



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Information Note: Changes to notarial and documentary services

Following a review of the consular services offered by our Embassies and Consulates overseas, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made changes to the notarial and documentary services offered at its Missions overseas. This includes the British Embassy in Berlin, Consulate-Generals in Munich and Dusseldorf and all Honorary Consulates.

In the past, British Embassies and Consulates have been able to assist with various notarial and documentary services. This included the following services:

- Witnessing signatures;
- Taking oaths;
- Administering affirmations or statutory declarations;
- Making certified copies of documents;
- Preparing other consular certificates (e.g. No Objection letters).

Following the recent review, our Missions overseas are working to identify alternative providers who can offer these services instead. Where private sector alternatives exist (e.g. notary publics, lawyers, solicitors etc) our staff will no longer provide these services and will re-direct customers to an alternative provider.

In addition, from 01 October 2013 we will stop providing the above services to Commonwealth citizens in countries where they do not have any diplomatic representation, unless there is a clear UK connection to the document or service. We will also stop providing the following services to those citizens, again unless there is a clear UK connection to the document or service:

- Legalising Commonwealth documents;
- Preparing Certificates of No Impediment or similar documents.

Finally, our Missions are no longer able to confirm residency details for British nationals, as we do not hold this type of information.

These changes are part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 2013-2016 Consular Strategy, which was launched by the British Foreign Secretary in April 2013. As the strategy makes clear, Consular Excellence is about high-quality, modern, cost-effective and efficient support to British nationals overseas. The changes will help make better use of our scarce resources and modernise the way we deliver these services. This will allow us to concentrate on front-line consular work, providing more support to our most vulnerable customers including, for example, minors, the elderly, people with mental health problems, and victims of serious crime abroad.

Please also note that British High Commissions in Commonwealth Countries are unable to provide any of the above services at any time as our staff in those countries do not have the appropriate powers under the 1889 Commissioners for Oaths Act.

You can find more information about the services we offer on our website at the following address: <https://www.gov.uk/notarial-and-documentary-services-guide-for-germany>.

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