



Online View Digital Image Service Guide v6

1. Background

The General Register Office (GRO) continues to review the services offered to customers. We can now offer an Online View digital image service which enables GRO to provide copies of historic birth and death certified register entries in alternative formats.

What is the Online View digital image service?

The Online View digital image service provides a low-cost, digital alternative for customers wishing to access certified copies of historic birth and death register entries in England and Wales. You will be able to apply for an individual digital image (in JPEG format*) online.

* A JPEG is a format for compressing image files on the internet created by the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG).

2. Records available

The following records are available through the Online View digital image service:

- Birth entries from 1837 up to 100 years ago
- Death entries from 1837 to 1957

3. Making an application

The Online View digital image service can be accessed via [Order a copy of a birth, death or marriage certificate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/order-a-copy-of-a-birth-death-or-marriage-certificate) or directly through the GRO application service link here:

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>.

Customers should note that this service is only available via an online application. You will need to provide the full GRO index reference number for the record that you wish to apply for. The GRO index reference number can be found in the GRO Online Index. You will be prompted to supply details of the event as you complete the online application form.

4. Viewing your Online View digital image

Once your purchase is complete you will be taken to a page showing details of your order. The first table shows the Order Reference Details and the second shows the Order Application Summary Details. To view the digital image, you have purchased on your personal computer, laptop, or mobile device, click on the **View Image Online** link in the Order Application Summary Details table (see image below).

Name	Item Type	Quantity	Delivery Method	Despatch Date (Est)	Customer Ref
- SMITH	E/W Birth Digital Image	1	View Image Online	11 Jun 2021	

The digital image will be displayed in JPEG format, which can be viewed, printed, or downloaded by the applicant for up to 3 months from the date of placing the order, at which point it will be deleted. **There will be no warning regarding the deletion**, but you may download a copy of the image if you wish to retain it for longer than 3 months.

You can view previous orders by clicking on the **My Orders** link of your GRO account and then by either entering the COL number of a specific order or searching for them by date (see image below).

My Recent Order Details

COL Number: COL /

Start Date: (DD/MM/YYYY) End Date: (DD/MM/YYYY)

Order Reference Number: COL126086/2021		Order Submitted: 24 Mar 2021 08:42			
Your Reference:		Order Amount: £2.50			
Name(s)	Item Type	Qty Price	Your Reference	Despatch Date (Est)	
JONES, -	E/W Birth Digital Image	1 £2.50		24 Mar 2021	<input type="button" value="View Details"/>

Please click on Item Type
E/W Birth Digital Image
link to **view the image**

5. What you will see on the digital image of the record

The digital image is **an exact copy** of the registration entry as provided in the register. As such, the image will not show all the details currently available on a certificate. An example of a digital image of a registration entry is shown below.

Columns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and Where Born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and Surname of Father	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother	Rank or Profession of Father	Signature, Description and Resident of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar	Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth
	Twentieth of September 1846 at 11/9 High St. London W. 6 o'clock A.M.			John Robert Jones	Anne Jones formerly Evans	Labourer	The mark of a Father Robert Jones formerly Evans	Twentieth of September 1846	Thomas Jones Registrar	

6. Troubleshooting

6.1 Image is of a poor quality and cannot be read clearly

The image available to view is an exact copy of the certified register entry and is not manipulated in any way, other than to isolate it from other entries on the same page in the register. As these are historic records it is possible that for some records the handwriting style may make the record difficult to read or decipher. However, it is a true copy of the entry.

6.2 Image is misaligned or slanted

The image may be misaligned or slanted due to the way it was originally scanned. We have made every effort to ensure an entry is shown in full.

6.3 Image contains writing above/below the entry requested

The way in which the original register page was captured digitally may be misaligned, which means that the image itself may contain partial details of another entry (although this will not identify the other entry). We have made every effort to ensure that the entry you requested is shown in full.

6.4 Image seems to be missing the usual page headings, such as Registration District, etc

As the image is of the individual entry, the page headings are not shown. However, these will have been shown in the GRO Online Index when locating the index reference as part of the application process.

6.5 Identification of an error in the GRO indexes

You can report this by visiting the Online Ordering Service home page at: <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>. Click on the **Data Quality & Error Reporting** link on the right-hand side of the page and follow the

instructions. Your feedback will help us to improve the quality of the information available.

6.6 Online View digital image states 'Image not currently available for this entry, the record may alternatively be ordered as a certificate or PDF. Please refer to the Q&A section below.'

If you complete your search for the Online View digital image order and the message above is revealed, this means that the image is not held within the Online View digital image data store. However, you may still be able to order this as a certificate or PDF.

6.7 There is no option to click on the 'digital image' button

Not all records are available to view as a digital image and when this is the case the digital image is not displayed. You still have the option to order a certificate or PDF of your record.

7. Q&A

Q1. Isn't this the same as the PDF service?

No. the Online View digital image service enables a customer to have immediate access to the image of the record. The image is automatically processed upon payment. The PDF service has a five-day turnaround timescale and includes the page heading detailing the Year, the Registration District, Sub-District and County from the register, which is not shown in the Online View digital image as stated at 6.4 above.

Q2. Can the image be used as evidence instead of a certificate for official purposes?

No. The image has no "evidential" value and a paper certified copy (certificate) is still required for official purposes such as applying for a passport or driving licence, or where required to give notice of marriage/civil partnership.

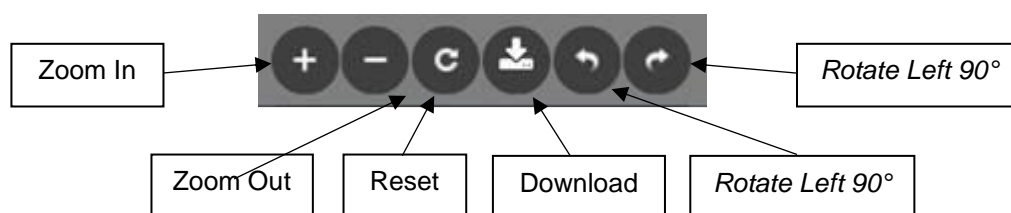
Q3. What information is shown in the image?

The example below reflects what you will see in your image. The headings explain each column.

Columns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and Where Born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and Surname of Father	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother	Rank or Profession of Father	Signature, Description and Resident of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar	Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth
20	August 25 th 1871 Oxford			James Smith	Elizabeth Bristow	Labourer	the X mark of Elizabeth Smith mother of the child Oxford	August 31 st	Thomas H. Smith Registrar	

Q4. How do I download digital images (JPEGs)?

You can download a copy of the digital image using the fourth option on the menu bar shown when viewing an image (see image below), or by using the context menu. This can be accessed by right-clicking on the image, pressing and holding, or by pressing with two fingers, dependant on the browser and device being used.



Q5. Will I still be able to order a PDF or certificate?

Yes. Both these formats will continue to be available as they are now, the Online View digital image is an additional product. You will be able to add each product to your basket as required.

Q6. Does the Online View digital image service cover any other records?

No. Not all civil registration records are held in a digital format. The Online View digital image service will only make the following records available for customers:

Birth entries from 1837 up to 100 years ago and Death entries from 1837 to 1957.

Q7. How much does an Online View digital image cost?

The cost of the service will be £2.50 for each digital image.

Q8. Why is it so much cheaper than a PDF image?

This is a self-service product which requires no manual intervention and as a result this is reflected in the cost of the product.

Q9. What if I don't have the GRO Index reference?

As part of the application process, you will automatically be directed to the GRO Index to obtain the reference that you will need to proceed.

Q10. What if I already have the GRO index reference – can I use that and bypass the search?

No. The service can only be accessed by identifying the GRO index reference from the GRO Online Index held on the system as part of the application process. This ensures that the image requested is available to view in a digital format (as not all records are).

Q11. Will I get a refund if you are unable to provide a record as an Online View digital image?

If we are unable to provide you with access to a particular record, then you will not be able to order a digital image and will not be charged for this service.

Q12. Does this mean the payment is not taken until I know there is a record?

The payment is taken if the image is identified in a digital format at the application stage and is held in your basket. If the digital image is not available for this entry, no payment will be taken.

Q13. What if I ordered the wrong image or entered the incorrect GRO index reference?

If you have provided incorrect information, the record that your application relates to will be provided if there is a corresponding image available. No refund will be issued.

Q14. Can I amend or cancel my Online View digital image application?

You will **not** be able to amend or cancel your Online View digital image application once it has been submitted.

Q15. When will I be able to see other records (e.g. historic marriages) and more modern records in this format (or PDF)?

There are no plans to release these records at this time.

Q16. Are the Online View digital images subject to any copyright?

No. You may copy, publish, or use the information included in the JPEG image.

Q17. Can I obtain this service from local register offices?

No. The power to issue digital images of records only applies to certified copies of entries sent to the Registrar General for England and Wales and held at the GRO.

Q18. If I need help after I've ordered, who do I contact?

For help with your order please complete the [online form](#) . Please ensure that you have your COL number available. This is your reference number (see section 4 above).

Q19. Are there any plans to increase the search fields when searching the online indexes page, e.g. increase the 3-year search field, introduce wildcards in the surname?

There are no plans to change any of the search criteria at the moment.

Q20. Why is there a difference in search fields between the historic and the modern records?

The purpose of the GRO Online Indexes is to provide a searchable index for customers. We recognise information regarding historic records can be less reliable and to reflect that, in addition to 'Exact Matches', we have provided 3 search algorithms to assist with locating the correct entry. However, for modern records, as well as the customer journey, we must also consider public protection measures to protect the data contained within the indexes as, despite these being public records, they relate to people who (in most cases) are still alive. Therefore, GRO has removed one of the search algorithms (i.e. 'Similar Sounding Variations') for modern records to continue to provide a searchable index, which takes into account public protection measures and stops short of it being a browsable index.

Q21. Why is age at death shown in some but not all death indexes?

Over the years the format of the indexes has changed several times. In addition, GRO has taken decisions to provide additional or redacted information to that which is available on the microfiche index to help or protect the public. Age at death is shown in "historic" indexes because it was captured as part of the microfiche during that time. If it is missing this is because the information was not recorded or was unclear/illegible. For modern records, the information in the microfiche changed and so rather than age of death, the index will provide the year of birth.

Q22. There is information missing from my image. Can I get the information?

This is a self-service product with no manual intervention. We are unable to manipulate the image you receive as part of this service. Complete this [online form](#), for investigation into potential reimbursement for your digital image. The information can only be obtained by ordering a certificate or PDF as these can be manipulated to include the missing information.