



Home Office

# Home Office issued documents

Version 11.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue.

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# About: Home Office issued documents

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue and what they must do with them. It explains customers may send evidence of settlement in the UK as Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) and No Time Limit (NTL). The Home Office documents covered are:

- UKVI settlement letters, application registration cards
- immigration status document
- Home Office travel documents
- Home Office eVisa
- biometric residence cards and permits

## 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 **11.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **2 September 2024**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to tell examiners that UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) are replacing Biometric Residence Permits with eVisas.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Home Office issued documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about documents the Home Office issue, what they look like and what they must do with them. The Home Office documents covered are UKVI settlement letters, application registration cards, immigration status document, Home Office travel documents, Home Office eVisa, biometric residence cards and permits.

United Kingdom Visas & Immigration (UKVI) issue several Home Office documents to foreign nationals in the course of their work on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. These documents may be sent to HM Passport Office with applications for passports, either where the holder of the document has gained British citizenship or accompanying an application for the holder's child.

## ILR, ILE and NTL

A customer may send you evidence to confirm they are settled in the UK, for example:

- Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)
- Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE)
- No Time Limit (NTL)

You must check a customer's ILR, ILE or NTL on UKVI's systems, in line with the British citizenship guidance.

## UKVI settlement letters

If you receive a Home Office letter showing the customer (or their parent) was settled in the UK, and the letter includes a dependent, UKVI have confirmed that the dependent was granted settlement on the same date.

You must check all UKVI settlement letters on UKVI's systems, to confirm they are genuine.

## Application registration cards

These are credit-sized cards given to asylum seekers. They show the person's photograph, name, date of birth, gender and nationality, together with a Home Office reference number. Clearly if the holder of this card has now obtained asylum, or British citizenship, they are no longer an asylum seeker.

When examiners are clear to issue a passport to the holder of an application registration card (ARC) submitted with the application, they must return the card to CEBU, PO Box 222, Liverpool, L69 2TY, with a short note confirming a British passport has now been issued.

If you are working on:

- Application Management System (AMS), you, the examiner, must post the physical document
- Digital Application Processing (DAP) and the document is being handled by DHU (Document Handling Unit), you must use ARD (Application Receive Domain) to send the document to the CEBU alternate address

## Immigration status document

At present, the Home Office does not issue UK Residence Permits in Home Office Travel Documents. Instead, they will issue an immigration status document. There are 3 different immigration status documents, all covering different needs. These are:

- Refugee Status, given when the person named on the document has been recognised by the Secretary of State as a refugee (as defined by the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol)
- Discretionary Leave, given when the Secretary of State has granted the person named on the document leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for a reason not covered by the Immigration Rules, in accordance with Home Office Asylum Policy Instruction on Discretionary Leave
- Humanitarian Protection, given when the Secretary of State has granted the person named on the document leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom for a reason not covered by the Immigration Rules, in accordance with the Home Office Asylum Policy Instruction on Humanitarian Protection

In each case the document will be endorsed with a vignette showing a scanned image of the individual's photograph, plus their residence status (including any conditions attached to their residence). It is acceptable as evidence of a parent's immigration status at the time the document was issued.

Examples of these documents are kept in Knowledge base.

## Home Office travel documents

For how to deal with Home Office travel documents see Travel documents issued by UK government offices.

## Home Office eVisa

UKVI are changing to an online immigration system called [eVisa](#). Holders of eVisa's will be able to download a share code and provide evidence of their status within the UK. Current valid permits, cards and vignettes are acceptable until their expiry date.

These documents will be replaced as an eVisa on the customer's renewal:

- [biometric residence permits \(BRP\)](#)
- [biometric residence cards \(BRC\)](#)

- passport endorsements, such as indefinite leave to enter wet ink stamps
- vignette stickers in passports, such as entry clearance or visa vignettes

For HM Passport Office purposes, we will not ask for the share code but will ask the customer to provide their 16 digit immigration reference number (global web form (GWF) or unique application number (UAN)).

## Biometric residence cards and permits for foreign nationals

From 25 November 2008 the Home Office changed the way it issues permission to stay in the United Kingdom. Biometric residence permits (BRP) for foreign nationals replaced the vignettes previously placed in passports. Vignettes remain in circulation for passport purposes as customers will still hold them on older passports. All BRPs will expire by 31 December 2024 and these customers will need an eVisa.

If a foreign national must give biometrics as part of their permission to stay, this will be scans of all 10 fingerprints and a digital photograph. Children under six will not need to provide fingerprints.

The permit, card or eVisa is proof of the holders right to stay, work or study in the UK. It can also be used as a form of identification, for example if they wish to open a bank account in the UK.

The permit, card or eVisa for foreign nationals is not a travel document. If the holder travels abroad, they will still need to hold a passport issued by their country's government. They will need to take both their permit, card or eVisa share code and their passport as evidence that they are entitled to return to the UK.

## Biometric residence cards and permits: what they look like

The permit's design was set by European Union (EU) regulation. It is a standard credit card size (86mm 54mm). The physical card contains a chip to make it more secure against forgery and abuse. A copy of the permit may be found in Knowledge base under UK documents.

Details of the security features on the permit can be found in Knowledge base. The biometric residence permit verification helpline on 0300 123 4699 is available for employers and other government departments, to verify whether the format is valid. This service must not be used routinely but only in cases where there is doubt over the authenticity of the permit.

## Biometric residence cards and permits: who are they issued to

Biometric residence permits were issued to nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) who were granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom, as either a student or on the basis of marriage or partnership. They are no

longer issued and existing BRPs will be expired by 31 December 2024. You must not accept an expired BRP.

Biometric residence cards were issued to nationals of European Economic Area (EEA) countries until 2018. The European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) now issue Home Office EUSS status letters or eVisas instead. You must still accept biometric residence cards which are in date. Any cards which are out of date cannot be accepted. eVisas must be checked on UKVI systems to confirm they match the customer's personal details and the date settlement was granted where needed.

## Biometric residence cards and permits: ILR

UKVI started issuing biometric residence cards and permits on 25 November 2008, to those with indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the UK, and so they may form part of the evidence of ILR for the application if required.

A card or permit with a validity of 5 years or 10 years will be acceptable as evidence of ILR as ILR does not expire once granted, unless the holder leaves the UK for more than two consecutive years, or the card or permit is out of date.

The holder's immigration conditions are shown on both the front and the back of the permit. In addition, the permit will be valid for the time specified in the conditions of stay.

For children born before the introduction of UK biometric residence permits, the parent will still be required to provide usual evidence that they had ILR at the time of the child's birth (see: ILR, ILE and NTL).

## Biometric residence cards and permits: out of date

Where an application is received and the British or foreign national's biometric residence permit or foreign passport clearly shows the immigration conditions have expired, you must:

1. Check UKVI systems to see if the customer has current immigration leave.
2. Return the passport to the passport holder (in all cases).
3. Follow Customers who do not have permission to live or work in the UK guidance.

## Biometric residence cards and permits: naturalised customers

Foreign nationals must be free of immigration conditions when they apply for naturalisation (and normally for 12 months before that) in addition to meeting the requirements on residence in the UK.

You must refer to the naturalisation and registration certificates guidance if you receive an application from a naturalised customer.

Customers who have naturalised or registered as a British national must return their biometric residence card or permit to UKVI.

If the customer has naturalised or registered and they send their biometric residence card or permit with an application, you must:

- cancel and return the residence card or permit to UKVI; and,
- tell the customer you have returned the document to UKVI

## Biometric residence card or permits: returning permits

Permits issued by UK immigration authorities and forwarded to HM Passport Office as part of a passport application must be returned to the customer, or UKVI by secure delivery in the same way that any valid British passport will be returned. Where the customer is resident overseas follow the posting passports and documents guidance for returning the document to the customer.

Residence permits must be returned to the customers address with the accompanying documents if they do not hold a British passport or are not being issued with one.

## DAP: how to cancel and return a residence card or permit to UKVI

If you are dealing with the application on the Digital Application Processing (DAP) system and you need to return a residence document to UKVI, you must:

1. Put a case note on the customer's application confirming you returned the residence document to UKVI (you must include the personal details and residence document number).
2. Write to the customer, telling them you have returned the residence document to the Home Office (using letter code 004 using phrase D).
3. Update the handling instruction for the residence document on ARD (Application Receive Domain):
  - select **Handling instruction**
  - select **Edit**
  - select **send to another location by internal mail**
  - select **UKVI – Residency** permits (ARD will pre-populate with the address)
  - update to show the residence permit must be cancelled and returned to:

Biometric Product Returns,  
IFB,  
5th floor Lunar House,  
40 Wellesley Road, Croydon,  
CR9 2BY

When the application processing is complete, the DHU will cancel the residence document, update the envelope, and send it to UKVI.



## AMS: how to cancel and return a residence document to UKVI

If you are dealing with the application on the Application Management System (AMS) and you need to cancel a residence document and return it to UKVI, you must:

1. Put a case note on the customer's application confirming you have cancelled and returned the residence document to UKVI (you must include the residence document number).
2. Write to the customer, telling them you have returned the residence document to the Home Office (system letter code 04 using phrase 004D).
3. Authorise the issue of a British passport.
4. Return the customer's other supporting documents using the correct postal method.
5. When you are ready to return a residence document to UKVI, you must:
  - o cut the document in half; and,
  - o write the residence document number on the bottom right-hand corner of a secure delivery envelope and seal the residence document inside; and,
  - o write the following address clearly on the left-hand side of the front of the envelope:

Biometric Product Returns,  
IFB,  
5th floor Lunar House,  
40 Wellesley Road, Croydon,  
CR9 2BY

6. Take the secure delivery envelope to your local Post room (or ask the team support clerk to take it).

## Biometric residence cards and permits: found document

Where residence documents are sent to us by a third party, they must be returned to UKVI in line with the Storage, retention and destruction guidance.

Found documents should be sent to:

Returns Unit  
Freepost RRYX-GLYU-GXHZ  
PO Box 163  
Bristol  
BS20 1AB

## How the Post room must deal with a residence document

Residence documents can be sent in bulk to UKVI once per day, but each residence document must stay in its original sealed envelope in line with Biometric residence cards or permits: returning permits guidance.

To send a residence document to UKVI, Post room staff must:

1. Create a consignment on Final Mile for Eternal Secure Transfer to UKVI.
2. Send an e-mail to UKVI showing the:
  - Final Mile consignment reference number
  - date the residence document was sent to UKVI
  - residence document number (this will be written on the bottom right of the envelope)
3. Send the envelope to UKVI using External Secure Transfer.

## Biometric residence cards and permits: dealing with customer questions

If a general enquiry about biometric residence documents is received from a customer, you, the receiver of the enquiry must refer them to [GOV.UK biometric residence cards](#).

### Related content

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