



Home Office

## Guide RN

### Declaration of renunciation:

- British citizenship
- British Overseas Territories citizenship
- British Overseas citizenship
- British subject status
- British National (Overseas) status

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# About this guidance

This guide is for British citizens, British Overseas Territories citizens, British Overseas citizens, British subjects and British Nationals (Overseas) who wish to renounce (give up) their citizenship or status. This guide will help you to decide whether you can renounce your citizenship or status, and tells you how to do it.

## Introduction

The law covering renunciation is contained in the British Nationality Act 1981 and the Regulations made under it. Renunciation of British National (Overseas) status is covered by the Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order 1986. The information in this guide is meant only as a brief guide to the law and to the Home Secretary's policy. It is not a comprehensive statement of either the law or the policy.

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# Who can renounce British nationality?

If you are a British citizen, a British Overseas Territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British subject or a British National (Overseas), you may renounce your citizenship or status if:

- EITHER you already have some citizenship or nationality other than the British nationality that you wish to renounce.
  - OR you can satisfy the Home Secretary, or Governor (if you wish to renounce British Overseas Territories citizenship), that you will acquire another citizenship or nationality after renouncing, and
- you are of full age (aged 18 or over). If you are under 18 and have been married or in a civil partnership, you are treated as being of full age for this purpose), and
- you are of full capacity. The British Nationality Act 1981 defines full capacity as being “not of unsound mind”. We consider this requirement met if you have some understanding of the meaning and consequences of renunciation.

You should check whether you also need to renounce any other form of British nationality or citizenship of any other country.

The Secretary of State or Governor has discretion to waive the requirement to be of full capacity if they think it is in the applicant’s best interests to do so. If you are applying on behalf of someone else who is not of full capacity and for whom you are responsible you will need to explain why it would be in the applicant’s best interests for them to renounce their citizenship, despite their inability to understand fully what is involved. This should be supported by confirmation of the applicant’s mental condition and of the fact that they are in your care.

## For British Nationals (Overseas) and former British Dependent Territories citizens by connection with Hong Kong

If you were a British Dependent Territories citizen by virtue only of a connection with Hong Kong, you ceased to be a British Dependent Territories citizen on 1 July 1997. If you had no other nationality or citizenship on that date, you automatically became a British Overseas citizen.

A person who became a British National (Overseas) can only now be a British Overseas Territories citizen if they have that citizenship by a connection with a British Overseas Territory other than the former dependent territory of Hong Kong.

The British Overseas Territories are currently:

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic Territory
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn
- Henderson
- Ducie and Oeno Islands
- St. Helena
- Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- The British Virgin Islands

Before 26 February 2002, British Overseas Territories and British Overseas Territories citizenship were called British Dependent Territories and British Dependent Territories citizenship respectively.

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# How to renounce British nationality

You can renounce your British citizenship, British Overseas Territories citizenship, British Overseas citizenship, British subject or British National (Overseas) status by completing the declaration of renunciation. If you hold more than one of these citizenships or status, apart from British Overseas Territories citizenship, you can renounce them all on one declaration. If you wish to renounce British Overseas Territories citizenship and another citizenship or status, you will need to complete two declarations. This is because the application to renounce British Overseas Territories citizenship needs to be made to the Governor of the territory but all other renunciations are made to the Home Secretary.

You will cease to be a British citizen, a British Overseas Territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British subject or a British National (Overseas) on the date your declaration of renunciation is registered by the Home Secretary (or Governor if you are renouncing British Overseas Territories citizenship). In war time the Home Secretary or Governor can withhold registration.

If your declaration is registered in the expectation of your acquiring another citizenship, but you do not do so within 6 months of the registration, the renunciation will not take effect, and you will be considered to have remained a British national as before.

A declaration of renunciation affects only the status of the person making the declaration and does not affect the current status of any other member of his or her existing family.

A person who renounces British citizenship or British Overseas Territories citizenship has a right (once only) to resume that citizenship if the renunciation was necessary to enable him or her to keep or obtain some other citizenship. A person who renounces British citizenship or British Overseas Territories citizenship more than once, or for any other reason, may be allowed to resume that citizenship if the Home Secretary or Governor thinks it fit. A person who renounces British Overseas citizenship, British subject or British National (Overseas) status cannot later resume that citizenship or status.

A person who renounces their British citizenship will lose their right of abode in the United Kingdom, unless they also have that right as a Commonwealth citizen (see <https://www.gov.uk/right-of-abode/commonwealth-citizens>). If you renounce British citizenship and want to live in the UK you will need to apply under the Immigration Rules.

## Documents you should supply

You should send:

- documentary evidence that you are a British citizen, a British Overseas Territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British subject or a British National (Overseas) (depending upon which citizenship or status you wish to renounce). Normally a passport will establish your citizenship or status. If you do not have one, you should send a birth certificate or a certificate of naturalisation or registration. If you have your citizenship or status through descent from a parent or grandparent, you should send documents proving that person's citizenship or status and your relationship to him or her.
- EITHER that you have, or will have on making the declaration of renunciation, another citizenship or nationality.
  - a passport issued to you by the other country of which you are a national, or a statement by the authorities of that country that you are one of their nationals OR that you are about to become a citizen of another country.
  - You should send a letter from the authorities of the country concerned confirming that you will be granted citizenship of that country when you have renounced British citizenship, British Overseas Territories citizenship, British Overseas citizenship, British subject status or British National (Overseas)
- Send your marriage or civil partnership certificate if you are under 18 years are married or in a civil partnership.

Information you give us will be treated in confidence but may be disclosed to other Government Departments and agencies and local authorities to enable them to carry out their functions.

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# What happens afterwards?

After the declaration has been registered, the declaration officially signed and stamped, will be sent to you, together with the documents that you sent. This copy will be formal evidence that your declaration of renunciation has become effective.

If your declaration was registered in the expectation of your acquiring another citizenship, but you do not do so within 6 months of the registration, you should send your 'Applicant's Copy' of the declaration, together with a letter from the authorities of the other country concerned confirming that you have not acquired that country's citizenship to:

Department 1  
UKVI  
The Capital  
New Hall Place  
Liverpool  
L3 9PP

Your declaration will then be forwarded to the UK Visas and Immigration, or to the Governor of the relevant territory (if appropriate), and endorsed to show that your renunciation never took effect.

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