



Home Office

Biometric reuse

Version 7.0

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

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About this guidance

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

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

In this guidance

'Decision maker' means:

- immigration, nationality and asylum caseworkers
- immigration and Border Force officers

'Senior decision maker' means:

- a senior executive officer or above

'People / person' means:

- applicants, claimants, individuals, and dependants

For the purpose of this guidance

Biometric immigration document means:

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

Biometric residence card (BRC) means either:

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

Out of scope

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

Contacts

If you have any queries about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Identity Security Policy Team with your comments.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Review, Atlas and Forms team.

Publication

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

- version **7.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **13 March 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to reflect that most BRPs and BRCs expired at the end of 2024.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Introduction: Biometric reuse

This page tells people and decision makers what biometric reuse means.

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

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

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

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

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

People who have registered for a UKVI account cannot use the application process to update any biographical changes until after their application is decided when they should use the [Update My Details \(UMD\)](#) process.

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

Related content

[Contents](#)

[Biometric enrolment](#)

[Retention and usage of biometric information](#)

Related external content

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

Reuse of previously enrolled biometric information

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

Reuse: the general approach

People who are in the UK and were previously issued a biometric residence permit (BRP) will be allowed to have their fingerprint biometric information reused if they are:

- applying for leave under the [Graduate](#) route
- applying for leave under the [Skilled Worker](#) and [Student](#) routes
- a dependant partner of a person applying under the above routes
- a dependant child of a person applying under the Skilled Worker and Student routes
- adults applying individually for settlement on the [Protection](#) or [Innovator](#) routes (as main applicants)
- children applying individually for settlement on the [Protection](#) route
- applying for leave under the [Child Student](#) route

Eligible cohorts

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

The requirements are as follows:

- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has previously enrolled and retained the person's fingerprint biometric information or the person is permanently unable to enrol their fingerprints
- the person must be in the UK
- people must have previously been issued a BRP or BRC
- the BRP or BRC must be within 18 months from the expiry date printed on the face of the card
- must be aged 5 years old or over
- the existing facial photograph stored on the Immigration and Asylum Biometric System **must not** be older than 10 years, or 5 years for people aged under 16, at the date the application is made, and the person uploads a new facial image
- **must** use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app (the App)

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

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

People who make a successful application will only receive an eVisa, which contains the facial image they provided when using the UK Immigration: ID Check app. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes. Most BRP cards expired on or before 31 December 2024.

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

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

- report this using the link at: <https://www.gov.uk/report-error-evisa>
- request to amend their information by accessing their customer account using the [Update My Details](#) function

Change to visa status

Where a decision is made to change the status of a non-visa nationality so they are required to apply for a visa before travelling to the UK, decision makers must contact any affected people who are residing in the UK. The person **must not** be required to reenrol their biometric information.

Related content

[Contents](#)

External links

Identity checks and biometrics

Replacement of damaged, lost or stolen BRPs and BRCs

This section tells you about what people need to do if their biometric residence permit (BRP) or biometric residence card (BRC) is damaged, lost or stolen. The replacement BRP and BRC service has closed, and people with extant immigration permission **must** register for a UKVI account to obtain an eVisa as evidence of their immigration status.

People can get information about eVisas at: [Online immigration status \(eVisa\)](#).

BRP card holders

People whose BRP is lost, stolen or damaged **must** notify UKVI about their card at [Biometric residence permits \(BRPs\): If your BRP is lost or stolen](#) and **must** register for a UKVI account to obtain an eVisa, if they still have outstanding immigration permission. They can find out about registering for an account at: [Get access to your eVisa: Overview](#).

You must record that the card was destroyed.

People whose BRP cards are damaged should retain a copy of the cards unique reference number, which they may be able to use when registering for their UKVI account to obtain their eVisa.

BRC card holders

People whose cards are lost, stolen or damaged should still notify UKVI about their card at [UK residence cards: Report a lost or stolen card - GOV.UK](#), as doing so will help to prevent identity enabled criminality. Ordinarily, most people who were issued a BRC will hold EU settled status (EUSS) which means they already have a UKVI account and an eVisa. To access their account, they should either refer to the letter they received when they were notified that they were granted EUSS or go to View and prove your immigration status: get a share code - GOV.UK.

You must record that the card was destroyed.

Information about applying to the EU settlement scheme can be found at: [Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme \(settled and pre-settled status\): Overview - GOV.UK](#)

Related content

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Retention and usage of biometric information

Related external links

[Immigration Rules Appendix Graduate](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Worker](#)

[Immigration Rules Appendix Student](#)

[View and prove your immigration status](#)

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

[Biometric residence permits \(BRPs\): If your BRP is lost or stolen](#)

[UK residence cards: Report a lost or stolen card](#)

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

[Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme \(settled and pre-settled status\): Overview](#)

Unable to enrol biometric information

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

Requirements

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

Decision makers can only exceptionally reuse the fingerprint biometric information of people, where UKVI still retains their fingerprint biometric information, who are:

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

Unable to attend a biometric enrolment event in the UK

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

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

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

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

People who make a successful application will receive an eVisa, which the most recent facial image they provided as part of their latest or previous biometric enrolment. The reused biometric information will be treated as a fresh enrolment for retention purposes.

Detained in the UK

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

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

Related content

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Biometric enrolment guidance

Reduced operational capacity

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

Decision makers **must** consider reusing biometric information where:

- people are in the UK
- people were previously issued a biometric residence permit (BRP)
- the facial image printed on the BRP will not be older than 10 years, or 5 years for cards issued to people aged under 16, before the leave or card expired
- the BRP or BRC must be within 18 months from the expiry date printed on the face of the card
- people are aged 5 years or over

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

Prioritising people

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

Higher priority people

Decision makers will prioritise the following groups of people for either a biometric enrolment appointment or for biometric reuse:

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

All people who meet the higher priority criteria will either have their previously enrolled biometric information used to complete their application or be invited to attend a Service and Support Centre to enrol their biometric information. Where a

person has been assessed as vulnerable, you must consider whether biometric enrolment would be preferable to biometric reuse.

Lower priority people

Decision makers must treat people whose circumstances meet the criteria below as lower priority, which includes those with:

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

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

Children: safeguarding

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

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

Other urgent requests that do not meet the higher priority criteria

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

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

Related content

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Requiring new facial image

This section tells decision makers about the process for requesting a new facial image when the image provided cannot be printed on a biometric residence permit (BRP) card.

Where a person fails to submit a digitised facial image that meets the requirements set out in the biometric enrolment guidance and the [digitised photo standards](#), decision makers must write to the applicant using the [initial request template](#) if the person has not already provided an acceptable facial image.

Facial image process checks

Where decision makers notify people that they require a new facial image, the person will need to log into their UKVI customer account. They will need to sign into Update My Details (UMD) Status Photo Update function to enable them to upload a new facial image.

People aged over 10 are strongly advised to complete all the photo enrolment steps, including the liveness scan, as this will improve the likelihood the new uploaded facial image will be acceptable. Where a person aged over 10 skips the liveness scan, they will not be able to have their previously enrolled biometric information reused, and will need to attend a biometric enrolment appointment at a VAC.

Official – sensitive: start of section

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Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

[Contents](#)

Biometric information: enrolment

[Initial request template](#)

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

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

Related external links

[Biometric information: caseworker guidance](#)

[Get a passport photo: Digital photos](#)

Identity: preventing abuse

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

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

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

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Scanned documents

Impostors

Document image archive

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