



HM Passport Office

Freedom of Information Team
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Edward Baker
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Reference: FOICR 53415/19

Date: 16 May 2019

Dear Mr Baker

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 23 April, in which you ask for information on signing your new UK passport.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

When a new British Passport is issued to someone it will sometimes have a photo of the persons signature copied and pasted electronically from their form to the passport (meaning that there is no need to sign the passport). While sometimes it will not have this and the person will be required to manually sign it with a pen the old fashioned way. It seems very random and both styles seem to still be used.

I am therefore requesting full details and information about this. I would like to know why a photo of the signature is sometimes electronically copied and pasted (meaning that there is no need to sign the passport). Why sometimes does this not happen and the person has to manually sign it with a pen.

I am able to disclose the following information regarding signatures on passports.

International Civil Aviation Organisation standards require Travel Documents to include a signature of the holder unless by exception. The original online channel to apply for a passport required that applicants print off and sign the declaration form and send this together with their photograph in the post to Her Majesty's Passport Office.

To improve the online application process Her Majesty's Passport Office is moving to all applications using the digital route to allow applicants to upload their photograph online and to remove the need for applicants to send in a signed declaration. The applicant is then asked to sign their passport after they receive it.

The introduction of the new style passport enabled sign after receipt to take effect from 8 October 2016. All passports issued before this date captured the signature during the application process.

Passport Adviceline: 0300 222 0000
Email us at foi@hmpo.gov.uk
Visit our website at www.gov.uk



To ensure the smooth running of the online application system it was necessary for both systems to operate as gradually more applications were dealt with by the new digital application process. The transfer to the digital route is envisioned to complete in the near future.

In some instances, however, applicants still need to send in the signed declaration as certain application types are still being dealt with using the online channel rather than the digital route. Currently the applications being dealt with by the online channel are Welsh language applications and child change of name applications.

Please see the attached links to the gov.uk website regarding the rollout of the new digital service.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/customers-to-benefit-from-online-passport-application-roll-out>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ten-minute-passport-renewal-service-extends-to-16-to-25-year-olds>

Yours sincerely

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Freedom of Information Team