



Home Office

## GUIDE UKF

### Registration as a British citizen

Persons born to British fathers and whose parents were not married

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# Introduction

Becoming a British citizen is a significant life event. It allows you to apply for a British citizen passport and gives you the opportunity to participate more fully in the life of your local community.

This guide is for adults (18 or over) or parents/guardians completing the form on behalf of a child under 18. References to 'you' refer to the applicant, unless otherwise stated.

You will need to show that you satisfy a number of requirements set out in British nationality law. This guide aims to help you to make a successful application. It will also help you to prepare for British citizenship. It tells you what information to put into each section of the application form and which documents you need to supply.

Before continuing with your application, you should be aware that under the nationality laws of some countries a person will automatically lose their nationality if they become a citizen of another country. If you have any questions about this, you should ask the authorities of the country of which you are a citizen before making your application. If the country of which you are currently a citizen continues to recognise you as one of its citizens, you may continue to be subject to the duties of citizens of that country when you are in its territory. This may include obligations to undergo military service.

The law covering registration is contained in the British Nationality Act 1981 and the regulations made under it. This guide is intended to help you to apply. It is not a complete statement of the law or policy. Other information about citizenship and immigration is available on our [website](#).

For the purposes of this guide;

United Kingdom means:

- England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man; and
- the Republic of Ireland at a time when it formed part of the United Kingdom (that is to say, before 31 March 1922); and
- (in relation to birth) a ship or aircraft registered in the United Kingdom or an unregistered ship or aircraft of the Government of the United Kingdom.

Natural father means a man who is your biological parent.

Please note: If you are not honest about the information you provide, and you are registered on the basis of incorrect or fraudulent information you will be liable to have

British citizenship taken away (deprivation) and you may be prosecuted. It is a criminal offence to make a false declaration knowing that it is untrue.

## OISC and Immigration Advice

You may, if you wish, use the services of an agent such as a solicitor or other competent adviser to help you with your application.

Immigration or nationality advisers acting in the course of business (whether paid or unpaid) are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), an independent body. The provision of such advice is prohibited unless a person works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the OISC or is authorised to practise (like solicitors and barristers) by a designated professional body. Certain categories (for example public health bodies) are exempted from the regulatory scheme by Ministerial Order. It is a criminal offence to provide advice or services in contravention of the regulatory scheme. Further information about the regulatory scheme and a full list of OISC regulated advisers is available on its website at [www.oisc.gov.uk](http://www.oisc.gov.uk).

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## Applying to register as a British citizen if you were born to a British father (and your parents are not married)

**1. Check you meet and understand the requirements before you submit your application. You will be eligible to apply for British citizenship if:**



You would have become a British citizen automatically if your mother had been married to your natural (biological) father.



You have never been a British Citizen.

**2. Submit your application and pay the required fee**



You must apply by post using Form UKF. You must pay the [ceremony fee](#).

**3. Enrol your biometric details for identity verification purposes**



We will contact you with further instructions on how to enrol your biometrics after you submit your application.



**4. Wait for a decision**

Your application will be considered by the Home Office. We will write to you if we need more details about your application. If you are in the UK, you must have valid permission to be in the UK whilst waiting for your decision.



**5. Attend a citizenship ceremony**

You will make an oath of allegiance and pledge promising to respect the rights, freedoms and laws of the UK. You will receive your British citizen certificate.



**6. Return your Biometric residence permit (if you have one) within five working days of getting your certificate of British citizenship**

To travel outside the UK after getting British citizenship, you'll need to apply for a British passport or a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode. You cannot use your naturalisation certificate to travel.

# The requirements you must meet

You will be entitled to registration if you meet all the requirements below:

- You would have become a British citizen automatically if your mother had been married to your natural (biological) father
- You have never been a British citizen

The law has been written in this way to ensure that those who would have become British citizens automatically, had their parents been married, now have an opportunity to become British citizens by registration.

- Some countries (such as the USA or New Zealand) do not make a distinction between whether a child's parents are married or not. Where the parents are not married a person may have a claim to British citizenship through their father if he was domiciled in a country whose laws (at the time of the birth) did not distinguish between children of married or unmarried parents. Our guidance on this is published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

There is no registration option for people who would have become British Overseas citizens 1 January 1983 had their parents been married and who, as a result, might now have had entitlements to British citizenship under other provisions.

There is a registration route for people who would have become British Dependent Territories citizens on 1 January 1983 had their parents been married – Please see BOTC F guidance.

## How someone became a British citizen

You would have become a British citizen (if your parents had been married) if:  
You were born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 and your father was a British citizen or settled in the UK at the time of the birth.

Or

You were born outside the UK and you would have been able to become a British citizen through your father. A man could normally pass on British citizenship if he was born in the UK, or registered or naturalised there. Some fathers who were born outside the UK could also pass on British citizenship, for example if they were in Crown service at the time of the birth.

## How someone became a British citizen father

- Until 1983, people born in the UK or a place which was a British territory were normally citizens of the UK and Colonies (CUKCs) (and called British

subjects before 1949). A person could also become a CUKC through registration or naturalisation.

- When a territory became independent, most people who were CUKCs through their connection with that territory lost their CUKC status and acquired citizenship of the newly independent country. However, if someone did not become a citizen of the new country, they retained CUKC status.
- The concept of the right of abode (ROA) was introduced within the Immigration Act 1971 and came into effect on 1 January 1973. This was held by citizens of the UK and Colonies who:
  - were born, naturalised, registered or adopted in the UK
  - had a parent who was born, naturalised, registered or adopted in the UK
  - had a parent with the right of abode and a grandparent who was born, naturalised, registered or adopted in the UK
  - had completed a period of residence in the UK
- On 1 January 1983, CUKCs with the right of abode in the UK became British citizens.

### How someone became a settled father

For nationality purposes and for the purposes of registering as a British citizen, settled refers to someone resident in the UK and without any immigration limits on the time for which they can remain there. Many people demonstrate this by having indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

### How someone missed out on British nationality

- Before 1 July 2006 unmarried fathers were not allowed to pass on nationality.
- A child born outside the UK to an unmarried father before that date could not acquire British citizenship from him.
- By contrast, a married father could pass on British citizenship to a child born overseas.
- Up until 1983 this did not affect children born in the UK as, at that time, being born in the UK was sufficient to become a British citizen.
- However, from 1983 a child born in the UK only became a British citizen if, at the time of their birth, their parent was a British citizen themselves or settled in the UK.
- Until 1 July 2006 an unmarried British citizen father or an unmarried settled father was not classed as a child's parent for nationality purposes.
- By contrast, the child would be a British citizen if their natural father was a married British citizen father or a married settled father.
- In addition, there are registration provisions which allow a child born from 1983 to register as a British citizen where their parent becomes a British citizen or settled after they are born.
- Until 1 July 2006, these registration provisions could not be used by a child whose unmarried father's status had changed.

- By contrast, the child would be able to register if it was the status of their married father which had changed in this way. (If you could have applied if your parents had been married, you can apply using [Form MN1](#)).

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# Who can register?

You will generally be able to register under these provisions if you were:

- Born outside of the UK before 1 July 2006 and your unmarried father was born, naturalised or registered in the UK before you were born
- Born inside the UK on or after 1 January 1983 and before 1 July 2006, and your unmarried father was born, naturalised or registered in the UK before you were born, or was settled in the UK when you were born
- Born on or after 1st July 2006, but you did not become a British citizen because your mother was married to someone other than your natural father

(If you were born before 1 July 2006, and your unmarried father became a British citizen or settled after you were born, but existing registration provisions cannot be used because your parents were not married, you can apply using [Form MN1](#)).

## Example:

Lucy was born in the UK in 2000. Her father was a British citizen and also born in the UK. He was not married to Lucy's mother. If unmarried fathers had been able to pass on citizenship in 2000, Lucy would have become a British citizen at birth. She can apply using Form UKF.

## Example:

George was born in the USA in 1969. His father was born in the UK. His father did not marry George's American born mother. If unmarried fathers had been able to pass on citizenship in 1969, George would have become a CUKC at birth and then a British citizen. He can apply using the Form UKF.

To apply under these provisions, you will need to prove your relationship with your natural father. To do this you will have to provide evidence of paternity.

If you can provide genuine and reliable documents, we will recognise a man as your father in the following circumstances:

- He is named as your father on a birth certificate issued within one year of your birth, or
- A DNA test report shows he is your father, or
- A court has ruled that he is your father, or
- You can provide other evidence that is sufficient to establish paternity.

If your parents married after your birth you may already be a British citizen. This will depend on which country's laws applied to your father at the time of the marriage. Some countries' laws – including the UK - state that where a child's parents marry after the child's birth, the child will be treated as if the parents had been married at

the time of the birth. If your parents married after your birth you may wish to seek the advice of an [immigration adviser](#).

## Biometric Enrolment

As part of your application, all applicants are required to enrol their biometric details for the purpose of identity verification.

Children under 18 applying for registration as a British citizen must also enrol their biometric details. Children under the age of 5 do not need to provide fingerprints but must have a digital photograph taken of their face.

Up to the age of 5 the Home Office only requires a digitised image of the child's face, although the regulation does not prevent fingerprints being recorded from children aged less than 5 years. There is no upper age limit for biometric information to be taken.

Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at their biometric enrolment appointment.

Where you give your biometric information depends on how you're making your visa or immigration application. You'll be told where to go after you've applied.

Your application may be rejected as invalid if you do not enrol your biometrics when requested. For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit the following section of our website:  
<http://www.gov.uk/biometricresidence-permits>.

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# Documents

This section tells you the sort of documents you will need to provide to consider your application. We cannot consider your application unless we have supporting documents. If you do not submit your application with supporting documents and the application will be returned to you unprocessed.

## Documentary evidence that (had the law been different) you would have become a British citizen

You will need to provide the following documents:

- Your passport
- Your full birth certificate and either:
  - Your father's full birth certificate, or
  - Your father's certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British citizen or as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (or, before 1 January 1949, as a British subject), or
  - Papers showing your father's legal adoption, or
  - Your father's citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or British citizen passport showing he had that status before you were born, or
  - Evidence that he was settled in the UK at the time of your birth, if you were born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983.

## Proof of Paternity

If your natural father was named as your father on a birth certificate issued within 12 months of your birth and you were born before 10 September 2015, this will be acceptable evidence of paternity. If not, you must provide other evidence. This could include:

- DNA test reports. We will accept test results from a company that is on the [government's accredited list](#), or
- a court order, or
- other evidence that proves you are related as claimed.

Please provide any translations if these are applicable.

If the person applying is under 18, the consent of all those with parental responsibility should be provided.

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# The citizenship you will acquire

If you would have become a British citizen by descent had your parents been married, you will be a British citizen by descent after registration under this provision. British citizens by descent cannot normally pass on British citizenship to any children born outside British territory.

If you are resident in the United Kingdom, and 18 or over, you may therefore wish to consider applying for naturalisation, as that would give British citizenship otherwise than by descent which would allow you to be able to pass on that citizenship to any children born abroad to you in the future.

Further information about the requirements for citizenship can be obtained on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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# Citizenship ceremonies

If your application is successful and you are living in the UK, you will be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony. You will receive an invitation from the Home Office and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony. We expect you to arrange to attend a ceremony within 3 months of receiving your invitation otherwise it will expire and you will have to reapply for registration.

If you are living abroad, your citizenship ceremony will take place at the embassy or consulate in the country you are living in.

If you do not attend the ceremony within 3 months without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused.

At the ceremony, you will be asked to affirm or swear an oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. Following this you will be presented with your certificate of registration as a British citizen. Making the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge at a citizenship ceremony is a legal requirement, and the point at which you will become a British citizen.

Successful applicants are rarely exempt from ceremonies and then only if they are physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate to attend. If you wish to be exempt you should say why and provide supporting evidence.

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