

Countersigning passport applications and photos

Passport applications and photos must be signed by someone else (the 'countersignatory') to prove the identity of the person applying. Check who can and can't sign - and what they have to do.

The Identity and Passport Service is now called Her Majesty's Passport Office.

When you need someone else to sign your application and photo

You must get your application form and 1 photo signed if you're applying for:

- your first adult or child passport
- a replacement for a lost, stolen or damaged passport
- a renewal of a passport for a child aged 11 or under
- a renewal of a passport if your appearance has changed and you can't be recognised from your existing passport

Who can sign applications and photos

Personal relationship

The countersignatory must:

- have known the person applying for at least 2 years
- be able to identify the person applying, eg they're a friend, neighbour or colleague (not just someone who knows them professionally)

They can't be closely related or involved with the person applying, eg:

- related by birth or marriage
- be in a relationship or live at the same address as the person applying

Where you're applying from

If you're applying in the UK, the countersignatory must:

- live in the UK
- have a current British or Irish passport

If you're applying from outside the UK, they must have a current British, Irish or other EU, US or Commonwealth passport (your application will be processed quicker if it's British or Irish).

Occupations

Countersignatories must work in (or be retired from) a recognised profession or be ‘a person of good standing in their community’, eg:

- accountant
- airline pilot
- articled clerk of a limited company
- assurance agent of recognised company
- bank/building society official
- barrister
- chairman/director of limited company
- chiropodist
- commissioner of oaths
- councillor (local or county)
- civil servant (permanent), but not someone who works for Her Majesty’s Passport Office
- dentist
- director/manager of a VAT-registered charity
- director/manager/personnel officer of a VAT-registered company
- engineer (with professional qualifications)
- financial services intermediary (eg a stockbroker or insurance broker)
- fire service official
- funeral director
- insurance agent (full time) of a recognised company
- journalist
- Justice of the Peace
- legal secretary (fellow or associate member of the Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs)
- licensee of public house
- local government officer
- manager/personnel officer (of a limited company)
- member, associate or fellow of a professional body
- Member of Parliament
- Merchant Navy officer
- minister of a recognised religion (including Christian Science)
- nurse (RGN and RMN)
- officer of the armed services
- optician
- paralegal (certified paralegal, qualified paralegal or associate member of the Institute of Paralegals)
- person with honours (an OBE or MBE, for example)
- pharmacist
- photographer (professional)
- police officer
- Post Office official
- president/secretary of a recognised organisation
- Salvation Army officer
- social worker
- solicitor
- surveyor
- teacher, lecturer
- trade union officer

- travel agent (qualified)
- valuer or auctioneer (fellows and associate members of the incorporated society)
- Warrant Officers and Chief Petty Officers

Your countersignatory's occupation won't on its own mean your application will be successful. But you should always try to get a countersignatory who has 'good standing' in your community.

Her Majesty's Passport Office may contact your countersignatory for more information. If they aren't available (eg they're on holiday), your application may be delayed.

People who work for Her Majesty's Passport Office can't be countersignatories.

Application form - what the countersignatory must do

After you've filled in the application form, you must ask your countersignatory to check the details on the form are correct, fill in and sign section 10. By doing this, they are confirming that:

- they have known you for more than 2 years
- you're who you claim to be
- as far as they know, all the information you have put on the form is true

If the form is for a child passport, the countersignatory should know the person who signs the declaration at section 9 rather than the child.

The countersignatory must also fill in their British or Irish passport number - Her Majesty's Passport Office may check their identity.

Photo: what the countersignatory must do

The countersignatory should write the following on the back of 1 photo:

'I certify that this is a true likeness of [title and full name]'

They must add their signature and the date below this statement.

Child passport photos

The countersignatory must:

- know the person with parental responsibility signing the application form
- be able to identify the child