

GUIDANCE NOTES

BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMITS

General information for overseas applicants, employers and sponsors

March 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.

SECURING OUR BORDER CONTROLLING MIGRATION

DESIGN OF THE BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMIT

The biometric residence permit's design is set by European Union (EU) regulation. It is a standard credit card size (86mm x 54mm) and looks similar to biometric residence permits issued by other EU countries. The permit is made from polycarbonate plastic and contains a chip to make it more secure against forgery and abuse.

1. Holder's digital image
2. Holder's name
3. Valid until – the date the permit expires.
This date is at the end of the time the holder is allowed to stay; or five or 10 years if the holder has been given permission to settle in the UK (known as indefinite leave to remain)
4. Place and date of issue – this is the UK followed by the date the permit was issued
5. Type of permit – this is the immigration category the holder is in (for example, STUDENT)
6. Remarks – these are the immigration entitlements for the length of the holder's stay, and may continue on the back of the permit
7. ZU1234567 – unique permit number
8. Holder's signature
9. Biometric chip
10. Holder's gender
11. Holder's date and place of birth
12. Holder's nationality
13. Remarks – this is a continuation of immigration entitlements for the length of time of the holder's stay (see 6 above)
14. Machine readable zone (MRZ) – this area allows information printed on the permit to be read quickly by machine



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.



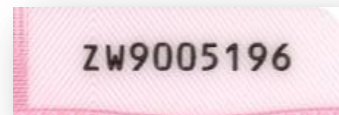
Dynaprint – from one angle, the 'valid until' date and the letter 'U' are visible; tilting the permit replaces these with a photograph of the holder and the letter 'K'.



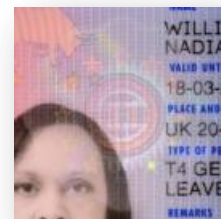
Tactile feature – the back has a raised design incorporating the four national flowers of the UK, seen by shining a light across the permit.



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 UK. Biometric residence permits are issued to foreign nationals from outside the European Economic Area who are granted leave to enter the UK for more than six months.

When will I receive my biometric residence permit?

If you are successful in your application for leave to enter the UK for more than six months you will receive a biometric residence permit upon arrival in the UK.

How do I travel to the UK without my biometric residence permit?

Successful applicants will be issued with a vignette in their passport which is valid for 30 days from the date you indicated as your intended travel date in your visa application. The vignette is proof only of your permission to enter the UK and will allow you to travel to the UK. If you do not travel to the UK within this 30 day period, your visa will expire and you will need to apply for another 30 day visa. You will have to pay a fee for this.

Your full leave conditions are contained on your biometric residence permit which you must collect on arrival in the UK.

How do I obtain my biometric residence permit upon arrival in the UK?

You must collect your biometric residence permit within 10 days of arrival in the UK from the Post Office branch detailed in your decision letter. If you do not collect your BRP within 10 days of arrival in the UK you may be subject to a financial penalty or cancellation of your leave. The Post Office

branch you have been allocated is linked to the postcode you submitted in your visa application.

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

How do I collect my biometric residence permit from the Post Office?

Your decision letter will tell you the date from which your biometric residence permit will be available for collection as well as the Post Office branch holding your biometric residence permit. The date from which the biometric permit is available for collection is based upon the date you indicated as your intended travel date in your visa application. The Post Office branch you have been allocated is linked to the postcode you submitted in your visa application. You must collect your biometric residence permit within 10 days of arrival in the UK from the Post Office branch detailed in your decision letter. If you do not collect your BRP within 10 days of arrival in the UK you may be subject to a financial penalty or cancellation of your leave. You do not need to make an appointment to collect your BRP.

When you attend the Post Office branch to collect your biometric residence permit you **must** bring with you the passport or travel document which contains your 30 day visa. You should also bring your decision letter with you if possible as it will help the Post Office staff to locate your BRP quickly. If you do not bring your passport or travel document you will not be able to collect your BRP. Details of Post Office locations offering the service and their opening times can be found at: www.postoffice.co.uk.

What must I do if I have lost my decision letter and do not know which Post Office branch holds my biometric residence permit?

If you have lost your decision letter and cannot remember the Post Office branch holding your biometric residence permit, you must e-mail

BRPCollection@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. You must provide us with the following details:

- your full name;
- your date of birth;
- your nationality;
- your passport number;
- a contact telephone number; and
- your case reference number.

Can I collect my biometric residence permit from a different Post Office branch to one in my decision letter?

Yes. If you or a nominated party who has been authorised by the Home Office to collect your BRP on your behalf, wishes to collect your BRP from a different branch to the one in your decision letter, you or the nominated party should go to the Post Office branch from which you would like to collect the permit and speak to a Post Office employee. You will have to pay a fee for each and every permit you wish to re-direct to that branch. Not all branches offer the collection service. Details of Post Office locations offering the service and their opening times can be found at: www.postoffice.co.uk.

If you are part of a family group that has travelled to the UK together, a family member can arrange for all the biometric residence permits belonging to that family group to be re-directed to a new Post Office branch for collection. The family member requesting re-direction must present the travel documents (and vignettes) of everyone whose biometric residence permit they wish to re-direct. They will also need to present these when collecting the biometric residence permits.

What do I do if I have lost my passport after arriving in the UK but before I have collected my biometric residence permit?

If you do not bring your passport or travel document with you to the Post Office you will not be able to collect your BRP. If you have lost your passport or travel document since arriving in the UK, you must e-mail BRPCollection@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. You must provide us with the following details:

- your full name;
- your date of birth;
- your nationality;
- your UK residential address;
- your passport number;
- how it was lost;
- the date the loss was reported to the Police;
- a contact telephone number; and
- your case reference number

We will notify you of what to do next within 5 working days of receipt. You should not attempt to collect your BRP until you have been told to do so by the Home Office.

Can someone else collect my biometric residence permit on my behalf?

You are expected to collect your own BRP. However, if you:

- have a serious illness or disability that prevents you from collecting your permit; or
- are under 18 and you cannot collect your permit at the same time as your parent or legal guardian collects their biometric permit,

you may be able to nominate someone else to collect your permit on your behalf. The nominated person will have to provide your passport and provide evidence of their own identity. To prove their identity they must present one of the following identity documents:

- Passport
- UK issued photocard driving licence (UK citizen only)
- European national identity card (European citizen only)
- UK issued biometric residence permit.

To nominate someone else to collect your biometric residence permit on your behalf, you must e-mail 3PartyCollection@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk providing the following information:

- your full name;

- your date of birth;
- your nationality;
- your passport number;
- why you need someone to collect on your behalf (including details about the illness or disability – you may be asked to provide further information before we will authorise)
- a contact telephone number;
- your case reference number and
- vignette reference number (this can be located in red on the top right hand corner of your visa)

You must also provide the following information about the person collecting the permit on your behalf:

- their full name;
- their date of birth;
- their nationality;
- the document they will use to prove their identity;
- the identity document reference number;
- the identity document expiry date; and
- their e-mail address.

If approved, you and the person collecting your biometric residence permit will receive an authorisation e-mail. The nominated person will need to present this to the Post Office Customer Service Advisor at the time of collection. The nominated person will not be able to collect the permit without it.

Can children collect their own BRP?

Yes, but if you are under 18 and will be collecting your permit in person, you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian collecting their permit at the same time, or be accompanied by a responsible adult such as teacher, a relative (over the age of 18), a carer or a social worker. The responsible adult must be approved by the Home Office. The responsible adult will have to provide evidence of their identity when accompanying you to collect your biometric residence permit. To prove their identity the responsible adult must present one of the following identity documents:

- Passport
- UK issued photocard driving licence (UK Citizen only)
- European national identity card (European citizen only)
- UK issued biometric residence permit.

To register the responsible adult you should e-mail RACollection@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk providing the following information:

- your full name;
- your date of birth;
- your nationality;
- your passport number;
- a contact telephone number; and
- your case reference number.

You must also provide the following information about the responsible adult accompanying you to collect your permit:

- their full name;
- their date of birth;
- their nationality;
- the document they will use to prove their identity;
- the identity document reference number;
- the identity document expiry date;
- their e-mail address; and
- how the responsible adult is related to you

If approved, you and the responsible adult will receive an authorisation e-mail. You and the responsible adult will need to present these to the Post Office Customer Service Advisor at the time of collection and you will not be able to collect the permit without them.

Can I collect my BRPs on behalf of my family?

If you are part of a family group that has travelled to the UK together, all the biometric residence permits belonging to that family group can be collected by an adult member (aged over 18) of that family group. It does not have to be the main applicant. The group must comprise of a main applicant and one or more dependants (including household staff) explicitly linked to the main

applicant. The link to the main applicant will be shown as a vignette remark, for example, "Dependant of John Smith". Applicants will be unable to use the family group collection arrangements if the remark linking them to the main applicant is missing from their vignette. The person collecting the biometric residence permits belonging to the family group must present the travel documents (and vignettes) of everyone whose permit they are collecting.

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

You must check your permit carefully when you receive it, to make sure that all the details on it are correct. If you find a mistake, you must email BRPError@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk within 10 working days of receiving the permit. You must provide us with as many of the following details as possible:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- nationality;
- passport number;
- contact telephone number;
- BRP reference number
- case reference number; and
- exactly what is wrong with the BRP.

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 UK, 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 UK. You may have to show the permit to an immigration officer at the border when you leave the UK. 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 UK. The permit proves that you are allowed to return to the UK, 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 as soon as possible by e-mailing BRPLost@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. You must provide us with as many of the following details as possible:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- nationality;
- passport number;
- contact details;
- BRP reference number;
- case reference number; and
- when, where and how the loss or theft occurred.

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 UK, 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 UK, you must apply for a Replacement BRP visa in order to re-enter the UK. [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 UK, 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 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 UK;
- 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 the information on my biometric residence permit is incorrect, someone has been using my permit, or my permit is damaged or is faulty?

You must tell us immediately by emailing BRPError@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk if you know or suspect that

- the information held on your permit is untrue, misleading or incomplete;
- someone has used your permit with or without your permission; or
- your permit has been damaged, been tampered with or is faulty.

You must provide us with as many of the following details as possible:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- nationality;
- passport number;
- a contact telephone number;
- BRP reference number
- case reference number;
- what exactly has happened to the biometric residence permit. If your permit has failed to scan upon entry to the UK, you should tell us the date of entry to the UK, and the airport (including terminal number) or port of entry.

What if I find a biometric residence permit that is not mine?

If you find a biometric residence permit that is not yours, send it free of charge to:

Freepost RRYX-GLYU-GXHZ
Returns Unit
PO Box 163
Bristol
BS20 1AB

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 UK, 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 UK.

Where can I access more information?

For further information please log on to:
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 UK 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 UK. 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 UK.
- 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 photocard 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:

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

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 UK 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](#)