



Landlords' guide to checking immigration documents

1. Checklists and golden rules

Introduction

This guidance is intended to help landlords conduct necessary document checks to establish whether a person has a right to rent in accordance with the Immigration Act 2014. Further guidance for landlords on their duties under the Act on operating the scheme can be found at the website [here](#).

This is not a comprehensive guide to all immigration documents but provides the information needed to identify and understand the greater majority of documents that are likely to be encountered.

Details of countries in the European Union and in the European Economic Area can be found [here](#).

Three golden rules



Obtain

- Obtain original versions of one or more acceptable documents.



Check

- Check the document's validity in the presence of the holder.



Copy

- Make and retain a clear copy, and record the date the check was made.

List A - acceptable documents for right to rent checks. If you see these documents when taking in a tenant, there is no need for a repeat check.

List A	Seen?	Date
Group 1 – Acceptable single documents		
1. A passport (current or expired) showing that the holder is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.		
2. A passport or national identity card (current or expired) showing that the holder is a national of the EEA (European Economic Area) or Switzerland.		
3. A registration certificate or document (current or expired) certifying or indicating permanent residence issued by the Home Office, to a national of a European Union, European Economic Area country or Switzerland.		
4. A permanent residence card, indefinite leave to remain, indefinite leave to enter or no time limit card issued by the Home Office (current or expired), to a non-EEA national who is a family member of an EEA or Swiss national.		
5. A biometric immigration document issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK. The document must be valid (not expired) at the time the right to rent check is made.		
6. A passport or other travel document (current or expired) endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.		
7. A current immigration status document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is permitted to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK. The document must be valid (not expired) at the time the right to rent check is made.		
8. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen.		

Notes:

Group 2 – Acceptable document combinations.

1. Any two of the following documents when produced in any combination. All documents in List A, Group 2, must be dated to show they were issued within the specified date shown, eg: within the last three months. The document must contain the name of the prospective tenant.		Seen?	Date
i.	A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents.		
ii.	A letter issued within the last 3 months confirming the holder's name, issued by a UK government department or local authority and signed by a named official (giving their name and professional address), or signed by a British passport holder (giving their name, address and passport number), or issued by a person who employs the holder (giving their name and company address) confirming the holder's status as an employee.		
iii.	A letter from a UK police force confirming the holder is a victim of crime and personal documents have been stolen, stating the crime reference number, issued within the last 3 months.		
iv.	Evidence (identity card, document of confirmation issued by one of HM forces, confirmation letter issued by the Secretary of State) of the holder's previous or current service in any of HM's UK armed forces.		
v.	A letter from HM Prison Service, the Scottish Prison Service or the Northern Ireland Prison Service confirming the holder's name, date of birth; or a letter from an officer of the National Offender Management Service in England and Wales, an officer of a local authority in Scotland or an officer of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.		
vi.	Letter from a UK further or higher education institution confirming the holder's acceptance on a course of studies.		
vii.	A current full or provisional UK driving licence (a photocard without paper counterpart is acceptable).		

	A current UK firearm or shotgun certificate.		
viii.	Disclosure and Barring Service certificate issued within the last 3 months. NB: Further information, including details of security safeguards included within the certificate, can be found here .		
ix.	Benefits paperwork issued by HMRC, Local Authority or a Job Centre Plus, on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions or the Northern Ireland Department for Social Development, within the last 3 months.		

Notes:

List B – Acceptable documents establishing a time-limited statutory excuse. You will need to conduct further checks at a later point.

All documents in List B must be valid (not expired) at the time of the right to rent check. You may have to check again as follows

- a) one year, beginning with the date on which the checks were last made, or
- b) before the expiry of the person’s leave (immigration permission) to be in the UK, or (whichever is longer from a or b)
- c) on the expiry of a person’s permission to stay in the UK as shown on their biometric residence permit).

List B			
Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse is established		Seen?	Date
1.	A valid passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK for a time-limited period.		
2.	A current biometric immigration document issued by the Home Office to the holder, which indicates that the named person is permitted to stay in the UK for a time limited period. NB: ensure that both sides are copied.		
3.	A current residence card (including an accession residence card or a derivative residence card) issued by the Home Office to a non-EEA national who is either a family member of an EEA or Swiss national or has a derivative right of residence.		
4.	A current immigration status document issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK for a time-limited period.		
5.	In the case that the person has an ongoing application with the Home Office, or their documents are with the Home Office, or they claim to have a permission right to rent, an email from the Landlords Checking Service providing a “yes” response to a right to rent request. This will only be sent to the landlord by the Landlords Checking Service.		

Notes: Including date for follow up check.

Step 2: Checking the validity of documents

When you are checking the validity of the documents you must ensure that you do this in the presence of the holder. This can be a physical presence in person or via a live video link. In both cases you must be in possession of the original documents.

You are not expected to be an expert in any or all of the various passports and identity documents that you might see. It is not possible to give comprehensive details of all travel and identity documents but there are some features in many documents that any person can look for and which may give you confidence that the document is likely to be genuine. Further detailed guidance on inspecting British passports can be found [here](#).

Further information on checking EEA passports/ID cards can be found on the [Prado website](#)

If you believe a British passport may have been altered or used by someone fraudulently you can report it to HM Passport Office by email: oiu@hmpo.gsi.gov.uk. Other documents suspected to be fraudulent can be reported to **Crimestoppers**.

Most international travel documents contain security features such as holographic images, watermarks and images that fluoresce under ultra violet light. Laminates are used to make it difficult to change information printed on the documents and high quality and expensive printing processes are used. Take time to look at the document properly by feeling it, tilting and turning it to see how it reacts. Consider whether the printing is blurred. Forged documents may be deliberately battered and dog-eared to provide an explanation for their poor quality.

It is recognised that forged documents are difficult to detect and that those who use them are setting out to deceive. If you are given a false document, you will only be liable for a civil penalty if it is **reasonably apparent** that it is false. This means that a person who is untrained in the identification of false documents, examining it carefully, but briefly, and without the use of technological aids could reasonably be expected to realise that the document in question is not genuine.

In other cases, it is equally likely that documents may be used by imposters. Where a person presents a document and it is reasonably apparent that the person presenting the document is not the person referred to in that document, even if the document itself is genuine, you may be liable to a penalty.

You will not be able to rely on a statutory excuse if you knew that the documents were false or did not rightfully belong to the holder.

Step 3: Retaining evidence

You must keep a record of every document you have checked. This can be a hardcopy or a scanned and unalterable copy, such as a jpeg or pdf document. You should keep the

copies securely for the duration of the person's tenancy and for a further 12 months after the tenancy ends. By doing this, you will be able to provide evidence that you have complied with the law if we find that someone is, or has been living at your property who does not have a right to be in the UK. This will provide you with what is known as a "statutory excuse" which is an excuse provided for in law to prevent landlords from being penalised in cases where it subsequently transpires that the tenant is disqualified from renting property.

You must also make a record of the date on which you conducted your check. This can be by either making a dated declaration on the copy made or by holding a separate record, securely, which can be shown to us upon request to establish your statutory excuse.

Where documents are encountered that are not described here the Home Office Landlords Helpline can offer general advice on understanding immigration documents but cannot verify individual documents or disclose any details of a persons immigration status The Landlords Helpline can be contacted by telephone on **0300 069 9799**.

2. Acceptable documents for right to rent checks - List A

List A - Group 1 documents

The following documents will provide you with a continuous statutory excuse because there are no restrictions on the rights of the holder to be in the UK and to rent

- 1. A passport showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.**

A person with the right of abode in the UK has the right to live and rent in here without restriction. A passport stating that the holder is a 'citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' will only be acceptable if it includes the words: 'holder has the right of abode in the United Kingdom'.

You may accept an expired passport for these nationalities to establish the right to rent.

Examples of British passports

Most passports will look like one of these examples. You will need to check the 'nationality' or 'citizenship'.



2. A passport or national identity card showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland

All nationals from EEA countries and Switzerland, with the exception of Croatia, are free to live and rent in the UK. Special transitional controls have applied to Croatian nationals since 1 July 2013.

You may accept an expired EEA or Swiss passport to establish the right to rent if it clearly shows that the prospective tenant is a national of an EEA country or Switzerland.

5. A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.

You must not accept an expired Biometric Residence Permit as evidence of the right to rent. These documents have a maximum duration of 10 years for holders who are aged 16 years or over, and 5 years for holders under 16 years.

Permission to reside in the UK for a variety of purposes; validity, purpose of residence and any restrictions attached to residence are indicated on the card.

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

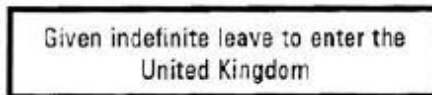
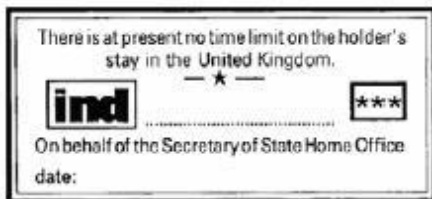
The diagram shows the front and back of a Biometric Residence Permit card. The front side (left) includes a digital image (1), name (2), valid until date (3), place and date of issue (4), type of permit (5), remarks (6), unique card number (7), and holder's signature (8). The back side (right) includes a biometric chip (9), gender (10), date and place of birth (11), nationality (12), remarks (13), and the machine readable zone (MRZ) (14).

1. Holder's digital image
2. Holder's name
3. Valid until – the date the card 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 United Kingdom (known as indefinite leave to remain)
4. Place and date of issue – this is the UK followed by the date the card 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 card
7. ZU1234567 – unique card 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 card to be read quickly by machine

6. A passport or other travel document (current or expired) endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.

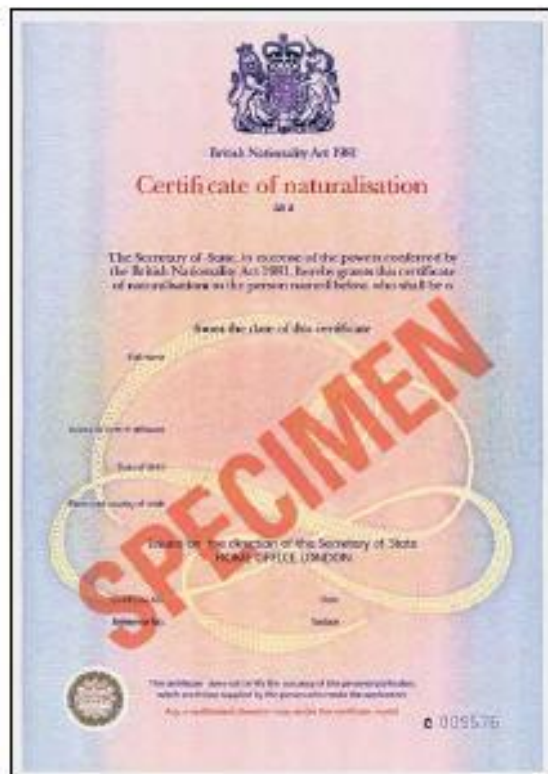


The examples shown below are no longer issued but may be found in some old passports and are still valid whether or not the passport is expired.



8. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen.

You should check that the A4 certificates describe the holder as a British citizen, as indicated below.



3. UK passport visas and stamps

Most visas and stamps shown in this section will be replaced by simpler Biometric Residence cards from February 2015 – except for those visiting for less than 6 months. The visas and stamps shown below will continue to be encountered so long as they remain valid.

UK entry clearances (usually known as visas) are issued abroad on vignettes such as these. They show the reason the person has been given permission to travel to the UK.

For those who have visas OTHER THAN A VISIT the relevant date is that shown in the top right corner. The individual it was issued to has permission to rent until this date. If the visa shows that it has been issued for a visit, see the next section.



Visitors

The green visa above grants permission for a visit. Visitors may stay for a maximum of 6 months but the visa shows in this case that the person can enter as many times as they wish, for a maximum of 6 months each time, provided the visa remains valid. A stamp is placed in their passport at the port of entry showing the date they entered. Provided the stamp remains valid, ie: the person has not stayed beyond their 6-month permission, then they have a right to rent.

Note:

In this case, where a person only has a short permission to stay, the date of the follow up check is 12 months after they begin their tenancy NOT the expiry of their passport stamp.

Some visitors who do not need visas such as those shown above are simply given a stamp in their passport such as this which is valid for 6 months from the date shown:

LEAVE TO ENTER FOR SIX MONTHS:
EMPLOYMENT AND RECOURSE TO
PUBLIC FUNDS PROHIBITED

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
* (***) *
20 SEP 1996
HEATHROW (*)

Other passport stamps

Where people have extended their stay for any reason they may have stamps such as these. Examples of passport stamps below may show an expiry date but others show that a period of stay has been granted from the date shown.

<p>Leave to remain in the United Kingdom, on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds is hereby given</p>	
<p>until</p>	
<p>..... on behalf of the Secretary of State Home Office</p>	
<p>Date</p>	

<p>Leave to enter for/until</p>
<p>.....</p>
<p>to work as/with</p>
<p>.....</p>
<p>Changes must be authorised No recourse to public funds</p>

<p>Leave to remain in the United Kingdom, on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds is hereby given</p>	
<p>until..... The holder is not to engage in employment paid or unpaid other than with.....</p>	
<p>..... and is not to engage in any business or profession without the consent of the Secretary of State for the Home Department</p>	
<p>..... on behalf of the Secretary of State Home Office</p>	

<p>Leave to enter for/until</p>
<p>.....</p>
<p>No recourse to public funds Work (and any changes) must be authorised</p>