

Her Majesty's Passport Office update on passport applications

The necessary public health measures taken to suppress the spread of COVID-19 have had an impact on provision of passport services. In order to ensure our customers and employees remained safe, we had to reduce the number of people working from Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) sites.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, HMPO has continued to operate and process standard passport applications. Those who are most in need of passport services have been prioritised and HMPO has issued more than 6,500 passports for individuals on compassionate and emergency grounds.

HMPO recognises that an increasing number of people who do not meet the urgent and compassionate criteria will want a passport more quickly as international travel restrictions continue to ease, particularly those with pre-existing bookings.

Therefore, where a UK-based customer can evidence they are due to travel within the next fortnight, and where HMPO has had their application for longer than 4 weeks for renewal applications, it will expedite their application so that it is delivered within 5 working days.

For adults applying for a passport for the first time, the required security checks mean that the process will take longer than renewals but HMPO are working hard to ensure that anyone with pre-planned travel does not miss out if their passport application has been submitted correctly and in good time.

If people find themselves in this situation then they should contact the Passport Advice line (0300 222 0000).

However, as HMPO always says, people should not book travel until they have received their passport and that advice still stands.

Overseas applicants who have an urgent need to travel will, as usual, be able to approach the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for an Emergency Travel Document (ETD). Where HMPO has had a passport application for 2 weeks longer than normal service standards, it will invite customers to contact us to arrange a refund of the cost of the ETD.

HMPO is encouraging everyone who needs to apply to do so [online](#) as this does help speed up the process. It is vital that everyone applying thoroughly checks that they are sending in the right documentation, have filled in the form accurately, and ensure their photo meets the correct specifications, as this will also speed up the process.

But what HMPO is also asking is that if people do not need to renew right now, then they should wait until after Summer. This is always a busy time and with the added difficulties during the coronavirus pandemic, HMPO has had to scale back its operation. But it is working hard to get services fully

resumed as soon as possible.