

Allow up to ten weeks to apply for a British passport

News story

People are urged not leave their application to the last minute, with demand at an all-time high.



People are being urged not to leave their application for a British passport to the last minute, with demand at an all-time high.

Since April 2021 HM Passport Office has been advising people to allow up to ten weeks when applying for their passport. This remains the case.

Due to COVID-19, HM Passport Office saw a significant drop in the number of people applying for passports, with over 5 million people delaying their applications throughout 2020 and 2021.

But with international travel returning to normal, more and more people are applying for a new passport.

While there are urgent services for people who need their passport more quickly, appointment availability is limited. People are therefore strongly advised to apply early and help ensure that their holiday plans go smoothly.

Director General of HM Passport Office, Abi Tierney, said:

Now that international travel has resumed, we know people will be looking at going away on holiday and yet many people are leaving applying for a passport too late.

The summer holidays are fast approaching so if you need a new passport, we urge you to apply now.

Our dedicated staff are working tirelessly to ensure that passport applications are processed as quickly as possible.

[Applying online](#) is the cheapest and easiest way to obtain your passport.

Published 11 April 2022

[Scottish security operatives face realistic terror scenarios in nightclub exercise](#)

The Security Industry Authority (SIA), which is the regulator for the private security industry, ran the safety resilience exercise at Kokomo on Glasgow's West Regent Street. The SIA organised the exercise, which is the first of its kind in Scotland, in partnership with Police Scotland counter-terrorism officers and Glasgow City Council.

The training event at Kokomo confronted security staff with a series of real-time simulations, involving actors, of possible emergency scenarios. These included a mass stabbing, an acid attack, a marauding terrorist attack taking place outside the club, and a suspect package.

Ronnie Megaughin, the SIA's Acting Director of Inspections & Enforcement, said:

Putting these security operatives into realistic terror scenarios is one of the best ways to prepare them in the event of a real-life incident. We stage a terror incident, watch how they deal with the scenario, and then provide an instant debrief from counter-terror experts. We know from past experience that operatives, and their managers, really appreciate what they learn from these events and find them worth their while. Any of these security staff could find themselves as the first responder at a serious incident, and this training could literally be the difference between life and death.

Lee Crofts, the SIA Criminal Investigation manager who co-ordinated the event, said:

The main aim of exercises like this is to enhance public safety in the night-time economy by working with venues and security staff. It's also to showcase best practice by putting the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) security e-learning package, which we've been recommending to all SIA-licensed operatives, into practice. We're really pleased with the commitment that all the security staff put into the Kokomo exercise.

This emergency planning exercise at Kokomo continues a programme of exercises and follows on from events in Chesterfield and London in autumn 2021. A pilot event took place at Buxton in Derbyshire in October 2019.

Further information:

The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the [Private Security Industry Act 2001](#). Our main duties are: the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities; and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.

For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit www.gov.uk/sia. The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).

[10-year ban for wine investor](#)

William Mason Fine Wines Limited was incorporated in March 1997 and traded as an alcohol wholesaler from premises on Church Street, in Great Ellingham, Norfolk.

William Geoffrey Mason (54) was the director of the company before the alcohol wholesaler entered into liquidation and was wound-up in November 2020.

The company's liquidation, however, triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service, which found that for more than 18 years, William Mason caused the alcohol wholesaler to trade with a lack of commercial probity.

Investigators uncovered that William Mason Fine Wines operated a wine investment scheme, purchasing and storing wines on behalf of the company's clients.

Between 2001 and 2019, investors made payments worth £445,000 and William Mason corresponded with investors, providing stock certificates and in some cases arranging partial return of their wine or funds.

Investigators, however, found that in a majority of cases, William Mason caused the company not to purchase the wines and where wine was purchased, the company disposed of the alcohol without the agreement of the investors. At the point of liquidation, William Mason Fine Wines Limited held no wine in stock.

William Mason's ban became effective on 22 February 2022 and the disqualification prevents him from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the

permission of the court.

David Argyle, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations, said:

Several of the investors that have lost their investments were good friends with William Mason and it was this friendship that made them believe they could trust him.

10 years is a significant disqualification and sends a stark warning to directors who think they can abuse their investors that we will pursue the strictest restrictions and remove them from the corporate arena.

William Geoffrey Mason is from Wymondham, Norfolk and his date of birth is June 1967.

William Mason Fine Wines Limited (Company Registration: 03336395).

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available on GOV.UK.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[UK announces sanctions under Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime: 11 April 2022](#)

- Bosnian-Serb politicians Milorad Dodik and Zeljka Cvijanovic are sanctioned by the UK for their attempts to undermine the legitimacy and functionality of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- the designations, which include travel bans and asset freezes, are the first under the UK's Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime

- UK believes the pair are deliberately undermining the hard-won peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UK has today sanctioned Milorad Dodik, Bosnian-Serb member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state-level Presidency, and Zeljka Cvijanovic, President of the entity of Republika Srpska, for their destabilising activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The designations, which include travel bans and asset freezes, are the first under the UK's Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime.

Emboldened by Russia's undermining of the international rules-based system, both individuals have used their positions of authority to push for de facto secession of Republika Srpska – one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2 entities – in direct contravention of the country's constitution.

Milorad Dodik has driven action to withdraw Republika Srpska from key State institutions, using divisive, dangerous, nationalist rhetoric, undermining domestic and regional peace and encouraging ethnic hatred and genocide denial.

Meanwhile, in October 2021, Zeljka Cvijanovic used her office to table legislation in Republika Srpska seeking to transfer state competencies to the entity level. Cvijanovic has publicly glorified war criminals and denied the genocide at Srebrenica.

Working in coordination with the US and other like-minded partners, the Foreign Secretary hopes today's announcement will encourage other nations to apply similar restrictive measures which hold politicians to account for their destabilising and dangerous behaviour.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

These two politicians are deliberately undermining the hard won peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Encouraged by Putin, their reckless behaviour threatens stability and security across the Western Balkans.

With these tough sanctions we are showing that the enemies of peace will be held to account.

Dodik and Cvijanovic's actions and rhetoric threaten to undo 26 years of hard-won peace and stability, and undermine the General Framework Agreement for Peace (Dayton Peace Agreement), which brought hostilities to an end in 1995.

Competition launched for £12 million grant to turbocharge UK tech growth

- Funding will tackle challenges facing small tech firms and grow regional support networks to level up investment and innovations around the country
- £12 million awarded to support activity until 2025

A new government grant competition is launching to boost the growth of innovative tech start-ups and scale-ups in all corners of the country.

The £12.09 million Digital Growth Grant will focus on opening up access to skills training and advice, and providing support services to the digital and tech sector over two years.

Improving regional support networks for start ups and scale ups is a key focus for the funding, which will help spread the benefits of our world leading tech industry across the UK.

The grant will help to develop the next generation of success stories after the UK tech sector became the third globally to be valued at \$1 trillion.

There are now more than 40 unicorns – companies valued at \$1 billion – outside London and 100 regional futurecorns – businesses on track to gaining unicorn status – that are paving the way for future success across the country.

This funding will help cutting edge start ups and scale ups like these to create booming tech hubs throughout the UK and level up growth in these job and wealth-generating businesses.

Digital Minister Chris Philp said:

Start ups and scale ups are hugely important to our thriving tech sector. This funding is dedicated to growing these innovative businesses wherever they are in the country, providing the support and skills they need to succeed and create good jobs and generate wealth.

The successful applicant will play a vital role in making the UK the best place in the world to start and scale a tech business.

The successful recipient will:

- Deliver support services to the digital sector, particularly in transformative/emerging technologies These services should address key challenges faced by a wide range of companies from the seed funding stage to series A/B, their first or second round of financing;

- Grow regional support networks for tech start ups and scale ups. Activities should deliver concrete improvements in three or more areas identified in DCMS' [Regional Ecosystems report](#) as crucial to the success of the digital economy: investment, skills, innovation, infrastructure and business growth. Support should be tailored to local needs and tech specialisms, developed in partnership with local bodies.
- Ensure founders and firms can access digital entrepreneurship and investment readiness training with tailored advice to help develop their skills to start and grow a tech business. The winner will need to clearly signpost start ups and scale ups to the digital skills initiatives in private and the public sector (DCMS' local digital skills partnerships) and share information on the types of roles available in tech companies, the skills required to access these roles, and direction to low/no cost skills provisions to acquire those skills.
- And promote and raise awareness of the strength and competitiveness of the UK tech sector with the aim of boosting investor confidence and inspiring the next generation of tech workers and entrepreneurs.

The government will consult the market to help refine the grant specification before applications open later in the year.

The competition will be run this summer by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the successful organisation will receive the funding from 1st April 2023. Further details on the eligibility criteria and application process will be published in due course.

The funding for this grant has previously been awarded to Tech Nation Group Limited. DCMS will continue to provide direct grant funding to Tech Nation until March 2023.

Notes to Editors

Further [detail about this grant](#).

Interested organisations can attend one of our upcoming webinars about this grant by [registering now](#).