



Kent County Council

Passport Application for Children in Care

Guidance and Protocol

Kent Fostering Service / Children in Care Service / Business Support Service

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Introduction

The Kent Pledge to our children and young people in care includes a promise that

‘We will get you a passport by your 16th birthday if you are legally allowed to have one – sooner if you need one to go on holidays with your carers and take part in school activities’.

We do not want any child in our care to miss out on school trips or trips abroad with their carers because they do not have a passport and so this guidance sets out principles and a clear process to help to ensure that passports can be obtained for children and young people in a timely manner.

Children Services departments are only entitled to apply for passports for a child in their care when they have parental authority (Care Order or Interim Care Order under Section 38 of the Children Act 1989). In these circumstances a passport can be applied for on behalf of the child without the need for the consent of the child’s parents or anyone else who has parental responsibility for the child.

If a child is subject to Section 20 an application cannot be made for a passport without the consent of a parent, guardian, or other person with parental responsibility. Everything must be done to obtain consent to avoid children missing out on opportunities for travel.

If the child or young person has been born after 31.12.82, rules now apply. The Passport Office needs to establish if the child or young person is a British citizen and if not whether they are eligible for British citizenship. The Passport Office checks if the child or young person is eligible through their parents being British Citizens or settled in the UK at the time of birth. This means that the Passport Office requires the Local Authority to supply documentary evidence e.g., parents’ birth certificates or passports. If a child or young person is not British, advice from the Passport Office is needed on a case-by-case basis.

Guiding Principles

Applications for passports must be made on a proactive not reactive basis (i.e., not simply in response to a holiday being booked).

As soon as a decision regarding long-term care has been made in Court or at a Child in Care Review (for those children S20 accommodated), a passport application must be made.

Fast track applications should be made as a last resort where there is a risk of there not being enough time for the application process. A fast-track application cannot be made if an application is already underway. In these exceptional circumstances the foster carer/s will usually be asked to undertake the face-to-face visit to the passport office with the required documents (provided by the child’s social worker).

The application process for a new passport and renewals must be monitored and tracked by Business Support (i.e. when application made, reference number, any

follow up enquiries, when received and when sent to carer). This will be alongside progress recording in the child's case notes and on their Liberi Identity Tab. The Management Information Intelligence Unit can report from the Identity Tab.

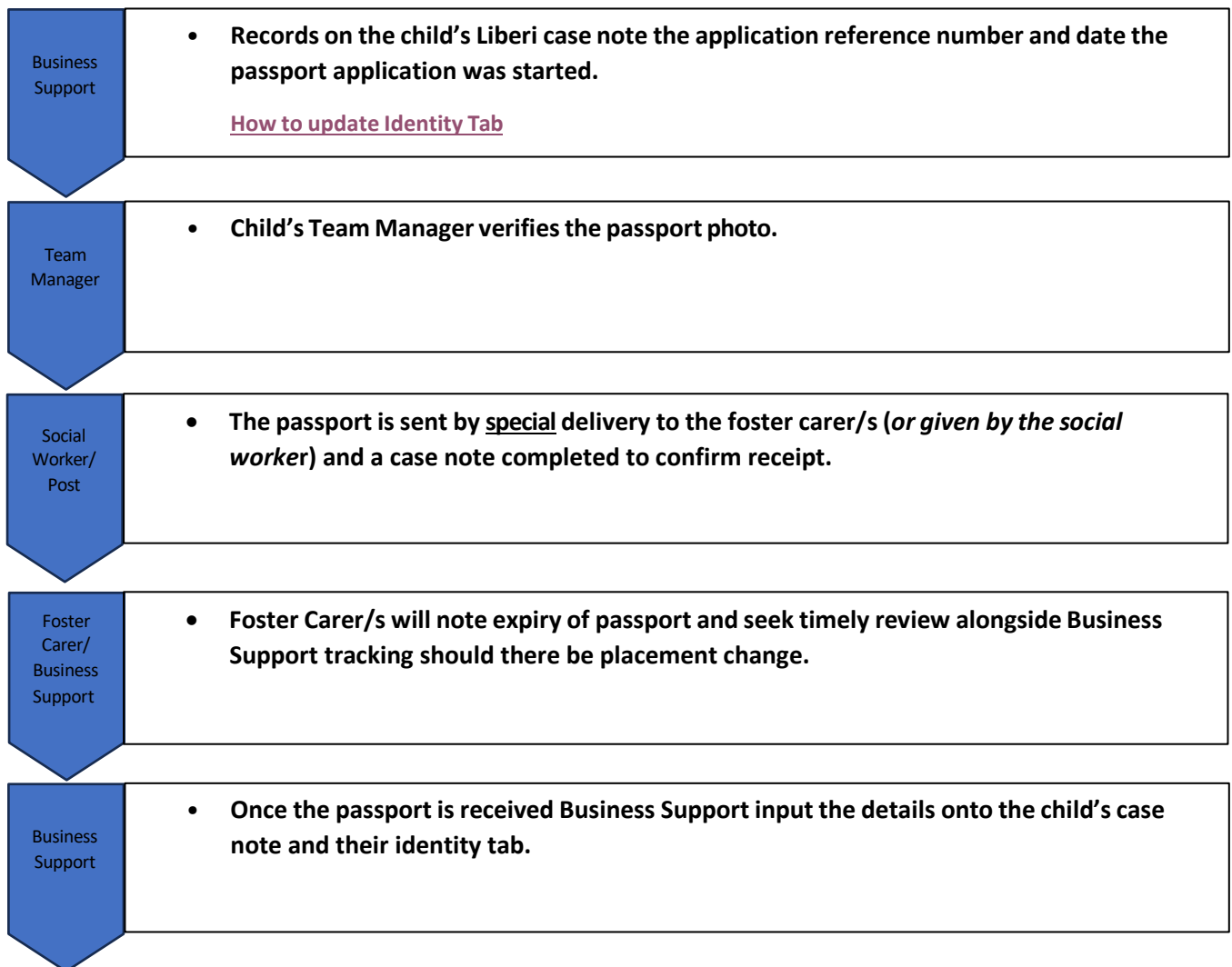
Independent Reviewing Officers will ensure oversight of young people obtaining their passports through monitoring in the Child in Care Review and will escalate if needed.

Ongoing communication with the Passport Office is needed to ensure they have the information they need and there is no delay. Passport Office staff may not be fully familiar with the processes for children in care or processes may change slightly so polite reminders can help. This is especially important if there are any complicating factors such as name changes. We do not want the application to be closed for any reason.

Teams will have a standard letter providing proof of legal status and Service Manager consent to the passport application.

Process

Social Worker/ Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtains a copy of the child/young person's birth certificate as soon as they enter care, a copy is uploaded to the child/young person's Liberi record and details entered in their identity tab. Birth Certificate Websites
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uploads all supporting documents for the passport application to the child's Liberi record and secures originals in the safe. This is essential to avoid documents being misplaced or lost track of with changes in staff.• Online Passport Application Paper Passport Application Letter to accompany passport
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify children who will need passports during the coming year and initiate the application, this can be done by requesting a report from MIU (every three months).
Social Worker/ Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request Foster Carer/s to provide a photograph of the child that meets with passport requirements.



Useful Links

Guidance notes for Local Authorities Children's Services Department when applying for passports on behalf of Children May 2020 :[looked after children govuk.pdf](#)

Guidance for applying for a passport for your child:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-a-child-passport/adopted-fostered-children>

You must [contact the Passport Adviceline](#) if you want a passport for a child who is in care. This includes a child you're fostering. Contact the advice line if you are not sure what documents you need or if your circumstances are more complicated.

Passport Adviceline
Telephone: 0300 222 0000