



## Guidance notes

### Biometric residence permits - general information for applicants, employers and sponsors

September 2015

This leaflet explains what a biometric residence permit (BRP) is, what it can be used for, and how employers can check that prospective employees have a right to work in the United Kingdom (UK).

The biometric residence permit is proof of the holder's right to stay, work or study in the UK. It can also be used as a form of identification (for example, if they wish to open a bank account in the UK). The holder is not required to carry their permit at all times, but they must show it at the border, together with their passport, when travelling outside of, and when returning to, the UK.

Under current legislation, employers have a responsibility to check the entitlement of prospective employees to work in the UK. We strongly advise that employers undertake checks on everyone they wish to employ. This will enable employers to establish a statutory defence against payment of a civil penalty for employing a person with no right to work in the UK, shows their recruitment process is open and transparent, and ensures their recruitment practices do not discriminate against anyone because of their race.

Migrants who are eligible to work in the UK are strongly encouraged to collect their BRP before they start work. If they need to start work prior to collecting their BRP they will be able to evidence their right to work by producing the short validity vignette in the passport they used to travel to the UK. A right to work check can be conducted on the basis of this vignette. Once the vignette in the passport has expired the migrant must collect their BRP. The employer must then need to conduct a right to work check on the basis of the BRP once the migrant has collected it.

All applicants, apart from those under the age of five are required to give their biometrics. These will be scans of all fingerprints and a digital photograph. Applicants who are under six are not required to provide their fingerprints, but will still have to provide a photograph.





## Security features

The International Civil Aviation Organisation ‘**chip inside**’ symbol, found on the front of the permit above the holder’s image, is printed using Optically Variable Ink (OVI). As the permit is tilted, the OVI shifts colour depending on the angle of viewing, whilst displaying a metallic quality.



**Two colour Ultra Violet design** – the angle of the design is different on the front and back.



**Dynaprint** – from one angle, the ‘valid until’ date and the letter ‘U’ are visible; tilting the permit replaces these with a photograph of the holder and the letter ‘K’.



**Tactile feature** – the back has a raised design incorporating the four national flowers of the United Kingdom, seen by shining a light across the permit.



The **Permit number** is unique.



**Kinegram™** – various designs can be seen as the permit is tilted, showing a distinctive colour change and large amount of fine detail.



Physical checks can also be performed on the permit. As it is made entirely from polycarbonate, it will have a distinctive sound when flicked, and the holder’s image will always be in grey-scale. The permit should not be bent or folded, as this is likely to cause it to break. Contact with water should be avoided to prevent damage to the contact chip.

## Applicants

### What is a biometric residence permit?

The biometric residence permit is a residence permit which holds a migrant's biographic details (name, date and place of birth) and biometric information (facial image and fingerprints), and shows their immigration status and entitlements while they remain in the United Kingdom.

### Who has to apply for a biometric residence permit?

Foreign nationals from outside the European Economic Area making certain applications to the Home Office have to apply for a biometric residence permit. This applies to both postal applications and applications made in person (known as 'premium applications').

If a migrant has to apply for a biometric residence permit it will be stated on the application form. For up-to-date information on which types of applications are affected please log on to the Home Office website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk).

Successful applicants receive a biometric residence permit as evidence of their status in the United Kingdom. Migrants applying successfully in categories which do not have to enrol biometrics will continue to receive a sticker (vignette) in their passport.

### Why do applicants over 6 years old have to give their fingerprints?

The law states that everyone over 6 years old must provide their fingerprints when applying for a biometric residence permit.

### Why do children under the age of 16 need a 'responsible adult' to accompany them?

It is a legal requirement to ensure the child understands the process and is reassured.

### Who is a responsible adult?

This is a parent or guardian, or another person aged 18 years or over who takes legal responsibility for the child.

### How do I enrol my biometric information and apply for a biometric residence permit from inside the United Kingdom?

If you make your application in the United Kingdom by post, we will send you a letter after we have received your application. You will be able to enrol your biometric information at some Crown Post Offices using their walk-in service. Please visit the Post Office website at [www.postoffice.co.uk/foreign-nationals-enrolment-biometric-residence-permit](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/foreign-nationals-enrolment-biometric-residence-permit)

or call their helpline on 08457 22 33 44 for the location of your nearest branch offering this service.

If you want to make your application in person you can do this at one of our premium service centres by using the premium or super premium service. You will enrol your biometric information at the same time as making your application.

If you want to apply at one of our premium service centres you must book an appointment online by visiting our website:

[Book-Appointment](#)

If you want to use the super premium service you must phone 020 8196 3893 or 020 8196 3892.

### What happens when I enrol my biometric information?

Enrolling your biometric information is a quick and clean process. We take a digital photograph of your face, then you put your fingers on a glass screen to be scanned - there is no ink or mess.

We are aware of the need to protect the dignity, privacy and modesty of applicants, and there will be special arrangements for applicants where needed.

### **How long does it take to enrol biometrics?**

The Home Office biometric enrolment process takes 5-10 minutes. There may then be a short wait while we check your data.

### **What about any medical or physical conditions that may require the Home Office to provide the applicant with special arrangements?**

If you or any dependants who are applying with you have a medical or physical condition which may require special arrangements to be made in order for your biometric features to be recorded, you must obtain a letter or other document giving the details of any such condition and enclose it with your application.

Appropriate documentary evidence would be a letter from a treating clinician, such as a practising doctor registered with the General Medical Council, giving details of the condition and/or special needs and explaining any arrangements that may be necessary.

### **What if I have no fingers or hands?**

If you are physically unable to provide fingerprints we will take a photograph of the facial image and record on the database the fact that you are physically unable to provide fingerprints.

You will not be able to use the biometric enrolment service at a post office branch.

### **Why must I give my biometrics as part of my application?**

Providing biometrics helps to protect the identities of genuine applicants. Biometric residence permits make it easier for individuals to prove their identity, immigration status and entitlements in the United Kingdom. Individuals are locked into a single identity which helps the Home Office tackle immigration abuse, child trafficking, illegal working and identity fraud.

### **What happens if I refuse to give my biometrics?**

If a postal applicant fails to make arrangements to provide their biometrics their application will be rejected. If they fail to enrol their biometrics or refuse to provide their biometrics then their application to the Home Office may be rejected.

If a premium applicant refuses to provide their biometrics then their application to the Home Office may be rejected.

### **Why do I have to be fingerprinted again when I gave my biometrics overseas as part of my visa/entry clearance application?**

This is to verify that an individual making an application in the United Kingdom is the same person who applied for the visa overseas and who came through the United Kingdom border.

### **What will happen to my biometrics after they have been taken?**

They will be held on the existing fingerprint database.

### **Will I be interviewed?**

If the fingerprint check reveals any queries around your identity, these matters may be resolved through an interview. However, this will not routinely be required.

### **Will I be issued with a biometric residence permit? And what must I do if my biometric residence permit is not delivered?**

If you are successful in your application you will receive a biometric residence permit. However, the card is not issued on the day you give your biometrics. It will be delivered to you by courier. If you have not received your permit within 10 working days of the date of your decision letter you should notify us using the service at

<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>.

You cannot enquire about undelivered permits in person at our offices or biometric enrolment centres. This applies to both premium and postal services.

### **When will I get my biometric residence permit?**

If you apply by post, we will post your permit to you by secure delivery, separately from the decision about your application and the return of your documents.

If you apply at a public enquiry office, we will post your permit to you by secure delivery after your appointment. Permits cannot be issued on the same day as your appointment.

We advise you not to book any non-urgent travel before you have received your permit.

### **What must I do when I receive my biometric residence permit?**

You must check the permit carefully to make sure that all the details on it are correct, as you are required by law to have a card that accurately records your personal details and the type of permission you have to be in the United Kingdom.

If you find a mistake and the mistake includes length of stay or conditions of stay you may, depending on the kind of application you have made, be eligible to apply for an administrative review. For more information on administrative review, and to see whether you are eligible to apply for it, please go to:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/administrative-review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/administrative-review).

For **all other** mistakes please notify us using the service at <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits> within 10 working days of receiving your card.

We advise you to make a photocopy of the front and back of your permit, in case it is lost or stolen. If you want to make another application in the future, you will have to

send your permit to the Home Office, so you may want to retain a copy for your records.

### **How do I use my biometric residence permit?**

Your biometric residence permit is evidence of your permission to stay in the United Kingdom, and shows the conditions of your stay. It enables you to confirm your identity and your rights to study and/or work here, and to access public services.

You must show the permit to your employer or approved education provider before you start to work or study.

You must take your permit with you if you go abroad while you have permission to stay in the United Kingdom. You may have to show the permit to an immigration officer at the border when you leave the United Kingdom. You will also have to show it as well as your valid national passport or travel document before you begin your return journey, and again when you re-enter the United Kingdom. The permit proves that you are allowed to return to the United Kingdom, but it cannot be used instead of a passport or travel document.

### **What must I do if my biometric residence permit is lost or stolen?**

If your biometric residence permit is lost or stolen, you must report the loss or theft to us using the service at:

<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>.

You must also report the loss or theft to the police and obtain a police report and a crime reference number, as soon as possible.

If your biometric residence permit is lost or stolen while you are in the United Kingdom, you must apply for another permit within 3 months of reporting the loss or theft of your original permit, using form BRP (RC). You can download the BRP (RC) application form and guidance from our website at: [Replace-BRP](#)

If your permit is lost or stolen while you are outside the United Kingdom, you must apply for a Replacement BRP visa in order to re-enter the United Kingdom. [Replace-BRP](#) page explains what you have to do. You must then apply for a new biometric residence permit within 1 month of re-entering the United Kingdom, using form BRP (RC). You can download the BRP (RC) application form and BRP (RC) guidance from our website at: [Replace-BRP](#)

If you do not apply for a replacement permit, you may have to pay a financial penalty of up to £1,000, or we may shorten your permission to stay.

### **How do I change my personal details on my biometric residence permit?**

You must tell us as soon as you can if:

- you change your name (for example, because of marriage or by deed poll);
- you change your gender, legally or permanently;
- you change your nationality; or
- your facial appearance changes significantly.

If you change any personal details listed above or any details shown on your biometric residence permit, you must apply for a new permit within three months, using application form for no time limit (NTL) or an application for transfer of condition (TOC). You can download the application forms and guidance at: [Transfer-Visa](#)

If you do not do this, you may have to pay a financial penalty of up to £1,000 or we may shorten your permission to stay.

### **What must I do if I change my address?**

The action to be taken will depend upon the stage your application is at within our system. If you have:

- Made an immigration application then:
  - you must tell us immediately by completing a change of address (COA) form, this can

be completed online at: [COA form](#)

- Received a decision letter but not received your biometric residence permit then:
  - you must tell us immediately using the service at: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits> or;
  - If you are unable to email, please write, free of charge to: Freepost RRYX-GLYU-GXHZ Returns Unit PO Box 163 Bristol BS20 1AB
- Received your biometric residence permit, and you will be at the new address for at least 6 months then
  - you must tell us immediately by completing migrant change of circumstances (MCC) form, this can be found online at: [Change-Circumstances](#) Print and complete the form, and post it to the address shown on its front cover.

### **What must I do if I change my circumstances?**

You must tell us immediately if:

- you change your circumstances so you no longer qualify to stay under the Immigration Rules that were in place when we gave you permission to stay in the United Kingdom;
- or
- you are a student and you change your course and/or education provider (sponsor).

It does not matter whether we are currently deciding or have already decided your application - you must tell us of any changes, by completing a Migrant Change of Circumstances (MCC) form, this can be found online at: [Change-Circumstances](#)

Print and complete the form, and post it to the address shown on its front cover.

### **What must I do if someone else has been using my permit or my permit is damaged or faulty?**

You must tell us immediately using the service at: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits> if you know or suspect that:

- someone has used your permit with or without your permission; or
- your permit has been damaged, tampered with or is faulty.

### **What must I do if the biographical information on my biometric residence permit is incorrect?**

Biographical information on the BRP is the following:

- your name
- your date of birth
- your gender
- your nationality
- place of birth

If any of these are wrong you must tell us immediately using the service at: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>.

### **What must I do if the period or conditions of my leave on the biometric residence permit is incorrect?**

If you think that the period or length of your leave is wrong you may, depending on the kind of application you have made, be eligible to apply for an administrative review. For more information on administrative review, and to see whether you are eligible to apply for it, please log on to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/administrative-review>

If you think that the period or length of your leave is wrong and you are not eligible to apply for an administrative review you must

tell us immediately using the service at: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>.

### **What do I do if my biometric residence permit is near its end date?**

If you have limited leave to enter or remain and you wish to remain in the United Kingdom, you will need to make a further application before your leave expires.

You will need to enclose your biometric residence permit with your new application. If you do not make a valid, in-time application you may no longer be permitted to stay in the United Kingdom.

### **Where can I access more information?**

For further information please log on to: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)



## Employers and sponsors

### Your responsibilities to prevent illegal working

Employers must carry out reasonable steps including the following when checking any documents presented by potential employees:

- check photographs, to ensure that you are satisfied they are consistent with the appearance of your potential employee;
- check the dates of birth listed so that you are satisfied these are consistent with the appearance of your potential employee;
- check that appropriate expiry dates have not passed;
- check any United Kingdom Government endorsements (stamps, vignettes, remarks, etc) to see if your potential employee is able to do the work you are offering, for the full length of time you require and for the hours per week that you require the employee to be present.

Migrants who are eligible to work in the UK are strongly encouraged to collect their BRP before they start work. If they need to start work prior to collecting their BRP they will be able to evidence their right to work by producing the short validity vignette in the passport they used to travel to the UK. A right to work check can be conducted on the basis of this vignette. Once the vignette in the passport has expired the migrant must collect their BRP. The employer must then need to conduct a right to work check on the basis of the BRP once the migrant has collected it.

### How does the introduction of biometric residence permits change what I do now?

The introduction of biometric residence permits does not mean you need to change the checks you currently make on foreign

nationals' right to work in the United Kingdom. If your employee (or potential employee) presents you with a biometric residence permit you should initially:

#### Look at the permit carefully:

- Is it clean and in good condition? Does it look tampered with?

#### Check the Permit Number:

- This is on the front of the permit in the top right hand corner.
- 
- It should start with two letters followed by seven numbers. The permit number should not be raised.

#### Check the Holder's Image:

- The holder's image will always be in grey-scale.
- Check that it matches the person presenting it to you.

#### Check the 'Tactile Feature' (on the back):

- The back has a raised design incorporating the four national flowers of the United Kingdom.
- The design can be seen by shining a light across the permit.
- You can also feel the raised design by running your finger over it.

#### Feel the permit:

- It should feel thicker than a driving licence.
- The permit will have a distinctive sound when flicked.
- The permit should not be bent or folded.

**Check the biographical details** (name, date of birth, etc) match the details of the person presenting it to you.

**Check the holder's immigration conditions.** These are shown on both

the front and the back of the permit. For example it might confirm that an individual has no right to work or can only work a limited number of hours per week.

If having done these checks you still have concerns, you can check whether a permit presented to you is valid by using the online 'right to work' checking service to perform a fast and effective 'right to work' check, This is available at:

[Check-an-employees-right-to-work-documents](#)

### **What you need to do?**

To request the 'right to work' check you will need to provide the following information:

- the name of the person making the check,
- the name of the organisation or business making the check,
- The email address of the organisation or business making the 'right to work' check to which our response will be sent. If the organisation or business does not have a dedicated email account, you should give us the most appropriate email address,
- the contact telephone number of the organisation or business making the check. If the organisation or business does not have a dedicated telephone number, you should give us the most appropriate personal telephone number,
- biometric residence permit card number,
- the name as it appears on the card (if there is only one name, put it in the top box),

- date of birth as it appears on the rear of the card,

### **What happens next?**

We aim to return all checks within 6 working hours (08:00-17:00, Monday to Friday, except bank holidays). When we have completed the check, we will send a certificate to the email address you give us. This will tell you if the biometric residence permit is valid and give you the 'right to work' status of the person. If we cannot complete your check within 6 hours, we will contact you.

### **Where do I get general advice about the prevention of illegal working?**

Look at the information on the Home Office website available at:

[Check-an-employees-right-to-work-documents](#)

The Employer Checking Service is a service that offers employers the opportunity to check the status of individuals to work in the United Kingdom when the individual cannot supply the mandatory documents to prove a right to work because the individual has an outstanding application or appeal with the Home Office. Details about this service are available at:

[Check-an-employees-right-to-work-documents](#)