**Q & A for customer enquiries**

**Q. What is this service?**

Consular birth registration is an optional service and is only available to those born overseas who have an automatic entitlement to British Nationality at birth. There is no legal requirement for a consular birth registration and a local birth certificate with a certified translation if necessary should be sufficient for all purposes in the UK including applying for a passport. Similarly there is no requirement for a consular death certificate –the local certificate should be sufficient for winding up the affairs and obtaining probate in the UK.

**Q. What is changing?**

There will be no change to what we offer – we will continue to register births and deaths and provide certified copies of entries in the relevant registers. However, the way we deliver this service will change. Our consulates overseas will no longer process consular birth and death registrations. This will be done by a new specialist unit in the UK. The service will be a postal only service.

**Q. When will this change happen?**

We will roll out the centralisation of this service between June 2014 and March 2015. Information on how to apply in individual countries can be found on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.

**Q. Why are you making this change?**

A centralised service will allow us to improve the service we offer to customers by introducing a new on-line payment system and on-line application forms. This is part of a series of wider changes to our documentary and notarial work, the key benefits being to modernise outdated services and ways of delivering them, which will free up consular staff to do more for vulnerable cases.

**Q. How will I apply for a consular birth/death registration?**

You will pay online and download an application form through the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website. Full details about what documentation you must send with your application can be found on [www.gov.uk/register-a-birth](http://www.gov.uk/register-a-birth) or [www.gov.uk/register-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/register-a-death). After registration, documents will be sent back to you by secure post, along with any copies of the registration if you have requested and paid for them (note that the fee for registration does not include a certificate). In some countries you may need to collect your documents from the British Embassy or High Commission, and if so you will be given details.

In order to expedite the birth registration process, we strongly encourage customers to apply for a UK passport for their child before making an application for a consular birth registration. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>

**Q. What about costs?**

The costs have not changed. The fee for registration is £105, plus £65 if you wish to have certified copy of the entry in the consular birth/death register. Centralisation will allow us to adjust the cost of the service in future years and we hope to reduce fees in the future.

You will be required to pay a fee for the return of your documents by courier.

**Q. What will be the processing time?**

We will continue to process birth registrations within 5 working days, and death registrations within 3 working days provided all the documentation submitted with the application is correct and complete, but you will need to allow extra time for documents to be sent to and from the UK. Registrations will take longer if you have not provided all the necessary supporting documents, or if we need to make additional checks, in which case we will contact you within the timescale highlighted above to discuss your application and the way forward.