



Home Office

## **Guide T**

Registration as a British citizen – A guide for those born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 who have lived in the UK up to the age of 10

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# Introduction

Becoming a British citizen is a significant life event. Apart from allowing you to apply for a British citizen passport, British citizenship gives you the opportunity to participate more fully in the life of your local community.

For your application to succeed you will need to show that you satisfy a number of requirements that are 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 provide and which documents you need to supply.

The first chapter of this guide summarises the legal requirements for applying for registration.

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 through their embassy or high commission 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 Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, and the regulations made under them. 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 at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.

## IAA 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 Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), an independent body. Nationality advice should only be provided by a person who works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the IAA or who 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 IAA regulated advisers are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-advice-authority>.

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# The requirements you must meet

To be registered under this section you must:

- have been born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983
- be 10 years of age or over
- have spent no more than 90 days outside the UK in each of the first 10 years of your life
- be of good character

In special circumstances, the Home Secretary may make an exception to the requirement that the applicant must not have been absent from the UK for more than 90 days in any of the first 10 years. If you have exceeded this number of days in any of those years, but you believe there are special circumstances in your case, you should explain what those special circumstances are on a separate sheet of paper.

An application may be made by an adult or a child, but if the applicant is under 18 the form should normally be filled in by their parent or guardian (giving the child's particulars).

A child who is unable to meet some of, or all of, the requirements listed above may still have a right to be registered as a British citizen on the strength of their parents' citizenship or immigration status. Alternatively, the Home Secretary may be prepared to register a child because of their special circumstances. You can obtain further advice on our [website](#).

If one of your parents was a British citizen or was settled in the UK at the time of your birth, you are already a British citizen and there is no need to apply for registration. The definition of 'parent' here will depend on the date of the child's birth. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

A parent will have been 'settled' in the UK if they were ordinarily resident there without being subject to any time limit under the immigration rules. A person is not 'settled' if he or she is in the UK either:

- in breach of the immigration laws
- as a member of a diplomatic mission, visiting forces or (with some exceptions) an international organisation

The UK means England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Information you give will be treated in confidence, but may be disclosed to Government Departments, the Security Service and other agencies, local authorities and the police, where it is necessary for immigration or nationality purposes or to enable these bodies to carry out their own function.

If you do not meet the requirements but think the Home Secretary should exercise discretion in your favour you should provide details of the special circumstances in your case. If you do not provide any details or if your special circumstances are not accepted your application will be refused and your fee will not be fully refunded. Applications that fail generally do so because either:

- applicants do not tell us about offences and convictions
- the residence requirements have not been satisfied

## Residence requirements

To satisfy the residence requirements you should not have been absent for more than 90 days in each of the first 10 years of your life.

There is discretion to disregard absences in excess of the limits. We will normally waive excess absences:

- if the number of days absence from the UK in any one of those years does not exceed 180 days, and the total number of days absence over the 10-year period does not exceed 990 days
- (if the number of days absence exceeds 180 in any one year or 990 over the 10-year period) the excess absence was the result of circumstances beyond your control (such as serious illness)

We would not normally waive excess absences simply because:

- your parents were unaware of the requirements
- your parents' absences, with you, were entirely voluntary

## Good character

The British Nationality Act 1981 contains a statutory requirement that those seeking to become British must be of good character. This means you must observe UK laws and show respect for the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Before you complete this section, you are advised to refer to the good character policy guidance which caseworkers use to decide your application. This is available on the GOV.UK [website](#).

Checks will be carried out to ensure that the information you provide is correct. This may include checks with other government departments such as HM Revenue and Customs. If you are not honest about the information you provide, and you are granted citizenship on the basis of incorrect or fraudulent information you will be liable to have your 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.

## Criminality

You must give details of all criminal convictions in the UK and overseas. This includes if you went to prison, or you received a non-custodial sentence such as a suspended sentence. You should also include any out-of-court disposal such as a fine, a caution, a warning or reprimand, a community sentence, a civil order, a civil penalty, a civil judgment, a hospital order or a restriction order. All fiscal fines must also be disclosed. If you are not sure, you should declare all penalties or orders.

Fixed penalty notices such as those issued under the coronavirus Regulations, or for traffic offences such as speeding or parking tickets must also be disclosed, although will not normally be taken into account unless you have failed to pay and there were criminal proceedings as a result, or you have received multiple fixed penalty notices in a short space of time.

Where a fixed penalty notice or fiscal fine in Scotland has been referred to a court due to non-payment, or the notice has been unsuccessfully challenged by the person in court, we will consider it as a conviction and assess it in line with the new sentence imposed.

Drink driving must also be declared. If you have any endorsements on your driving licence you must access the [DVLA website](#) to download and print a summary of your record and send it with your application, or provide the paper counterpart.

Criminal record checks will be carried out in all cases. If you have been charged with a criminal offence and are awaiting trial or sentencing, you are advised not to make any application for citizenship until the outcome is known.

You must give details of all civil judgments which have resulted in a court order being made against you, as well as any civil penalties under the UK Immigration Acts. For applicants from Scotland any recent civil penalties must also be declared. If you have been declared bankrupt at any time you should give details of the bankruptcy proceedings. (Your application is unlikely to succeed if you are an undischarged bankrupt).

You do not need to give details of family law proceedings such as divorce decrees, dissolved civil partnerships, guardianship orders, and parental responsibility orders.

You must also tell us if you have any children who have been convicted of an offence or who have received a court order.

You must say if your details have been recorded by the police as a result of certain sexual offences, or if you are subject to one of the following orders: notification order, sexual offences prevention order, foreign travel order, risk of sexual harm order (or equivalent order made in a British overseas territory or any other country).

You must say if there is any offence for which you may go to court, or which is awaiting hearing in court. This includes having been arrested for an offence and waiting to hear if you will be formally charged. If you have been arrested and not told that charges have been dropped, or that you will not have to appear in court, you may wish to confirm the position with the police. You must tell us if you are arrested or charged with an offence after you make your application and while the application is under consideration. You risk prosecution under section 46 of the British Nationality Act 1981 if you do not do so.

## Terrorism and International Crimes

You must say whether you have had any involvement in terrorism or whether you have been involved in any crimes in the course of armed conflict, including crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide, or if you are the subject of an international travel ban. If you are in any doubt as to whether something should be mentioned, you should mention it.

This guidance is not exhaustive. Before you answer these questions, you should consider the full definitions of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide which can be found in Schedule 8 of the [International Criminal Court Act 2001](#).

Alternatively, copies can be purchased from: [The Stationery Office \(TSO\)](#).

It is your responsibility to satisfy yourself that you are familiar with the definitions and can answer the questions accurately.

**Genocide** - acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

**Crimes against humanity** - acts committed at any time (not just during armed conflict) as part of a widespread or systematic attack, directed against any civilian population with knowledge of the attack. This would include offences such as murder, torture, rape, severe deprivation of liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law and enforced disappearance of persons.

**War Crimes** - grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions committed during an armed conflict. This includes an internal armed conflict and an international armed conflict. The types of acts that may constitute a war crime include wilful killing, torture, extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity, unlawful deportation, the intentional targeting of civilians and the taking of hostages.

**Travel bans** - travel bans restrict the movement of individuals associated with regimes or groups whose behaviour is considered unacceptable by the international community.

**Terrorist Activities** - any act committed, or the threat of action, designed to influence a government or intimidate the public and made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause and which involves serious violence against a person or which may endanger another person's life; creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public; involves serious damage to property; is designed to seriously disrupt or interfere with an electronic system.

**Organisations concerned with terrorism** - an organisation is concerned with terrorism if it:

- commits or participates in acts of terrorism,
- prepares for terrorism,
- promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism), or
- is otherwise concerned with terrorism.

## Financial soundness

Among the duties and obligations which you are expected to fulfil is payment of income tax and National Insurance contributions. We may ask HM Revenue & Customs for confirmation that your tax and National Insurance affairs are in order. When you sign the application form you will be giving your consent for us to approach them.

If you are liable for income tax but do not pay through PAYE, you must demonstrate that your obligations towards the HM Revenue & Customs have been discharged by attaching a Self-Assessment Statement of Account.

You must tell us if you have ever been declared bankrupt, found to have unreasonably failed to pay your council tax, engaged in fraud in relation to public funds (including claiming public funds to which you were not entitled or were prohibited from accessing, or failing to declare your full circumstances), or have an unpaid NHS debt of £500 or more.

## Deception

You must tell us if you have practised deception in your dealings with the Home Office or other government departments (for example, by providing false information or fraudulent documents).

## Immigration matters

We will look at your immigration history and whether you have been here unlawfully or “in breach” of the immigration laws. Further information is set out in the [good character policy guidance](#).

Your application for citizenship will normally be refused if:

- you entered the UK illegally, no matter how much time has passed since the illegal entry took place
- you previously arrived without a required valid entry clearance or electronic travel authorisation, having made a dangerous journey.

A dangerous journey includes, but is not limited to, travelling by small boat or concealed in a vehicle. It does not include, for example, arrival as a passenger with a commercial airline.

We will consider whether your illegal entry or arrival was outside your control, such as if you were a child, or trafficked into the UK or a victim of modern slavery at the time. Further information about what we will consider is in the [good character policy guidance](#).

## What if you haven't been convicted but your character may be in doubt?

You must say if there is any offence for which you may go to court, or which is awaiting hearing in court. This includes having been arrested for an offence and waiting to hear if you will be formally charged. If you have been arrested and not told that charges have been dropped, or that you will not have to appear in court, you may wish to confirm the position with the police. You must tell us if you are arrested or charged with an offence after you make your application and while the application is under consideration. You risk prosecution under section 46 of the British Nationality Act 1981 if you do not do so

You must say whether you have been involved in anything which might indicate that you are not of good character. You must give information about any of these activities no matter how long ago it was. Checks will be made in all cases and your application may fail and your fee will not be refunded if you make an untruthful declaration. If you are in any doubt about whether you have done something, or it has been alleged that you have done

something, which might lead us to think that you are not of good character, you should say so.

### **What if you consider that you have mitigating factors?**

You can also tell us about any genuine, meaningful attempts to change your behaviour and comply with the law. For example, any voluntary or charity work you participate in, or where you have engaged with programmes or activities aimed at addressing the cause of your offending such as treatments aimed at reduction of alcohol consumption, drug dependency or anger management courses. You can also tell us about any exceptional or compelling circumstances you may have, for example, evidence that indicates that you were not in control of your own arrival if you entered the UK illegally, for example a positive decision received through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). These examples are not exhaustive

You can tell us about this in the 'further information not covered in other sections' box on your application.

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# Referees

Your application must be endorsed by 2 referees.

One referee can be of any nationality but must be a [professional person](#). A professional person could include:

- a minister of religion
- civil servant
- a member of a professional body such as an accountant or a solicitor (but not one who is representing you with this application).

The other referee must be the holder of a British citizen passport and either a [professional person](#) or over the age of 25.

Each referee must have known you for at least 3 years.

Each referee must not be:

- related to you
- related to the other referee
- your solicitor or agent representing you with this application
- employed by the Home Office

## **Child applicants**

At least one of the referees must be a person who has dealt with the child in a professional role such as a teacher, doctor, health visitor or social worker. Where a child cannot provide a referee who has dealt with them in a professional capacity and has provided documents to show that they have attempted to do so, two referees who meet the criteria for referees on adult applications can be accepted.

We will not usually accept a referee who has been convicted of an imprisonable offence during the last 10 years.

Checks may be carried out to ensure that the referees do not have unspent convictions and are qualified to act for you and that their signatures are genuine. It is a criminal offence to provide false information knowingly or recklessly, punishable with up to 3 months imprisonment or by a fine not exceeding £5,000 or both under section 46(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

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# Biometric enrolment

As part of the application process, all applicants are required to enrol their biometric details for the purpose of identity verification. We may be able to re-use biometrics provided for previous immigration applications. We will contact you to provide further instructions on how to enrol your biometrics after you have submitted your application.

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.

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

There is no upper age limit for biometric information to be taken.

An application may be rejected as invalid if the person does not enrol their biometrics when requested.

For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit GOV.UK: [www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits](http://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits).

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# Documents

This section tells you the sort of documents you will need to send for.

You must send:

- your/your child's full UK birth certificate (showing the parents' details).
- evidence of residence in the UK for the first 10 years of your/your child's life. If you are self-employed and do not pay tax through Pay As You Earn (PAYE) arrangements, we require your most recent H.M. Revenue & Customs Self-Assessment statement of account.
- your/your child's passport(s) which cover the 10-year period. As the passport(s) may not be enough to show residence in the UK throughout the 10-year period, you should send as much as you can of the following:
  - letters from schools or other educational establishments which you/your child attended during that period
  - medical records (child health book, summary of appointments from your/your child's GP, nursery records) particularly where these assist in demonstrating residence in the years before attending school
  - any other documents showing that you/your child lived in the United Kingdom for the first 10 years of your/their life.

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# Application Processing Times

We aim to conclude citizenship applications within 6 months from the date on which we receive your application. Please do not contact us within this timeframe to request an update on your application – we will get in touch if we need any more information to help us make a decision.

You will usually get a decision on your application within 6 months – but some applications may take longer. If we expect that it will take longer than 6 months to decide your application, we will contact you to advise of this.

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# Citizenship ceremonies

## Arranging a citizenship ceremony

If your application is successful, and you are aged 18 or over, you will be invited to attend a [citizenship ceremony](#).

### **If you are in the UK**

You will receive an invitation from the Home Office, and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony.

You must ensure you have immigration permission to remain in the UK until you have completed your ceremony. A citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK.

### **If you are outside of the UK**

Arrangements will be made for you to attend a ceremony at a British Embassy; High Commission; Consulate; Governor's Office or Lieutenant-Governor's Office.

Your ceremony invitation may be sent to you via email. If you have not received this, we recommend that you check your email's spam or junk folder before contacting us.

**You must arrange and attend your ceremony within 90 days of receiving your invitation.** The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your invitation.

If you have special needs or concerns about attending your ceremony, please bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have received your invitation.

**If you do not attend your ceremony within 90 days without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused and you will need to re-apply.**

## At the ceremony

You will be asked to affirm or swear an Oath of Allegiance to the Monarch and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. This is a legal requirement for adults and is the point at which you will become a British citizen. Following this you will be presented with your certificate of citizenship as a British citizen.

## Exemptions

Successful applicants are rarely exempt from attending ceremonies. Exemptions may be granted where applicants are physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate for them to attend. If you wish to be exempt, you should say why and provide supporting evidence.

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# Next steps

## What to do if there is an error on your citizenship certificate

If you notice a mistake on your citizenship certificate, you will need to use [Form RR](#) to request an amendment to it.

Send your completed form and your original certificate to the following address:

Department 201  
UKVI  
The Capital  
New Hall Place  
Liverpool  
L3 9PP

You may need to pay to change the details on your certificate, depending on if the mistake is your fault (for example, if you provided incorrect details when you applied). UKVI will send you a letter telling you if you need to pay.

## Returning your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you still hold a Home Office issued immigration document, such as a BRP (or a Biometric Residence Card (BRC)), you must return it the Home Office (even if the BRP/BRC has expired) within 5 working days of attending your citizenship ceremony or getting your certificate of British citizenship (whichever is sooner).

You can do this by following these steps:

1. Cut your BRP/BRC into 4 pieces and put it in a windowless envelope.
2. Enclose a note saying you are returning your permit because you have become a British citizen. Include your name, date of birth and the document number (found on the front of the card) in the note.
3. Send your BRP/BRC and enclosed note to:

Naturalisation BRP Returns  
PO Box 195  
Bristol  
BS20 1BT

Please note that you may be fined up to £1,000 if you do not return your permit within 5 working days.

## Will I get digital status showing I am a British citizen?

There are no current plans to provide digital evidence of British citizenship. If you wish to travel, you will need to get a British passport or certificate of entitlement to the right of abode.

## Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen

Once an individual becomes a British citizen, they will no longer be able to enter the UK using their BRP or digital status, or by presenting their citizenship certificate at the UK border.

For travel purposes, an individual can [apply for a British passport](#) or for a [certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#) that can be placed in a valid foreign passport.

Please refer to GOV.UK for information on [how long it may take to get a British passport](#) or [how long it may take to get a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#). Individuals may wish to consider this before applying for citizenship (for example, if they have plans to travel outside of the UK).

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# Citizenship-related queries

If, having read the information set out in this guidance, you have questions about applying for British citizenship, you can email the Citizenship and Nationality Enquiries team at [nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk).

You should also contact them to let them know if you have made an application and your circumstances change (for example, you move house, get married or are arrested).

If you have not had a response, we recommend checking your email spam or junk folder before contacting UKVI again.

If you require anything else, please [contact UK Visas and Immigration for help](#).

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