



Passport application fees

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There are different fees for British passports, depending on whether the application is made in the UK or overseas.

Passport application fees are set to cover the average costs incurred in processing the application. Because fees are charged for processing the application, rather than the issuing of a passport, fees are generally not refunded in the event of an unsuccessful or withdrawn application. For an additional charge, applicants in the UK can use the Post Office 'Check and Send' service in order to check that an application has been correctly prepared before it is submitted.

British citizens born before 2 September 1929 are eligible for a free passport, as discussed in Library standard note [SN/HA/3201 Free passports for British citizens born before 2 September 1929](#).

For information about the recent controversy regarding passport application delays and Home Office measures to address the problems, see Library standard note [SN/HA/6916 Delays in processing passport applications](#).

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1 Who is responsible for issuing passports?

[HM Passport Office \(HMPO\)](#) (a Home Office directorate) handles passport applications from UK residents and British nationals living overseas.

The process for issuing overseas passports recently changed. In April 2011, responsibility for overseas passports was transferred from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to the Home Office (HO). The transfer of responsibilities from the FCO to the HO was fully completed in March 2014.¹ All passport applications from British nationals living overseas are now processed and printed by HMPO in the UK instead of local consular offices or regional processing centres.

The changes were intended to reduce costs incurred by diplomatic posts, improve security of documents, and enable consular staff to focus on providing other services for British nationals overseas. Cost savings were reflected in a 35% fee reduction for overseas applicants in April 2014.²

Members of the public can access information about the passport application process and related fees from the [GOV.UK website](#), or through HMPO Passport Adviceline (Tel: 0300 222 0000). HMPO also has a dedicated hotline for enquiries from Members of Parliament and their staff – details are available from the list of MPs' hotlines available from the [constituency casework](#) section on the Parliamentary intranet.

2 How are the fees calculated?

Fees may be prescribed by Order under the [Consular Fees Act 1980](#).³ The [Consular Fees Order 2012 \(as amended\)](#) sets out the current fees for passport applications made in the UK and overseas.⁴

An application for a first time or replacement 32-page adult passport costs £72.50 in the UK (following a price reduction in September 2012 which is to stay in place until March 2015).⁵ The equivalent overseas passport costs £83 (reduced from £128 in April 2014).⁶

¹ Explanatory Memorandum to [The Consular Fees \(Amendment\) Order 2014 SI 2014/509](#), para 7.1

² [HC Deb 13 Mar 2014 c43WS](#)

³ [Consular Fees Act 1980](#), s1(1)

⁴ SI 2012/798 (Most recently amended by [SI 2014/509](#))

⁵ Home Office, [Passport renewal now £5 cheaper](#), 3 September 2012.

⁶ [HC Deb 13 Mar 2014 c43WS](#)

There are three components to passport application fees:

- the costs incurred in administering passport applications (this forms most of the fee);
- the costs of providing consular assistance to British citizens overseas (known as the 'consular premium'); and
- the costs of providing assistance to British citizens overseas in the event of unexpected emergencies (known as the 'emergency consular premium').⁷

The fees are reviewed on an annual basis. HMPO sets the fee for passport applications, in conjunction with HM Treasury, to recover the full cost of providing passport services. It is never intended that passport services should make a profit or a loss, although, in reality, costs and passport demand can deviate from plans, which can lead to surpluses or deficits arising.⁸

Fees for overseas applications are slightly higher than those for UK applications because, on average, overseas applications take longer and therefore cost slightly more to process. This is because it is often less straightforward to establish whether or not an overseas applicant is entitled to a UK passport. Overseas customers also pay a courier charge in addition to the passport fee.⁹

According to information from their respective websites, a ten year passport costs around £135 in Australia and £82 in the USA whilst a five year passport in New Zealand costs around £69.¹⁰

3 Exemptions, refunds and replacements

HMPO policy on [Application fees and refunds](#) provides some general information on its approach, and answers to frequently asked questions.¹¹

Adults born before 2 September 1929 are entitled to free passports, "in grateful commemoration for their wartime efforts".¹² Everyone else must ensure that their application is accompanied by the relevant fee. If a passport is issued before payment has cleared (for example, due to a 'bounced cheque'), the passport will be cancelled if the passport holder does not respond to a final letter requesting payment. However, the passport will be reinstated if payment is received after this time.¹³

Since May 2008 refunds have not been available for withdrawn or unsuccessful applications (subject to some limited exceptions, such as if an applicant dies whilst the application is outstanding). This is because the fee regulations now provide for a charge to be made for administering the passport application, rather than for issuing a passport. The cost of refunds and a desire to deter multiple fraudulent applications were cited as reasons for the change in policy.¹⁴

⁷ [Explanatory Memorandum](#) to the *Consular Fees (Amendment) Order 2009* SI 2009/1745, para 7.4

⁸ HMPO FOI release 30133, [Overseas passport applications: cost forecast, 2013 to 2014](#), 5 March 2014

⁹ HMPO, [Passport fees for British nationals overseas reduced by 35%](#), 17 March 2014

¹⁰ According to currency conversion rates on 20 June 2014

¹¹ HMPO, [Application fees and refunds](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]

¹² See [SN/HA/3201 Free passports for British citizens born before 2 September 1929](#)

¹³ HMPO, [Cancellation of passports](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]

¹⁴ HMPO, [Application fees and refunds](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]

Even if an application is deemed invalid or is withdrawn before HMPO is likely to have spent much time processing it, the full application fee will be retained, because passport fees represent the average cost of processing each type of application, rather than the exact cost of the individual application.¹⁵

For an additional small charge (currently £8.75¹⁶), the Post Office 'Check and Send' service will check that an application has been correctly prepared and is accompanied by the necessary supporting documentation before submitting it to HMPO on behalf of the applicant.

HMPO may issue a replacement passport free of charge if it made an error in issuing the original passport, or if the passport is reported as lost in the post following dispatch. Free replacements are provided if the passport is shown to contain a manufacturing fault after a full investigation, such as a faulty microchip, but not if the damage was caused after the passport was issued.¹⁷

4 Passport processing delays

On 12 June 2014, following recent concerns about delays in processing passport applications, the Home Secretary announced a range of measures to address the problems, including free upgrades to fast-track services for those with an urgent need to travel.

For further information see Library standard note [SN/HA/6916 Delays in processing passport applications](#).

¹⁵ HMPO, [Application fees and refunds, annex A](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]

¹⁶ Post Office, [Passport Check & Send](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]

¹⁷ HMPO, [Damaged and faulty passports](#) [accessed 20 June 2014]