



British  
High Commission  
Singapore

Are you or your children dual nationals or  
Permanent Residents in Singapore?

**National Service –  
Know Your Obligations**



It is important to understand how Singapore's National Service obligations might affect your family. Singapore does not recognise dual nationality beyond the age of 21 years. All male citizens of Singapore are liable for National Service. All male children granted Permanent Resident status as part of their parents' Permanent Resident application are also liable for National Service. National Service is normally served for a period of two years from the age of 18 years, with additional reservist requirements lasting until the age of 40 years (50 in the case of officers).

From the age of 13 years, male Singaporean citizens and Permanent Residents must apply for an exit permit to travel outside Singapore for three months or more. On reaching 16 ½ years of age, all male Singaporean citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents must register for National Service.

A minor citizen (defined as below the age of 21 years) is allowed to hold dual citizenship until the age of 21 years, whereupon they are required to relinquish either one of their citizenships. A minor citizen can't renounce their Singaporean citizenship when they are below 21 years of age and their parents cannot renounce their child's Singaporean citizenship on their behalf.

If a male child holds dual citizenship and wishes to renounce his Singaporean citizenship without performing National Service, it may be possible for his parents to ask the Singapore

Government to first defer his National Service until he reaches 21 years of age, depending on the specific circumstances. In 2006 the then Minister of Defence told the Singaporean Parliament that “only those who have emigrated at a young age and have not enjoyed substantial socio-economic benefits are allowed to renounce their citizenship without serving National Service.” These continue to be the measures against which requests for exemption are tested, and some British families have found it difficult to frame their appeals in the absence of more specific guidelines.

**Please be aware that the British Government has no authority to change decisions made under Singapore law with regard to National Service matters.** It is important that you make yourself aware of the laws regarding National Service in Singapore and consider carefully their implications when making life choices that may affect your family in the future.

Specific questions regarding National Service can be put to Singapore’s Central Manpower base: [contact@ns.sg](mailto:contact@ns.sg)

For further information see the following websites:

Immigration and Checkpoints Authority  
[www.ica.gov.sg](http://www.ica.gov.sg)

Ministry of Defence (MINDEF)  
[www.mindef.gov.sg](http://www.mindef.gov.sg)



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**CONSULAR**

[www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-singapore](http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-singapore)

**OFFICE**

Email: [enquiries.singapore@fco.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.singapore@fco.gov.uk)

**WEBSITE**

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