

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, 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 is can—maybe in 2008 or 2009, but possibly before—the new 'United Kingdom 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 a "National Identity Register" database.

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 £51, 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 change from as early as October. 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 new United Kingdom *Identity & Passport Service* is issuing two types of passport now. It won't tell you which type you'll get when you renew, but the 'biometric' ones already have microchips in them. These chips store and transmit the information on the back page of your passport, and some data taken from your photograph. That is already enough to meet international rules.

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

NO2ID and others are asking that you renew your passport in **May 2006**—i.e. send your renewal form in at any point between 1st May 2006 and 31st May 2006.

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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 Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, has already started sneering, calling anyone who opts out of the ID scheme "foolish". This is 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 them 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. Why May 2006?

By acting together, we can show we do object in a way that will not be missed. Not only will you protect yourself from registration for a while, but coordinated resistance will show in passport statistics that forcing this surveillance scheme on the British people will not be easy.

We are also being practical. If you renew in May, you should still get your passport back in time to go on holiday or travel abroad over the summer. We do not intend to disrupt anyone's chance to renew their passport. The old Passport Service at peak capacity could issue around 300,000 passports in a month. The new 'UKIPS' agency is already expanding its staff rapidly.

9. Before they change the rules to stop you

If we wait until much later in the year, the Home Office could change the rules or raise the price of the passport.

There are other plans to build up the ID scheme that 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 October 2006. New forms for new passport applicants have already been introduced, 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 4 to 6 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.

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 No. 412
78 Marylebone High St
London W1U 5AP

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/>

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