



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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# Contents

Introduction	2
OISC and Immigration Advice	2
The requirements you must meet	3
Residence requirements	4
Good character	4
Referees	8
Biometric enrolment	9
Documents	10
Citizenship ceremonies	11
Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen	12
Citizenship-related queries	13

# 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>.

## OISC and Immigration Advice

Immigration or nationality advisers acting in the course of business (whether paid or unpaid) are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), an independent body. The provision of such advice is prohibited unless a person works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the OISC or is authorised to practice (like solicitors and barristers) by a designated professional body.

A full list of OISC regulated advisers is available on its website at [www.oisc.gov.uk](http://www.oisc.gov.uk).

[Contents](#)

# 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 register as 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 registered 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 registration 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

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).

## 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 tell us about this in the 'special circumstances' box at the end of your application.

[Contents](#)



# 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

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.

For 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.

[Contents](#)

# Biometric enrolment

As part of your application, all applicants are required to enrol their biometric details for the purpose of identity verification.

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

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

Where you give your biometric information depends on how you're making your visa or immigration application. You'll be told where to go after you've applied.

Your application may be rejected as invalid if you do not enrol your biometrics when requested. For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit the following section of our website: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>.

[Contents](#)

# 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.

[Contents](#)

# Citizenship ceremonies

If your application is successful and you are living in the UK, you will be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony if you are over 18. You will receive an invitation letter from the Home Office and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony. We expect you to arrange to attend a ceremony within 3 months of receiving your invitation otherwise it will expire and you will have to re-apply for registration and pay a further processing fee.

If you are over the age of 18 when your application is decided, you will need to attend a citizenship ceremony. At the ceremony, you will be asked to affirm or swear an oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. Following this you will be presented with your certificate of registration as a British citizen.

You must make immediate contact with the local authority once you have been informed that your application is successful, as you only have 90 days in which to attend the ceremony. The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your Home Office citizenship ceremony invitation letter. If you do not attend the ceremony within 90 days without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused and you will need to re-apply.

Making the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge at a citizenship ceremony is a legal requirement for adults, and the point at which you will become a British citizen. You are therefore expected to attend a ceremony. If you have special needs or concerns about saying the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge in English, you should bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have your invitation letter.

[Contents](#)

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

Once you have completed the registration process, you will no longer be able to enter the UK using your BRP (if you hold one) or by presenting your citizenship certificate at the UK border.

For travel purposes, you 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.

[Contents](#)

# 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.

Alternatively, you can also contact them via telephone on 0300 790 6268. You will need to select option 2, then option 2 again. You can call Monday to Thursday from 9am to 4:45pm, or Friday, 9am to 4:30pm. Information about call charges can be found [here](#).

[Contents](#)

