Home Office

Passport printing

Version 7.0

This guidance is for His Majesty's Passport Office staff and explains how to print a passport, the differences between central print and local print and how to collect printed passports

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About: Passport printing

This guidance is for His Majesty's Passport Office staff and explains how to print a passport, the differences between central print and local print and how to collect printed passports.

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 Guidance team.

Publication

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

- version **7.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **5 March 2024**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to show HM Passport does not always offer an upgrade service.

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Passport printing and delivery

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to print a passport, the differences between central print and local print and how to collect printed passports.

HM Passport Office prints passports through central and local print. Central print is more cost effective for us and the customer so we must use it whenever we can.

The system will automatically select a print location based on the fee the customer paid for. The system selects central print for most application types. Priority and collection services (for example, Premium) will automatically be sent to local print.

How to change the print location

You, the examiner, can change the print location but you will first need authorisation.

When you complete an application to issue a passport, the data is sent automatically to the print location. You cannot change this decision or stop printing, but you can re-open for re-issue or arrange a redirection.

You can 'return to examination' from central print, where we contact Thales to electronically send the data back, but this is not the standard process. You must only do this in specific cases.

You must follow guidance to decide when to use central print and when to use local print.

Central print

Central print is an automated passport printing service owned and managed by our business partner. Central print allows us to print passports at a central location in a cost efficient and time effective way.

We use central print to print most passports for customers in the United Kingdom and overseas. Central print personalises 34-page or 54-page passport books by adding customer details, including their nationality and photo.

Central print also prints other passport types, such as British overseas territory passports and Diplomatic or Official passports.

Local print

Local print is a passport printing service that allows staff to print 34-page or 54-page passports in each of our application processing centres. Local print teams cannot print other types of British passports (for example, Diplomatic passports).

We use local print to provide passports for customers who have paid for a quicker service (for example, Premium or Fast Track collect). We also use local print if we issue a passport for urgent or compassionate reasons or if we are correcting an error.

Secure delivery collection of printed passports

Our business partners collect printed passports directly from central or local print and deliver them to customers in the UK and overseas. Customers will have their passports delivered by:

- Royal Mail or DHL (Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn) if they are in the UK
- DHL if they live overseas

Royal Mail will collect printed passports from both central and local print and deliver them to customers in the UK.

For more information about secure delivery, see Secure Delivery guidance.

Customer collection of printed passports

Customers who use the Premium or Fast Track Collect Service and have their passports printed in local print, usually collect their passport from the public counter.

If we print a passport centrally, there is no collection option. Interventions (for example, re-directing a passport) can only happen when the passport is with the secure delivery supplier.

Customers who need their passport urgently can apply for an upgrade and arrange to collect their passport from the public counter (if HM Passport Office are currently offering an upgrade service).

Examiners can tell the passport issuing system to print the passport at local print in any application processing centre, not just their own. For example, an examiner in Belfast can send a local print request to the Glasgow office.

Customers can collect their passport from the public counter at any application processing centre:

- in person
- by authorising a third party (for example, a family member or a courier)

How we decide what passport printing service to use

We must consider and answer the following questions when deciding between central or local print:

1. How has the customer applied? Is it a paper or digital counter application?
2. What service has the customer paid for (for example, Premium or Standard)?

3. What type of passport has the customer applied for? Diplomatic passports, for example, must be sent to central print.
4. Has the customer asked for a braille sticker?
5. Has the customer contacted us to ask for an upgrade and are we currently offering an upgrade service?
6. Is there a customer service reason to use local print instead of central print (for example, a spelling error or an unnecessary delay)?

When deciding to use central or local print, we must use the information the customer has given us along with operational guidance.

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