

Travel documents & travelling abroad

This fact sheet provides an overview of the different type of travel documents and rules on travelling abroad. This includes refugee travel documents, certificates of travel and travelling on a national passport. The fact sheet also includes information about travelling abroad on different types of status and the rules surrounding this, including in relation to school trips.

British Citizens

If the child or young person is a British citizen, or becomes one, they will need to follow the same rules as any other British citizen to obtain a British passport. Passports can be applied for through the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport#more-information>.

A child's passport is currently £46 and a passport for someone aged 16 or over is £72.50. It should take 3 weeks for a child's passport and 6 weeks for a passport for someone aged 16 or over, although you can pay more for a faster service.

If you are unsure if a child is British or not, it is important to clarify this as soon as possible. A child born in the UK is not necessarily British. Someone may not discover that they are not British until something happens, like a passport application is refused or being ineligible for student finance.

Conversely, it is often not recognised that a child is British – please see our fact sheet on when a child is British, ways to check and how to register as a British citizen, available here: www.coramchildrenslegalcentre.com/resources.

The form on which the application for a travel document is made is called a [TD112](#), and it is the same form for the different types of travel document. The main distinction is between a Refugee Convention travel document and a Certificate of Travel. There are also guidance notes to the TD112. It is important to always use the most up to date version of the application form. [1]

Useful resources:

Nationality checking service
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nationality-checking-service>

Post office passport checking service
<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/passport-check-send>

Travel Documents

Refugee Convention travel documents

If the child or young person is a refugee then they can apply for a Refugee Convention travel document, which is a blue passport-sized document. Information about applying for this travel document is available [on the UK government website](#). [2]

Refugee travel documents are normally valid for all countries other than the country asylum is claimed from and/or the country of origin. The document costs £72 for an adult and £46 for a child.

The application must be completed correctly and provide all the specified information and documentation. This includes ensuring that:

- The correct fee is paid
- 2 identical colour passport photos, including one that is certified by a professional person, are enclosed
- the applicant's original current/expired passports (if available) and travel documents, and current immigration status document/ biometric residence permit, are enclosed
- A person with parental or legal responsibility has given the necessary consent for a young person under the age of 18
- For 16 and 17 year olds who have no-one exercising parental responsibility/able to give

consent to their application, a letter is provided explaining the circumstances

- The declaration is signed.

It is not possible for the Home Office to issue any travel document for longer than the permission to remain in the UK. Most countries will not accept a travel document with less than 6 months' validity – including a national passport, when issuing permission to enter (a visa).

Stateless person's travel document

A stateless person may apply for a 1954 UN Convention stateless person's document. For more information on statelessness, please see our fact sheet on this issue, available here:

www.coramchildrenslegalcentre.com/resources

The travel document is a red document. It is normally valid for up to 5 years (children) or 10 years (adults) or in line with the leave granted. The stateless travel document is normally valid for all countries. The stateless travel document costs £72 for an adult and £46 for a child (under 16).

The application form can be made online or by the same form used for the refugee travel document. General information about applying for this travel document is available [here](#) (and at [2] above).

Certificate of Travel

Certificates of Travel may be issued to individuals who:

- (1) are permanently resident in the United Kingdom, or
- (2) have been granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL) to enter or remain in the UK for a limited period, following an unsuccessful asylum application **and** can provide documentary evidence that they have been formally and unreasonably refused a passport by their country of origin.

The Home Office guidance states that to be 'formally and unreasonably refused' a passport by their national authorities, an individual must have applied for a passport in the manner required by their national authorities.

This evidence will need to be obtained before making the application in order to show the refusal was made and it was unreasonable.

An exception should be made in cases where humanitarian protection is granted following a refusal of asylum where it has been accepted that the individual has a fear of the authorities of their country. However, please note that the Home Office often refuse these types of applications in the first instance and if an application is refused the only remedy is judicial review.

The Home Office guidance states that the requirement to prove an application has been unreasonably refused may be discounted where that country:

- does not have the ability to issue a national passport in the UK,
- is unable to accept applications that can be processed by their national authorities overseas, or
- refuses to accept an application.

The certificate of travel is a black document. It is normally valid for up to 5 years or for the length of leave the individual has. The Home Office guidance states that the certificate of travel is normally valid for all countries but there were previously issues with the acceptance of the document in a number of countries, including many European ones. It is recommended that a particular country's rules should be checked before applying for such a document and travelling to that country. The cost is £267 (adult) or £134 (child under 16).

One-way travel document

A one way travel document may be issued to a non-British citizen in the UK, regardless of status, who

wishes to leave the UK permanently and voluntarily and does not have a valid travel document of their own.

Please note that this form of document can only be used for a single journey. It will not allow re-entry into the UK.

The document costs £72 (adults) or £46 (children under 16). It is valid for one year, but is designed for immediate use.

Travelling abroad with indefinite leave to remain or limited leave to remain

If an individual has indefinite leave to remain ('ILR') or limited leave to remain, they can normally re-enter the UK as long as their leave has not expired. If the person has limited leave to remain, they will need to be in the UK when they apply for their further leave to remain and will also need to submit their travel documents and biometric residence permit with the application. It should also be noted that if they spend a significant time away from the UK, they may find it harder to meet certain rules for limited leave (such as for those on private life routes).

However, if an individual stays outside of the UK for a period of more than 2 years, that leave to remain (whether indefinite or limited) will lapse. The leave to remain will not lapse if someone comes back and left again during the two year period – it must be continuous for the leave to lapse.

For those with indefinite leave to remain and whose leave lapsed due to the 2 year rule, they can be re-admitted to the UK and have their ILR restored as a returning resident. This is dealt with in the Immigration Rules – in order to be eligible the person must:

- plan to return to live in the UK permanently,
- have settled in the UK before they left,
- not have been given public funds to leave the UK,

- show strong family ties in the UK,
- be able to provide evidence that they have lived in the UK for most of their life,
- be able to provide evidence of their current circumstances and the reasons for living outside of the UK.

Applying as a returning resident costs £478 to apply and separate applications must be made for any dependants (partner and children under 18).

Those who will not lose their indefinite leave to remain after 2 years outside the UK are:

- spouse/partner is a member of the UK armed forces and they have joined on an overseas posting,
- spouse/partner is British/settled and a permanent member of the Diplomatic Service , a UK-based British Council employee working outside of the UK, a Department for International Development (DFID) employee, or a Home Office employee.

For further information about applying for a returning resident visa, please see the gov.uk website page on this issue: <https://www.gov.uk/returning-resident-visa>.

School trips

Children of school age who are undocumented will not be able to go on school trips abroad as they will certainly have issues on exit and re-entry to the UK.

For those with limited leave or indefinite leave to remain, they will be able to go on school trips unless they need to apply for further leave to remain in the near future. If they are travelling on their own passport, they can discuss with their school about ensuring a smooth trip. The British Council issues a '[list of travellers' form](#)' for school trips to countries in the EU for pupils who are of a non-EU nationality. This allows pupils to go on the trip without having to obtain a visa. **[3]**

Notes

[1] Application form for Home Office travel document, at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-home-office-travel-document-form-td112-brp>.

[2] Guidance - apply for a Home Office travel document, at:
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-office-travel-document/overview>.

[3] British Council List of Travellers visa scheme, at:
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/partner/list-travellers>

This fact sheet should not be used to give legal advice and is for information and guidance only. For advice on individual cases, assistance should be sought from an independent regulated legal adviser.

For further assistance contact us by email – mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk - or call 0207 636 8505 (10am-2pm Tuesday to Thursday).