



Home Office

British protected persons

Version 18.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about how to deal with passport applications for customers who hold British protected persons status

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About: British protected persons

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office examiners how to deal with passport applications from customers who hold British protected persons (BPP) status.

Only examiners with the correct level of training must deal with BPP cases.

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 **18.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **23 February 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated:

- to remove references to Application Management System (AMS)
- in the British protected persons section to tell examiners what they must do if a customer sends in an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card to support their passport application
- in the section How to deal with British protected person cases to tell examiners when they must deal with a British protected person case as a first time application

Related content

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Related external links

British protected persons: historical information

British protected persons

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff about the nationality status British protected person (BPP) and how they must deal with applications for a BPP passport.

The term 'British protected person' (BPP) appeared during the 1800s when the British government extended protection to people and places outside the Crown's dominions.

United Kingdom government protection was given for political rather than for nationality reasons. British protected persons are not mentioned in nationality legislation until the [British Nationality Act 1948](#). Before that the status came only from the Royal Prerogative.

The places given government protection fell into one of 4 categories:

- protectorates
- protected states
- mandated territories
- trust territories

For definitions, see: Order Book for British protected persons.

There have been several legislative orders that have affected customers holding BPP status since 1948 (see: Order Book for British protected persons).

The [BPP Order 1978](#) came into force on 16 August 1978 and declared:

- BPP status could no longer be passed automatically to children born on or after 16 August 1978
- a BPP would lose that status if they acquired any other nationality or citizenship on or after 16 August 1978

[Section 38\(1\) of the British Nationality Act 1981](#) declared the following categories of persons to be BPPs:

- a citizen or national of Brunei under any law providing for citizenship or nationality in force in Brunei (see Order Book - Brunei)
- a person who immediately (before 1 January 1983) was a British Protected Person by virtue of the 1978 Order
- a person otherwise stateless, can become a British protected person (by registration) if:
 - they were born (on or after 1 January 1983) in the UK or a dependent territory
 - at the time of their birth, their mother or father was a British protected person

- a person otherwise stateless can become a BPP (by registration), if
 - they were born outside the UK and the dependent territories
 - at the time of their birth, their father or mother was a BPP (under Article 7(2) of the Order)

Rights of British protected persons

British protected persons (BPPs) can hold a British passport and get consular help and protection from UK diplomatic posts abroad. A BPP is subject to immigration controls and does not have the automatic right to live or work in the UK.

BPPs cannot hold dual British nationality. If a BPP gains any other British nationality on or after 16 August 1978, they will lose BPP status.

Many BPP customers in the UK may be affected by Windrush and you must deal with their case fairly, by using the Windrush guidance.

Related content

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How to deal with British protected person cases

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff how to deal with an application for a British protected person's (BPP) passport.

HM Passport Office assess all applications for British protected person (BPP) passports as if they were first time applications. We do this for:

- customers who have never held a British passport
- customers who apply to renew or replace a BPP passport:
 - issued before 1 January 2013
 - issued after 1 January 2013 with no passport note to show the BPP nationality claim has already been re-assessed

You, the examiner, do not need to deal with a renewal or replacement application as a first time application if the customer's passport record shows we have already reassessed their claim (as a first time application) since 2013. But you must reassess the customer's claim if you have any concerns about their application.

You must send letter template 745 'BOC/BPP renewals – documents required' to ask for any additional documents or evidence needed to confirm the customer's BPP claim if they have not already provided it.

BPP applications: what the customer must send us

You, the examiner may need to write to British protected persons (BPP) customers to ask for the following:

- the documents we need for their application (for example, identity documents and birth certificates - see supporting documents guidance)
- any passport they hold or a colour copy of the personal details page if they need to keep their passport for travel
- any related documents confirming they are eligible to hold BPP status (for example, a parent's birth, marriage or death certificate)
- any related document or statement confirming they have not taken any citizenship of either:
 - the country they are a British protected person of, or,
 - any other country (since 16 August 1978)
- evidence to show they are settled in the UK or have valid immigration leave (permission) to be in the UK,, so we can add the [correct UK immigration observation to their passport](#) (if they are living in the UK and applying for their first passport)
- any other documents we need (in line with this or other guidance)

If a customer cannot send us the documents we need

If a customer cannot send us the documents we need, you must ask them why. If they do not have a document or a duplicate, you must ask for other documents or evidence.

If the customer cannot give us the evidence we need and you have exhausted all avenues, we must consider the application using a balance of probabilities (see: supporting documents not available guidance).

First-time BPP passport applications

You must deal with the application using existing first time passport application guidance. This may also include an interview, if the customer appears to be a British protected persons (BPP) and:

- has never held a British passport
- is renewing or replacing an Old Blue (hardback style) passport
- is renewing or replacing a burgundy passport (machine readable style passport) that:
 - you cannot find on our passport records or through a Genie search
 - was issued before 1 January 2013 and we need the customer's documents again to check their nationality and identity

If the application is for a first BPP passport, you must:

1. Make sure the application type is 'first time'.
2. Decide if you need to ask the customer to provide a referee (if the customer has not had a British passport before).
3. Decide if you need to do extra checks on the BPP application.
4. Make sure the customer still holds BPP status (in line with nationality legislation and this guidance).
5. Send system letter 740 to make sure the customer has not taken citizenship of either:
 - the country they are a British protected person of
 - any other country (since 16 August 1978)
6. Ask for advice from your Quality and Examination Support team (QuEST) if the customer has taken any other citizenship since 16 August 1978. QuEST will decide if we must refuse the application (see Refusing passport applications and passport facilities guidance). If we refuse the application, you must send letter 618 to the customer.
7. Be satisfied the customer has given enough evidence to confirm their nationality and identity.
8. Check if the customer must be dealt with in line with our Windrush guidance.
9. Use the **Nationality task** to record the customer's status as 'British Protected Person'
10. Case note the details of any checks you have done and the outcomes.

11. Check which UK immigration observation you must add to the passport in line with the British overseas citizens UK immigration observations guidance and add the correct observation to the system.
12. Send the customer for interview, if current guidance says you must. If not, issue the customer a BPP passport.

You must not proceed with the application and must complete additional checks if there are other entitlement reasons why we cannot deal with the passport application, for example:

- fraud concerns
- risk indicators
- court orders

Renewing or replacing a BPP passport

Most customers with BPP status will already hold or have held a BPP passport. A record of their passport will usually exist on our passport records, G-search or the X drive. You, the examiner, will identify this when the system creates an **Applicant has a British protected person passport** task.

Since 1 January 2013, any customer applying to renew or replace their BPP passport must send us the documents and evidence as if they are applying for a first time passport, unless they have sent them to us previously. You must check the case notes on the customer's previous passport record to see if they gave us their first time documents. If the case note shows the customer:

- has sent their documents before, you do not need to see them again, unless you have concerns with the application
- has not sent their documents before, you must ask the customer to send their documents again

You must use the correct application type for the renewal or replacement application if we already have a passport record of the customer's machine readable passport. You do not need to change the application type on the system to first time, you must continue processing as renewal or replacement, even if you are assessing the application as 'first time'.

How to renew a BPP passport

To renew a customer's BPP passport, you must:

1. Make sure the person still holds BPP status (in line with nationality legislation and this guidance).
2. Send letter 741 to make sure the customer has not taken citizenship of either:
 - the country they are a British protected person of
 - any other country (since 16 August 1978)

3. Ask for advice from your Quality and Examination Support team (QuEst) if the customer has taken any other citizenship since 16 August 1978, QuEst will decide if we must refuse the application (see Refusing passport applications and passport facilities guidance). If processing the application on DAP, you must place the application on hold until the checks are complete. If we refuse the application, you must send letter 618 to the customer.
4. Check if the customer must be dealt with in line with our Windrush guidance.
5. Check the documents and evidence to make sure you have no concerns with the application.
6. Confirm the customer's identity.
7. Add the correct case note to the application.
8. Check which UK immigration observation you must add to the passport in line with the British overseas citizens UK immigration observations guidance and add the correct observation to the system.
9. Select the correct nationality status from the dropdown in **Application details – personal details – nationality field**.
10. Issue the BPP passport.

You must complete additional checks if there are other entitlement reasons why we cannot deal with the passport application, for example:

- fraud concerns
- risk indicators
- court orders

How to replace a lost or stolen BPP passport

If a customer applies to replace a lost or stolen BPP passport, see [renewing a BPP passport](#) and lost, stolen and recovered guidance.

Related content

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British protected persons UK immigration observations

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff what UK immigration observations they must add to a British protected persons passport.

When we issue a customer with a British protected persons (BPP) passport, we must add the correct UK immigration observation. This will either be:

- subject to immigration control (STC) observation code OBTB, that says:

THE HOLDER IS SUBJECT TO CONTROL UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ACT 1971

- re-admission to the UK (RUK) observation code OBTE, that says:

THE HOLDER IS ENTITLED TO RE-ADMISSION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

If we do not use the correct UK immigration observation, especially for customers in the UK, it may:

- mean if they leave the UK, they can have difficulty when they try to return
- create similar issues seen with Windrush customers

The UK immigration observation we use in a BPP passport, depends on:

- if they are a UK or international customer
- how long a customer has been in the UK
- what UK immigration observations are in a customer's previous passports
- any immigration documents a customer has from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

About incorrect observations on BPP passports

You must be aware:

- before 25 August 2017, we usually issued a customer's British protected persons (BPP) passport with, the:
 - [RUK immigration observation](#) (if it was on their old passport)
 - [STC immigration observation](#) (if it was on their old passport)
 - the RUK or STC immigration observation based on the guidance that was in place at the time we issued the passport
- from 25 August 2017 to 7 June 2021, we incorrectly issued some customer's passports with the [STC immigration observation](#) instead of the [RUK immigration observation](#) – however, we have:

- since received confirmation from the Passport Policy team this was wrong
- updated our guidance on 7 June 2021 to correctly show which observation to use

First BPP passport: customer is in the UK

If a UK customer applies for their first British protected persons (BPP) passport, you must check:

- their supporting documents to see if it shows they:
 - are settled in the UK (for example, indefinite leave to remain (ILR), indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or no time limit (NTL))
 - have valid leave (immigration permission) to be in the UK (for example, a visit visa, limited leave to enter or limited leave to remain)
- UKVI systems (if the customer does not have documents showing they are settled or have valid leave) to see if the records show if they are settled or have valid leave

If the supporting documents or the UKVI system shows the customer is settled or has valid leave, you must refer to [first BPP passport: UK customer is settled or has valid leave](#).

If the supporting documents and the UKVI systems do not show if the customer is settled or has valid leave, you must:

1. Send the customer letter 137. The letter asks for:
 - evidence that shows their immigration status in the UK
 - the document they used to enter to the UK (if they cannot give us evidence that shows their immigration status in the UK)
 - a signed letter that explains when they travelled to the UK and what document they used (if they cannot give us the document, they used to enter the UK)
2. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made.
3. Store the application while you wait for a response.

When you get the customer's response, you must refer to:

- [First BPP passport: UK customer is settled or has valid leave](#) (if the customer provides evidence to show they are settled or has valid leave)
- First BPP passport: asking UKVI if a UK customer is settled or has valid leave, below (if the customer cannot provide evidence to show they are settled or has valid leave)

First BPP passport: asking UKVI if a UK customer is settled or has valid leave

When a customer in the UK applies for their first British protected persons (BPP) passport, we will ask UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to confirm if they are settled or have valid leave, when both of the following apply:

- the customer could not provide evidence to show they are settled or has valid leave
- the UKVI system does not show if the customer is settled or has valid leave

To ask UKVI if a customer is settled or has valid leave, you must:

1. Complete the UKVI referral – customer’s immigration status form using the details on the passport application to:
 - ask UKVI to check their records to see if the customer is settled or has valid leave
 - tell UKVI to contact the customer to explain what they need to do about their UK immigration status, if their records do not show the customer is settled or has valid leave
2. Create an email and with the subject field showing:

HMPO request – customer’s settlement status

3. Attach the referral form to the email and send it to UKVI from your team’s mailbox.
4. Add a case note to explain the:
 - customer could not give us evidence to show they are settled or has valid leave
 - actions and decisions you made
5. Store the application while you wait for UKVI to respond (usually within 10 working days).

When you get a response from UKVI, you must refer to:

- [first BPP passport: UK customer is not settled and does not have valid leave](#) (if UKVI confirm the customer is not settled and does not have valid leave)
- first BPP passport: UK customer is settled or has valid leave, below (if UKVI confirm the customer is settled or has valid leave)

First BPP passport: UK customer is settled or has valid leave

If the customer was born outside of the UK, and is applying for British protected persons (BPP) status from within the UK, you must follow Confirming identity checks guidance and consider how the customer travelled to the UK and if they are entitled to BPP status.

You must send letter 741 to make sure the customer has not taken citizenship of any other country (since 16 August 1978).

If the BPP customer is entitled to BPP status and provides evidence to show they are settled or have valid leave, you must first check to see if the evidence is genuine.

You must:

1. Check the customer's documentary evidence agrees with UKVI systems.
2. Refer the application to your operational team leader (OTL), to decide if the evidence is genuine (using a balance of probability) if there is nothing on the UKVI systems.
3. Make sure extra checks are completed, if you suspect the customer's evidence of settlement is not genuine by completing additional checks.

Providing you are satisfied there is evidence to show the customer is settled or has valid leave (either from the customer's supporting documents, information from UKVI systems or because UKVI confirmed they are settled or have valid leave), you must:

1. Add the UK immigration observation:
 - [STC immigration observation](#)
2. Send the customer letter 132, making sure you use the correct phrase to show their nationality status as British protected persons.
3. Add a case note to explain, the:
 - customer is settled or has valid leave (including how)
 - actions and decisions, you made
4. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

First BPP passport: UK customer is not settled and does not have valid leave

If the customer was born outside of the UK, and is applying for British protected persons (BPP) status from within the UK, you must follow Confirming identity checks guidance and consider how the customer travelled to the UK and if they are entitled to BPP status.

You must send letter 741 to make sure the customer has not taken citizenship of any other country (since 16 August 1978).

If the BPP customer is entitled to BPP status, and UKVI confirm the BPP customer is not settled and does not have valid leave, you must:

1. Add the UK immigration observation:
 - [STC immigration observation](#)
2. Send the customer letter 133, making sure you use the correct phrase to show their nationality status as British protected persons.
3. Add a case note to explain:
 - customer is not settled and does not have valid leave

- the actions and decisions you made
4. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

First BPP passport: international customer

If an international customer applies for their first British protected persons (BPP) passport, you must:

1. Add the UK immigration observation:
 - [STC immigration observation](#)
2. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made
3. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

We do not send letters to international customers about UK immigration observations.

Renewal and replacements of BPP passports: UK customer

If a UK customer applies to renew, replace or change the details on their BPP passport, you must:

1. Deal with the application in line with current guidance (for example, lost and stolen).
2. Check if their old passport has the [RUK or STC immigration observation](#).

BPP, renewal and replacement: UK customer has RUK

If the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport has the [RUK immigration observation](#), you must:

1. Add the [RUK immigration observation](#).
2. Send the customer letter 136, making sure you use the correct phrase to show their nationality status.
3. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made:
4. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

BPP, renewal and replacement: UK customer is STC

If the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport has the [STC immigration observation](#), you must check if we issued it:

- before 25 August 2017
- after 24 August 2017

This is because we may have previously [used the wrong UK immigration on the passport](#).

UK customer: old BPP with STC issued before 25 August 2017

If we issued the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport before 25 August 2017 with the [STC immigration observation](#), you must check the customer's passport history on our passport records, G-search of the X:drive for the observations shown on their previous passports.

You must deal with their application using the guidance in:

- [BPP, renewal and replacement: UK customer has RUK](#) if any of the previous passports have the RUK immigration observation
- [First BPP passport: customer is in the UK](#) if the customer's previous passports do not have an UK immigration observation or they only have the STC immigration observation

UK customer: old BPP with STC issued after 24 August 2017

If we issued the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport with the [STC immigration](#) after 24 August 2017, you must check their passport history to see if the [RUK or STC immigration](#) observation is on any of their previous passports.

If any of the previous passports show the RUK immigration observation, you must:

1. Deal with the application free of charge, in line with the correcting errors on passports guidance (if the reason the customer made it was because of the incorrect observation).
2. Re-add the [RUK immigration observation](#).
3. Send the customer letter 134.
4. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made.
5. Add a passport note to all previous passport records for any passport we issued after 24 August 2017, to explain we wrongly issued the passport with the STC immigration observation.
6. Change the validity on the new passport to match the expiry date on the old passport (if you are dealing with the application free of charge). You must also add observation code OBTZ:

REPLACES PASSPORT NUMBER [INSERT FREE TEXT] DATED [INSERT DATE] WHICH HAS BEEN [INSERT FREE TEXT]

7. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

If the customer's previous passports do not have the STC or RUK immigration observation or they only have the STC immigration observation, you must follow the guidance as though they are applying for their [first BPP passport in the UK](#).

BPP, renewal and replacement: UK customer is not STC or RUK

If the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport does not have the [RUK or STC immigration observation](#), you must check what is on their previous passports, using:

- our passport records
- G-search
- X-drive

You must deal with the application using the guidance in:

- [BPP, renewal and replacement: UK customer has RUK](#) if any of the previous passports have the RUK immigration observation
- [First BPP passport: customer is in the UK](#) if the customer's previous passports do not have an UK immigration observation or they only have the STC immigration observation

Renewal and replacements of BPP passports: international customer

If an international customer applies to renew, replace or change the details on their British protected persons (BPP) passport, you must:

1. Deal with the application in line with current guidance (for example, lost and stolen).
2. Check what date we issued it (as we may have [used the wrong UK immigration on the passport](#)).

International customer: old BPP issued before 25 August 2017

If we issued the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport before 25 August 2017 with the [STC or RUK immigration observation](#), you must:

1. Add the same immigration observation (as shown on the old passport).
2. Add a case note to explain the actions and decisions you made.
3. Continue to process the application (in line with current guidance).

You must not send any letters to an international customer about UK immigration observations you added to the passport.

International customer: old BPP issued after 24 August 2017

If we issued the customer's old British protected persons (BPP) passport after 24 August 2017 with no UK immigration observations or only the [STC immigration observation](#), you must:

1. Check what observations are on their previous passports.
2. Deal with the application using the guidance in:
 - [UK customer: old BPP with STC issued after 24 August 2017](#) (if any of the customer's previous passports have the RUK immigration observation)
 - [First BPP passport: international customer](#) (if the customer's previous passports do not have a UK immigration observation or they only have the STC immigration observation)

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