



Guidance notes

Biometric residence permits (BRPs): General information for overseas applicants, their employers and sponsors

July 2016

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). For some immigration categories the National Insurance Number (NINo.) will appear in the remarks on the reverse of the BRP. If this is the case there is no need for the holder or their employer to make a separate application to the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain a NINo. 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. The card confirms the date the holder's leave expires, whether they have the right to work in the UK and other restrictions placed on the right to stay. Failure to comply with any of these restrictions (see also police registration below) may result in prosecution and/or removal from the UK. The information provided as part of the immigration application will be shared with other government departments, in accordance with the law, to monitor compliance with conditions of stay.



If you are required to register with the police as a condition of your stay in the UK, this will be confirmed on the 30 day vignette issued to you to allow you to travel to the UK. The vignette will need to be shown to police when registering. Those required to register must do so within 7 days of arrival in the UK. For information on registering with the police please visit GOV.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. However, once the vignette in the passport has expired the migrant must present their BRP and the employer must conduct a further right to work check on the basis of the BRP.

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.



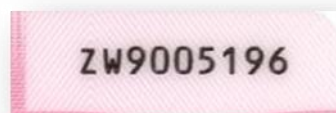
Dynaprint – from one angle, the 'valid until' date and the letter 'U' are visible; tilting the permit replaces these with a photograph of the holder and the letter 'K'.



Tactile feature – the back has a raised design incorporating the four national flowers of the 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 (BRP) 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.

When will I receive my biometric residence permit?

If you are granted leave to enter the UK for more than six months you will receive a biometric residence permit after 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. 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 you will have to apply for another 30 day vignette, for which there will be an additional fee.

In many cases your vignette will start on the date you indicated as your intended travel date in your visa application. However special arrangements apply to some applications under the Points Based System:

Tier 2 - your vignette will normally start 14 days before the start of your employment in the UK as recorded on the Certificate of Sponsorship Checking Service.

Tier 5 Temporary Worker - your vignette may start up to 14 days before the start of your engagement.

Tier 4 - your vignette will normally start either one month before the start of your

course or 7 days before your intended travel date whichever is the later.

The full conditions of your leave will be shown on your biometric residence permit.

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

This will depend upon whether you selected the Post Office collection option during your visa application or were given an Alternative Collection Location (ACL) code by your sponsor:

- **Alternative Collection Location (ACL)**

If you were given an ACL code by your sponsor, you must collect your biometric residence permit from your sponsor. Your decision letter will tell you where to collect your permit and your sponsor will tell you when and how to collect your permit.

If you selected the ACL option but cannot remember where or how to collect your biometric residence permit, you should contact your sponsor.

When you attend to collect your biometric residence permit from your sponsor you **must** bring with you the passport which contains your 30 day visa. You should also bring your decision letter with you, if possible, as it will help your sponsor to locate your BRP quickly. If you do not bring your passport you will not be able to collect your permit;

- **Post Office collection**

If you selected Post Office collection you must collect your biometric residence permit from the Post Office branch detailed in your decision letter. You must do this either before your 30 day vignette expires or within 10 days of arrival in the UK, whichever is later. The Post Office branch you have been

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

If you do not collect your BRP you may be subject to a financial penalty or cancellation of your leave.

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 is expected to be available, and the Post Office you must attend. This earliest collection date is based upon the date on which your vignette started.

You do not need to make an appointment to collect your BRP.

When you attend the Post Office branch you **must** bring with you the passport 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 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 their [website](#).

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 cannot remember the Post Office branch holding your biometric residence permit, you should contact us using the service at [Collect BRP](#).

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 third party 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 they should go to the Post Office branch from which you would like to collect the permit and speak to a Post Office employee.

The Post Office will charge a fee for each and every permit you wish to re-direct between branches. Not all branches offer the collection service. Details of Post Office locations offering the service and their opening times can be found at their [website](#).

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 are unable to present your passport 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 should notify us using the service at [Collect BRP](#).

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 my sponsor or legal representative collect my biometric residence permit on my behalf?

If your sponsor or legal representative has approval from the Home Office to operate third party collection they can collect the BRP on your behalf, but they must still take your passport to the Post Office.

I don't have a sponsor or legal representative. 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 own biometric residence permit,

you may be able to nominate someone else to collect your permit on your behalf.

The nominated person will have to show your passport and vignette to staff at the Post Office and will have to provide evidence of their own identity. To prove their own identity they must present one of the following identity documents:

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

Please note that to obtain approval for someone else to collect your permit in this way you should apply using the service at [Collect BRP](#). You will have to provide information about yourself and about the person you want to nominate to collect the permit on your behalf.

If approved, you and the person you nominate will receive an authorisation e-mail. The nominated person will need to present this to Post Office staff at the time of collection or they will not be able to collect your permit.

Can children collect their own BRP?

Please note that some schools have arranged with the Home Office for their students' BRPs to be delivered to the school, or for a member of staff to operate third party collection. In either of these cases the information below will not apply. You should check with your school if they

have entered into such an arrangement with the Home Office.

If you are under 18 years old and will be collecting your BRP at a Post Office you must be accompanied by a "Responsible Adult" approved by the Home Office, or you will be turned away by the Post Office staff.

Your parent or legal guardian can be your Responsible Adult without prior approval from the Home Office only if:

- they are collecting their own BRP at the same time as you, and
- the vignette in your passport states that you are their dependent (this will be shown by a printed remark such as "Dependant of John Smith").

In all other cases the adult who will accompany you must be approved in advance by the Home Office, even if they are your parent or legal guardian.

To register the Responsible Adult please use the service at [Collect BRP](#). You will need to provide information about yourself and about your Responsible Adult.

It will take **at least a week** to process a request to approve a Responsible Adult, and we cannot speed it up because that person is about to leave the UK, so apply as early as you can.

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
- European national identity card (European citizen only)
- UK issued biometric residence permit.

If approved, you and the Responsible Adult will receive an authorisation e-mail, which must be present to Post Office staff at the time of collection or you will not be able to collect the permit.

Can I collect BRPs from the Post Office on behalf of members of my family?

If you are part of a family group that has travelled to the UK together, and are collecting your biometric residence permit from the Post Office all of the biometric residence permits belonging to the family group can be collected by any adult member (aged over 18) of the 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 want to collect.

Can I collect BRPs from my sponsor on behalf of members of my family?

If the main applicant is collecting their biometric residence permit from their sponsor under the ACL arrangements, and the sponsor has agreed to take delivery of the dependants' permits, only the main applicant may collect the permits. The dependants must be explicitly linked to the main applicant by a printed remark on the vignette.

The main applicant will be unable to collect their dependants' permits from their sponsor if the remark linking the main applicant and the dependant is missing from the vignette. The main applicant must present the travel documents (and vignettes) of everyone whose permit they want to collect

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 please notify us within 10 working days of receiving your card by using the service at [BRP error](#).

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 are strongly encouraged to collect your BRP as soon as possible and prior to enrolment or starting work, so that just one check of your right to study or work is carried out by your sponsor. However, your sponsor can enrol you or allow you to start working before you collect your BRP, providing that your short-term vignette has not expired.

If your sponsor has allowed you to start studying or working on the basis of your vignette they **must see your BRP** when your vignette expires. If you do not produce it to them promptly they may have to stop you attending the course or stop you working.

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 have to show it along with your valid national passport 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.

Why does my National Insurance Number appear on my biometric residence permit?

Your National Insurance Number (NINo.) is part of the essential information that you have to provide to your employer which needs to be recorded correctly to ensure that you pay the correct amount of tax and National Insurance contributions. If you have been granted Leave to Enter as a Tier 2 General, Sports person or Minister of Religion Migrant following an application made on or after 15th June 2016, your NINo will appear in the remarks on the reverse of your biometric residence permit. If your NINo. appears on your BRP there is no need for you or your employer to make a separate application to the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain one.

What is my National Insurance Number and why is it important?

Your National Insurance Number (NINo.) is your personal reference number to make sure your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name only. It is made up of letters and numbers, is unique to you and will never change.

You must not share your NINo. with anyone who does not need it as knowledge of your number might help someone to steal your identity. You will need your NINo. at certain times throughout your life, for example if you apply for a student loan, start working or claim state benefits.

You must give your NINo. to every employer you work for straightaway. You must make sure you give the right number every time so

you pay the correct amount of tax and National Insurance contributions.

For further information about the National Insurance Number, please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

How do I know if I need to register with the Police?

If you are required to register with the police as a condition of your leave, this will be confirmed on the 30 day vignette issued to you to allow you to travel to the UK. You will need to present your 30 day vignette when you register with the police. **If** you are required to register you must do so within 7 days of your arrival in the UK. For information on registering with the police please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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 [BRP Lost](#).

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).

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. You must then apply for a new biometric residence permit within one month of returning to the UK.

Further details about both processes are available on our website at [Replace BRP](#).

If you do not apply for a replacement permit when required to do so, 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, by making an application for transfer of conditions (TOC) or no time limit (NTL). 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 to tell us of any changes, by completing a Migrant Change of Circumstances (MCC) form, this can be found online at: [Changed Circumstances](#)

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

What must I do if my permit is damaged or faulty?

You must tell us immediately using the service at [BRP Error](#) if you know or suspect that your BRP is damaged, has been tampered with or is faulty.

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

If you find a mistake on your permit, you must notify us of it within 10 working days of receiving the permit using the service at [BRP Error](#).

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.

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 to us at:

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

You **do not** have to pay postage when sending someone else's card to this address.

Where can I access more information?

For further information please visit [GOV.UK](#).

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.

If the Migrant has been granted Leave to Enter as a Tier 2 General, Sportsperson or Minister of Religion following an application made on or after 15th June 2016 their National Insurance Number will appear in the remarks on the reverse of their biometric residence permit.

For further information about the National Insurance Number, please go to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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. The third character in the permit number can be either a 'X' or a digit. The last six characters will be digits. 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.

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 [GOV.UK](#)

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.