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Dear Cody C

Thank you for your request for information regarding passport referees and in particular your reference to instances where a person has been able to unlawfully obtain a New Zealand passport due to failures in the referee/witness checking process.

The requirements for who can act as a referee/witness can be found on our website:

<https://www.passports.govt.nz/Adult-passport-renewals---referee-and-photos>

<https://www.passports.govt.nz/New-adult-passport---witness-and-photos>

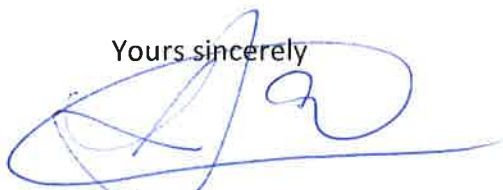
<https://www.passports.govt.nz/Child-passport---witness-and-photos>

In 2012 the passport processing system was upgraded so that a number of automated tests can be carried out on a passport application. These tests include the referee/witness and if any of these tests fail, then a passport officer will carry out a manual check and validation for the referee/witness.

The Department is always keen to receive feedback to enable us to improve our services and processes so if you are able to provide any specific examples relating to failures in the referee/witness process, we would be interested in receiving them.

However, any specific information on individual cases relating to fraudulently obtained passports will not be discussed in any detail.

Yours sincerely



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