members of the public to explore provisionally whether they are related to the enquiry you are conducting. As in any other form of official discourse with a member of the public, you should identify yourself and your purpose at the outset.

The general purpose of inviting people to cooperate with exploratory questioning (see Exploratory examination interviews) is to eliminate them from enquiries. As part of this exploratory examination, you may, with the fully informed consent of the person concerned, use Morpho RapID to confirm the person's identity. You must explain that:

- fingerprints will be checked against Home Office records to confirm their identity
- the person does not have to give their consent
- they can withdraw their consent until such time as the check is made
- the person's fingerprints will not be retained

You must fully record details of this consent in your pocket notebook (PNB). (see Record keeping during enforcement visits)

### **Use of Morpho Rapid: administrative interviews**

If, as a result of your initial enquiries, you have formed a reasonable suspicion that the person is liable to be detained as an immigration offender potentially liable for removal from the UK because you, for example (this is not an exhaustive list):

- cannot readily and easily confirm the person's identity to your satisfaction
- suspect the person has provided false information
- suspect the person has provided false documentation

you may, as part of your administrative interview (see Administrative enforcement interviews), exercise a power to take steps to establish identity, including by fingerprinting, conferred by [paragraph 18\(2\) of schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971](#), as amended.

You must attempt to use the mobile fingerprint device with the cooperation of the individual, explaining fully the power to obtain fingerprints. Provided that the person has been, or is liable to be, arrested or detained, and you are designated to use reasonable force (see [Use of reasonable force when taking fingerprints](#)), you may [use force](#) to obtain the fingerprints. Your explanation must include:

- why you suspect the person to be potentially liable for removal from the UK
- the fact that fingerprints will not be retained
- whether reasonable force was required to take the fingerprints

This will allow the individual an opportunity to quickly eliminate themselves from further enquiries and give you certainty as to the identity of the individual being questioned by checking against central records held about that person.

If necessary, you may request the person accompanies you to a location where the mobile device can obtain the required signal and successfully send and receive information relating to the fingerprints; this is provided that the officer in charge (OIC) is informed and neither the officer taking the fingerprints or the rest of the team is put at risk as a result.

In all cases you must record the full circumstances of the request, including all checks and their results and the related transmission identifier, in your pocket notebook (see Record keeping during enforcement visits).

You must also record which [power](#) the fingerprint check was conducted under and details of any [use of force](#) and why it was reasonable in the particular circumstances.

Where there is no match on the mobile fingerprint device, you may continue with your investigations to confirm identity and immigration status by contacting your local office or, outside of office hours, the National Command and Control Unit (NCCU).

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## Security and safe storage of Morpho RapID units

Units are encrypted for security purposes and all transmissions are automatically deleted from the units once the results have been viewed and the units are switched off. The units also include a camera facility to enable photographs to be compared against any possible match.

Morpho RapID units may only be used by an officer who has completed the mandatory training. A written record of this must be held by both the officer and the officer's line manager and will be required before an officer can be assigned to a unit.

Storage of units must be in line with the generic physical security guidance (see Clear desks and screens).

In addition, there are several security points that are specific to the Morpho RapID units:

- devices must be located in a secure area or office when not in use
- every team must have a list recording all the units they hold
- each team must have a designated officer responsible for the equipment and updating the log
- the log must be checked at the end of every shift to account for all units
- the log must detail the movement of each device on operations, noting the officer responsible on the day
- passwords must not be visible under any circumstances, this includes not sticking passwords to units and not leaving them under workstation keyboards
- the devices must not be used in situations where theft or risk to personal safety is increased
- the devices must not be visible in any vehicle or left unattended in public places

### Related content

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# Additional identity checks

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers which additional Home Office systems can be checked for biographical details, to help determine a person's true identity.

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## **Additional checks**

In cases of claimed British or European Economic Area (EEA) nationality where that identity cannot be established see: Common Travel Area and British nationality issues

DVA (Data Validation Application) is the HM Passport Office database that can be searched for any suspected British nationals where a trace has not been found on the above systems or when there is suspicion of forged documents or imposters.

Once you have completed all checks, you must record this in your pocket notebook (see Record keeping during enforcement visits), together with any results received.

### **Related content**

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# Age dispute cases: individuals claiming to be under 18

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers how to deal with age dispute cases.

You must read this guidance in conjunction with the Assessing age asylum instruction (even in non-asylum cases). You may also find it useful to consult Detention Services Order 14/2012 on managing age dispute cases in the detention estate. If an individual claims to be a child in detention the decision on whether to maintain detention or release must be made as promptly as possible. on managing age dispute cases in the detention estate. If an individual claims to be a child in detention the decision on whether to maintain detention or release must be made as promptly as possible.

## Age assessment categories

The Home Office will accept an individual as being under 18 (including those who have previously presented themselves as an adult) unless one or more of the following categories apply (this does not apply to individuals previously sentenced by the criminal courts as an adult):

- there is credible and clear documentary evidence that they are 18
- they are over a Merton compliant age assessment by a local authority is available stating that they are 18 years of age or over
- the Home Office has taken a decision to accept this view their physical appearance and / or demeanour very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age

No other credible evidence exists to the contrary the individual:

Prior to detention, gave a date of birth that would make them an adult and / or stated they were an adult, only claimed to be a child after a decision had been taken on their asylum claim, only claimed to be a child after they had been detained, has not provided credible and clear documentary evidence proving their claimed age, does not have a Merton compliant age assessment stating they are a child, does not have an unchallenged court finding indicating that they are a child and physical appearance and / or demeanour very strongly suggests that they are 18 years of age or over.

If one or more of the above categories apply, you must complete the following actions, where appropriate:

- before a decision is taken, the assessing officer must consult their countersigning officer (who is at least a chief immigration officer (CIO) or higher executing officer (HEO)) to act as a 'second pair of eyes', they must make their own assessment of the individual's age, if the countersigning officer agrees, the individual must be informed that their claimed age is not accepted

- all cases: the assessing officer must:
  - complete form IS.97M, signed by the countersigning officer
  - serve completed form IS.97M on the individual
  - send a copy of completed form IS.97M to Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU)
  - complete form BP7 (ASL.3596), sign and hold on file
  
- all cases: the assessing officer must update the individual's date of birth within CID 'Person Details' screen to reflect the Home Office's assessed date of birth, not the individual's claimed date of birth:
  - failure to complete this action will result in DEPMU refusing to allocate detention space in adult accommodation

all cases: if officers receive relevant new evidence, they must promptly review any previous decision to treat an individual as an adult.

## Age disputes and criminal prosecutions

Some of those who claim to be children and whose claimed ages are disputed by the Home Office, including those who have been determined to be a different age than claimed for immigration purposes, may also be subject to criminal investigation and, subsequently, prosecution for immigration related crimes, such as under section 24 or 25 of the Immigration Act 1971 (1971 Act). Any decision on age made by the Home Office for immigration purposes is not binding on the criminal courts. Where the court has doubt whether the individual is a child or not, they can make a separate decision on the age of an individual based on the available evidence or can order a Merton compliant age assessment. It is therefore essential when making referrals in these cases to a Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) team for potential criminal prosecution, that CFI are provided with the following information:

- that the claimant claimed to be a child but they were determined to be significantly over 18 or their claimed age was disputed (and they were referred for further consideration of their age by a local authority) by the Home Office
- attach copies of the age assessment decision letter (IS.97M or IS.98M), the age assessment minute sheet (ASL.3596 (BP7)) and the Initial decision on age factsheet

CFI teams are responsible for investigating organised immigration crime and disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups (OCGs) and deal with certain immigration related criminal investigations. Note, for information, that CFI officers must reveal the information to custody staff upon arrival in the custody suite and reveal to the CPS the information relating to the age dispute in the MG3 Form when referring for charging advice and any further information regarding this which may be requested by the CPS.

## Medical examinations and x-rays of minors



The Home Office does not commission medical reports or x-rays as part of any age assessment process. However, those relied on by applicants themselves and those commissioned by a local authority as part of its overall age assessment must be considered.

## Recording the age assessment process

All responses from the individual, local authorities or legal representatives must be noted and retained on file, since these may have a bearing on future appeal hearings.

Where an adult detainee is later determined to be a child there is a small risk that any detention not in accordance with paragraph [18B of Schedule 2 to the IA 1971](#) may be unlawful, even if while the individual was detained there was a reasonable belief that they were an adult. Caution must be exercised in favour of avoiding any unlawful detention.

As such, the threshold for individuals to enter, or remain, in detention following a claim to be a child is high. It is only met if both of the following factors are met:

- if the benefit of doubt afforded to all individuals prior to any assessment of their age, is then displaced because the individual has met one or more of the [categories](#) listed above
- a positive decision in favour of detention can be made

In order to proceed with or maintain the detention of any individual following a claim that they are a child, the threshold factors above **must** be considered and met, even where there are grounds for believing that the claim has been made to avoid detention.

During the threshold assessment, individuals will be appropriately managed. This is necessary to appropriately protect individuals during any threshold assessments to ensure they are not exposed to risks which might compromise their safety or welfare in the meantime. As such, the assessing age detention policy has in-built protections to ensure it is compliant with the section 55 duty (see Safeguarding children: advice from the Office of the Children's Champion).

Appropriate management will include (this is a non-exhaustive list):

- liaison with children's services and a clear agreement as to how and when they will contribute to a decision on the age of the individual, which might take the form of explaining in detail any current Merton compliant age assessment, or conducting a new one
- involvement of the local authority, where possible, to decide how and where the individual should be accommodated during this time; including providing a view on whether the individual can be released to accommodation that they will provide. If this cannot take place and the individual is to remain where they are, then a record should be made stating the perceived benefits to the individual in maintaining what is effectively detention

- a risk assessment of the individual, including consideration of the facilities of the immigration removal centre (IRC) (for example, only permitting limited observed contact with adults and / or segregating the individual from adult detainees as appropriate), will be conducted whilst a prompt decision on their age is made

Officers must also refer to '2.2 Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009' of Assessing age.

Whilst this policy is set at a high threshold and is compliant with the section 55 duty; the Home Office continually monitors the case details of individuals detained under this policy to ensure that, if necessary, the policy could be promptly amended to avoid the detention of children.

## Individual found to be a child

If none of the above [categories](#) apply (A-D), the individual must not be detained and must be released into the care of a local authority and treated as a child, in accordance with Processing asylum applications from children. Care must be taken to ensure the safety of the individual during any handover arrangements, preferably by agreement with the local authority.

## Individuals previously sentenced by the criminal courts as an adult

If a detained individual who had previously been sentenced by the criminal courts as an adult, later makes a claim to be a child, and:

- there is no credible evidence to support their claim to be a child
- detention is considered appropriate (having regard to the prospects of removal, the risk of absconding, and the risk posed to public)

you must manage the risk of detaining of an individual who may subsequently be found to be a child, by requesting the local authority to conduct a Merton compliant age assessment and submit the report to the Home Office **as soon as possible**.

The individual's detention may be maintained until a final decision on their age has been made, providing an assessment has been made addressing either the risks (to the public or of absconding) or the benefits to the individual of remaining where they are compared to release.

It is appropriate to treat these individuals differently from others because they have previously presented themselves as an adult during the criminal court procedure and any custodial sentence will have been served in an adult prison. Due to the imperative to protect the public from harm, and after careful consideration, it has been determined that they must not be released until it is clear that the Home Office's policy for the detention of adults does not apply.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Document verification and forgeries

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers what to do if they suspect encountered documents are fraudulent or forged.

## Examination of documents

If you suspect identity documents or marriage certificates are forgeries, contact your local forgery expert in the first instance.

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A non-European Economic Area (EEA) national who provides forged or fraudulent documentation and can provide no other evidence that they are the family member of an EEA national, is liable to removal action in the same way as any other non-EEA national who has attempted to gain leave by deception. They may also have committed criminal offences and consideration must also be given to referring the case for criminal investigation.

If a non-EEA national can provide other satisfactory evidence that they are the family member of an EEA national but has provided forged or fraudulent documentation as evidence of their right to reside, you must consider taking action under regulations 21B(1)(d) and (2) of the [Immigration \(European Economic Area\) Regulations 2006](#). These allow the Secretary of State to take an EEA decision against a person who fraudulently obtains, or attempts to obtain, a right to reside (or assists another person to do so).

#### Related content

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#### Related external links

[Public Register of Authentic travel and identity Documents Online \(PRADO\)](#)

# Photographs

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers when they may photograph a person for identity purposes.

[Paragraph 18\(2\) of schedule 2 to Immigration Act 1971](#), as amended by the [Immigration Act 2014](#), allows you to take the photograph of a person who has been detained or is liable to be detained under that section.

## **Related content**

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