

# Passport processing times and unprecedented levels of demand

News story

There has recently been considerable press coverage of people facing holiday cancellations or travel disruption due to waiting times for passports.



There is no backlog in passport processing as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are now seeing unprecedented demand as more than 5 million people delayed applying for passports during COVID-19 because of restrictions in international travel. Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) anticipate 9.5 million British passport applications will be made this year and in March 2022 alone, HMPO processed more than one million new passport applications, the highest output on record.

In preparation for the demand for international travel returning, since April 2021 HMPO have been advising people to allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their British passport. This remains the case.

The vast majority of all passport applications are being dealt with well within 10 weeks. However, a passport can only be issued once all the checks have been completed satisfactorily and will take longer if applications are submitted with missing or incomplete information.

## **What is HMPO doing to meet this increased demand?**

HMPO have prepared extensively for this surge in demand and have increased capacity – people and systems – across all elements of the production process. The priority is to ensure we can continue to process as many passport applications as possible.

To do this:

- we have increased staff numbers by 500 since April 2021 and are in the process of recruiting another 700. In total, as of 1 April 2022 there are over 4,000 staff in passport production roles – this has helped us

to handle more applications than ever before

- additional staff are being recruited to assist with customer queries on the Passport Adviceline which is currently run by Teleperformance
- we have onboarded more delivery companies to ensure passports and supporting documents are delivered on time to customers
- we have increased availability for fast-track appointments and extended working hours across the 7 HMPO public counters – new appointments are released daily, 3 weeks in advance

## **What can customers do to ensure there are no delays?**

We urge people who need a new passport to apply for one as soon as possible to ensure their passport arrives in time for the peak summer season. We do offer urgent services for applicants who need a passport more quickly. However, in busy periods these are booked quickly.

Customers can also help to ensure there are no delays with their application, such as using a high quality photo with a digital code, applying online and applying for a new passport more than 10 weeks before they are due to travel.

And it is important to stress, you should not book travel until you have a valid passport – your new passport will not have the same passport number as your old one.

## **Are HMPO staff working from home and is this affecting output?**

Our dedicated staff are working tirelessly to deal with this unprecedented demand. Working from home has no impact on HMPO's capacity to process passport applications.

## **Where you can go for more help?**

We advise customers to call the Passport Adviceline on 0300 222 0000 if they have a query relating to their specific passport application.

Photo guidance: [Get a passport photo: Digital photos](#)

General guidance: [Apply online for a UK passport](#)

Customers can track the progress of their passport application online at: [Track your passport application](#)

[Further details about our urgent services, available from all of HMPO's 7 public counters across the UK](#)