



Proposed invalidation of ID cards

Standard Note: SN/HA/5596
Last updated: 18 June 2010
Author: Grahame Danby
Section: Home Affairs Section

The Government does not plan to provide any refunds for people who have bought ID cards despite the measures in the *Identity Documents Bill* that provide for their invalidation.

The *Identity Documents Bill*, Bill 1 of 2010-11, had its second reading in the House of Commons on Wednesday 9 June. During the debate, there was some argument as to whether any refund should be given to the 15,000 individuals who have already paid £30 for a national identity card. In reply to an intervention by Kate Hoey, the Home Secretary (Theresa May) said:

I can tell her now that we will not be offering refunds to all those who chose to get an identity card. [Hon. Members: "Outrageous!"] Labour Front Benchers shout "Outrageous", but we made it clear that we were opposed to identity cards. The Liberal Democrat party made it absolutely clear that it was opposed to identity cards. People knew well before the election what would happen if a Conservative Government were elected.¹

Speaking for the Opposition, Alan Johnson said:

Those in possession of identity cards ought to be able to continue to use them as a legitimate form of identification, and to travel in Europe and access services. At the very least, they should receive a refund, or the Government should take up the suggestion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe and Sale East (Paul Goggins) and offer a discount off future purchases. The Government should be ashamed of themselves for even thinking that they could treat people with such off-hand arrogance, and they must look again at that aspect of the Bill.²

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as being up to date; the law or policies may have changed since it was last updated; and it should not be relied upon as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for it. A suitably qualified professional should be consulted if specific advice or information is required.

This information is provided subject to [our general terms and conditions](#) which are available online or may be provided on request in hard copy. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing with Members and their staff, but not with the general public.

¹ HC Deb 9 June 2010 c346

² HC Deb 9 June 2010 c362

The Government's Identity and Passport Service has published a number of frequently asked questions (and answers), some of which are reproduced here:

Are identity cards being cancelled?

Yes. The Government introduced the Identity Documents Bill to Parliament on 26 May 2010. The Bill makes provision for the cancellation of the UK National Identity Card, the Identification Card for EEA nationals and the destruction of the National Identity Register. The identity card for foreign nationals (biometric residence permit) is not being scrapped.

When will it happen?

The Government intends to cancel identity cards this year. With swift Parliamentary approval, this can be done within 100 days of the Bill being introduced.

What will happen to the cards already out there?

Cards remain valid until such time as the Identity Documents Bill is enacted. The Identity and Passport Service will be writing to existing cardholders at their registered address to inform them of the position.

Will you be offering refunds to those who bought cards?

Cardholders will not be offered refunds. The Government intends to scrap identity cards at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer.³

The Government aims to have the Bill pass through Parliament and enacted by the Parliamentary recess in August. As the above material suggests, there is no provision in the Bill to reimburse current card holders in any way. Only an amendment during its passage through Parliament could change this.

The Public Bill Committee will meet for the first time on Tuesday 29 June and complete its consideration of the Bill by Thursday 8 July. A call for evidence was issued on 15 June 2010; interested individuals should submit their views by email to the Scrutiny Unit – details are available online.⁴

More information on the Bill is available in Library Research Paper 10/41, also available online.⁵

³ http://www.ips.gov.uk/cps/rde/xchg/ips_live/hs.xsl/1690.htm

⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/06/identity-documents-bill-committee-issues-call-for-evidence/>

⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/rp2010/RP10-041.pdf>