



Home Office

Historic passport information

Version 11.0

This document tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about useful historic information about British passports. It tells them about passport history, the language we use in passports, the different types of passport and observations, carriers' liability and the Schengen area. It tells them about passport and delivery fees between 3 September 2012 and 11 April 2024.

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About: Historic passport information

This document records historic information and background material relating to British passports. It tells HM passport office staff about passport and delivery fees from 3 September 2012 and 11 April 2024.

You must not use it to deal with applications for a British passport, as you must use current guidance instead. However, you may use it to find out useful information about how we previously dealt with passport applications.

We will continue to update this guidance to record any major changes to our current passport process and practices.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email the [Guidance team](#).

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

Publication

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

- version **11.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **13 October 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated in the [Passport observations](#) section, to include observations that HM Passport Office no longer uses in British passports.

Related content

[Contents](#)

The history of the British passport

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the history of the British passport.

The idea of a passport existed since people began to travel between countries.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the origin of the passport is 'Safe Conduct', which was at first, little more than a note signed by the king or queen asking that the person who held it be allowed to travel freely. Safe Conducts were issued to people of all nationalities and were mentioned in an Act of Parliament in the reign of King Henry V in 1414.

A brief history of the passport can be [found on GOV.UK](#).

How early passports were granted

The Privy Council probably granted the first passports. We can see from the Council Register that it granted them between 1540 and 1685. The earliest passport still in existence was granted in 1641 and was signed by King Charles I.

Between 1644 and 1649, the two Houses of Parliament also granted passports. An order to the House of Commons dated 14 April 1649 stated that no one should be granted a 'Pass' to 'go beyond the seas' until they had promised they would not 'act, be aiding, assisting, advising or counselling against the Commonwealth'.

At first, all British passports were signed by the king or queen. This changed during the reign of King Charles II (1660 to 1685), when a second type of passport was introduced. It was still issued in the King's name but was signed by the Secretary of State.

In 1794, the system was changed so that all passports were granted by the Secretary of State, as they are today. We still have records of passports that have been issued since 1674 in the [national archives](#).

Early passports and national identity

The earliest passports or 'Safe Conducts' were granted to people of all nationalities. In fact, they were given free to foreign nationals, but British subjects had to pay for them.

In 1858, British passports became documents of national identity, issued only to UK nationals.

The language of passports

The language of British passports has changed throughout history to reflect the culture and politics of the times:

- before 1772, they were written in Latin or English
- between 1772 and 1858, they were written in French
- from 1858, they have been written in English (with a French translation of certain sections since 1921)

Language in the British passport and related literature

In line with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards, the titles of some sections (such as the word 'surname', or 'date of issue') are also translated into the other official languages of the European Union (EU). This allows immigration staff to easily read the document.

Welsh and Scottish Gaelic appear on the titles page of the document before the official EU languages in the translations section.

HM Passport Office agreed a scheme in consultation with the Welsh Language Board which confirms our commitment to the principles of the Welsh Language Act 1993. It stipulates that all literature produced by us for use in Wales will be printed in both English and Welsh.

The need for a passport

There is no legal requirement for a British citizen to hold a British passport. However, immigration authorities in the UK and abroad must be satisfied with the identity and nationality of a traveller and a passport is the most convenient document to prove this.

Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1971 explains the evidence a person must provide when seeking entry to the UK on the basis they have a right of abode and that if the person is a British citizen, they should prove it by presenting a British passport.

Airports, international rail stations and seaports use passport checks as part of their security measures for international travellers and to ensure that they are meeting their obligations under the carrier liability regulations 2002 (amended 2023).

Passports are also required when a:

- foreign country requires overseas residents and visitors to provide proof of identity and nationality (either a national identity card or valid passport)
- foreign country enforces a legal obligation to carry a national identity card or passport at all times
- person requires consular assistance when in difficulties abroad

Some people may also need a passport to help them gain access to work or services (such as bank accounts, benefits or healthcare).

Carrier liability

The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 introduced in March 1987 (repealed on 8 December 2002) applied to carriers bringing passengers into the UK from abroad. Its aim was to reduce the number of people arriving in to the UK without passports, travel documents or visas, or with forged or counterfeit passports and visas. Following the United Kingdom leaving the European Union 31 January 2020 these [regulations were updated in 2023](#).

The carrier must ensure that passengers to the UK hold valid travel documents, passports and visas. If the carrier allows a passenger to travel with inadequate documentation they will be fined. Over 40 other countries have similar legislation in place including European Union member states who have not signed up to The Schengen Convention of June 1990.

[Section 40 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#) replaced the Immigration (Carriers Liability) Act 1987 and came into effect on the 8 December 2002.

The Schengen Convention

In June 1990, the Schengen Convention (an intergovernmental agreement outside of the EU) agreed to abolish checks on persons and goods at internal frontiers of the Schengen area. This agreement was implemented by France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal on the 26 March 1995. As more countries joined the EU, the Schengen area increased and now extends to 26 countries in mainland Europe (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia).

With the exception of France, who maintained controls at its frontiers with Belgium and Luxembourg, people crossing the common borders of these countries are no longer routinely asked to show their passport or national identity cards. People entering or leaving the Schengen areas are still required to hold a valid travel document. The Schengen Borders Code (SBC) does provide Member States with the capability of temporarily reintroducing border control at the internal borders in the event of a serious threat to public policy or internal security.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Passports issued by UK authorities

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the types of British passports issued by authorities in the United Kingdom.

The type and appearance of British passports has changed over time.

Old Blue (hardback style) passports

The passport commonly known as the 'Old Blue' started in 1920 and followed a standard format agreed internationally. The passport:

- was a hard backed booklet
- was dark blue in colour
- had:
 - 30 pages in a standard passport (which changed to 32 pages in August 1988)
 - 94 pages in a jumbo passport (now known as a Frequent Traveller Passport) which was introduced in May 1973 and changed to 48 pages in August 1988)
- had text that was printed in English and French
- was originally issued with 5 years validity and doubled to 10 years validity in 1968
- contained a list of countries where it was valid

Some of the information in the passport was handwritten. This included the:

- date and place of issue
- customer's:
 - title
 - name
 - spouse's name (if the customer had a spouse)
 - profession
 - date and place of birth
 - country of residence
 - height, eye and hair colour
 - distinguishing marks (if they had any)
 - signature
 - photo
- name (including maiden name) of the customer's spouse (if they had one)
- name, dates of birth and gender of any children to be included in the passport

The customer's spouse could also be included on 'joint' passports. Joint passports showed the personal details of both the husband and wife and included a photo of each person.

Children could either be:

- issued with their own Old Blue passport that was valid for 5 years and could be renewed free of charge (see [Child passport extensions](#))
- included on their parent's (or other relative's) Old Blue passport (in these cases, the child's name, date of birth and gender was handwritten on the passport)

Changes to the customer's details could be made by a passport officer by crossing through the original details and authorising the amendment with an official stamp.

As all Old Blue passports were handwritten, they could only be produced in regional passport offices and consular sections in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (now known as the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office).

UK common format passport

In 1981 the European Community (EC) member states agreed the common format for passports. The passport complies with the 'International standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation convention on international civil aviation', first issued in 1949.

The common format passport was introduced in September 1988 in the Glasgow office to replace the Old Blue passport. During 1990 and 1991, the Peterborough office issued Old Blue and common format passports. By the spring of 1992, all offices issued the common format passport.

The passport brought an end to the option of spouses and children being included on someone else's passport. It had a burgundy cover, lamination over the customer's personal details and photo and a machine readable zone across the bottom of the personal details page. Passports issued overseas by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office did not have machine readable zones, but they were added later.

The customer's personal details are converted into characters which are readable by passport scanners. The characters are added to the passport in 2 lines of 44 characters each. This information is known as the machine readable zone. The zone contains the:

- customer's name
- passport number
- two check digits
- nationality
- date of birth
- sex
- passport expiry date
- personal identity number

As these Passport Issuing Management Information System (PIMIS) passports contained 1 of the customer's passport photo (not a digital image), the passport was personalised in the regional passport office.

EU and non-EU passports

In 1988, we adopted the common recommended format of passports issued by EU member states. The passport was still a British passport and had 'European Community' on the front cover.

The reference to the EU on the passport front cover and page 1 of the document showed the holder was entitled to certain privileges under European Treaties (for example, free movement or the right to work). The passport had a page that translated some of the words used in the passport in to each of the official languages of the member states.

On 4 December 1997, 'European Community' was changed to 'European Union' on both the front cover and page 1 of the passport as a result of 'Supplementary Resolution - 22 June 1995'.

The UK announced it was leaving the EU on 31 January 2020 and would enter a transition arrangement until 31 December 2020. As such, in

- March 2019, we began issuing burgundy passports without the words 'European Union' on the front cover (some customers may have still received one with 'European Union' on until stocks ran out)
- March 2020, as part of routine re-designs, we began issuing a new UK series C e-passport (blue e-passport) with a blue cover that made no reference to the EU (some customers may have still received a burgundy passport without references to the EU on it until stocks ran out)

Digital passports

HM Passport Office introduced digital machine readable passports (MRPs) on 5 October 1998 at the Liverpool office. By November 2001, all offices produced the new document. The digital passport incorporated new safeguards and improved security, such as preventing photo substitution by using digital photos and signatures on the personal details page of the passport.

The customer's personal details are shown on page 31 (for standard passports) or page 47 (frequent traveller passports).

Digital passports are printed and personalised at a central facility. They can also be printed in regional passport offices depending on the service level and type of application requested by the customer.

The standard passport has 32 pages and the frequent traveller passport has 48 pages.

Biometric passports

There are different versions of the biometric passport. These passports have a chip that contains the customer's personal details and photo, as shown on the passport.

Biometric passport: version 1

The first biometric or e-passport (version 1) was issued on the 6 March 2006.

The passports:

- were:
 - consecutively numbered
 - laminated
 - chip encoded
- showed:
 - a digital photo of the customer (on pages 2 and 3)
 - the customer's personal details on the back page of the passport (page 31 for standard passports and page 47 for frequent traveller passports)
 - a chip and antenna visible on the page 32 (for standard passports) or page 48 (for frequent traveller passports)

The standard passport has 32 pages and the frequent traveller passport has 48 pages.

The introduction of biometric passports in the UK mirrored over 40 other countries and ensured that the UK remained within the USA visa waiver scheme.

Biometric passport: version 2

On 4 October 2010, the first new style (version 2) biometric passport was issued. Full rollout was completed by December 2010, however, local print rooms continued to print the older style biometric passports until stocks ran out.

New security features were designed to fight identity fraud and make the document more secure. The new style passport is randomly numbered and has:

- the personal details page moved to the front of the document and can now be found on page 2
- the observation page:
 - moved to the front of the document and can now be found on page 3
 - has the words 'THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL OBSERVATIONS' (if the customer did not need any observations adding)
- a digital photo of the customer on page 2 and 3
- the electronic chip contained within the back cover
- a different design, covering both pages on each visa page
- a latent image on the inside front cover (viewed by tilting the document at eye level)

The standard passport has 32 pages and the frequent traveller passport has 48 pages.

Ultra-high frequency (UHF) tags are attached to blank passport books allowing them to be tracked through the printing and personalisation process. The tag is automatically disabled when the passport process is complete and customers are asked to remove the tag when they receive their new passport.

The biometric passport undergoes regular changes to the visa page designs and to update security features.

Biometric passport: version 3

On 1 March 2020, UK series C e-passport (blue e-passport) was phased into production. [The passport:](#)

- has a dark blue cover
- is a non-EU passport
- has a hard wearing polycarbonate personal details page at the front of the book
- has observations printed on page 3
- shows the customer's passport photo 3 times within the book
- has the electronic chip, embedded in the personal details page

The standard passport has 32 pages and the frequent traveller passport has 54 pages.

References to passport types in the examiner guidance

Different designs of digital and e-Passports passports are in circulation, collectively these are known as machine readable passports (MRP). The table below details the types of passports we issued, the year they were introduced and what the individual passport types are called in guidance.

Passport type	Colour	Issue date	Term to use
First machine readable passport - issued using the Passport Issuing Management Information System (PIMIS) passport showing EU status	Burgundy	1989	PIMIS
Digital passport	Burgundy	1998 to 2006	digital passport
Biometric passport	Burgundy	2006 to 2010	e-Passport (version 1)
New style biometric passport	Burgundy	2010 to 2020	e-Passport (version 2)

New style biometric passport	Blue	2020	UK series C e-passport (blue e-passport)
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Diplomatic and Official passports

Before 2013, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), now known as the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), dealt with passport applications for Diplomatic and Official passports and the Queen's Messenger Service. Queen's Messenger Service passports were similar to an Old Blue passport but were a burgundy colour and had 93 pages.

Since September 2013, the Durham Diplomatic and Official team have processed passport applications for Diplomatic and Official passports and the Queen's Messenger Service. These passports can only be printed in our central print facility and they have the words Diplomatic or Official in gold lettering on the front cover.

The Queen's Messenger Service was renamed the King's Messenger Service in November 2022. Passports for the King's Messenger Service are Diplomatic passports with an added observation showing they are used by the King's Messenger Service.

Related content

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Documents issued by UK authorities

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about different types of documents issued by authorities in the United Kingdom.

The UK authorities have issued several different types of documents which a customer may submit as supporting documents when applying for a passport.

UK biometric residence permits for foreign nationals

The biometric residence permit, issued by UK Visa and Immigration, design was set by European Union (EU) regulation and each permit number is unique. It:

- is credit card size (86mm 54mm)
- contains a chip to make it more secure against forgery and abuse
- has the International Civil Aviation organisation symbol found on the front of the card above the holder's image is printed using Optically Variable Ink (OVI) and changes colour when tilted
- has a two-colour ultraviolet design the angle of the design is different on the front and back
- uses Dynaprint and tilting the card will show the:
 - valid until date and the letter U
 - photograph of the holder and the letter K.
- has tactile features on the back showing a raised design of the four national flowers of the UK (these can be seen by shining a light across the permit)
- uses Kinegram and shows various designs as the permit is tilted, with a distinctive colour change and fine detail

UK: Application Registration Card

An Application Registration Card (ARC) was introduced in June 2017.

ARCs are 'claimed' ID cards given to every Asylum Seeker to acknowledge their asylum claim. Issuing the ARC was mandated by the European Union (EU) and domestic regulation. The ARCs were used as part of the Asylum Support process as recipients use their ARC prior to collecting weekly allowance. The ARC is used by employers and external bodies to verify identity.

The ARCs were printed by Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and posted to applicants.

The benefits of the ARC are:

- encourages a high-quality, ICAO compliant biometric image for all applicants seeking asylum in the UK

- sustainable, cost effective approach to artefact production – centrally controlled card stock.
- reduced effort for Officers in Port and the Appeals Implementation Units
- reduction in fraudulent cards in circulation (the card has 47 additional security features)

UK: Alien Order Book

An Alien Order Book is a registration card for immigrants to Britain, known as ‘aliens’ in the legal terminology of the time. Aliens were legally required to register with the police from 1914 onwards and to pay a registration fee, in return they received a certificate.

EU citizens with Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) will usually have applied for it and have a stamp in their passport or a letter from the Home Office as proof. They could also have a ‘vignette’ (sticker) or biometric residence permit. If they lived in the UK before 1973, they may have been given ILR automatically.

The status of EU citizens who already had ILR in the UK is unaffected by the UK leaving the EU, provided their ILR has not lapsed by having spent more than two years outside the UK. They can continue to live in the UK without applying to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). However, sometimes long-term residents find it difficult to prove they hold ILR – for example, where the status had been endorsed in a passport this may have been returned to the issuing authority when it expired.

These documents however could be accepted as sufficient evidence of a person’s ILR, provided they are from an EU citizen who can confirm their ILR has not lapsed by having spent more than two years outside the UK.

Permanent Residence label

Since April 1992 this label has been issued to people who have permanent residence in the United Kingdom. It shows “Given leave to remain in the United Kingdom for an Indefinite Period.”

- under ultra-violet light the serial number in the top right hand corner-fluoresces
- under ultra-violet light the left side of the pattern around the central crown shines brighter than the right side
- the borders and lettering are slightly raised
- the straight lines are made up of very small letters. You will probably need a magnifying glass to see these properly
- passport holder’s photograph has also been included from Jan 2004
- the signature line reads “SIGNEDSIGNEDSIGNED” etc
- the date line reads “DATEDATEDDATE” etc
- all other lines read “INDINDIND” or “BIABIABIA” or “UKBAUKBAUKBA” etc

Related content

[Contents](#)

Passport fees

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about a history of passport fees. It contains details of passport and delivery fees between 03 September 2012 and 11 April 2024.

The [Consular Fees Act 1980](#) (CFA) set out the fees that can be charged for our services. The actual fees charged and variations in them are set out in Consular Fees Orders which were approved by the Privy Council.

The Immigration Act 2016 replaced the CFA on 27 March 2018 and provided HM Passport Office with the power to set the fees charged for passport services.

The first Statutory Instrument came into force on 27th March 2018 and summarises all current passport fees and when they can be waived. Any future statutory instruments will either:

- reaffirm current fees
- introduce new fees
- change the fees

Passport fee changes

The current passport fees can be found in Passport fees and have been in place since 11 April 2025.

UK fees charged 11 April 2024 to 10 April 2025

The fees for UK passport applications and secure delivery between 11 April 2024 and 10 April 2025 were:

Passport type	Postal	Online	Premium Service	Fast Track	Fast Track Collect****
Adult (16 and over) standard	£100.00	£88.50	£207.50*	£166.50**	£190.00**
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£112.00	£100.50	£219.50*	£178.50**	£202.00**
Child (under 16) standard	£69.00	£57.50	£176.50	£135.50	£159.00
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£81.00	£69.50	£188.50	£147.50	£171.00
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	£119.00	£78.00	£101.50
Diplomatic, official or dependant***	£88.50	-	-	-	-

Diplomat and official child	£57.50	-	-	-	-
HM forces standard – adult or dependant***	£100.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces standard child	£69.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport – adult or dependant***	£112.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport child	£81.00	-	-	-	-
Collective passports	£39.00	-	-	-	-
Collective passport - collect from office	£54.00				

Service	Fee
Returning supporting documents by secure delivery	£5.00*

UK fees charged 2 February 2023 to 10 April 2024

The fees for UK passport applications and secure delivery between 2 February 2023 and 10 April 2024 were:

Passport type	Postal	Online	Digital Premium Service	Fast Track	Fast Track Collect****
Adult (16 and over) standard	£93.00	£82.50	£193.50*	£155.00**	£177.00**
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£104.00	£93.50	£204.50*	£166.00**	£188.00**
Child (under 16) standard	£64.00	£53.50	£164.50	£126.00	£148.00
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£75.00	£64.50	£175.50	£137.00	£159.00
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	£111.00	£72.50	£94.50
Diplomatic, official or dependant***	£82.50	-	-	-	-
Diplomat and official child	£53.50	-	-	-	-

HM forces standard – adult or dependant***	£93.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces standard child	£64.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport – adult or dependant***	£104.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport child	£75.00	-	-	-	-
Collective passports	£39.00	-	-	-	-
Collective passport - collect from office	£54.00				

Service	Fee
Returning supporting documents by secure delivery	£5.00*

UK fees charged 27 March 2018 to 1 February 2023

The fees for UK passport applications and secure delivery between 27 March 2018 and 1 February 2023

Passport type	Postal	Online	Digital Premium Service	Premium	Fast Track
Adult (16 and over) standard	£85.00	£75.50	£177.00*	£177.00*	£142.00**
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£95.00	£85.50	£187.00*	£187.00*	£152.00**
Child (under 16) standard	£58.50	£49.00	£151.00	£151.00	£122.00
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£68.50	£59.00	£161.00	£161.00	£132.00
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	£77.50	£77.50	£42.50
Diplomatic, official or dependant***	£75.50	-	-	-	-

Diplomat and official child	£49.00	-	-	-	-
HM forces standard – adult or dependant***	£85.00	£75.50	-	-	-
HM forces standard child	£58.50	£49.00	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport – adult or dependant***	£95.00	£85.50	-	-	-
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport child	£68.50	£59.00	-	-	-
Collective passports	£39.00	-	-	-	-
Passport type				Fast Track Collect	
Adult (16 and over) standard				£164.50**	
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport				£174.50**	
Child (under 16) standard				£142.00	
Child Frequent Traveller Passport				£152.00	
Veteran standard				£65.00	
Diplomatic, official or dependant***				-	
Diplomat and official child				-	
HM forces standard – adult or dependant***				-	
HM forces standard child				-	
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport – adult or dependant***				-	
HM forces Frequent Traveller Passport child				-	
Collective passports				-	

The secure delivery fee between 27 March 2018 and 11 April 2024 was:

Service	Fee
Returning supporting documents by secure delivery	£5.00

UK fees charged 3 September 2012 to 26 March 2018

The passport fee for UK applications between 3 September 2012 and 26 March 2018 were:

Passport type	Standard	Fast Track	Fast Track collect	Premium
Adult first standard	£72.50	-	-	-

Adult renewal standard	£72.50	£103.00	£123.00	£128.00
Adult replacement standard	£72.50	£103.00	£123.00	-
Child first standard	£46.00	£87.00	£103.50	-
Child renewal standard	£46.00	£87.00	£103.50	£106.00
Child replacement standard	£46.00	£87.00	£103.50	-
Frequent Traveller Passport	£85.00	£111.00	£123.00	£137.00
Veteran standard	£0.00	£30.50	£50.50	£55.50
Collective passport	£39.00	-	-	-

The secure delivery fee for UK applications between 3 September 2012 and 26 March 2018 was:

Delivery fee	Standard	Fast Track	Fast Track collect	Premium
Secure delivery	£3.00	-	-	-

International fees

International fees charged 11 April 2024 to 10 April 2025

The fees for international passport applications and secure delivery between 11 April 2024 and 10 April 2025 were:

Service type	Postal	Online	Premium Service	Fast Track
Adult (16 and over) standard	£112.50	£101.00	*	*
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£124.50	£113.00	*	*
Child (under 16) standard	£77.00	£65.50	*	*
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£89.00	£77.50	*	*
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	*	*

The international delivery fee between 11 April 2024 and 10 April 2025 was:

Service type	Delivery of passport to customer from UK to address as specified	Return of supporting documents to customer from HMPO in UK (where applicable*)
Standard DHL delivery to overseas address	£9.70	£10.16

Diplomatic bag delivery overseas (where required in some countries for security reasons)	£11.41**	£10.16
British Forces Post Office (BFPO) delivery (for applications from the armed forces overseas processed via unit)	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at a BFPO or UK address	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at UK embassy, high commission or consulate overseas by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Services (FCDOS)***	£11.41	£10.16
Delivery to a UK address where the customer has applied overseas	£5	£0.00
Veteran passport	£0.00	£0.00

* The Local Service will not always send original documents to the UK, so a return fee is not always necessary

** Using secure delivery to send supporting documents to a UK address is optional. The UK fee of £5 applies for this service

*** If the passport is:

- sent to the customer's personal address overseas, the standard £9.70 fee applies
- delivered to an embassy, high commission or consulate through the BFPO, the £5.00 delivery fee applies

International fees charged 2 February 2023 to 10 April 2024

The previous passport fee for international applications between 2 February and 10 April 2024 were:

Service type	Postal	Online	Digital Premium Service	Fast Track
Adult (16 and over) standard	£104.50	£94.00	*	*
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£115.50	£105.00	*	*

Child (under 16) standard	£71.50	£61.00	*	*
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£82.50	£72.00	*	*
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	*	*

The previous delivery fees for international applications between 27 March 2018 and 11 April 2024 were:

Service type	Delivery of passport to applicant from UK to address as specified	Return of supporting documents to applicant from HMPO in UK (where applicable*)
Standard DHL delivery to overseas address	£9.70	£10.16
Diplomatic bag delivery overseas (where required in some countries for security reasons)	£11.41**	£10.16
British Forces Post Office (BFPO) delivery (for applications from the armed forces overseas processed via unit)	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at a BFPO or UK address	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at UK embassy, high commission or consulate overseas by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Services (FCDOS)***	£11.41	£10.16
Delivery to a UK address where the applicant has applied overseas	£5	£0.00
Veteran passport	£0.00	£0.00

International fees charged 27 March 2018 to 1 February 2023

The fees for international passport applications and secure delivery between 27 March 2018 and 1 February 2023 were:

Service type	Postal	Online	Digital Premium Service	Premium	Fast Track
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Adult (16 and over) standard	£95.50	£86.00	*	*	*
Adult or veteran Frequent Traveller Passport	£105.50	£96.00	*	*	*
Child (under 16) standard	£65.50	£56.00	*	*	*
Child Frequent Traveller Passport	£75.50	£66.00	*	*	*
Veteran standard	£0.00	£0.00	*	*	*

The previous delivery fees for international applications did not change between 27 March 2018 and 11 April 2024 and were:

Service type	Delivery of passport to applicant from UK to address as specified	Return of supporting documents to applicant from HMPO in UK (where applicable*)
Standard DHL delivery to overseas address	£9.70	£10.16
Diplomatic bag delivery overseas (where required in some countries for security reasons)	£11.41**	£10.16
British Forces Post Office (BFPO) delivery (for applications from the armed forces overseas processed via unit)	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at a BFPO or UK address	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at UK embassy, high commission or consulate overseas by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Services (FCDOS)***	£11.41	£10.16

Delivery to a UK address where the applicant has applied overseas	£5	£0.00
Veteran passport	£0.00	£0.00

Veteran passport	£0.00	£0.00
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International fees charged 3 September 2012 to 26 March 2018

The previous passport fee for international applications between 3 September 2012 and 26 March 2018 were:

Passport type	Standard	Fast Track	Fast Track collect	Premium
Adult first standard	£83.00	-	-	-
Adult renewal standard	£83.00	-	-	-
Adult replacement standard	£83.00	-	-	-
Adult Frequent Traveller Passport	£91.00	-	-	-
Child first standard	£53.00	-	-	-
Child renewal standard	£53.00	-	-	-
Child replacement standard	£53.00	-	-	-
Veteran standard	£0.00	-	-	-
Diplomatic and official passport (including dependents)	£72.50	-	-	-
HM Forces adult first, renewal and replacement standard (including adult dependents)	£72.50	-	-	-
HM Forces adult first, renewal and replacement Frequent Traveller (including dependents)	£85.50	-	-	-
HM Forces child first, renewal and replacement (dependents)	£46.00	-	-	-

The previous delivery fees for international applications between 3 September 2012 and 26 March 2018 were:

Service type	Delivery of passport to applicant from UK to address as specified	Return of supporting documents to applicant from HM Passport Office in UK (where applicable*)
Standard DHL delivery to international address	£9.70	£10.16
Diplomatic bag delivery overseas (where required in some countries for security reasons)	£11.41**	£10.16
British Forces Post Office (BFPO) delivery (for applications from the armed forces overseas processed via unit)	£0.00	£0.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at a BFPO or UK address	£3.00	£3.00
Delivery to diplomats and officials at UK embassy, high commission or consulate overseas by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Services (FCDOS)***	£11.41	£10.16
Delivery to a UK address where the applicant has applied from outside the UK	£3.00	£0.00
Veteran passport	£0.00	£0.00

* The Local Service did not always send original documents to the UK, so a return fee was not always necessary.

** Using secure delivery to send supporting documents to a UK address was optional. The UK fee of £5 applied for this service.

*** If the passport was sent to the customer's personal address overseas, the standard £9.70 fee applied. If it was delivered to an embassy, high commission or consulate through the BFPO, the £3.00 delivery fee applied.

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How customers could apply

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about a history of the ways in which a customer could apply for their passport.

There are several ways a customer can currently apply for a passport. Depending on if they are eligible for the service, this includes:

- by post, using a paper application form (some international customers may need to submit their application through Local Services)
- online
- the Fast Track or Premium service
- Post Office Check & Send services

How customers could apply: Post Office Check & Send

The Check & Send service started in 1996. The Post Office provided much of the service, along with:

- some branches of Lloyds bank (up until around 2007)
- World Choice travel agents (up until around 2006)

The service was originally for paper applications but was extended to online applications in 2019. As the service allows applications to be checked before being sent to HM Passport office, it means they are less likely to be delayed or rejected.

The service was popular and during its peak, accounted for up to 70% of all postal applications. Due to the success of Digital Customer Services (the customer-focused way a customer can apply online for a passport) and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the service accounted for less than 15% of all UK applications as of 2022.

The Post Office is the only place other than HM Passport Office where customers can get a paper application form and over 95% of paper application forms are distributed by the Post Office.

You can find more information about the Post Office Check & Send service, including who can use it, in Post Office Check & Send applications.

How customers could apply: online applications

Up until 12 May 2019, customers could apply for their passport online using the Online Channel (OLC) on GOV.UK. The OLC was the way a customer applied for their passport online before Digital Customer Services. Customers:

- could use the OLC to apply:
 - for a first adult or child passport

- to renew an adult or child passport
- to replace a lost or stolen passport
- to extend a restricted validity passport
- for a frequent traveller passport
- for a concessionary passport
- for up to 8 applications at the same time and make a single payment to cover the full cost
- could not use the OLC if they wanted to apply:
 - for a Diplomatic or Official passport
 - through their Forces Unit to the Peterborough Forces team

The OLC catered for international addresses, post codes and phone numbers that can be longer than UK addresses. The:

- post code field allowed for up to 10 characters
- phone number field allowed for up to 15 characters

The post code and phone number were shortened if they were too long to fit on passport and application records and in such cases, the system added an automatic case note to show the full information.

OLC: completing the application

When a customer logged onto GOV.UK to complete their application using the online channel (OLC), they had to:

- confirm what passport they were applying for (for example, first time, renewal or replacement)
- fill in their personal details
- record any previous passports they had
- provide information that allowed us to confirm their claim to British nationality (if they were applying for their first passport)
- confirm their payment method and pay the correct fee

When a customer filled in and submitted the application, they had to:

- print, complete and sign an OLC: declaration form
- post their declaration form, supporting documents and photo directly to HM Passport Office (if they applied from the UK or internationally from a country where Local Services were not in operation)
- take their declaration, supporting documents and photos to Local Services (if they applied internationally from a country where Local Services were in operation)

OLC: declaration form

Customers who submitted their application using the online channel (OLC) had to complete a declaration form that contained the following information:

- the address to send the declaration form
- advice about what photos are acceptable
- the customer's:
 - name
 - first line of their address and post code
 - contact details
 - reference number
- a statement asking the customer to confirm:
 - the details on their application are correct
 - they read and understood the relevant guidance provided
 - they are a British national and have not given up their national status
 - they understand they could lose citizenship of another country if they hold another passport
 - they may be asked to provide further information to complete their application
 - they do not know of any reason why a British passport should not be issued to them
 - they have parental responsibility for the child they are applying on behalf of (for child applications)
 - they will return the lost or stolen passport if it's later recovered (for applications to replace a lost or stolen passport)
- an area for capturing the customer's signature (or child's signature, if applicable)
- a checklist of the documents the customer must send with the declaration form
- an area for capturing parental consent (for child applications)
- a section for the countersignatory to complete and sign (if applicable)
- an area for a third party to sign on the customers behalf, as well as recording their relationship to the customer (if the customer has a physical or learning disability)

An error with the OLC meant international customers were asked to use the UK version of the declaration form if they applied on, or before 23 February 2014 and printed the declaration form on, or before 2 April 2014. The declaration included a statement that said they were living in the UK. In such cases, HM Passport Office:

- accepted the declaration
- did not take any action if they suspected a false declaration

OLC: when a customer submitted the application

When a customer submitted their application using the online channel (OLC), they:

- could access and print the declaration form again (only if HM Passport Office had not received and processed the application)
- were given a password they could use to log on to the OLC to track the progress

OLC: when HM Passport Office received the application

The Application Management System (AMS) electronically held the online channel (OLC) application until we received the customer's declaration form, supporting documents and photos. A reminder was sent to the customer to ask for their declaration, supporting documents and photos if we did not get them after 45 days of receiving the application. AMS withdrew the application if we did not get them after 90 days.

When we received the declaration form, supporting documents and photos, Sopra Steria Ltd (SSL):

- scanned the declaration form on to AMS
- processed the application for passing to examination

If SSL could not scan the declaration form on to AMS, they:

- printed a copy of the declaration pack, attached the photos and scanned them on to AMS
- wrote to the customer to ask them to complete another declaration (for UK customers)
- passed the application to the correct international team who wrote to the customer to ask them to complete another declaration (for international customers)

OLC: examining the application

Examiners processed the online channel (OLC) application using the guidance available to them (to confirm identity, nationality and entitlement). They:

- could send a copy of the declaration form to the customer and ask them to re-sign it (if there was a problem with the customer's signature)
- had to ask the customer to complete a free of charge paper application form if their details changed and other sections of the application need to be completed (for example, if they needed a new countersignatory)
- had to make sure they had written reasons why a third party completed and signed the application on behalf of the customer (if it was not included on the application)
- had to make sure they had the consent of someone with parental responsibility if a 16 or 17 year old had a mental disability that meant they did not understand the consequences of signing the declaration form
- could reopen the application within 28 days of when a passport was issued in order to reissue it (for example, if there was an error on the passport), otherwise the customer needed to complete a new paper application form, which would be dealt with free of charge
- had to contact customers by email if they needed more information (for international customers)

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International passport applications

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the history of who dealt with international passport applications.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), now known as the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), were previously responsible for issuing British passports for international customers (under the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs).

Consulates in each country processed passport applications for customers in that country, up until 2006. Between 2006 and 2011, 1 of 7 Regional Passport Processing Centres (RPPCs) across the world processed passport applications, depending on which country the customer applied from. The RPPCs were located in:

- Dusseldorf
- Hong Kong
- Madrid
- Paris
- Pretoria
- Washington
- Wellington

In 2011, passport processing moved from the 7 RPPCs to HM Passport Office application processing centres in the UK. The transition was managed by the Overseas Passport Management Unit in the FCO (now known as the FCDO), on behalf of HM Passport Office.

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Passport validity

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about a history of passport validity.

British passports were originally issued with 5 years validity. In 1968, it increased to 10 years for adults. Up until 26 March 1998, children's passports that expired could be extended with the remaining validity (up to the 10 year anniversary of their original passport), free of charge.

Passports with remaining validity

Between November 2004 and October 2018, customers renewing their passport before it expired could have any remaining validity, up to 9 months, added to their new passport. For example, if an adult customer renewed their passport when it had:

- 7 months validity remaining on it, they would receive their new passport that was valid for 10 years and 7 months
- 10 months validity remaining, they would receive their new passport that was valid for 10 years and 9 months

Since October 2018, customers renewing their passport before it expired do not get any remaining validity added to their new passport. Instead, they are issued with a passport that has no more than:

- 10 years validity (for adults)
- 5 years validity (for children)

This is because when the UK left the European Union, customer's travelling to some other European countries can only use the passport if, on the date of travel, it was issued in the last 10 years.

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Passports for children

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about a history of child passports.

Up until 4 October 1998, children could:

- be included on their parent's (or other relative's) passport (the child's name, date of birth and gender were entered on to the passport and the details were noted on our passport records)
- have their own passport with a sibling named on it (the sibling's name, date of birth and gender were entered on to the passport, and the details were noted on our passport records)

When adding a child to another person's passport in the UK, their nationality was checked. If they were added overseas, we could not be certain their nationality was checked. Therefore, when a child included on another person's passport applied for their own passport, they had to provide all of the necessary supporting documents with their application. However, while we still confirmed their identity, we:

- did not need to check their nationality (if they were added to another person's passport in the UK)
- checked their nationality (if they were added to another person's passport overseas)

Before adding a child to a passport, we asked for evidence to confirm their relationship to the person whose passport they were being added to.

Since 5 October 1998, children need their own passport. However, a passport that included a child or sibling, could still be used until it expired. All British passports that included a child on it will now be out of date.

Child passport extensions

Before 26 March 1998, HM Passport Office charged a standard fee for both adult and child passports. Customers who applied for child passports were issued with a 5 year passport. They had to reapply when this expired and were granted a new passport free of additional charge with the remaining validity (up to the 10 year anniversary of the original passport). HM Passport Office removed this service on 26 March 1998. Passports issued to children since this date cannot be extended free of charge.

Countersignatories for child renewals

From 10 December 2007, someone needs to countersign an application for a child aged:

- 11 or under
- 12 to 15 who cannot be recognised from the photo in their old passport

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Passports issued in 1999

This section tells HM Passport Office about passports issued during 1999.

During the summer of 1999, HM Passport Office were under considerable operational pressure caused by the volume of passport applications. During this time:

- there was no general relaxation of examination processes and therefore no need to introduce additional checks on renewal applications
- we considered issuing a 1 year restricted validity passports for applications stuck in a backlog for customers who could not provide all of the evidence we needed
- in exceptional circumstances, we extended passports for 2 years if they were about to expire (this was mainly done by Check and Send Post Offices who used Foreign & Commonwealth Office (now known as Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) stamps)

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Passport observations

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about a history of passport observations.

There are some observations we previously added to a passport that we no longer use.

British overseas territory or crown dependency observations

We previously issued some British overseas territory or crown dependency passports with observations that we no longer use. We no longer add the following 2 observations to British passports.

Observation: British overseas territory citizens

THE HOLDER IS A BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES CITIZEN

HM Passport Office does not use observation code OBTA, previously used in some British overseas territories citizen (BOTC) passports.

From 3 June 2021, we updated our guidance to explain we no longer use the observation. It was removed from the Observations in passports guidance on 10 October 2025.

Observation: Right of abode in overseas territories

THE HOLDER HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN [INSERT FREE TEXT]

HM Passport Office does not add observation code OBTD to British overseas territory citizen passports. If a customer wants this observation adding to their passport, they must contact the immigration office in their territory. See BOTC territory immigration observations

From 18 October 2021, we updated our guidance to explain we no longer use the observation. It was later removed from the Observations in passports guidance on 10 October 2025.

European Union related observations

The United Kingdom (UK) left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 and entered into a transition period that ended 31 December 2020. As such, from 1 January 2021, there are some EU related observations that we no longer use.

Observation: not entitled to EU benefits

We previously issued some passports with observation OBTR that said:

THE HOLDER IS NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFIT FROM EU PROVISIONS
RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT OR ESTABLISHMENT

We used this observation for:

- British citizens who got their British citizenship through a connection with Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man who did not benefit from European Union (EU) provisions
- British subjects connected to:
 - Ireland who had the right to readmission to the UK
 - India
- British protected persons
- British nationals (overseas)
- British overseas citizens
- British overseas territories citizens (BOTCs) connected to:
 - a British overseas territory other than Gibraltar
 - Gibraltar whose passport does not include an observation that says:

THE HOLDER IS DEFINED AS A UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL FOR
COMMUNITY PURPOSES

From 1 January 2021, we updated our guidance to explain we no longer use the observation. It was later removed from the guidance on 2 December 2021.

Observation: community purpose

We previously issued some passports with observation OBTF that said:

THE HOLDER IS DEFINED AS A UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL FOR
COMMUNITY PURPOSES

We used this for BOTCs who got their BOTC status through a connection with Gibraltar who have a right of free movement in the EU.

From 1 January 2021, we updated our guidance to explain we no longer use the observation. It was later removed from the guidance on 2 December 2021.

Observation: member of the EU parliament

We previously issued some passports with an observation that said:

THE HOLDER IS A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

We used this observation for elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who wanted the observation shown on their passport.

From 1 January 2021, we updated our guidance to explain we no longer use the observation.

British overseas territory citizen observations

Since June 2021, HM Passport Office no longer added the following observations to a British overseas territory citizen (BOTC) passport:

- observation OBTC which said:

THE HOLDER IS A BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES CITIZEN

- observation OBTD which said:

THE HOLDER HAS RIGHT THE OF ABODE IN [TERRITORY]

Only the British overseas territory team in Peterborough added a BOTC observation to a Bermudan BOTC variant passport that says:

THE HOLDER IS REGISTERED AS BERMUDIAN

Libya travel stamp in passports

The following content was removed from guidance because it relates to a practice withdrawn in 2010.

Between 1973 and 2010 the Libyan authorities refused to issue visas for travel to Libya unless the passport holder's details were shown on the passport in Arabic. HM Passport Office helped British passport holders by providing (on request) a stamped Arabic template to record their personal details. It was the customer's responsibility to have their personal details completed on the stamp in Arabic before applying for a Libyan visa.

The stamp was known as the 'Libyan stamp' and was manually added to British passports by staff in local print rooms in HM Passport Office and Consular offices in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). This service was withdrawn in 2010.

Customers requesting this stamp must be told to contact the nearest Libyan Embassy for advice and to check [Foreign travel advice](#).

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Full birth certificate policy

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the full birth certificate policy

Before January 2005, HM Passport Office accepted short birth certificates from customers as evidence of their birth and claim to British nationality.

From 4 May 2004 the short birth certificate, which omits the names of parents, was no longer acceptable evidence of nationality for the purpose of applying for a British passport in the UK.

From 3 January 2005, all first time applications for those born on or after 1 January 1983 must be supported by additional documents to establish their nationality.

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