

NO2ID Public Information: Passports

What you need to know if you are a British passport holder.

1. Passports will change soon in order to force you to have a government ID card...

On March 30th last year, the Identity Cards Act 2006 became law. Among other things this lets the Home Office turn your passport into a 'designated document' for its ID card scheme.

That means that as soon as it can—maybe in 2008 or 2009, but possibly before—the new 'UK Identity & Passport Service' (UKIPS) will *refuse* to renew your passport unless you attend an official interview and agree to be fingerprinted and give a wide range of personal information for the Home Office's 'National Identity Register' database(s).

2. ...and a government dossier for life

The National Identity Register (NIR) will be the biggest store of personal data in the world. And once you are on it, you are on it *for life*. You will be required to update any details about you that change for the official record, or be fined. They want to make sure they know where you live.

Every use of your passport will be recorded on the NIR—when you travel *and* whenever you use it to verify your identity, say at the bank or to get a job. That information may be seen by police, tax, housing, and benefits officials and thousands of other Government agencies. It may even be checked by private companies.

3. They will say it will make your life easier

The Home Office will try to issue you with an ID card, too. You will be charged for the card whether you want it or not, but taking it will make it *much* easier for the Home Office to track you, by noting every time you use it.

There's no gain to you in having an electronic policeman in your pocket, checking on everything you do. There's no gain in being fingerprinted like a criminal and made to prove you are yourself to officials. There's no situation in which you might need an ID card that you couldn't use your passport. But it is so useful to the Government that they'll try to sneak it in when you get a new passport.

4. But for now you have a choice

The current rule is that ***you can renew your passport at any time***. NO2ID got the Home Office to make its policy clear, and you can read it on the new UKIPS website:

*"You do not have to wait until your passport is nearly expired to renew it, but we can add no more than 9 months unexpired validity from the old passport to the new one. **You can renew your passport whenever you wish**, but you must pay the full fee and no refund can be given for the unexpired validity in the old passport".*

In other words, you can buy 10 years' freedom from compulsory Registration on the NIR for just £66, right now. You may get slightly longer than 10 years on your new passport—but that's entirely up to the Home Office.

The government says the price will rise to at least £93 when it starts issuing ID cards. But the way you can get a passport will begin changing from early 2007. That's why we suggest you act now and "renew for freedom".

5. What about international passport rules?

The Government often claims that it has to build the NIR and take 'biometrics' (eye scans and fingerprints) from everyone to comply with 'international obligations'. But it doesn't—neither the US nor the EU requires more than two fingerprints and a photo. And they only need to be on the passport, no central database is necessary.

The United Kingdom Identity & Passport Service is now issuing 'biometric' passports with radio frequency (RFID) microchips in them. These chips store and transmit the information on the photo page of your passport, and some data taken from your photograph. That is already enough to meet international rules. It's worth noting that UKIPS has confirmed that you will *still be able to travel* should the chip in your passport develop a fault.

6. Tell the Government that you refuse to have your life nationalised

NO2ID and a growing list of other organisations are still recommending that you renew your passport—i.e. send your renewal form in straight away.

renew for freedom • renew your passport

If you care about your privacy, civil liberties or the creeping intrusion of the state into the personal life of you and your family, then now is the time to act.

7. Get some privacy insurance

The old Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, openly sneered at the British public, calling anyone who chooses to opt out of the ID scheme "foolish". This was just a hustle. Once you are on the system there is no way back. The Government didn't ask you; it doesn't want any awkward questions now; if you don't agree with it you are 'a fool'. But what's so foolish about spending a little money and time *now* to buy yourself ten years' freedom?

Government computer systems are often disastrous. The NIR would expose you and your personal data to all sorts of risks, untold levels of bureaucracy and punitive charges. Even if it might be a *good* thing, then why be a guinea pig? Keeping your privacy for a few years to see what happens is just common sense.

8. What happened to 'Renew in May'?

Our 'renew in May' launch in 2006 was timed so that people would get their passports back in time for the summer holidays. The new 'UKIPS' agency was expanding its staff rapidly and the old Passport Service at peak capacity could issue around 300,000 passports in a month. We neither intended nor expected to disrupt anyone's chance to renew their passport.

By acting together, we created a 'spike' in renewals of some 13-15% in May—i.e. tens of thousands of people demonstrated their objection in a way that could neither be missed, nor denied. By continuing the campaign, our coordinated resistance will show in passport statistics that forcing this surveillance scheme on the British people will not be easy.

9. Before they change the rules to stop you

If you wait much longer, the Home Office could change the rules or raise the price of the passport again.

Plans to build up the ID scheme will increase the future cost of a passport. The Identity Agency will make all first time adult passport applicants attend an 'identity authentication interview' from early 2007 (pushed back from October 2006). New forms for first passport applicants have already been prepared, that require much more information about you, where you live and your previous addresses, too. It is likely that this will be extended

to everyone in time. The much greater information collected could be used to make a start on the NIR. So it is best to renew before the introduction of any more new forms.

Please do it now. While you still have a choice.

10. How do I renew my passport?

Just send in a completed application form with two identical passport photos, your old passport and the appropriate fee. If you want your new passport back in less than the standard 2 to 4 weeks, you will need to apply in person at one of the Passport Offices, using either the 'Fast Track' (one week) or 'Premium' (one day) service. This will cost extra, but both services will be withdrawn completely for first time applicants in 2007.

For more details, or to download an application form, you can visit the UK Passport website: http://www.passport.gov.uk/passport_online.asp Or call the Passport Adviceline on 0870 521 0410, or pick up a form in your local Post Office.

NO2ID
Box 412
19-21 Crawford Street
London W1H 1PJ
e-mail: office@no2id.net
telephone: 07005 800 651

What is NO2ID?

NO2ID is the national campaign against ID cards and the National Identity Register. It is not affiliated to any political party and is funded almost entirely by voluntary donations.

Founded in 2004, we aim to bring together people and organisations from all sections of the community in opposition to the Government's plan for compulsory registration, fingerprinting and lifelong tracking of all UK residents by means of a centralised 'identity' database.

We want the public to be properly informed about a scheme that has kept invisible by spin, but that aims to transform all our lives.

NO2ID is supported by over 70 organisations, including unions, political parties, and local councils—and more than 30,000 individuals. We already have around 100 local groups across the UK. You can find the nearest one on our website:

<http://www.no2id.net/localGroups/>

renew for freedom • renew your passport