



Home Office

Guide BOTC(M)

Registration as a British Overseas Territories citizen and/or a British citizen
– A guide for certain persons born before 1983 to mothers connected to a British overseas territory

October 2023

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About this guidance

British Overseas Territories citizenship (BOTC) is a form of British nationality held through a close and continuing connection with a British Overseas Territory. The vast majority of people who hold BOTC also hold British citizenship.

This guidance describes how certain people, who missed out on acquiring British nationality at birth because their mother could not pass on status, can now make an application to correct that. This change was introduced in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and applications can be made from 28th June 2022.

For an 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 summarises the legal requirements to apply for registration and aims to help you to make a successful application.

Terms used in this guidance

The name given to the nationality held by people who have a close and continuing connection to the Overseas Territories has changed over time:

- Before 1949, the term used was British subject
- From 1949 to 1982, the term used was Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC)
- From 1983 to 2002, the term used was British Dependent Territory citizen (BDTC)
- Since 2002, the term used is British Overseas Territories citizen (BOTC)

In this guidance we are using the term “**BOTC mothers**” to describe women who became a BOTC in 2002 (or would have done had they not died before that date). It therefore includes women who may also have held one or more of the earlier statuses. It also therefore excludes mothers connected to countries which did not become an Overseas Territory in 2002.

For more information on BOTC see our [BOTC guidance](#).

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Applying for BOTC and British citizenship at the same time

We recognise that people who missed out on acquiring BOTC because BOTC mothers could not pass on British nationality in the same way as men, may also have missed out on acquiring British citizenship.

Where this is the case, the application process will allow you to register as both a BOTC and a British citizen at the same time.

You will be asked on your application form if you do not wish to apply for British citizenship, but otherwise it will be assumed that you are applying for both statuses where you qualify for them. This means you don't have to make two separate applications.

If you already hold British citizenship through other means, but not BOTC, you will also be able to tell us that when you apply.

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Becoming a citizen

Anyone becoming a BOTC is required to make an oath and pledge before they receive their registration certificate.

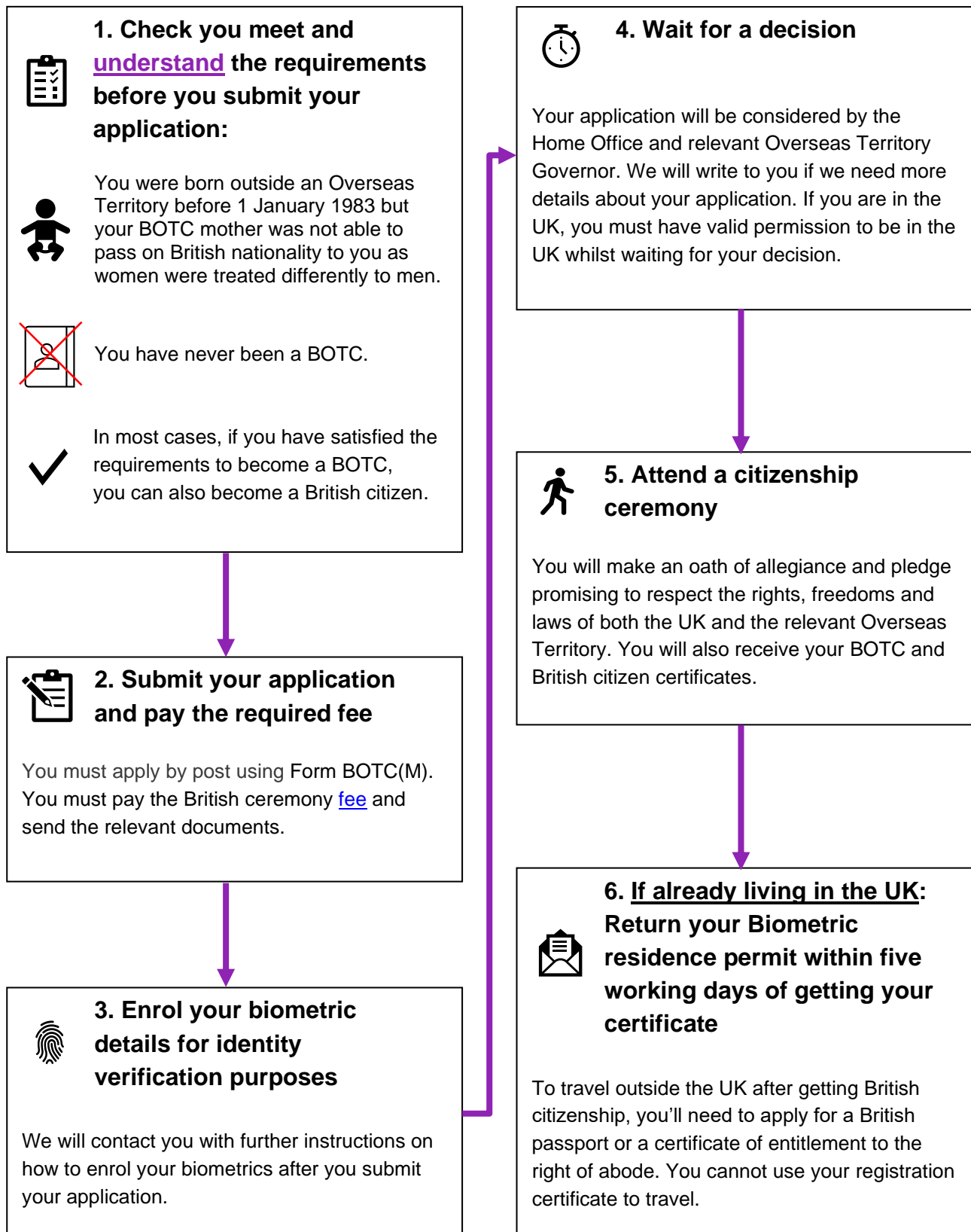
Anyone becoming a British citizen is required to make an oath and pledge at a citizenship ceremony before they receive their registration certificate.

As with the application, we will combine together these events so that you can give both oaths and pledges on one occasion.

You will become a BOTC and/or a British citizen from the date on which you receive your certificates.

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Applying for both British Overseas Territories citizenship and British citizenship



The requirements you must meet

You will be entitled to registration if you meet these requirements:

- You were born before 1 January 1983, outside of a British Overseas Territory, to a BOTC mother.
- If BOTC mothers had been able to pass on British nationality in the same way as men, you would have become a British national at birth and then become a BOTC in 2002.

How someone became a BOTC mother

- Until 1983, people born in a place which is now a British Overseas Territory were normally CUKCs (and called British subjects before 1949). A person could also become a CUKC through registration or naturalisation.
- On 1 January 1983, CUKCs through a connection with a territory became British Dependent Territories citizens (BDTCs). This included people who were born, registered or naturalised in a territory, or whose parent was born in a territory.
- On 26 February 2002, everyone who was a British Dependent Territories citizen before that date was renamed a British Overseas Territories citizen. Most BOTCs also became British citizens that year.

How someone missed out on British nationality

- Before 1983 women were not allowed to pass on nationality.
- This did not affect anyone born in an Overseas Territory as, at that time, being born in that location was sufficient to become a British national.
- However, a child born outside of an Overseas Territory to a BOTC mother could not acquire British nationality from her.
- By contrast, a man born, registered or naturalised in a territory could pass on status to a child born overseas.
- A child of a BOTC mother, born overseas before 1983, therefore did not become a CUKC, and then later did not become a BDTC, BOTC or a British citizen.

Who can register?

You will generally be able to register under this provision if you were born outside of an Overseas Territory before 1 January 1983 and your mother was born, naturalised or registered in a British overseas territory before you were born.

Example:

Elizabeth was born in Canada in 1980. Her mother was born in Anguilla, which is an Overseas Territory. If women had been able to pass on citizenship in 1980, Elizabeth would have become a CUKC at birth. She would have become a BDTC in 1983 and then both a BOTC and British citizen in 2002.

She can apply using the BOTC(M) form – this application form allows you to apply for both citizenships at the same time.

Who else can register?

CUKC could normally only be passed on to one generation born outside an Overseas Territory. This means that your BOTC mother would need to have been born, naturalised or registered in an Overseas Territory before you were born, and that you were the first generation born overseas after that.

However, there are some scenarios where, even if your mother was herself the first generation born outside an Overseas Territory, you may still be able to register using the BOTC(M) form. This could be where:

- You were born, or your mother was born, in a British protectorate, protected state, mandated territory or trust territory, or in any foreign place in which British subjects came under British extraterritorial jurisdiction, or
- you were born in a non-Commonwealth country, or
- your mother was in Crown service under the United Kingdom government at the time of your birth, or
- you were born in Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Example:

Harry was born in the USA, a non-commonwealth country, in 1980. His mother was also born in the USA and her father (Harry's grandfather) was born in Bermuda, which is an Overseas Territory.

Although Harry is the second generation born outside of an Overseas Territory, it would have been possible to register his birth at the British consulate in New York, as the USA is a foreign country. However, women were not able to do this.

Had his mother been allowed to register his birth he would have become a CUKC at that time, a BDTC in 1983, and then both a BOTC and British citizen in 2002.

He can apply using the BOTC(M) form – this application form allows you to apply for both citizenships at the same time.

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What you will need to provide

This section tells you what documents you will need to provide so we can consider your application. We cannot consider your application unless we have supporting documents. If you do not submit your application with supporting documents the application will be returned to you and no further action taken.

Evidence of identity

You should provide one of the following:

- Your current passport
- Your birth certificate
- National identity card
- Your photo driving licence
- A bank, building society or credit card statement issued to you within the last 6 months
- Biometric Residence Permit issued by the Home Office
- Home Office travel document
- Home Office entitlement card

If you have changed name and/or gender and do not have, or cannot obtain, any of these documents in your acquired identity you are also required to provide evidence of that change. This can include:

- a [Gender Recognition Certificate](#) / an official document confirming your acquired gender or
- a letter from your doctor or medical consultant confirming that your change of gender is likely to be permanent
- change of name deed poll
- marriage certificate
- civil partnership certificate

Evidence that you meet the requirements

Please send the following documents:

- Your passport

- Your full birth certificate (one which includes the name of your parent(s). If you do not hold this certificate then one should be requested from the relevant authorities in your country of origin.
- Your mother's full birth certificate, and either
 - Her certificate of naturalisation or registration as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (or, before 1 January 1949, as a British subject), or
 - Papers showing her legal adoption, or
 - Her current BOTC passport or her expired citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies passport or BDTC passport

If your family name on your birth certificate is different from your mother's family name on her birth certificate, you must provide marriage certificates that show your and/or your mother's family name has changed.

If your mother was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by descent and was in Crown service under a territory government at the time of your birth, please also provide evidence of that service.

You should also provide documentary evidence that (had the law been different) you would have been a CUKC at birth and become a BDTC and then BOTC – see above. The evidence requested above may be enough to establish this. You only need to provide additional evidence if at the time of your birth, your mother was not a British overseas territories citizen by birth, adoption, naturalisation or registration in a Territory but one of her parents was such a citizen at that time. You should also note the section on [who else can register](#). You will need to provide the following evidence of this:

- Her parents' marriage certificate
- Her father's or (as appropriate) mother's birth certificate
- Her father's or (as appropriate) mother's certificate of naturalisation or registration as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (or, before 1 January 1949, as a British subject)

Please provide any translations if these are applicable.

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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

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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Understanding the process

Before you apply

Please ensure you have the correct documents before you apply. You should indicate in the space provided what documents you have supplied and why. These documents will be held with application throughout the process. Before making any travel plans, it is worth bearing in my that we will need to keep your passport whilst your application is being processed.

Dual nationality

Dual nationality (sometimes called [dual citizenship](#)) is when someone holds British nationality and the nationality of at least one other country at the same time.

The UK recognises dual nationality and allows British nationals who have dual nationality, to hold a British passport.

Before applying, you should be aware that not all countries allow dual citizenship and you may therefore lose, or have to give up, your existing nationality in order to become a British citizen. If you have any questions about this, you should seek advice from the country of which you are already a citizen before making your application.

Getting help making an application

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 Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), an independent body. Nationality advice should only be provided by a person who works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the OISC 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 OISC regulated advisers is available on its website at www.oisc.gov.uk.

When to apply

You can apply using this route from 28 June 2022. There is no time limit on applications – you can apply at any time.

You should time your application for a time when it is convenient to send us your documents.

How to apply

At the moment applications must be made using the paper form. An online application process will be introduced later, but we did not want to delay you being able to apply.

All applications will be considered by the Home Office in the United Kingdom.

Send your application to:

Department 162
UKVI
The Capital
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

If you can apply under more than one route

It is possible that you might be able to apply for BOTC and British citizenship through a connection with both your mother and your father. You can choose whether to apply under using this route or the one for people with BOTC fathers. You may wish to think about the evidence you would need to provide and choose the route that is easiest for you.

Fees

There is no application fee to apply for British citizenship, but you will need to pay the ceremony [fee](#) if you are over the age of 18. You need to send this with your application, using the [payment slip](#).

British overseas territories are responsible for the fees for BOTC applications. You may wish to check with the territory that you have a connection with to see if they will charge a fee.

Sending documents

You will need to send original documents. We will return them once the application is complete

If you do not have all the documents on the list, you may still be able to apply. We will look at all the information available and see if there is enough to show that you would have been, or been able to become, a BOTC and British citizen if your mother had been able to pass on her citizenship at the time of your birth.

Biometric Enrolment (if you are also applying for British citizenship)

You will need to enrol your biometric details to verify your identity as part of the application process. You will usually need to complete this step of the application process within 45 days of submitting your application and failure to do so would invalidate your application.

You will be provided with instructions explaining where and how you need to enrol your biometric information after you have submitted your application. If you are in the UK, we may be able to re-use biometrics previously provided with earlier immigration applications.

Application Processing Times

We aim to conclude 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.

Travel after submitting an application

Before making any travel plans, it is worth bearing in my that we will need to keep your passport whilst your application is being processed.

Please be aware that you will usually be required to [enrol your biometric information](#) within 45 days of submitting your application. You will receive instructions on how to provide your biometric details once you have submitted your application.

In addition, please note that should we grant an application, there is a 90-day period where you will need to arrange attendance at a [citizenship ceremony](#) or give an oath and pledge.

Please bear in mind that a citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK or a territory and you may need to demonstrate your entitlement to re-enter the UK or territory.

You should ensure that we are able to contact you quickly if we have any queries about your application.

The status you will get - BOT citizenship by descent and otherwise than by descent

All British Overseas Territories Citizens (BOTCs) hold that status either 'by descent' or 'otherwise than by descent'. Whether an individual holds BOT citizenship by descent or otherwise than by descent will determine whether they can pass the status on to their children born outside the British Overseas Territories. It does not affect any other rights or privileges that go with this status. BOTCs by descent cannot normally pass this status on to children born outside of the British Overseas Territories. The exception to this is where their parent was serving outside of the British overseas territory in Crown or similar service. BOT citizens otherwise than by descent automatically pass their citizenship to their children regardless of where they are born.

If you register as a BOTC under this route you will be a BOTC by descent.

If you are resident in an overseas territory, and aged 18 or over, you may wish to consider applying for naturalisation, as that would give BOTC otherwise than by descent which would allow you to be able to pass on that citizenship to any children born abroad to you in the future.

If you become a BOTC by descent and are also registered as a British citizen you will become a British Citizen by descent.

Further information about the requirements for citizenship can be obtained on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Citizenship Ceremonies

BOT citizenship

If you are an adult at the time that you are registered, you will have to make a citizenship oath and pledge. Making the Oath and Pledge is a legal requirement, and the point at which you will become a BOTC.

If you are living in a territory, you will be invited to make the oath and pledge where you are living.

If you are living abroad, you will be invited to make the oath and pledge at the embassy or consulate in the country you are living in.

If you are becoming both a BOTC and British citizen, you will be invited to make the BOTC oath and pledge at a ceremony, along with the oath and pledge for British citizenship. You will receive both certificates at the ceremony.

Ceremony for applicants applying for both BOTC and British Citizenship or British Citizenship only

If your application is successful, you will need to attend a citizenship ceremony. The Home Office will contact you about how to arrange a 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 reapply for registration and pay a further processing fee (if applicable). If you are living in a territory, you will be invited to attend a ceremony in that territory.

If you are outside the UK, arrangements will be made for you to make the oath/affirmation and pledge at a ceremony, this will take place at the British Embassy, High Commission, Consulate, Governor's Office or Lieutenant Governor's Office.

If you are in the UK, you will be invited to attend a ceremony in the UK.

At ceremonies for British citizenship, 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. Making the Oath (or Affirmation) and Pledge at a citizenship ceremony is a legal requirement, and the point at which you will become a British citizen.

Successful applicants are rarely exempt from ceremonies although an applicant may be exempted where he or she is physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate to attend. If you wish to be exempt you should say why and provide supporting evidence.

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 person arranging the ceremony once you have received your invitation. Please be assured that the wording is of a level that a person who has met the language requirement should be able to understand.

Next steps

Returning your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you have a BRP issued by the Home Office, you must send it back to the Home Office within 5 working days of getting your certificate of British citizenship.

Please cut your BRP into 4 pieces and put it in a windowless envelope.

Please 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.

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.

Passports

If you wish to obtain a British passport, you will need to make a separate application. Information about applying for a passport is on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen

Once you have successfully registered as a BOTC and/or a British citizen, for travel purposes, you can apply for either a BOTC or British citizen passport or both.

You can apply for a BOTC passport by going to the relevant territory's website.

For those who have registered as a British citizen, 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 or BOTC passport. You will not be able to enter the UK using your BRP or digital status, or by presenting your citizenship certificate at the UK border.

Citizenship-related queries

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

You should also contact them to let them know if your circumstances change.

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

Alternatively, you can get in touch via telephone on +44 (0)300 790 6268. You will need to select option 2, then option 2 again. You can get in touch Monday to Thursday from 9am to 4:45pm, or Friday, 9am to 4:30pm. Information about call charges can be found [here](#).

If you cannot contact UK 0300 numbers, use +44 (0)203 875 4669.

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British Overseas Territories

The British Overseas Territories are:

Anguilla
Bermuda
British Antarctic Territory
British Indian Ocean Territory
British Virgin Islands
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

Hong Kong and St Kitts and Nevis used to be British Dependent Territories, but are not British Overseas Territories. A person cannot qualify under this provision through a connection with Hong Kong or St Kitts and Nevis.

The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia are British overseas territories. They are not, however, “qualifying territories” for the purposes of the British Overseas Territories Act 2002. This means that a BOTC with a connection only with the Sovereign Base Areas would not have become a British citizen automatically in 2002. A person with a connection with the Sovereign Base Areas can apply for BOTC status under this provision, but not British citizenship.

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