



Home Office

Tiered Application Service: the service levels we provide

Version 26.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff about the Tiered Application Service and the different service levels we offer.

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About: Tiered Application Service: the service levels we provide

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport operational staff about TAS (Tiered Application Service). We use TAS to describe the different service levels we provide, including:

- what the different service levels are
- who can apply for what service level
- upgrading Standard applications to another service level. (Not usually available; see Upgrades: how to deal with passport service upgrades to check if the upgrade service is currently available)
- when to downgrade an application service level
- TAS exceptions

If you have issues with TAS that this guidance does not answer, you must contact the counter service line manager.

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 HM Passport Office's 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 **26.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **13 April 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated in the sections Who can apply for the Digital Fast Track service and Digital Fast Track service, to tell examiners the 7 calendar day service level agreement for Digital Fast Track excludes Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Related content

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Tiered Application Service

This section tells HM Passport operational staff about our Tiered Application Service and the different service levels we offer our customers.

We encourage customers to apply for their passport early, so we have enough time to complete nationality, identity and entitlement checks.

The Tiered Application Service (TAS) is the collective name for the passport service levels we provide (for example, Standard, Fast Track and Premium). Some of these service levels include guarantees, where we will agree to complete the customer's application within a set time limit or refund the service level element of the fee.

TAS allows customers to:

- use different application channels, (for example, applying online or by post, instead of visiting a passport office public counter)
- apply for their passport urgently
- upgrade their Standard service application to another service level (upgrading applications is not usually available; see Upgrades: how to deal with passport service upgrades to check if the upgrade service is currently available)
- apply quickly if they have urgent government business or compassionate reasons

Our public counters are not open for drop-in appointments.

If a customer visits a public counter to apply for a passport because they want a quicker service, you (the counter examiner) must tell them to apply using any of the application routes available to them (for example, [Digital Fast Track](#) or [Premium service](#)).

Where we provide TAS

TAS covers all the services we provide, which are:

- [a Standard service](#) at 6 of our application processing centres (APC) in:
 - Durham
 - Glasgow
 - Belfast
 - Liverpool
 - Peterborough
 - Newport
- upgrading applications to another service level (upgrading applications is not usually available; see Upgrades: how to deal with passport service upgrades to check if the upgrade service is currently available)

- [Fast Track](#) and [Premium services](#) at our counter offices in the 6 APCs and in our London customer service centre (CSC)
- an urgent government business and compassionate travel service at all APC and CSC sites

We will decide where work is dealt with and may move applications to different APCs to maintain our service levels.

All APCs and CSC sites must adopt a consistent approach so customers can expect the same level of service, no matter which office is dealing with their application.

TAS fees

You must follow fees guidance, for details on the fees we charge for the different TAS service levels. Customers who are eligible for a concessionary passport, must still pay the TAS element of the fee.

Standard service in the United Kingdom

The Standard service is a non-guaranteed service, including Post Office Check & Send service, available at all our APCs. It is for customers who do not need their passport urgently. Customers can apply online or with a paper application form. We do not offer the Standard service at our public counters.

See [Standard service timescales](#) for information on our target processing times.

Standard international service

Customers applying from outside the UK cannot apply for a guaranteed service, as they are only available to UK customers.

International customers can apply for the standard service by:

- post
- online
- through our Local service offices

We will only accept Premium or Fast Track applications from international customers if they:

- were in the UK when they applied
- can provide us with a UK address so we can deliver their passport and return their documents

We cannot upgrade international applications. If an international customer needs a passport urgently they must contact the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Our published turnaround targets for [international applications are published on GOV.UK](#).

TAS and child safeguarding

Applications for children can only be made through the Digital Fast Track or Standard service.

To safeguard (protect) children HM Passport Office will not offer a faster service for passport applications for children, until the application has been with us for 5 working days or more (working days are defined as Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays).

We have a legal duty to safeguard children, and the timing of an application and when the passport is available can be crucial factors that affect child abduction. We set our safeguarding period at 5 working days to allow parents (or other parties involved in a child's welfare) to obtain court orders or arrange for HM Passport Office to put a caveat in place.

The 5 days begin when we receive the customer's application:

- through Digital Customer Services (DCS) for online applications
- physically in the DHU (Document Handling Unit) for paper applications

Both events are recorded as 'Application received' on the DAP (Digital Application Processing) timeline.

On DAP, all standard and Digital Fast Track applications have an automatic safeguarding period of 5 days. If the application is completed on DAP within 5 days, DAP will automatically hold the application until the 5 day period expires. DAP will then run final automatic checks and if these are clear, send the passport to print. If the checks create a task (for example, a watchlist match) the application will be returned to the national queue or Counter Fraud team.

TAS upgrades

TAS upgrades are not available as standard, see Upgrades: how to deal with passport service upgrades to check if the service is available for customers.

Where the upgrade service is available it is only open to customers who have already submitted a Standard service application and need a faster service. Upgrades are a:

- 48-hour service (if the customer is upgrading their Standard application to the Premium service)
- 7 day service (if the customer is upgrading their Standard application to the Fast Track service)

We only upgrade Fast Track applications to the Premium service in exceptional circumstances when:

- an upgrade service is available; and,
- the office has availability to deal with the application

Fast Track counter service

The [Fast Track](#) service is a guaranteed 7-day service (for [straightforward applications](#) and where there are [no concerns preventing issue](#)). However, if we receive a customer's application after our [cut-off time](#), it will be a guaranteed 8-day service. This service is only available by appointment at an APC.

Customers may apply for [Fast Track Collect](#) and get their passport from an APC. The cut off times also apply to Fast Track collect applications. There is an additional fee for the Fast Track Collect service.

Premium counter service

The [Premium service](#) is a guaranteed 4-hour service (if we receive the application before our [cut-off time](#)). Customers must apply using a digital application. This is only available by appointment at an APC.

If a customer's appointment is after the cut-off time, their passport will be ready to collect up to 4 working hours the next working day (if it meets standard checks).

See [Premium service](#), if you need information about how a customer books an appointment and what happens if they want to change it.

Customers needing advice at a counter office

Customers may visit a counter office without an appointment (for example, they want advice on getting a passport). This goes against the Consular Fees order, which explains how passport fees cover the cost of administering a passport application. Part of this is determining the customer's eligibility.

Visiting the counter for advice, instead of making an appointment:

- has a negative effect on Tiered Application Service (TAS) turnaround times
- gives an unfair service to customers applying by post

If a customer arrives at the counter but does not intend to apply for a passport (for example, they do not have a completed application or correct documents), you must not give advice. You must:

- tell them to call the customer adviceline
- tell them they can make an application, or find further information on GOV.UK
- give them a passport application pack

Booking a TAS counter appointment (Digital Fast Track or Premium service)

Customers can book appointments online for Digital Fast Track and Premium service, and re-book online or through our Contact Centres.

The booking element of a counter application fee is non-refundable if a customer does not attend a booked appointment or cancels it within 48 hours of the appointment time (see [The Passport \(Fees\) Regulations 2022](#)).

We cannot change appointments if it is less than 48 hours away. For more information on appointments, see Digital Customer Service: how a customer applies.

If a customer attends an appointment without the documents we need, the counter receptionist or examiner can re-book an appointment.

If we need to suspend TAS

In special cases, we may need to suspend TAS due to factors outside our control (for example, because of power failures or offices that need to close). This may affect customers who applied for a guaranteed service.

Each APC has a workflow interruption plan to deal with these issues. Where the issue affects a public counter, the counter manager will consider the problem and take the decision to suspend services.

If we suspend services, we must tell our customers and explain that we may not be able to meet their guaranteed service. We also refund the difference in fee from a standard to the fee paid, for example if the customer paid a Premium fee.

This applies to customers:

- attending an appointment
- waiting to collect a passport

If there is a national issue affecting all HM Passport Office sites, the service manager will take the lead and:

- update stakeholders
- make sure each APC takes a consistent approach across all sites (for example, by following crisis guidance)

The counter manager will tell the counter service line manager of any reduction in service so they can deal with the impact.

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Who can apply for the different TAS service levels

This section tells HM Passport Office staff who is eligible to apply using the different tiered application service (TAS) levels.

Everyone can apply for a passport using the Standard service.

Who can apply for the Digital Fast Track service

The Digital Fast Track service (DFT) allows a customer to apply online through our Digital Customer Services (DCS) online application system. Customers using DFT will receive their new passport within 7 calendar days (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays), by secure delivery.

If the customer makes their application online using the DFT service, they must pay an extra fee and book an appointment at the public counter. Customers must bring to the public counter, their:

- supporting documents, where they will be scanned, validated and associated with their application
- previous British passport so we can cancel it (if they have one)

The DFT service can be used to:

- renew an:
 - adult or child passport
 - additional passport
- change the personal details on a passport (for example, the name, place of birth or gender)
- replace a lost, stolen or damaged passport
- apply for a first child passport

The DFT service can be used by customers living in the UK. If a customer lives overseas and they use the DFT service, they must be in the UK when the application was completed and provide us with a UK delivery address.

First time adult passport applications cannot be made using the DFT service.

If a customer applies for their first passport within 3 weeks of them turning 16 years old, they can:

- not use the DFT service, if they are applying for their first passport
- renew their passport using the DFT service, after they have turned 16 years old

Welsh language applications

The DFT service does not currently have the functionality to deal with Welsh language applications online.

If the customer would like to submit a Fast Track application in Welsh, the customer must contact the Passport Adviceline. The Passport Adviceline will:

- contact Newport Counter Managers
- arrange for a Welsh speaking member of staff to contact the customer within 2 working days

When the customer is contacted, Newport Counter will book the customer a Fast Track appointment. The customer will be told to collect a paper Welsh application form, complete this, and bring this to their appointment. A paper Welsh application form can be collected from the:

- Post Office
- Newport office

Who can apply for the Premium service

The Premium service allows a customer to apply online using GOV.UK, where their application will be made through our Digital Customer Services (DCS) system. The customer can make an appointment to:

- attend the counter (or send a third party on their behalf)
- provide any documents needed (including their previous passport)
- collect their new passport

If the customer applies using the Premium service, they must pay an extra fee and book the collection appointment at the public counter as part of their application. The customer or third party must bring the previous British passport to the counter appointment, so we can cancel it and issue their new passport.

The Premium service can be used if the customer:

- is an adult
- is living in the UK and able to give a valid UK address
- is renewing their passport
- is renewing an additional passport
- is not a dual national
- has not changed their personal details
- is not upgrading an existing application

The customer's previous passport must not be:

- damaged beyond normal wear and tear
- lost or stolen
- an Old Blue passport
- a restricted validity passport
- a Diplomatic or official passport

Premium service appointments are available at the following His Majesty's Passport Office sites:

- Belfast
- Durham
- Glasgow
- Liverpool
- London
- Newport
- Peterborough

Who can apply for urgent government business or compassionate travel

Adults and children can apply for a passport urgently if they can show they need the passport for urgent government business or compassionate travel. They can do this at a public counter or by upgrading their standard passport.

We will only issue a passport if there are no safeguarding concerns, and the intended passport holder has a claim to British nationality. If we have not completed our checks, we may issue a restricted validity passport.

See Urgent government business or compassionate travel guidance, for information on:

- what evidence is needed to confirm an urgent need for a passport
- who can authorise a child's passport application in this circumstance

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Examining TAS applications

This section tells HM Passport Office staff what they must consider before they agree to process the customer's application under one of the guaranteed service levels.

You, the examiner, must always do the correct checks, regardless of the application and service type a customer applies for. You must case note your actions and decisions and document scan all documents, in line with current policy and guidance.

Before you pass an application for issue, you must be satisfied:

- with the customer's identity
- that the customer has a claim (in line with nationality legislation)
- with the customer's entitlement
- that you have no vulnerability or safeguarding concerns

If you have doubts, you must:

- carry out all necessary checks (for example, asking for a previous file (if you need it))
- contact the customer and tell them they do not qualify for a guaranteed service (unless the Counter Fraud team has an interest in the application)
- consider refunding the customer's TAS fee (if they applied for a guaranteed service)

For potentially fraudulent cases or if the Counter Fraud team is dealing with a suspect case, you must consult with them before contacting the customer in case it interferes with their investigation.

Straightforward applications and service guarantees

We can only offer a guaranteed service (Premium, Fast Track or upgrade) when we receive a straightforward application (and for upgrades, when we are currently offering the upgrade service). A straightforward application, includes:

- a fully completed application
- correct supporting documents (to confirm nationality and identity)
- the correct fee
- photos

We do not offer a Premium service for child applications.

We will consider child applications for Fast Track (and upgrades if upgrade facilities are being offered), if they meet the criteria, but they must include:

- all the bullets above
- an acceptable referee who has confirmed all the customers details are correct

You, the examiner, must accept that an application is straightforward and complete when you have:

- examined the application (in line with standard guidance)
- no doubts about the customer's identity, nationality and entitlement
- no safeguarding (protection) or vulnerability concerns
- no other concerns associated with the application that mean you cannot examine the application within the service level requested because the application requires:
 - additional checks
 - additional interventions (such as the customer needing to attend an interview)

Vulnerability indicators may include:

- court orders
- applications with letters from other authorities
- discrepancies with consent
- indicators that a child is at risk of abuse
- indicators that a child has a disability, which prevents them signing their passport

Straightforward application: counter

If you are dealing with a counter application on DAP, you must record and scan all relevant documents, and case note your actions, decisions, and outcomes.

Counter application due to compassionate reasons

If a customer visits an APC as they need their passport quickly, because of compassionate reasons, follow TAS urgent government business or compassionate guidance.

If we agree to deal with the application, we will try to issue the passport as soon as possible. However, it may not always be possible to process within 4 hours. Most customers can usually collect their passport on the same day.

Non-straightforward applications

We must do identity and nationality checks on every application. If we cannot complete our checks, we may not meet service level guarantees (for example, for a Premium service). In these cases, we will view the application as non-straightforward.

If you receive a non-straightforward application from a customer who asked for a guaranteed service, you must explain the situation to the customer and tell them why we cannot meet the service guarantee.

You must:

- tell them the new expected turnaround time for their application
- add a case note explaining:
 - the customer has been informed we will not meet the service guarantee
 - why we cannot meet the service level
 - any actions needed
- tell the customer their application will not continue as a Digital Fast Track or Premium service application; it will be processed as a standard application

Non-straightforward applications: case notes

If the application is not straightforward and requires additional checks, supporting documents or processing you, the counter examiner, must make sure your case note explains in detail:

- why we cannot meet the customer's preferred service level
- your recommendation for the next course of action

Non-straightforward applications: counter

If you are dealing with a counter application on DAP, you must record and scan all relevant documents, and case note your actions, decisions, and outcomes.

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Premium service

This section tells HM Passport Office operational staff how a customer can apply using the Premium service, and how to deal with the application.

The Premium service is a guaranteed 4-hour service that we provide to customers [who are eligible for it](#).

How the customer applies using the Premium service

Customers wanting to apply for the Premium service, must apply online at [GOV.UK](#). This service is only available for adult renewal applications.

Digital Customer Services (DCS) will ask the customer questions to make sure they are eligible for the service.

The customer must:

1. Answer the questions to check they can use this service.
2. Choose a counter appointment at a suitable time and location.
3. Complete their application using DCS, upload a digital photo and pay the fee.
4. Attend their counter appointment, bring any required documents (including their previous passport).
5. Collect their new passport.

DCS will tell the customer at the point of booking:

- they need to bring any required documents (including their previous passport) to their appointment
- the date and time of their appointment
- if they cancel or need to reschedule their Premium service appointment within 48 hours of their appointment time they will receive a refund of their application fee, minus the booking fee
- if they do not attend their appointment and do not give a compassionate reason explaining why they did not attend, they will not receive a refund
- if they attend their appointment but do not qualify for the service (for example, their passport is damaged or they declare it lost or stolen), their application will be handled as a standard application, and the customer will no longer be able to collect their new passport. The customer will not receive a refund if they do not qualify for the service

Premium service applications do not capture a customer's signature.

Customers must be able to sign their new passport when they receive it. DCS will ask the customer if they are able to sign their passport. If they cannot, DCS will ask

the customer why and record the customer's reply in the case notes on Digital Application Processing (DAP).

At the end of the online application, DCS will show the customer a declaration page.

Alternative addresses

Customers cannot give an alternative address for a Premium service application.

Multiple passport holders

Customers must tell us about any British passports they hold. They can use the Premium service if they also hold another British passport.

If the customer wants to renew an additional passport, they must provide us with evidence to show why they need one (for example, a letter from their employer). If the customer does not bring this evidence to their counter appointment, the counter examiner will rearrange the appointment so the customer can bring this evidence.

If the customer wants to apply for their first additional passport, they cannot use the Premium service.

Lost or stolen passports

DCS will ask the customer if their passport is lost or stolen. If the customer tells us their passport is lost or stolen, the system will not allow the customer to continue with their Premium service application.

Damaged passports

DCS will ask the customer if there is any damage to the passport. If the customer tells us there is damage to their passport, DCS will not allow the customer to continue with their Premium service application.

We class a passport as damaged if, for example:

- the details on it cannot be read
- the laminate cover has come away
- there is an ink or chemical spillage on any of the pages
- there is discolouring on the personal details or official observations page
- any of the pages are ripped, missing or detached
- the chip is damaged or showing through the back cover (e-passports only)
- there is any damage to the back cover (for example, ripped, bite marks or staple holes)
- there is excess water damage

Processing a Premium service application

Premium service applications are processed on DAP. See [Premium service: processing the application](#), which includes guidance about how:

- counter staff process applications
- back office staff handle applications, including printing passports locally and dealing with applications sent to the DAP national queue
- national queue examiners process Premium service applications, and in which scenarios

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Digital Fast Track service

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the Digital Fast Track service.

The Digital Fast Track (DFT) service is a guaranteed 7 day service, excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays, that we provide to customers [who are eligible for it](#).

How the customer applies using the Digital Fast Track service

Customers who want to apply for their passport using the DFT service must make their application online using [GOV.UK](#).

To apply using the DFT service, on the GOV.UK website, the customer must:

1. Answer some questions to check they are eligible for the service.
2. Select the option for needing their passport urgently if they wish to use the upgraded services (if HM Passport Office are currently offering an upgrade service).
3. Select the option for a Fast Track appointment if this is available (Digital Customer Service (DCS) will only show this option if the customer has answered the previous questions and they are eligible for the service).
4. View the available appointments and select one at a suitable time and location (this will be reserved until the customer has completed their application).
5. Complete their application using DCS, upload their digital photo and pay the fee.

When the customer has submitted their application, they will be told to attend their counter appointment and bring all the required supporting documents. The customer (or someone on their behalf) can attend the counter appointment.

Appointments for DFT applications can be made 2 to 3 weeks in advance, based on operational demand. The appointments will last approximately 10 minutes. Customers may be able to change their appointment time after booking.

Where a customer needs to make multiple appointments for multiple applications, they must:

- make each of these appointments separately
- complete a separate online application for each person

What DCS will tell the customer at the time of the booking

DCS will tell the customer, at the time of booking, they need to bring their old passport and any supporting documents listed to their appointment.

The customer will be given the date and time of their appointment and told they can reschedule their appointment:

- more than 48 hours before the booking time:
 - through the application tracking screen on DCS (this will allow the customer to change their appointment to a time after the appointment they originally booked)
 - by calling the Passport Adviceline
- within 48 hours of the booking, by calling the Passport Adviceline

If the customer cancels their appointment:

- we will refund their fee, if the appointment is cancelled more than 48 hours before it is due to take place
- they will be charged an administration fee if they cancel the appointment within 48 hours (the customer will be refunded the remainder of the fee)
- we will keep the full fee, if they do not attend their appointment and do not give a compassionate reason (and evidence) explaining why they did not attend

If the customer attends their counter appointment but they do not:

- qualify for the service, you must tell the customer we will downgrade the service and retain the full fee
- bring the required documents, they will be asked to rebook their appointment

DAP (Digital Application Processing) will continue to deal with the application under the DFT service level agreement, as the system does not have the functionality to downgrade the application.

Alternative addresses

Where we need to retain the customer's documents at their counter appointment, we can return the documents to an alternative address if the customer:

- requests this
- provides evidence they are:
 - the person who consented to the application
 - not an imposter trying to steal the customer's personal data
 - linked to the alternative address

To do this, you the counter examiner, must follow the Delivery addresses for passports and documents guidance, to update the customer's return address.

If the customer has not brought the evidence needed to confirm the alternative address, their counter appointment must be rebooked.

When the customer's return address has been updated and the application processing is complete, the DHU (Document Handling Unit) will send the documents to the alternative address.

Multiple passport holders

Customers must tell us about any other passports they hold. The customer can use the DFT service if they are applying to renew an additional British passport, but they cannot use the service to make an application for a first-time additional passport.

If the customer wants to renew an additional passport, you must follow the additional passport guidance. The customer will be asked to provide us with evidence to show why they need one (for example, a letter from their employer). This evidence must be brought to the customer's counter appointment.

The customer must provide this evidence along with their other supporting documents during their DFT appointment. If the customer has not brought the evidence to their appointment, the appointment must be rebooked.

Lost or stolen passports

DCS will ask the customer if their passport is lost or stolen.

If the customer tells us their passport is lost or stolen, the customer can still make their replacement passport application using DFT.

The customer must:

- report their passport as lost or stolen online, using [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- still attend their counter appointment, even if they can no longer bring their previous passport to be physically cancelled

Damaged passports

DCS will ask the customer if there is any damage to the passport.

If the customer tells us there is damage to their passport, the customer can still use the DFT service to replace or renew their passport.

Digital referees

The customer may be asked to provide a digital referee as part of their DFT application. This is in line with our Confirming ID: referees guidance.

Completing the declaration

DFT applications do not capture a customer's signature.

Customers must be able to sign their new passport when they receive it. DCS will ask the customer if they are able to sign their passport. If they cannot, DCS will ask the customer why and record the customer's reply on DAP.

DCS will show the customer a declaration page.

Processing a Digital Fast Track application

Digital Fast Track applications are processed on DAP. See [Digital Fast Track: processing the application](#), which includes guidance about how:

- counter staff process applications
- back office staff handle applications, including Digital Fast Track Collect
- national queue examiners process Digital Fast Track applications, and in which scenarios

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Standard service applications

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the standard service. Standard service in the United Kingdom guidance explains what our Standard service is.

Customers can apply for the Standard service:

- [by post](#)
- [online at GOV.UK](#)
- by posting it in the Application Processing Centre (APC) post box
- [using the Post Office Check and Send service \(UK applications only\)](#)
- through Local Services (when we offer this service) (international applications only)

The fees needed for a Standard service differ depending on how the customer applies (for example, using a paper form or online) and where they are applying from (from the UK or internationally, for example).

Standard service: upgrades

If a customer applies for a Standard service application, you may be able to upgrade it to a Fast Track or Premium service if HM Passport Office are currently offering the upgrade service, and the customer:

- meets the criteria
- they pay the extra fee

If HM Passport Office is offering the upgrade service, customers can apply using GOV.UK. If the service is unavailable the ability to apply for it will be removed from GOV.UK.

Standard service: timescales

We publish up to date turnaround times for UK and international passport applications on [GOV.UK](#). International applications may take longer.

We do not give priority to applications from Post Office branches over UK postal work (applications posted directly by a customer).

Standard service timescales: unreasonable delays made by our staff

If we have unreasonably delayed an application due to an error made by our staff:

- we may consider giving the customer a gratis (free) upgrade (this only applies to UK applications, as we do not upgrade international applications)
- the customer may have the right to a free Emergency Travel Document (ETD)

Standard service timescales: service delay upgrades

You must refer to the upgrades guidance for guidance on how to process service delay upgrades.

Standard service: returning passports and documents

For information on how and when we return documents and deliver passports for UK applications, see: posting passports and documents guidance.

For international customers, we will deliver:

- new passports by secure delivery (the customer can collect their supporting documents from a Local service office)
- supporting documents using our international secure delivery providers (the customer can collect their supporting documents from a Local service office)

How to correct Standard service errors

If you find an error on a passport we originally issued through the Standard service, you must issue the customer a new passport using the Standard service. If they give us evidence, they are travelling in less than 2 weeks, you must offer the [Premium service](#).

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