



HM Passport  
Office



# How to Order and Pay for Civil Registration Records

Getting the most from the **General Register Office**  
[www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

**The General Register Office (GRO) based in Southport, Merseyside, holds records for all births, deaths and marriages that have been registered in England and Wales from 1837. This booklet provides you with information to help you order and pay for a Civil Registration record.**



## **What certificates are available?**

For a full list of records available from the General Register Office see pages 10 and 11.



**The quickest, easiest and cheapest way to order a certificate is to go online** using the GRO's secure online ordering service at: [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

# How much will I have to pay?

## Priority Service

	 online	 Phone/Post
Full certificate with a GRO index reference supplied	£35.00	£39.00
Full certificate without a GRO index reference supplied (if customer requires the GRO to index on their behalf a fee of £3.00 is charged)	£38.00	£42.00
Additional copy of the same certificate at the same time	£35.00	£35.00

## Standard Service

	 online	 Phone/Post
Full certificate with a GRO index reference supplied	£11.00	£15.00
Full certificate without a GRO index reference supplied (if customer requires the GRO to index on their behalf a fee of £3.00 is charged)	£14.00	£18.00
Additional copy of the same certificate at the same time	£11.00	£11.00
PDF	£7.00	n/a
Commemorative Certificate with a GRO index reference supplied	£35.00	£39.00
Commemorative Certificate without a GRO index reference supplied	£38.00	£42.00

Please note that the GRO will retain a fee of £3.50, to cover the work incurred, if we are unable to find a record of the event you have requested. Any additional administration fees which you may have paid if not applying online or including a GRO index reference are non-refundable. Orders for PDFs are non-refundable.

## The General Register Office Index of events

The GRO provides a public index that lists basic details of every birth, marriage and death recorded in England and Wales since 1837. If you provide details of the index reference number it will be cheaper for you and also help speed up your application.

The historical birth and death index - births over 100 years old and deaths from 1837 to 1957 (those records that have been digitised) can be viewed free of charge online, via the GRO website at [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

You can also visit [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk) which contains a transcription of the index from 1837 to 1983.

Further information on researching GRO index reference numbers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/research-family-history>

## What do I need to know about short and full certificates?

The fee is the same for a full certificate or a short certificate. A full birth certificate is an exact copy of the full record. A short certificate provides much less information and no details of parentage.

A full adoption certificate generally includes the date of the adoption order, name of the court and shows the adoptive name, the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), date of birth and (where known) country or district of birth.

## What if I am interested in certificates of recent events?

The GRO is not able to issue certificates for events which have taken place within the last **six months** (for marriages this period is extended to **eighteen months**) and you may wish to obtain a certificate from the register office for the district where the event was registered.

This excludes adoption certificates as the local register office does not hold a copy of the Adopted Children Register. Adoption certificates can only be obtained from the General Register Office and can be applied for by the adoptive parents once an adoption order has been made.

## Getting your certificate legalised for use in another country

If you need to use a certificate in an overseas country, the local authorities in that country may require the certificate to be legalised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK before they will accept it.

For further information on how to get your certificate legalised as well as details of the current fee for an Apostille please see [www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised](http://www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised).

## What is the PDF Service?

The General Register Office (GRO) is continuously improving the way it provides civil registration services; including registration records in a format other than by paper certificate.

We offer historical birth and death records for England and Wales in Portable Document Format [PDF]. These include birth registration records over 100 years old and deaths from 1837 to 1957.

A GRO index reference is required to be provided with the application. You can find the GRO index references by logging on to the GRO online ordering service and accessing the GRO online indexes.

*It should be noted that a PDF has no evidential value, and therefore a paper certified copy [certificate] is required for official purposes, e.g. if applying for a passport, driving licence, or where required to give notice of marriage or to form a civil partnership. You should also note that this service is only available via an online application.*

For more information on the PDF service please visit [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates) click 'start now' and select 'Most Customers Want to Know'

## Service levels

**Standard Service** : your certificate(s) will be despatched on the fourth working day from receipt of order, or the fifteenth working day when no GRO reference number is quoted.

**Priority Service:** your certificate(s) will be despatched on the next working day from receipt of order, if received before 4pm.

## Postage

*The following postage options are included in the price of your application*

**Standard Service** : your certificate(s) will be posted to you using 2nd class postage.

**Priority Service:** your certificate(s) will be posted to you using 1st class postage.

## Additional Postage Options

*The following postage options are **in addition** to the price of your application and are only available if you use the Priority Service*

**Royal Mail Next Day Delivery**– despatched on the next working day from receipt of order, Delivered via Royal Mail Special Delivery to arrive before 1pm the day after despatch

**Royal Mail Saturday 9am** – Saturday delivery

**DHL Overseas Delivery**– despatched on the next working day from receipt of order, to be delivered worldwide outside of the UK within 7 working days of despatch.

## Additional Administration Fees

Additional administration fees are payable if you choose not to apply online. An additional fee is also payable if you do not provide a GRO index reference. These cover the extra cost of processing these type of applications and are generally non-refundable.

## How do I order and pay?

You can order online or by phone using: Visa credit card, debit card or Visa Electron, MasterCard, and Maestro.

It is cheaper if you order online via [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

When you are applying online you will need to provide:

- Your full name and address
- A contact email address
- Valid credit/debit card information
- Details of the event you are applying for: birth, marriage, civil partnership, death, adoption or overseas record

*When you make your first online application you will need to register and you will be asked to provide an email address and password.*

### By phone

If you want to order certificates by telephone you can call **+44 (0) 300 123 1837**, Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, and Sat 9am-4pm.

You can also request an application form by phone.

### By post

If you apply by post you will be asked to complete a GRO application form. Application forms are available on the GOV.UK website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-register-office-gro-certificate-application-forms](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-register-office-gro-certificate-application-forms)

Alternatively you can get a form by sending an email to [certificate.services@gro.gov.uk](mailto:certificate.services@gro.gov.uk) confirming the number and type of application forms required.

### For postal applications

Payment can be made either by credit/debit card, cheque, postal order or international bankers draft payable to **'Her Majesty's Passport Office'**.

- Payments made by international bankers draft should be in sterling. The draft must bear the name and address of a clearing bank within the UK
- Please do not send cash
- Where you wish to use the priority service please clearly mark your envelope 'priority'
- A stamped self addressed envelope is not required



## Important additional information

- The GRO is unable to accept any amendments or cancellations to orders once they have been placed
- Full identifying information will be required to identify the entry if you are applying for a certificate where the event was registered in the last 50 years
- If you are not able to supply the GRO reference you will be charged an additional £3.00 and a search will be carried out for you in the GRO index that covers a three year period (this means a search in the year you quote, plus one year on either side). GRO staff can only carry out this search if you have provided sufficient information to identify an entry.
- In the case of popular names likely to occur frequently in the indexes –for example: **John Smith 1861 London**, more specific details are needed to help identify the correct entry. In such situations, the first six entries that agree with the name you've requested will be checked to see if a match can be found that way. Should none of the six entries agree you will be informed and issued with a partial refund and asked to reapply with more information.
- The certificate will be folded and posted out to you in a C5 envelope using standard postal services. There is an additional charge for priority customers requesting a premium delivery service.
- If the GRO is unable to produce a certificate, on the basis of customer information provided, then £3.50 will be retained from the certificate refund to cover costs incurred. In these instances, any additional administration fees paid with the application are also non-refundable.
- There may be circumstances where the Registrar General may waive additional charges, but this would be by exception.
- If, for any reason, the GRO is unable to despatch certificates within the published turnaround times, a service announcement will be posted on the login page of the online ordering website. Details will also be available via a recorded message on the contact centre telephone line.

Further details about GRO and all its services are available at [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

# What records does the General Register Office hold?

## Events recorded in England and Wales

Record held	Explanation	From - to	To order
Birth and death records	A record of all births and deaths recorded	July 1837 – 6 months prior to the present date	Online, telephone or post
Marriage records	A record of all marriages recorded	July 1837 – 18 months prior to the present date	Online, telephone or post
Civil Partnership records	A record of all civil partnerships recorded	2005 – the present date	Online, telephone or post
Thomas Coram Register*	A record of children given into the care of the Founding Hospital	1853 – 1948	Post
Adopted Children Register	A record of all adoptions granted by courts	1927 – present date	Online, telephone or post
Stillbirth register	A record of all stillbirths recorded	1927 – present date	Post
Parental Order Register**	A record of all births that have been re-registered on production of a court order where a child has been born via a surrogacy agreement	1994 – present date	Online or telephone
Gender Recognition Register**	A record of people who have been issued with a gender recognition certificate granted by the gender recognition panel	2005 – present date	Post or telephone
Presumption of Death Register**	A record of all events recorded in the Presumption of Death Register	2015 – present date	Post or telephone

## Events recorded abroad

Record held	Explanation	From - to	To order
Regimental records	Records of births/baptisms, marriages and some deaths relating to British Army Regiments	1761 - 1924	Online, telephone or post
Chaplains returns	Army Chaplains records of baptisms, marriages and deaths	1796 - 1880	Online, telephone or post

\* Postal address for certificates issued from the Thomas Coram Register: Coram Community Campus, 49 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC12 2QA

\*\* Copies of these records can only be applied for by phone or post.

## Events recorded abroad (cont.)

Record held	Explanation	From – to	To order
Ionian Islands records	Births, marriages and deaths of the British Garrison on Corfu	1818 - 1864	Online, telephone or post
Marine records	Births and deaths at sea	1837 - present date	Online, telephone or post
Consular records	Births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths of British subjects registered at British Consulates	1849 – 12 months prior to the present date (birth, marriage and death). 2005 – present date (civil partnership)	Online, telephone or post
Army records	Births, marriages and deaths of members of the British Army or their families which took place abroad	1881 – 1965	Online, telephone or post
War deaths	Deaths of serving personnel during the Boer War World War 1 World War 2	1899 – 1902 1914 – 1921 1939 – 1948	Online, telephone or post
Aircraft records	Births and deaths on board British registered aircraft	1947 – present date	Online, telephone or post
Foreign Marriage and Civil Partnership certificates	Certificates deposited with the General Register Office	1948 – 2013 (marriages) 2005 – 2013 (civil partnerships)	Online, telephone or post
High Commission records	Births and deaths of British subjects registered at British High Commissions	1949 – present date	Online, telephone or post
Armed Forces records	Births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths of members of the Armed Forces or their families	1965 – present date (birth, marriage and death). 2005 – present date (civil partnerships)	Online, telephone or post
Installation deaths	Deaths of workers on British Oil and Gas rigs	1971 – present date	Online, telephone or post
Hovercraft records	Births and deaths on British registered hovercrafts	1972 – present date	Online, telephone or post

Online: [www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

Telephone: +44 (0) 300 123 1837 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 9am-4pm

Post: General Register Office, PO Box 2, Southport, Merseyside PR8 2JD

General Register Office:  
part of Her Majesty's Passport Office

All prices and information correct at time of going to press.

For more information visit:

[www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates](http://www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates)

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