

Applying for a passport from outside the UK

Guide to the online
application service



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Before you start

This is a guide for applicants applying for a British passport from outside the UK using the online application service.

You can use this guide to help you complete the form online, or you can simply use the online screen help, which is available on each page of the online application form.

What is the online application service?

The online application service allows you to submit your personal information securely, and pay for your passport online. The service will tell you which sections to complete and what supporting documents you need to provide, based on how old you are, and the type of passport you're applying for.

Who can apply using the online service?

This service is for British applicants from certain countries applying from outside the UK. In those countries it's the only way to apply for a British passport. Check www.gov.uk/overseas-passports for specific advice about how to apply for your passport from the country you are in.

How does the online service work?

There are 3 easy stages to applying for your passport online. They are:

- **Fill in & Check** - firstly you'll be asked some questions so we can work out what type of passport application you are making (eg a first passport or renewal). You'll then be asked to provide some personal details of the person who the passport is for. You'll be able to check and edit the information you've provided, and we will show you the total amount that you will need to pay.

- **Pay & Print** – you will need to enter your card details. Once you have paid you will have to print the declaration form and other guidance. You can save the form and print it elsewhere.
- **Sign & Post** – at this point you will need to sign the printed declaration form. The guidance will tell you where to send it, what documents you must include, whether or not you require a countersignatory and what kind of photos are acceptable.

Where can I get more information to help complete my application?

You can use the information in the following pages in this guide, or as you go through the online process there are 'Help on this' buttons next to the boxes you need to complete. There are also help pages under the 'Useful information' bar on the right hand side of each online screen.

What happens once I've submitted my information online and paid the fee?

Once you've submitted your information and paid for your passport, the online service will create a personalised declaration pack for you to download and print.

The declaration pack tells you what to do next, and what to send us. We cannot process the application until we receive a signed and completed declaration form, your supporting documents and photos. If we don't receive them within 90 days, your application will be withdrawn and you won't get a refund.

Things you need to know

Get it right

- Don't book travel or visas until you have your passport.
- We cannot accept responsibility for travel you book before it arrives. We do our best, but cannot guarantee to return your passport within a certain time.

When can I renew my passport?

You can renew your passport whenever you want. You do not have to wait for it to run out. We will add any period that your passport has left to run (in whole months up to nine months), to your new passport.

What information do I need to complete an application online?

If you are renewing a passport you will need your current passport and any other non-British uncancelled passports with you, and you'll need their numbers.

If you are applying for a first British passport you will need passport numbers of parents (or adoptive parents) if they had British passports, their dates and place of birth as well as what their nationality and citizenship was at the time of your birth. You will also need their date of marriage if applicable. You may need these details for grandparents as well if you were born outside the UK or your parents were born on or after 1 January 1983.

How do I pay online?

You must pay in pounds sterling by credit card or debit card. You must ensure that you have checked with your card provider that your card is valid for this international transaction and that adequate funds are available. The cards we accept are: Mastercard, Visa, Visa Electron, Visa Debit and Maestro (UK Domestic). We don't accept Maestro (International) cards.

What if I can't pay online?

If you don't have one of the cards we accept then you should ask a friend or relative if they can pay on your behalf.

Can I save an application and return to it later?

You can begin a passport application and then save it before it's complete, but you must return and finish the application within 72 hours.

Do I need to provide photos?

Yes, two photos. The declaration pack you'll be given at the end of the online application gives advice on what photos are acceptable. If your photos don't meet our guidelines your passport will be delayed.

What is an 'old blue' passport?

This is a passport with a blue cover that was issued up until the early 1990s. If your passport expired some time ago, or was an 'old blue' style passport we need you to apply as a first-time applicant, and send the expired passport to us with your supporting documents.

Do all applications need a countersignatory?

No. Check page 9 to find out if you need one.

Will I need an interview?

Please see page 13 for more details.

How do I track the progress of my application?

You can log in to the online application service to check progress. You'll need the username we email to you, and the password you set, when you create an account, either when you save your application, or just before you pay (if you didn't save it earlier on).

Use your username and password to continue, review or track your application by logging in at <https://passportapplication.service.gov.uk/ips-olc/>. You can also log in to print the declaration pack if you have not already printed it after payment.

Who is the passport for?

Get it right

- Include any middle names - the name you enter should match your previous passport. If you have never held a passport before, it should match your birth, marriage or nationality certificate or change of name document. If it doesn't, your application could be delayed.
- If there isn't enough space please provide the full details when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form.

Names to be shown on your passport

- We can add a limited number of titles to your British passport if you ask. See www.gov.uk/changing-passport-information for details.
- Please give the name of the person who the passport is for under 'surname' and 'first and middle names'.
- The name that is shown on the passport should be the name that you use for all purposes – that is, the name on your new passport should match the name that appears on your supporting documents (such as your birth certificate or previous passport). If you're a dual national and hold a non-British passport in a different name, you must change it to match the name you want on your British passport. You must do this before you make your application.
- You should check the requirements for the country you are in for when and how a name can be changed as this may not meet UK requirements. HM Passport Office cannot accept responsibility for any problems encountered as a result of issuing a passport in a new name which is not recognised in the country you live in.
- We can only show up to 30 characters (including spaces) for first and middle names and a further 30 characters for surnames. If your names are longer, please shorten them in a way you would want them to be shown on your passport. You should tell us your full name when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form. We will add your full name on the observation page on your passport
- If you have changed your name, enter your name as it is now.

- Special characters and accent marks on names cannot be included on British passports. If your name has a special character or accent mark please enter your name using a normal letter eg e instead of é, or a instead of ä etc.

Change of name in passport

- If you are changing your name, put your new name under 'First and middle names' and 'Surname' and put your previous names under 'Maiden or all previous names'.
- You will need to provide proof of your change of name if this is different from your supporting documents. Send proof to support every name change. This applies if you are getting married or forming a civil partnership and you want your passport to be in your new name.
- If you no longer want your middle name to be included in your new passport when it has been on previous passports, you should tell us when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form and provide evidence of the change. If you don't, we will add your name to match what is in your previous passport.
- If you spell your name differently, change the order of your names or add a new name, compared to what is in your previous passport, then you will need to provide evidence of the name change.
- The document checklist in the declaration pack that you print off after paying will provide more details of the evidence that you need to provide.
- Provide all of your maiden or previous names that you have been known by (surname first then first and middle names).
- You cannot change a child's name unless you have the permission of everyone who has parental responsibility for the child.

Change of name for newly-weds and new civil partners

- If you are getting married or forming a civil partnership and will be changing your name, and you plan to travel to another country shortly after the ceremony, or want to use your passport in your new name shortly after the ceremony, we can issue a passport in your new name up to three months beforehand. In some cases we will not be able to issue a passport within 3 months, but will contact you if this applies to you.

- The passport will only be valid from the date of the wedding/civil partnership, and so can be used after the date of your ceremony. Your old passport will be cancelled and you will no longer be able to use it for travelling. It can be returned to you to be used as an identity document, but you must be sure that the authorities in the country where you are living are content for you to have a cancelled passport as your identity document which may also contain your current residence permit or work visa. You must consider the consequences of cancelling your current passport in your existing name and not having a valid document for a time.
- You will need to send a 'Post-date' form (PD2) with this application. The person who will carry out the ceremony should fill in part 1 and you should fill in part 2 (using your current – not future – name and signature). Get more details and a copy of the PD2 form from www.gov.uk/changing-passport-information or by contacting the passport advice line.

Gender

- Select the relevant box to say whether the person the passport is for is male or female.
- If you are transgender (live as a different gender to that shown on your birth certificate) or if you have changed or are in the process of changing your gender, you can get more guidance at www.gov.uk/changing-passport-information

Place of birth

- You will be asked for the names of the town and country you were born in as shown on your birth, registration or naturalisation certificate or previous British passport.

Current address

- You will be asked for your full residential address (where you live) including state or province, and postcode (where applicable).
- We may check you live at the address you give. If you don't, it may delay your application unless you explain the circumstances when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form.
- We won't normally return your passport to an address that is different from the applicant's current address. If you want it delivered to a different address, please explain why and give the other address when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form. We may contact you for evidence of your connection to that address.

Contact details

- Please give as many contact details as possible and make sure the information is accurate as we may need to contact you about your application. If you don't, it may delay your application.
- To make sure our emails don't get missed in your spam folder, check your spam or junk folder regularly, or adjust your spam filter settings.
- We will contact you on your mobile phone number if we have any queries about delivery.

Previous passports

Uncancelled passports

You will be asked for details of any passport (British or otherwise) which has not yet been cancelled.

An uncancelled passport is one that is either:

- current and in use or
- has expired but has not been physically altered (e.g. corner cut off by the issuing authority).

If you have an uncancelled British passport you must send this with the application.

If you are a dual national, you should send us a full colour photocopy of the uncancelled non-British passport, or British Overseas Territories Citizen passport (every page including blank pages).

Lost or stolen

If you want to apply for a replacement passport at the same time as reporting it lost or stolen, complete an LS01 form and send it to us with the declaration form. You can download the LS01 form at www.gov.uk/overseas-passports

If your passport has been stolen report the theft to the local police. They may give you a reference number. Put this on the LS01 form.

We will cancel your lost or stolen passport once we have received the LS01 form. If you later find the passport which you reported lost or stolen, you must return it to us. You will no longer be able to use the passport. You may also be held by the immigration authorities or the police if you try to do so.

For security reasons, any passport which is found by a third party such as the Police should be returned to us for cancellation and destruction.

Parents' details

Get it right

You will be asked to provide parents' details if:

- you are applying for your first adult passport
- you are applying to replace a passport that has been lost, stolen or damaged
- the passport you are applying for is for someone aged 16 or under, or
- you are applying to extend your passport.

We require parents' details, and in some cases grandparents' details, to help us determine your nationality and eligibility for a British passport.

For nationality purposes, parents are defined in law as 'mother' and 'father'. Nationality by birth cannot always be gained through either parent's national status. This includes parents who are of the same sex. Because of this, it is important that details of both parents are entered on the online form.

If you were born in the United Kingdom after 31 December 1982, you will only be British if either or both of your parents:

- were British at the time of your birth; or
- were settled in the United Kingdom at the time of your birth.

If you were born outside the UK on or before 31 December 1982 you can only claim British nationality through your father, and he must have been married to your mother (either before or after you were born). If your father was born outside the UK, he can't pass his British nationality to you.

If you were born before 1 July 2006, then British nationality can only be claimed through the father if your parents were married at the time of your birth, or have married since.

Grandparents' details

You will be asked to fill in the section on grandparents' details if your parents were:

- born outside the UK, or
- born after 31 December 1982, or
- you cannot provide sufficient information about your parents.

Adoption

If you, or the child you are applying for, is adopted, please enter the details of the adoptive parents here.

If adoptive parents are of the same sex, the parent who appears first on the adoption certificate should enter their details in the 'mother or parent 1' section and the parent named second on the adoption certificate should enter their details in the 'father or parent 2' section, regardless of gender.

If you were born and adopted in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 then you will be a British citizen if either person that adopted you is a British citizen.

If you were born outside the UK, and adopted in the UK before 1 January 1983 then you will be a British citizen if:

- in the case of a sole adoption, the person that adopted you is a British citizen, or
- in the case of a joint adoption, the male adopter is a British citizen.

If you were born outside the UK, and adopted in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 then you will be a British citizen if either person that adopted you is a British citizen.

When a child is adopted in the UK, nationality can be gained through either parent. If adoptive parents are of the same sex, the parent who appears first on the adoption certificate should enter their details in the box 'mother or parent 1' and the parent named second on the adoption certificate should enter their details in the box 'father or parent 2' regardless of sex.

If a child is adopted outside the UK under the Hague Convention, nationality may be gained through the adoptive parents depending on when the adoption took place, the nationality and residence of the adopters at the time of the adoption. For passport

purposes an adoption order or certificate issued by the relevant foreign authority is required, validly certified under Article 23 of the Hague Convention. Until a full adoption order is made, whether in the State of origin or in the UK, an Article 23 certificate will not be issued. Further guidance on adoptions outside the UK visit www.gov.uk/child-adoption/adopting-a-child-from-overseas

Children conceived through sperm donation

If your child was conceived through sperm donation and born in the UK, you should complete the form in the normal way. You do not need to tell us your child was conceived through sperm donation.

If the parents are of the same sex, the mother who gave birth should enter their details in the box 'mother or parent 1' and the parent named second on the child's birth certificate should enter their details in the box 'father or parent 2'.

If your child was conceived through sperm donation and born outside the UK see www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-get-a-passport-if-your-child-was-conceived-through-sperm-donation for information on what documents you'll need to send.

Surrogacy

When a child is born of a surrogacy arrangement and a parental order has been granted in the UK after 6 April 2010, nationality can be taken through either parent named on the order. Where these parents are of the same sex, the parent who appears first on the parental order should enter their details in the box 'mother or parent 1' and the parent named second on the parental order should enter their details in the box 'father or parent 2'.

Where a child is born as a result of a surrogacy arrangement outside the UK to a man and a woman and a passport is being sought before a parental order has been granted, the child may have an automatic claim to British nationality as long as:

- (a) the child is biologically related to the British father and,
- (b) the British father is not British by descent and,
- (c) the birth mother is not married at the time of the birth.

If the child is biologically related to the father but he is British by descent and/or the birth mother is married at the time of the birth, the commissioning surrogate parents must seek to register the child as a British Citizen before applying for a passport for the child. The child will not be British until this step is taken. For further information on entering into surrogacy arrangements in foreign countries please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/surrogacy-overseas

It may be possible to apply for a passport before a parental order has been granted. Passport applications involving surrogacy are often highly complex and we may need to ask for further documentation or to talk to you in person after you have sent us your application. Please allow a lot more time than our average processing times for such applications to be processed – we recommend submitting an application involving surrogacy at least 4 months before you need the passport. We are not in a position to guarantee a specific processing time for these cases.

No mention of parent's details or 'mother or parent 1' and 'father or parent 2' will appear on the passport. This information is used simply to gather the information we need to issue a passport.

Child with one parent

If you are the only parent of your child, fill in either the 'Mother or Parent 1' or 'Father or Parent 2' sections of the form, whichever applies to you and leave the spaces for an additional parent blank. When you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form add a note to show that you are the only parent and why (whether you do not know the other parent of the child, are an individual adopter, or an individual parent whose child was conceived through sperm donation and so on).

For more information on the circumstances in which nationality is decided please visit www.gov.uk/british-passport-eligibility

Additional information

Get it right

- Most people will not need to fill in this section. The examples below show when you should give us extra information using this section.
- Names or contact details, including email address and telephone number that you were not able to fit in the spaces provided earlier.
- Tell us which country's passport your countersignatory holds, and his or her email address.
- If you change your name after getting married but you want to continue to use your maiden name for professional purposes tell us here and we will add a note on the observation page of your passport showing your maiden name.
- If your passport is lost or stolen and you have already submitted a Lost and Stolen Notification form LS01, tell us here that you have already submitted the form.
- Tell us why you need to have your passport sent to another address and give us the other address.
- If you have a disability that means you can't meet the passport photo requirements. Please include a letter from your doctor, and tell us if it's a permanent or temporary disability.
- If you have a mental or physical condition that you believe would prevent you from coming to, or taking part in, an identity interview.
- If your passport is damaged, explain briefly how it was damaged.
- If the application is for a child and you have parental responsibility, you should say if you have enclosed any court orders that relate to the child's residence in, contact with or removal from a country.
- If the applicant was born of a surrogacy arrangement (for first time adult and child applications only).
- If you are applying for a British National (Overseas) Passport you should enter the number of your Hong Kong permanent identity card and enclose a colour photocopy with your application.
- If the address you have given is not where you live, please explain why.

If you need more space

- If there is not enough space in the 'Additional information' section please include any extra information on a blank sheet of paper. You should sign and date this and include it with your declaration form.

Passport fee

The passport fee will be calculated for you. It depends on the type of application you are making.

You will have to pay a courier fee to cover the cost of the return of your new passport and supporting documents. For renewal applications the supporting document fee covers the return of your old passport.

You must pay in pounds sterling by credit card or debit card. You must ensure that you have checked with your card provider that your card is valid for this international transaction and that adequate funds are available. The cards we accept are: Mastercard, Visa, Visa Electron, Visa Debit and Maestro (UK Domestic). We don't accept Maestro (International) cards.

If you were born on or before 2 September 1929, you don't have to pay for a standard passport. The passport and delivery to you will be free of charge. You will only have to pay if you select the jumbo passport option.

We cannot usually refund the fee if your application is unsuccessful or withdrawn. This is because we will already have carried out a lot of work in processing it.

The British passport stays the property of the Crown, not the person who holds it. If payment is unsuccessful we will cancel the passport and you will not be able to travel with it or use it for identity purposes.

Declaration

✔ Get it right

- Once you've submitted your information online and paid for your passport, the online service will create a personalised declaration pack for you to download and print.
- The declaration pack includes the declaration form for you to read, sign and return to us.
- You will need to post your completed declaration form to HM Passport Office with your supporting documents and photos, to the address given in the pack.
- We will not begin processing the application until we receive a signed and completed declaration form along with the appropriate supporting documents and photographs.
- Please send these as soon as possible. If we don't receive them within 90 days, your application will be withdrawn and you won't get a refund.

People applying under age 18

If you are 16 and over, or you will turn 16 within three weeks, sign the declaration yourself. You don't need permission from a person with parental responsibility.

For applicants with a learning disability who cannot understand the consequences of signing the declaration someone with parental responsibility should give their permission. You must enclose a letter with your declaration and supporting documents that explains why the applicant cannot sign and who has signed on the applicant's behalf.

Parental responsibility

A child under 16 must have permission from a person with parental responsibility.

The mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth, and can give permission.

The father can give permission if he:

- was married to the mother at the time of the child's birth (or, for those living in Scotland, when the mother became pregnant)

- was married to the mother at any time after the child's birth
- has a parental responsibility order or agreement (which must be sent with the application)
- has a child arrangements order which grants parental responsibility, or:
- is named on the birth certificate (which must be sent with the application), and the birth was jointly registered on or after:
 - 15 April 2002 in Northern Ireland
 - 1 December 2003 in England and Wales, or
 - 4 May 2006 in Scotland

For children born to female same-sex partners

who conceived through sperm donation, the second female parent can give permission if she:

- was married or in a civil partnership at the time of the child's conception and consented to the conception
- has a parental responsibility order or agreement (which must be sent with the application)
- has a child arrangements order which grants parental responsibility, or
- is named on the birth certificate (which must be sent with the application) and the birth was jointly registered on or after 6 April 2009

If the child's parent is under 16, they can also sign the declaration on behalf of the child.

If a child has been adopted, either adoptive parent can give permission.

If parents are divorced, a child arrangements order or maintenance order will not automatically take away the parent's parental responsibility. Include any extra information on a blank sheet of paper. You should sign this and include it with your declaration form.

If a child has been born of a surrogacy arrangement, either parent named on the parental order or birth certificate can give permission. If the application is made before the parental order is granted, the rules are more complex. Please contact us for guidance if this applies to you.

Step parents (adults who enter into a marriage or civil partnership with someone that is already defined as a parent as explained above) can give permission only if they have parental responsibility by a parental responsibility order; a child arrangements order giving parental responsibility or parental responsibility agreement.

If the child is in care or is living with foster parents, we will need permission from the local authority before we can issue a passport to the child. For separate guidance notes for social services, please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications

If the court has made an order about who the child should live with, or about the child having a passport, this must be sent in with the application.

If there is an ongoing case about who the child should live with or a dispute about parental responsibility of the child, we may refuse to deal with the application if someone with parental responsibility has made an objection to the child having the passport. If the child is the subject of an ongoing case about who they should live with, we are unlikely to issue a passport without the express permission of

both parents or on the direction of a UK court, or equivalent court order outside the UK.

If an adult is acting as a parent in a situation other than one described in this section, please explain the circumstances in an accompanying letter to your application. We will also need documentary proof of your responsibility for the child.

If we have already issued a passport to a child after an application has been made by one parent, the other parent or anyone else with parental responsibility cannot apply for a separate passport for that child.

If we have issued a passport in good faith, we would not usually cancel that passport without the permission of both parents or a Court Order.

If you cannot sign the declaration:

- get someone else to sign on your behalf, and
- enclose a letter with your declaration form and supporting documents that explains why you cannot sign. This is normally done by the person filling in the application form on your behalf. Your passport will note that the holder does not have to sign.

Countersignature

Get it right

We only need a countersignature when there is a section shown on the declaration form.

A 'countersignatory' will need to fill in this section if you are applying:

- for a first British passport
- to replace a lost, stolen or damaged passport
- to renew a child passport (if the child is aged 11 or under), or
- to renew a passport (adult, or child aged 12 to 15 years) if you cannot be recognised from the photograph in your current passport, or to extend a passport.

Countersignatories

- A countersignatory is someone who can confirm your identity. They need to confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, the details you have given in your application are correct, and they must also confirm that the photograph is of you.
- For child applications (aged under 16) it is also to confirm that they have known, for at least two years, the adult who signed the declaration form. They must also confirm that the person has parental responsibility for the child and confirm the child's photo.

The countersignatory must:

- be a professional person (including those who are retired) for example, bank or building-society officials, police officers, civil servants, ministers of religion and people with professional qualifications like teachers, accountants, engineers and solicitors – you can find more information at www.gov.uk/countersigning-passport-applications
- have known you personally for at least two years (for example a friend, neighbour or colleague, not someone who knows you professionally), and

- hold a British, Irish or other EU, US, or Commonwealth passport (in that order of preference) which has not run out. We will be able to process applications more quickly where the countersignatory has a British or Irish passport.

If you cannot comply with the countersignatory requirements your application may be delayed. You must provide a full explanation when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form and we will contact you to agree a way forward.

The countersignatory needs to:

- tell us which country's passport they hold, and his or her email address.
- when they hold a US, Commonwealth or other EU (not British or Irish) passport, they must provide a colour photocopy of the page with their photograph on it. This must be included with the countersigned application.
- review the application summary in your personalised declaration pack and to make sure the information is accurate
- fill in and sign the countersignatory section in the declaration pack
- give their business address (or private address if this does not apply) and contact details
- for an adult application, 'certify' one (not both) of your photographs – signing and dating one of the photographs as shown in the example in the declaration pack

- for a child application under 16, confirm that they have known the adult who signed the declaration for at least two years, and certify the photograph (giving the child's full name), signing and dating it as shown in the example in the declaration pack and
- put their initials next to any mistakes they may make.

The countersignatory must not:

- be related to you by birth or marriage (including in-laws or partners of family members)
- be in a personal relationship with you
- be a commercially employed agent helping the applicant to apply for a passport
- live at your address, or
- work for us at HM Passport Office.

What we do with the details of the countersignatory

As part of our work we will check that the countersignatory is genuine. This may include checking their passport and other records to confirm their identity and their profession or professional qualification.

Please make sure that your countersignatory knows that we may contact them and carry out these checks.

We may ask you to provide another declaration form with a different countersignatory if we are not satisfied with your choice of countersignatory or if we cannot contact them.

Supporting documents and delivery

Get it right

- Send us original or replacement documents. Unless stated, we do not accept photocopies or certified copies of documents, or documents that have been laminated.
- If you need to send a birth certificate, it must be a full birth certificate. (This is one that contains the details of both you and your parents).
- If you need to get a document from a local issuing authority, do it before you apply.
- If any document you are providing is in a language other than English or Welsh, you must provide the original document and an official translation. This must be signed and stamped by a translator who is a member of a recognised professional organisation to prove it is genuine.

You will need to send supporting documents and two identical photos with the declaration form. Your personalised declaration pack will tell you what supporting documents you will need to send to us and provide guidance on how your photos should be taken. Please read it carefully to make sure that you submit all the right documents. If you don't your application will be delayed.

If you want to replace documents issued in England and Wales, go to www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates

To replace documents issued in Northern Ireland, go to www.nidirect.gov.uk and for Scotland go to www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

To replace documents issued outside the UK, get advice from the relevant British Embassy, Consulate or High Commission of that country.

Delivery information

Your new passport and supporting documents will be returned to you separately.

Our courier will aim to deliver packages direct to customers. You should ensure that you provide up to date, correct contact details in your application.

In some countries you will have to collect your new passport from a British Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate. For specific advice on where you need to go and what you need to bring with you visit www.gov.uk/overseas-passports

We cannot:

- take responsibility for applications and supporting documentation which go missing on their way to us. We can only take responsibility once we have received the application and supporting documents into our care. Proof of posting is not proof of delivery.
- replace any documents that you report as missing six months after we have issued the passport; or
- accept responsibility for passports and supporting documents which are not delivered if you quote an incorrect address or do not tell us if you move house while we are processing your application.

Contact us

We will need to ask you personal information to verify your identity when you contact us.

Passport advice

- Visit www.gov.uk
- For advice or to get a Braille or audio version of this booklet please call the Passport Adviceline on +44 (0)300 222 0000. (Call charges to this number vary by telephone provider).

Travel advice

HM Passport Office cannot answer questions about passport entry requirements for individual countries. Information about this can be found on the FCO Travel Advice website at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice. Advice includes information on when a passport is valid, visa information and requirements to enter certain countries, and information on health, insurance, and money when you travel.

Other information

Protecting your personal information

Your identity and personal information are valuable. We protect your privacy and process your personal information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Your personal information will only be seen by those who have a legitimate reason for seeing it. We will check the information you give us with the issuing authorities of your supporting documents, other government departments and a credit-reference agency to help us check your identity. We may also pass the information you give us to law-enforcement agencies or government departments involved in preventing fraud to help prevent or detect identity theft, fraud or other criminal activity.

You can find details about the personal information we hold, how we protect it, who we pass it to and how you can get a copy of that information in our privacy statement on our website. You can get a printed copy of the information by writing to us at:

Disclosure of Information Section
Her Majesty's Passport Office
Aragon Court
Northminster Road
Peterborough
PE1 1QG
United Kingdom

Service standards

Providing a high level of service to all our customers is very important to us. We sometimes make mistakes, or circumstances beyond our control affect the standards of service. When this happens, we will apologise and do everything we can to put things right. We welcome your feedback on any aspect of our service, including how we can improve in the future.

We have a disability equality scheme which sets out clear and specific aims about how we will promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Your views are important, so please contact us by phone, letter, email or fax if you have any ideas or suggestions that will help us to help you.

What you can expect from us

- Our staff will be polite, helpful and professional.
- The details in your passport (including the chip) will be correct and we will return your supporting documents by secure delivery.
- We will give you a clear and helpful explanation if you are refused a British passport because of citizenship or other reasons.

Complaints about passports

1 Step one

If you have a complaint about how we handled your passport application, please contact our Customer Contact Centre by phone, in writing or by using our online enquiry form.

Phone: +44 (0)300 222 0000

Write to:

HM Passport Office
PO Box 767
SOUTHPORT
PR8 9PW
United Kingdom

Online: visit www.gov.uk/passport-advice-line and complete our online enquiry form

When you write to us, please provide:

- full details of the problem
- the name and date of birth of the person the passport was for

- the date the application form was sent to us and if you used a courier, the courier reference details
- which of our offices the application form was sent to
- the passport number, if you have one
- information so we can contact you (name, address, postcode, daytime/mobile and evening phone numbers, and a fax number and email address if you have these).

When we receive your complaint, we will investigate and let you know what went wrong and advise you what we are doing to put things right. We will contact you within 15 working days from receiving your complaint, either with a full reply or to let you know what is happening if we have not finished our investigation.

2 Step two

If you have followed step one and are not satisfied with our response, you can ask us to review your complaint.

3 Step three

If you have followed steps one and two and are still not satisfied, you may ask your Member of Parliament (MP) to raise the matter with our Director General.

Follow the advice at www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/find-your-mp-help/ to find an MP where you were last living in the UK. If you have never lived in the UK, or you are having difficulty contacting an MP, you can write to our Director General using our general enquiry address available at www.gov.uk/passport-advice-line or a Home Office Minister via the Direct Communications Unit by email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

4 Step four

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask an MP to ask for an investigation by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (the Ombudsman).

You can only do this through an MP.

The Ombudsman's role is to investigate complaints by members of the public about the way government departments, and their executive agencies, have treated them.

Compensation

We realise that sometimes our mistakes may cause you expense or financial loss. In these cases, you should follow the instructions in step one and write us a letter. With the letter you should send any documents that prove your claim (for example, a receipt to show a cancelled flight). If your claim for compensation is agreed, payment will be made by sterling cheque. Alternatively, payment can be made onto a chosen debit or credit card, but you will need to provide an email address so that we can contact you about your preferred payment option.

Identity interviews

In some cases we may call you for an identity interview in order to verify details in your application. This will take place outside of the UK and, as far as is possible, we will attempt to secure a location that minimises inconvenience. In the case of child applications we may need to talk to one or both parents of the child. The interview will help us to confirm your identity and that the passport application we have checked belongs to you. You may also be asked to attend interview with additional documentation. This is an important part of our commitment to help to reduce identity fraud. It will help us to spot and prevent other people using your identity and committing fraud in your name.

If an interview is considered necessary we will then contact you. This process will increase the time it takes for us to process your application.

If you have a mental or physical condition that would prevent you from taking part in an identity interview, please let us know when you get to the 'Additional information' section of the online form. You should also provide a letter from your doctor or hospital consultant explaining your condition and if this is likely to be permanent or if an improvement can be expected.

What we will ask you at the interview

We will ask you to confirm basic information about yourself or your child, including information that someone trying to steal your identity may not know. Our questions will also be based on information you give in your application form, your supporting documentation and from our searches against other public and private sector databases or records. The questions we ask will not be the same at every interview.

If you are invited to come for an interview, we will write or telephone with more information.