



Home Office

Home Office issued documents

Version 14.0

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 **14.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **25 September 2025**

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
- include the new correspondence address for UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI)
- tell examiners, if they need to confirm the immigration status of a customer, or their parent
- how and when to use an eVisa reference number to check Atlas
- when to accept a biometric residence card or permit
- remove references to the Application Management System (AMS)
- to tell examiners how to cancel and return a residence document to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

Related content
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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, the examiner, 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. If the holder of this card has now obtained asylum, or British citizenship, they are no longer an asylum seeker.

When you are ready to issue a passport to the holder of an application registration card (ARC) submitted with an application, you must:

- select the document record for the ARC on ARD (Application Receive Domain)

- update the handling instruction to return the document to an alternate address, entering:
 - 'CEBU, PO Box 222, Liverpool, L69 2TY' as the alternate address
 - a note confirming a British passport has now been issued, in the **Why are you updating the instructions** text box

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.

Biometric residence cards, permits and eVisas

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 expired by 31 December 2024. Any customer with valid leave who previously held a BRP will now have 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 issued as proof of the holders right to stay, work or study in the UK. It is not a travel document. If the holder travels abroad, they still need to hold a passport issued by their country's government. But they need to take their valid residence card or eVisa share code as evidence they are entitled to return to the UK.

Home Office eVisa

UKVI introduced the [Online immigration status \(eVisa\)](#) system in 2018 to replace physical documents with digital immigration status records. eVisas have now completely replaced [biometric residence permits \(BRP\)](#), the last of which expired on 31 December 2024. Other documents being replaced are:

- [biometric residence cards \(BRC\)](#), which can be used until their expiry date but will be replaced as an eVisa on renewal
- passport endorsements, such as ILE or ILR wet ink stamps (customers holding these are advised to make an NTL application and will receive an eVisa if successful)
- vignette stickers in passports, such as entry clearance or visa vignettes (visa vignettes continue to be issued for dependents and those applying for reasons other than work or study)

Holders of eVisas can download a share code to provide evidence of their status within, or on their return to, the UK.

How a customer must send evidence of an eVisa

HM Passport Office 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)). We will accept the GWF or UAN if the customer provides it on:

- a copy of their Home Office email or letter; or
- section 8 of a paper application (if they apply by post); or
- a signed and dated letter; or
- an email from the email address entered on their application (where the number is requested after application)

How to check a Home Office eVisa

If a customer provides an eVisa GWF or UAN, you must follow the steps in How to use the Atlas system to:

1. Enter the reference number and select the correct record.
2. Check the **biographical strap** matches the details of the person whose status you are verifying.
3. View the **immigration history** or **all case cards strap** to verify the person's immigration status on the date you are interested in.

When to accept a Home Office eVisa

If you need to confirm what the customer's, or their parent's, immigration status was on a particular date (for example, before a child's date of birth), you must:

- accept the eVisa without asking for further documentation, if the Atlas record associated with the GWF or UAN:
 - matches the biographic details of the person whose status you are checking; and,
 - confirms the holder's immigration status at the time of the event
- ask the customer for the document that was valid at the time of the event (for example, a passport endorsement or vignette), if:
 - the date you need to confirm is before the eVisa was issued; and,
 - you cannot confirm from the Atlas record what the holder's immigration status was at the time of the event
- ask the customer to [reconfirm their eVisa GWF or UAN](#), if the Atlas record does not match the details of the person you are checking

If a customer cannot provide an eVisa reference number or a physical document, you must refer to: Supporting documents not available.

Biometric residence cards and permits

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 expired by 31 December 2024.

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.

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: 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. The permit was valid for the time specified in the conditions of stay.

When you can accept a biometric residence card or permit

If you need to confirm what a customer's, or their parent's, immigration status was on a particular date (for example, before a child's date of birth), and the customer provides a biometric card or permit, you must:

- accept the document as part of the evidence to support the application, if the document was valid at the time of the event
- ask the customer to provide a 16-digit eVisa reference number, if the date you need to confirm is after the expiry date of the card or permit (you must not use an expired residence card or permit to check an eVisa on Atlas)
- ask the customer to provide a previously issued document (for example, a passport endorsement or vignette), if:
 - the date you need to confirm is before the issue of the card or permit; and
 - you cannot confirm from UKVI's systems what the holder's immigration status was at the time of the event

If the customer cannot send a biometric residence card or permit or previously issued document, you must refer to: Supporting documents not available.

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.

How to cancel and return a residence card or permit to UKVI

If you need to return a residence document to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), you must:

1. Add a case note to the customer's application confirming:
 - the residence document number and personal details
 - you have returned the document to UKVI
2. Send the customer letter 004 using the Comms builder, telling them you have returned the residence document to the Home Office.
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,
2 Ruskin Square
Dingwall Road
Croydon
CR0 2WF

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

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 email to UKVI showing the:
 - o Final Mile consignment reference number
 - o date the residence document was sent to UKVI
 - o 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](#).

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