



Home Office

Biometric enrolment: policy guidance

Version 12.0

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About this guidance

This policy guidance explains to immigration officials and caseworkers the overarching policy requirements for enrolment of biometric information from persons subject to immigration control who apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), a Biometric Immigration Document, which includes an eVisa and the biometric residence permit (BRP), a visa, a biometric residence card (BRC) issued under the EU settlement scheme (EUSS), and British citizenship.

The purpose of the biometric enrolment is to record a person's biometric information and seek to verify their claimed identity. The role of the biometric information enroller is to attempt to capture high quality biometric samples. High quality biometric data will result in more accurate comparison both at a later date and, where appropriate, within an enrolment. This will increase the security of biometric systems by increasing operator confidence in the identity of genuine people.

In this guidance:

- **'Official' means:**
 - immigration, nationality and asylum caseworkers
 - immigration and border force officers
 - authorised person, within the meaning of section 141(5) of the immigration and asylum Act 1999
 - **'Senior official' means:** SEO or above (in-country) and Grade 7 or above (overseas)
 - **'Senior manager' means:** Grade 6 management grade or above (in-country) and regional director or above (overseas)
 - **'Senior Civil Servant means':** an officer who is at least a Deputy Director
- **'a person / people' means:** applicants, individuals, claimants, foreign nationals, and dependants

Commercial partners will have their own equivalent definitions of an official.

For this guidance:

- biometric immigration document (BID) means:
 - a document, physical or electronic, issued under the Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008
- biometric residence permit (BRP) means:
 - a card issued to foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and granted over 6 months leave to enter or remain - as part of our move to digital status, we are phasing out BRPs - most BRPs will expire at the end of 2024
- biometric residence card (BRC) means:
 - a card issued to non-EEA nationals granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme - as part of our move to digital status, we are phasing out BRCs - a small number of BRCs have expiry dates beyond 2025, but should not be valid beyond 2030

- eVisa means:
 - digital evidence of immigration status issued to foreign nationals, which can be accessed online
- an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) means:
 - an advance permission to travel, digitally linked to the passport used to apply, required by specified non-visa nationals travelling to the UK as a visitor, to transit, or under the Creative Worker concession

This guidance explains:

- who is required to enrol their biometrics
- who is exempt from enrolling biometrics
- which biometrics must be enrolled

This guidance does not cover biometrics taken under s141 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, s35 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 or under any non-immigration or non-nationality legislation.

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 please 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 **12.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **23 December 2024**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to confirm that greyscale facial images cannot be accepted and latest BRP decommissioning updates.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Biometric enrolment: introduction

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. Information about biometrics is contained in the policy guidance [Biometric Information: introduction](#).

We use biometrics to fix and confirm the identities of all foreign nationals who are required to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), to apply for entry clearance or are applying to extend their stay in the UK for over 6 months and then from those applying to become British citizens.

Biometrics enable us to conduct comprehensive checks against immigration and criminality records to prevent leave being granted to illegal immigrants and foreign nationals who are a public protection threat or use multiple identities. For example, enrolling fingerprints from people who apply for a visa has helped us to identify people who are involved in terrorist activities or organised criminality and enabled us to prevent them coming to the UK.

We require biometrics to be enrolled as part of an application for an immigration product or British citizenship. They **must**, in most circumstances, be enrolled before consideration of an application as they enable us to confirm the identity of people and assess their suitability, by checking for any criminality or immigration offending unless they are exempt or excused.

Related content

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People who must enrol their biometric information

This page tells officials which people must enrol their biometric information.

People who make an application for the following products are required, in most circumstances, to provide biometric information before a decision on the application can be considered, unless an exemption or exception applies, or the Home Office has decided to reuse previously enrolled biometrics:

- Biometric Immigration Document (BID) – which is mainly issued in the form of the person's online evidence of their immigration status, known as an eVisa, but may still be in the form of a biometric residence permit (BRP) or a vignette containing a facial image
- Biometric Residence Card (BRC)
- visas and entry clearance
- British citizenship
- Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

People who make in-country applications **must**, in most circumstances, book an appointment to enrol their biometric information within a specified period unless an exemption or exception applies or they have used the [UK Immigration: ID Check](#) app. people will be informed to:

- make an appointment at a Service and Support Centre (SSC) within 15 working days
- make an appointment at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) location within 45 working days

People who are applying from overseas must, in most circumstances, attend a biometric enrolment centre to enrol their biometric information unless an exemption or exception applies or have used the [UK Immigration: ID Check app](#).

If a person does not comply with the requirement to provide their biometric information, the Secretary of State may:

- refuse or reject the immigration application (which includes treating the application as not being made)
- vary or cancel any existing leave
- refuse to issue an eVisa
- issue a civil penalty notice (in relation to applications for a BID under the 2008 biometric registration regulations)

You can find more information about the sanctions in: [UK Borders Act 2007: Code of Practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#).

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

An ETA is a permission to travel therefore applications must be made in advance of travel into the UK. Overseas ETA applicants will not need to attend an enrolment centre to enrol biometric information, in the form of a facial image.

For the purposes of making an ETA application, the biometric information is submitted remotely by the applicant via the ETA app or using the ETA online application form on GOV.UK.

It will be possible for a third-party to complete the online application form on behalf of an applicant.

The Home Office will not reuse previously enrolled facial image biometrics for ETA applications.

An ETA application will not be valid if the applicant has not provided the required biometric information. No applicant will be excused from the requirement to supply biometric information for the purposes of an ETA application.

Related content

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Who is exempt

This page tells officials which people are exempt from enrolling their biometric information.

Exempt from control

British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK are exempt from having to enrol biometric information.

Some people's roles mean they are exempt from immigration control and are not required to give their biometric information. You can find details of who is exempt from control at: [Persons exempt from control](#).

Other categories who are exempt from having to enrol biometrics

There are other certain categories of people who are subject to immigration control but are not required to give their biometric information. For a full list of these exemptions, including a list of organisations of whose members are exempt, see: [Exempt entry clearance guidance](#).

Age

Children under the age of 5 are exempt from having to provide fingerprint biometrics, but they must provide a digitised image of their face.

For Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) applications, applicants under the age of 10 are not subject to a liveness check as part of the ETA application process.

Related content

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Who is excused

This page tells officials and people about the types of circumstances when the Secretary of State may exceptionally excuse people from having to attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to enrol their biometrics at the time they make their application by either deferring the requirement until later or excusing them from having to enrol fingerprints.

People who are physically unable to enrol their fingerprints may be excused from the requirement to provide them, but they **must** provide a facial image. See [unable to enrol](#).

Excusing people applying from overseas

People who are required to apply for a visa or a biometric immigration document **must**, in most circumstances, enrol their biometrics as part of their application at a VAC or other location authorised by the Secretary of State, unless they are excused, or officials have decided to use previously enrolled biometrics. Officials **must**, in most circumstances, not consider an application until checks against the person's biometrics are completed, except where the person is excused from having to enrol their biometrics before their application is decided. This is to ensure officials can confirm the identity and the suitability of the person before considering whether they are eligible for the leave or status being sought.

Medical cases

A senior official may authorise excusing a person from the requirement to attend a VAC to enrol their biometrics overseas in the circumstances where there is independent medical evidence from a qualified practitioner to show that a person would be physically unable to enrol their biometrics and should be excused having to attend a biometric enrolment event before coming to the UK, such as a medical emergency 'stretcher cases' where the person is coming to the UK for urgent life saving medical treatment, such as where the person is incapacitated. They must enrol their biometrics as soon as they are physically capable of doing so, where they are seeking to stay in the UK beyond 6 months.

People who are unable to travel to the UK

People **must** only apply for entry clearance if they are free to travel to the UK. Officials **must not** agree to predetermine an application, or excuse or defer the requirement to enrol biometrics from people who are:

- detained in prison or immigration detention overseas
- prevented from leaving or entering the country or territory where they are residing or where there is a Visa Application Centre (VAC) by the controlling authorities

Officials **must**, in most circumstances, treat people who are not able to enrol their biometrics at a VAC or any other location authorised by the Secretary of State, as not having made a valid application except where the person is excused from having to enrol their biometrics as set out elsewhere in this guidance or in the Unable to travel to a Visa Application Centre to enrol biometrics (overseas applications) guidance.

When a person is released from prison or immigration detention overseas, or leaves the country or territory where they are residing, regardless of whether they have permission, they will be able to apply and enrol their biometrics at a VAC or other location authorised by the Secretary of State. This is to ensure officials undertake identity and suitability checks on the person who could pose a risk of harm to public safety in the UK and to avoid encouraging people from engaging in unsafe journeys across multiple countries. A successful person will need to be able to travel to the UK shortly after they are issued with an Entry Clearance vignette.

Senior Foreign Government Officials

A Senior Manager who has responsibility for the country the senior foreign official represents is authorised to excuse a senior civil servant, official or equivalent who is the head of a department or ministry, the equivalent of Permanent Secretary, from having to attend a VAC to enrol their biometric information where the person is applying under the Official Visit route at the invitation of a UK Government department in their official capacity.

The Senior Manager **must** only excuse the requirement to attend a VAC where there are strong reasons for doing so, based on the person's previous travel, the location of the nearest VAC, the integrity of the passport issuing authority and the wider political environment.

The Senior Manager **must not** excuse the requirement to attend a VAC where senior foreign officials may have a criminal record, or are subject to travel sanctions or where they are deemed to be of interest for reasons of national security. Officials must conduct background biographical checks on senior foreign officials before deciding whether to waive the requirement to attend a VAC. Where an application is submitted and the checks reveal one of these records the applicant should be asked to attend the VAC to submit their biometrics.

The decision to excuse biometrics is limited to the equivalent of one of the UK's 23 Government departments as listed on [Departments, agencies and public bodies - GOV.UK](#), such as:

- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (usually known as Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Home Office or equivalent (such as Ministry of the Interior)
- Ministry of Defence
- Department for Health and Social Care

Senior Managers **must** record every occasion they decide to waive a requirement for foreign senior officials to attend a VAC. UK Visas and Immigration will collate this information and provide Ministers with a summary report quarterly.

Excusing biometrics is not the same as [exemption from immigration control](#). The person's application must still meet the requirements of Appendix V of the Immigration Rules. If the application is successful a visit visa valid for up to 6 months will be granted.

Exceptional circumstances

Officials **must** not excuse people from the requirement to enrol biometrics unless a senior official or a senior manager has authorised excusing the requirement on medical grounds or the person is a senior government official.

Where a person is applying to come to the UK from overseas and claims it is too unsafe for them to travel to a VAC to enrol their biometrics, you must follow the process set out here: [Unable to travel to a Visa Application Centre to enrol biometrics \(Overseas Applications\)](#).

Where a senior official considers a person who is applying for a visa and / or a BID to come to the UK should be excused from the requirement to enrol their biometrics as part of their application because their circumstances or status warrants it on the basis it is in the interest to the UK's economy or reputation, they **must** refer the matter to Ministers to either approve the proposal to excuse the requirement to attend a VAC to enrol their biometrics or defer the requirement for a person to enrol their biometrics for a BID.

The person **must** still provide a facial photograph that meets required [facial photo standards](#) in support of their application.

Excusing people who apply in-country

This section tells officials about the circumstances they can defer or waive the requirement for a person to enrol their biometrics in the UK.

In most circumstances, people who are in the UK will not normally be excused from having to enrol their biometrics otherwise we will be unable to issue a biometric document, such as an eVisa. Where the person claims they are unable to enrol their biometrics, you **must** refer the case to a senior official. In most cases this will concern [attendance at a biometric enrolment centre](#).

Domestic violence

If you are dealing with applications for leave to remain, you **must** refer requests to excuse the requirement to enrol biometrics to a senior official, unless the person is in the UK and is claiming to be a victim of domestic violence and at risk of destitution – the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession (MVDAC formerly the Destitution and Domestic Violence concession DDVC). For further information, including how to

apply for the concession see: [MDVA concession](#). Where a person has claimed domestic violence you **must** immediately refer the case to the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU).

Where a person is claiming they are a victim of domestic violence and at risk of destitution, the DVU will update their eVisa or tell the person about registering for a UKVI account to access their eVisa, which will give the person recourse to public funds. The person will not normally be required to reenrol their biometrics at this stage as the eVisa is intended to enable the person to leave the family home and move to a place of safety. This eVisa is valid for up to three months from the date of issue and is intended to enable claimants to decide their next steps. Where they decide to apply for settled status as a victim of domestic violence, they will be required to enrol their biometrics, unless officials consider their previously enrolled biometrics can be reused.

Other circumstances

You **must** consider whether there are any other exceptional circumstances that warrant excusing the person from the requirement to enrol their biometrics. This may include circumstances where the police or other UK law enforcement organisation have requested a vulnerable victim or witness to be excused from having to enrol their biometrics.

Senior officials **must** refer such cases to the Identity Security Team for policy advice, which may include referring the matter to ministers to consider.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Migrant victims of domestic abuse concession](#)

Unable to enrol

This page tells officials about people who may be unable to enrol their biometric information and the Home Office does not hold previously enrolled biometrics that are [suitable for reuse](#).

Temporarily unable to enrol

You may encounter situations where a person is temporarily unable to enrol their fingerprints. In such cases you **must** refer the case to a senior official.

People who have been detained in the UK

Where a person is detained in prison or at an immigration removal centre in the UK and needs to apply for a biometric immigration document (BID), officials **must** use the biometrics the person has previously enrolled to undertake identity and suitability checks. If the application is successful and the person is released from prison or detention, they must make a separate application for a BID and enrol their biometrics.

Where a person is detained in prison or in an immigration removal centre in the UK and needs to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), officials must use, if available, the fingerprint biometrics the person has previously enrolled to undertake identity and suitability checks. If no fingerprints are available, then officials should investigate the options for enrolling fingerprints, such as by using mobile biometric enrolment equipment, where available and where it is feasible to do. If it is not possible to enrol biometrics, you must reject the application as invalid and advise the applicant to re-apply to the EUSS on their release. Where officials reject an application because the detained person was unable to enrol their biometrics, a record must be made to ensure this is taken into account if the person makes a further application upon their release.

You **must** not grant the application without consulting the area which is considering the person's removal or deportation from the UK.

Short-term impairments

You may encounter short term circumstances that will temporarily prevent you from being able to enrol a person's fingerprints. Reasons may include:

- temporary hand decorations, such as henna
- temporary damage because of, blisters, cuts or minor burns

Longer-term temporary impairment or permanent impairment

You may encounter long term circumstances that will temporarily prevent you, and in some cases permanently prevent you, from being able to enrol a person's

fingerprints. In such cases you **must** refer the case to a senior official. A person may have permanently deformed or damaged fingertips.

Examples of permanent deformity or damage are:

- extensive scarring
- fused fingers
- angled fingertips
- worn skin

Consideration must be given to either deferring the enrolment of biometrics or only enrolling a facial image where the circumstances are that fingerprints can never be enrolled.

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Deliberately damaged fingers

This section tells officials about people who appear to have deliberately damaged their fingers.

If you suspect a person has deliberately damaged their fingers to avoid biometric enrolment you **must** refer the case to a senior manager for advice before proceeding any further.

The Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) can also be contacted for further advice. Contact details can be found on the GAL under IFB Mailbox.

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Attendance at an enrolment centre

This section tells officials about people who claim to be unable to attend an appointment to enrol their biometrics.

Overseas

people who make an application from overseas are, in most cases, expected to enrol their biometrics as part of their application.

Temporarily unable to travel to an enrolment centre

If there are short-term reasons why a person cannot attend an enrolment centre overseas to enrol their biometrics, for example the person is recovering from a broken leg and have exhausted other options to enrol their biometrics, they should normally delay their plans until they can get to an enrolment centre.

Officials will not normally defer or waive the requirement to provide biometric information, unless there are circumstances that are so compelling as to make them exceptional which are beyond the control of the person.

In-country

People may be eligible to have their biometric information reused, which means they will not usually need to provide their fingerprints again but must upload a new facial image, if they apply through the [UK Immigration: ID Check app](#). However, you may need to ask a person to attend an enrolment centre where the uploaded imaged does not meet the required standard or you cannot confirm the person's identity to a reasonable degree of certainty. If a person is unable to use the app and claims that they are unable to enrol their biometrics because they are unable to travel to an enrolment centre in the UK, you must establish the reasons for being unable to attend and whether the person is able to enrol their biometrics.

You must ask people who claim they are physically unable to travel to an enrolment centre to provide medical evidence from a registered clinician within 15 working days. If people provide satisfactory evidence they are physically unable to attend a biometric enrolment centre you must consider either deferring their attendance, reusing previously enrolled biometrics or, depending on the reasons, refer their case to a mobile enrolment unit so that a home visit can be made.

Short term reasons

Where the evidence indicates that the inability to attend a centre is short-term, for example the person is recovering from a broken leg, you **must** refer the case to a senior official to seek agreement to defer the biometric enrolment until a later date.

Long term reasons

If a senior official from the responsible case working team believes the person may never be able to attend a centre to enrol their biometrics, they **must** refer the case to a mobile enrolment team or consider whether previously enrolled biometrics can be reused.

Mobile enrolment may be appropriate where there is a longer-term medical issue. Mobile enrolment could also be applicable to people who may be:

- too infirm to be able to attend an enrolment centre
- undergoing medical treatment in hospital
- unable to leave their private residence owing to physical impairment

In cases such as these it is the responsibility of the casework team to assess the available medical evidence and casework notes and decide whether mobile enrolment is appropriate and merited. If the person does not submit medical evidence within 15 working days, you must consider rejecting the case for mobile enrolment.

If the casework team considers the person is unsuitable for a mobile enrolment because they will be fit enough to attend an enrolment centre in the near future, the enrolment must be deferred by a senior official until a date when the person is likely to be able to attend an enrolment centre.

If a person is in hospital and likely to remain there for a considerable period, you **must** refer the case to a senior official to consider whether to exceptionally validate the application by reusing biometrics the person has previously enrolled. If the responsible casework team consider that the person is not suitable for a mobile enrolment and is unlikely to be able to attend a centre to enrol their biometrics in the long-term, the senior official **must** refer to the senior civil servant (SCS) (grade 5 or above) responsible for the application route, alongside the options they have explored including any policy advice, for consideration and whether:

- the person is suitable for a mobile enrolment
- to indefinitely defer enrolment **and** whether to exceptionally validate the application without biometrics **or** reuse previously enrolled biometrics

The person **must** submit (or have submitted on their behalf) **a new and live** photograph of their face as part of the application process even if biometric enrolment is deferred or the application has been exceptionally validated. The photograph **must** meet the requirements for [facial images](#).

In cases where the person is eventually able to enrol biometrics, they **must** enrol as a minimum a facial photograph and where physically capable their fingerprints at the enrolment centre. If a person is physically unable to provide a live facial image the SCS may authorise the provision of an independantly certified facial photograph that meets the [passport photograph](#) standard or if available, to reuse the last enrolled facial photograph.

Where the senior official is recommending to excuse the person from having to enrol their biometrics, including a facial image they **must** obtain approval from ministers.

Related content

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[Who is excused](#)

Related external links

[Passport photograph standards](#)

Facial images

This page tells officials about the requirements for providing facial images.

In most circumstances, the person **must** provide a facial photograph as part of their application unless it meets the requirements to be reused.

Applying for an eVisa or Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

If the person is applying for an eVisa where they have not previously enrolled their biometrics or where their biometrics cannot be reused, the person is required, in most circumstances, to enrol their biometrics when they apply for their visa.

In most circumstances, people who are applying for an ETA or an eVisa **must** provide a new and live digital image of their face as part of the application process. It **must not** be from a previously taken digital facial image. The processes that the Home Office has put in place will ensure that the facial photograph meets the [passport photograph](#) standards.

There may be circumstances where they are unable to attend a centre to have their facial image captured. In those circumstances you should apply the guidance that is set out in [Attendance at an enrolment centre](#).

Biometric reuse and online status

Where a person makes an application for leave to enter or remain which meets the requirements of the biometric reuse guidance to enable their fingerprint biometrics to be reused, such as when they are:

- applying for leave where evidence of their immigration status is provided in the form of an online status only, such as an eVisa
- applying for leave under a route set out in the biometric reuse guidance
- updating their facial image details via Update My Details

they can choose to use the UK Immigration: ID Check app to upload their facial image using a smart-phone or submit their facial image through an online form. The facial photo image **must** be new, and it must be live. It **must not** be from a previously taken photographic image.

The person **must** only submit facial image files that comply with the following requirements:

- jpg or jpeg file format (xxx.jpg or xxx.jpeg)
- at least 50Kb – otherwise the image will be too small and poor quality
- no more than 6Mb – otherwise it will be too big to store
- at least 600x750px – which is a portrait image

The person's facial image will be displayed on their online immigration status information (eVisa) which they may choose to share with employers and other organisations. They **must** follow the guidance below to avoid their facial photographs being rejected. They **must** ensure their digital photo:

- is in colour, as we cannot accept greyscale images
- contains no other objects or people
- be taken against a plain neutral-coloured background
- be in clear contrast to the background
- contains the whole of head of the person
- has not been modified, such as the use of filters
- is not a photograph of a photo, such as a photograph of the facial image contained in their passport or travel document

When taking a digital photo, the person **must** ask another person to help them to take their facial photograph.

The subject of the facial photograph **must**:

- not have anything covering their face
- not have hair in front of their eyes
- not have a head covering (unless it's for religious, such as a headscarf or medical reasons, such as a wig worn by a cancer patient)
- be facing forwards and looking straight at the camera
- have their eyes open and visible
- not have any shadows on their face or behind them

They **must not** wear sunglasses or tinted glasses. They can wear other glasses if they need to, but their eyes must be visible without any glare or reflection. They **must** generally avoid taking a facial image that contains any glare, reflection or uneven lighting.

If they do not follow the above steps officials may reject the photographs after 5 attempts if the person's facial image cannot be compared against the image contained in their identity document or where officials consider employers and landlords are likely to be unable to properly compare their facial image when making checks on their right to work and rent accommodation in the UK. People can use the [passport photograph](#) standards as guidance on providing their facial photographs. Although the facial image must not be larger than 6Mb.

If the person is submitting facial photographs of young children or people with disabilities which make it difficult to capture their facial image they will only need to comply with the [passport photograph](#) standards for babies and children. They **must** notify the Home Office if they are unable to provide an acceptable facial image because of a disability or the subject is a young child.

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

To apply for an ETA the applicant **must** provide a facial image in accordance with the application process and which complies with the rules for digital photos, set out in the section on [facial images](#).

A facial image must be supplied using the ETA app or GOV.UK ETA webpage, whichever is used by the applicant to apply.

The Home Office identity verification system will check for a positive match between the image uploaded by the applicant and the image from the passport used in the application.

Where the image fails identity verification this will be assigned to a decision maker to compare facial likeness to determine if the onscreen images show the same person.

In chipped documents, a decision maker **must** be able to positively match the applicant enrolled facial biometric to the verified chip image.

In non-chipped documents, a decision maker **must** be satisfied the person matches the facial image contained on the bio-data page of their passport.

An ETA application **must** be rejected where either:

- in chipped documents: a decision-maker is not satisfied the verified chip image and the applicant enrolled facial biometric match
- in non-chipped documents: a decision-maker is not satisfied that the bio-data page image and the applicant enrolled facial biometric match

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[Unable to attend enrolment](#)

Children aged under 16 and responsible adults

This section tells officials about enrolling the biometric information of children aged under 16.

You **must** only enrol the biometrics of children aged under 16 in the presence of an adult who takes responsibility (responsible adult) at the time of the enrolment. You **must** ensure that the responsible adult is a person aged 18 or over and who is either the child's parent, legal guardian, or a person who has responsibility for the child at that time, such as a member of staff at the child's school.

Responsible adults

Certain types of people can never be a responsible adult while acting in their capacity as:

- biometric enrolment staff, whether they are employed by the Secretary of State or a commercial partner
- immigration officers
- officials of the Secretary of State
- police officers
- prison officers or persons employed at a removal centre

Where a person who would usually be the responsible adult is one of the above, you **must** tell the person to contact the Home Office, using the email address on the enrolment letter or email.

In-country enrolment

You **must** notify senior officials of instances where children aged under 16 have attempted to enrol their biometrics in the absence of a responsible adult. If the responsible adult is incapacitated and will not be able to attend the biometric enrolment appointment, the person must provide medical evidence and be given the opportunity to make a new biometric enrolment appointment. If a child aged under 16 attends their appointment with an adult other than the nominated responsible adult, the enrolment **must** not proceed, unless the person acting as the responsible adult is a local authority social worker. The responsible adult **must** produce valid photographic evidence of their identity.

If the responsible adult for a person who is under the age of 16 is a parent or guardian who is not enrolling their biometrics at the same time, they **must** provide the following documents at the enrolment centre:

- [valid photographic document](#)
- biometric enrolment letter or email

If the responsible adult for the person who is aged under 16 is not their parent or guardian, you **must** ask them to provide a letter from the person's parents or guardian stating they can act as a responsible adult along with a valid photographic document in the form of a:

- national passport
- UK or Irish photo driving licence
- national identity card
- biometric immigration document (biometric residence permit or eVisa) or biometric residence card, which can have expired up to 18 months from its end of validity date

Local authority registered foster carers or social services employee or school representatives **must** provide a letter from the authority or establishment they represent confirming they can act as a responsible adult for the child. They **do not** need to provide a letter from the person's parents or guardian.

Local authority registered foster carers or school representatives **must** provide proof of identity in the form of one of the documents listed above. Social services representatives **must** provide their photo employee document issued by their employer.

You **must** ensure there are child safeguarding measures in place for staff or contractors conducting biometric enrolments, so they are able to identify risks and to be able to alert local social services and/or the police where necessary. Commercial partners **must** also refer any concerns they have about a child and their responsible adult to the Home Office.

Where checks on the responsible adult indicate a possible risk to the child, you **must** notify your local child safeguarding lead.

Overseas enrolment

In the case of enrolment overseas, people aged under 16 **must** have a parent or guardian or responsible adult accompanying them when they provide their biometrics. You **must** record the name of the person who is acting as the responsible adult. Applications from children aged under 16 where a parent, guardian, or responsible adult is not present must not be accepted.

Related content

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Enroller knows the person or the responsible adult

This section tells officials what to do if they know the person or responsible adult.

If you are a friend or relative of the person or the [responsible adult](#), you **must** not enrol the person's biometrics. You should inform a senior official who may direct another official to deal with the person or reschedule the appointment for another day.

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Signatures

This section explains to officials the need for adult people to provide their signature.

Each person over the age of 16 who makes an application for a biometric immigration document (BID) **must** provide a digital image of their normal signature.

Where the person's usual signature is a mark such as an 'X' or a line, this is acceptable, however a simple '.' (dot) is not.

Where a senior official is satisfied that a person cannot make a mark at all, for example a person who has severe arthritis, they do not have to provide a signature.

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Enrolling vulnerable people

This section tells officials about the enrolment of vulnerable people.

All foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and are required to apply for a biometric immigration document, are required to comply with the requirements of the biometric registration regulations. This may include a person who is vulnerable, such as a person:

- with a serious medical condition:
 - who lacks capacity as defined under, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (for England and Wales); the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 (for Scotland); or the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (for Northern Ireland);
- who is a victim of trafficking, modern slavery or domestic violence
- who has limited digital skills or access to digital technology

You **must** refer cases where you consider the person may be a victim of trafficking or domestic violence to a senior official.

The decision as to whether a person comes under the heading of a person lacking capacity will be made on a case by case basis. When considering these cases, you **must** handle it with care and sensitivity. You **must** refer cases where you consider the person may lack the capacity to understand the requirement to enrol their biometrics to a senior official.

Where the person's biometrics are already held by the Home Office, officials **must** consider whether they can be reused. See: Biometric reuse.

How to take biometrics in cases where the person lacks capacity to make a decision

You **must** allow the person to identify a carer, close friend or family member to assist them in providing their biometrics. If the person is unable to identify such a person you must attempt to identify such a person. An example of such a person might include a person who has been appointed an attorney while the person had capacity.

If no person can be identified, you **must** ensure the person is fully supported to comply with the enrolment process. You must ensure the person is:

- given the fullest opportunity to make decisions for themselves and had fullest input to any decision made on their behalf
- given help to express their wishes on matters where they do have the capacity to make decisions

If decisions are being made on the person's behalf their wishes **must** be, as much as possible, taken into consideration.

Sanctions for vulnerable people

Every effort **must** be made to ensure that vulnerable people have arrangements put in place for them to enrol their biometrics.

Sanctions **must** only be imposed on a vulnerable person if there is satisfactory evidence that despite arrangements appropriate to their vulnerability being made available, they have:

- intentionally failed to cooperate
- understood what is required of them
- understood the consequences of not complying

Details on imposing sanctions are set out in: [UK Borders Act 2007: Code of Practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#).

Related content

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Refusal to enrol biometrics

This section tells officials about dealing with people who refuse or fail to enrol their biometrics in connection with an application, where an official has decided against deferring or excusing the requirement.

Visas and entry clearance

All people applying for a visa or entry clearance are required, in most circumstances, to enrol their biometric information (fingerprints and facial image) as part of their application, except where exempted, deferred or excused, or when officials have decided to reuse previously enrolled biometrics.

If a person does not comply with a requirement to enrol their biometrics, you **must** consider the circumstances of the case and whether the person had a reasonable excuse.

Where you are satisfied that a person has failed to comply with the requirement, without a reasonable excuse, the Secretary of State may treat the application as not being made.

Biometric Immigration Documents

If a person fails to comply with the requirements of the biometric registration regulations without a reasonable excuse and where satisfied that a person has failed to comply with a requirement of the biometric registration regulations, without a reasonable excuse, the Secretary of State may:

- reject their immigration application for leave
- vary or cancel their existing leave
- refuse to issue a biometric immigration document
- issue a civil penalty notice (in-country only)

Officials **must** follow the [Code of Practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#) when considering imposing a sanction on the person.

People who have not enrolled (in-country only)

If the person has not enrolled their biometric information or booked an appointment within the specified period, you **must** send them the rejection warning letter to warn them their application may be rejected as set out in the [code of practice](#).

Officials **must not** invalidate an application when the person responds to a warning letter and books an appointment to enrol their biometrics, unless the person fails to attend the booked appointment without providing evidence of a significant reason, such as a bereavement of an immediate family member or is hospitalised. Where a

person cancels an appointment which they booked on a date after the expiry of the warning period specified in the [code of practice](#), officials **must** invalidate the application unless the person provides satisfactory evidence they had a valid excuse for cancelling the appointment.

Where the person has been recognised as a refugee, a stateless person, someone who needs humanitarian protection (or is a dependant of such a person) or cannot be removed from the UK on human rights grounds you must not impose a sanction that may result in the person being required to leave the UK.

The code of practice for imposing sanctions, including financial civil penalties, on foreign nationals who fail to comply with a requirement of the biometric registration regulations can be found at: [UK Borders Act 2007: Code of Practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#).

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Validation

This section tells officials how biometric information enrolment in-country affects the process of validating an application.

This section does not apply to applications to become or be registered as a British citizen. For information on those applications please see related links.

Application requirements

Application requirements are those which form an essential part of the process for applying for a biometric immigration document (BID), which can be in the form of an eVisa.

BID application requirements

To satisfy the application requirements, a person **must**:

- apply for a BID when they are required to do so by regulations made under section 5 of the 2007 Act, see the [Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008](#)
- surrender any documents requested by an official connected with immigration or nationality when this is required as part of the issue of a BID - requested documents would include a valid passport or travel document
- provide their biometric residence permit (BRP), where held, if an official requests it and they are already in possession of one, when they submit a valid application:
 - if the person fails to comply with a request to provide their BRP, the official may hold the application until it is either received or the person provides an explanation of why it is unavailable
 - failure to comply with the request may result in the application being treated as invalid
- follow any specified process for the application set out by an authorised person - this may include making and attending an appointment at a specified time, date and place to enable a photograph to be taken and a record of their fingerprints to be registered

Invalid applications following failure to comply with the biometric registration regulations

This section tells officials what action to take when a person fails to follow the procedure used to apply for a biometric immigration document.

You **must** send a warning letter to people, after the prescribed timescale has passed, if they have not enrolled their biometric information or made an appointment to enrol their biometric information.

If the person does not enrol or make an appointment after the further warning period of 10 days set out in the warning letter, you **must** reject their application.

Once a valid application has been made it cannot be rejected. If the person fails to meet the requirements of the rules of the route they have applied under, the application **must** be refused.

If requested documents, such as passports or previously issued BRPs, are not submitted with the application it should not immediately be invalidated. You **must** request all documents required.

You **must** not immediately cancel an eVisa, BRP or biometric residence card (BRC) because an application has been rejected. For more information about rejected applications, see: [Invalid applications](#).

Related content

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Related external links

[UK Borders Act 2007: Code of Practice about the sanctions for non-compliance with the biometric registration regulations](#)

The deletion of biometric information: rejected applications

This section tells officials what to do where a person makes an invalid application but has already enrolled their biometrics.

If a person has submitted their biometric information and their application is then rejected because it is invalid their biometric information **must** be deleted.

In order to delete the biometric information you **must** send the following information to the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) mailbox:

- full name of person
- date of birth
- nationality
- IFB reference
- Unique Event Reference Number (UERN) – if known
- IABS Case Type – if known
- IABS Recording Event Reference – if known
- port location code - if known
- the reason why the biometrics must be deleted

Upon receipt of the information the Immigration Fingerprint Bureau (IFB) will then:

1. Delete all biometric information enrolled for that application.
2. Delete case type information and the recording event.

Any information relating to previously enrolled biometrics relating to valid applications made by the person **must not** be deleted. These must be retained as set out in the [Immigration \(Biometric Registration\) Regulations 2008](#).

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Biometric enrolment where leave has been granted without making an application

This section tells officials what to do when a person who has not made an application has been granted leave by the Secretary of State on human rights grounds.

A person who is granted leave **must** apply for a biometric immigration document which will be issued in the form of an eVisa. Officials **must** send the person who has been granted leave an [application form](#) which they must sign and return to the specified address. When the completed application form has been received, officials must arrange for the person to enrol their biometric information.

Once biometrics have been enrolled, officials must send a letter advising the person to register for a UKVI account (advising of support at this stage for those people who are unable to register for an account. For guidance see: [Get help with your online Home Office application](#)).

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Related external links

[Get help with your online Home Office application](#)

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