



Home Office

Guide MN3

**Registration as a British Overseas Citizen
– a guide about the registration of
children under 18**

October 2023

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Introduction to the guide

Who is included in this guide and who is not included?

This guide assists children who have not yet reached the age of majority (age 18) to become British Overseas citizens at the Home Secretary's discretion under section 27(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981. Children who reach age 18 will only be able to become a British Overseas citizen if they have an entitlement to registration.

It does not cover:

- British citizenship – see guide [MN1](#).
- British overseas territories citizenship – see guide [MN2](#).
- British subjects – see guide [MN4](#).

Avenues to citizenship through entitlement

A person who is born stateless may have a right to be registered as a British Overseas citizen if they:

- were born before 1 January 1983 and has always remained stateless
- were born outside the United Kingdom and the British overseas territories on or after 1 January 1983 and has always remained stateless
- were born on or after 1 July 1997 outside the British overseas territories (see [Note 1](#))

Further information is available on our [website](#).

A parent applying for British Overseas citizenship at the same time as their child should consider the possibility that the child may be found to be eligible for registration but that their own application falls for refusal. Section 6 of the application form invites the parent to confirm that, in this event, the child should still be registered as a British Overseas citizen. If the relevant box is not ticked, the child's application will be treated as having been withdrawn at the point when the parent's application is refused. No refund will be given.

Becoming a British Overseas citizen

For the application to succeed, you will need to show that the child satisfies the criteria agreed by the Home Secretary. These, and the way that the Home Secretary exercises their discretion, are described in the nationality staff instructions which are available on our [website](#). If the child does not satisfy the agreed policy, you will need to demonstrate why it would be right for the Home Secretary to grant the child British Overseas citizenship. This guide aims to help you to make a successful application. It tells you what information to put into each section of the application form and which documents you need to supply.

It is important that you take care in completing the form and ensure that there is sufficient evidence to support the application. You also need to make sure that you have paid the correct [fee](#). If you pay by cheque you should ensure that you have sufficient funds available. Only cheques issued in sterling and drawn from a bank which has a UK based presence will be accepted. Those applying from overseas who wish to pay by cheque should therefore ensure that the issuing bank has a branch in the UK where the cheque can be cashed. We will also accept credit/debit card payment. Cash, transcash or postal orders cannot be accepted. If you do not pay the correct fee, your application will be returned to you unprocessed.

What happens to the child's present citizenship?

Before continuing with your application, 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 the child is a citizen through the Embassy or High Commission before making your application. If the country of which the child is currently a citizen continues to recognise them as one of its citizens they may continue to be subject to the duties of citizens of that country when they 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 regulations made under it. This guide is intended to help you to apply. It is not a statement about the law or policy. Other information about citizenship and immigration is available on our [website](#).

Citizenship ban

This section only affects you **if you entered the UK illegally on or after 7 March 2023**. It will **not** affect you if you entered the UK before that date, or came here lawfully.

This section also does **not** affect you if you were born in the UK and your parent has become a British citizen, settled in the UK or joined the UK forces. It does **not** affect children born abroad to members of the UK forces.

Under the Illegal Migration Act 2023, you will not be eligible for citizenship if you meet all of these criteria:

- You entered or arrived from 7th March 2023 onwards
- You entered illegally. This means you needed permission to enter the United Kingdom but entered:
 - without permission, or with permission that was obtained by deception
 - in breach of a deportation order
 - without a valid entry clearance if it was required; or
 - without a valid electronic travel authorisation if one was required.
- You did not come directly from a country in which your life and liberty were threatened because of your race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion

This includes where you entered as a child. It also applies if you left the UK following an illegal arrival meeting the criteria above and later re-entered lawfully – you remain ineligible for citizenship.

You also will not be eligible for citizenship if you entered Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, or an overseas territory, in the same way.

If you are not eligible for citizenship, then your application is highly likely to be refused without consideration and we will retain the fee. The only exception is where UK's obligations under the Human Rights Convention would be breached if we did not consider an application.

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Who qualifies for registration?

Children must be under 18 years old when the application is made. Once they reach the age of 18 they can only apply for British Overseas citizenship if they have one of the avenues to registration described [here](#). The date of application is the date it is received by the Home Office or the receiving authority, see [where to send the application form](#).

If the child is aged 10 or over they must be of good character.

What other criteria does the child need to meet?

Registration of children as a British Overseas citizen is at the Home Secretary's discretion. The Home Secretary will normally only agree to register a child where:

- at least one parent is a British subject; and
- all those with parental responsibility for the child (normally the parents) agree to the child becoming a British subject; and
- the child has no other nationality or citizenship, and cannot acquire one; and
- the lack of a passport is causing the child genuine difficulties (for example in obtaining health care or education); and
- the family's continued stay in the country in which they live is at risk to the point of deportation (and there is no country other than the UK where the family could go).

Automatic acquisition of British Overseas citizenship

Children who have automatically acquired British Overseas citizenship do not need to be registered. There are three ways a child can automatically be a British Overseas citizen without needing to register:

- (a) A child who is born in the UK or a British overseas territory (see [Note 1](#)) on or after 1 January 1983 is a British Overseas citizen if, at the time of the birth:
 - the child has no other citizenship or nationality, and
 - one of the parents (see Note 2 below) is a British Overseas citizen.
- (b) A child who was a British Dependent Territories citizen by connection with Hong Kong became a British Overseas citizen on 1 July 1997 if he or she had no other citizenship or nationality on that date.

(c) A child who is born on or after 1 July 1997 is a British Overseas citizen if, at the time of the birth:

- the child has no other citizenship or nationality, and
- one of the parents (see Note 2 below) is either a British National (Overseas) or a British Overseas citizen as described in (b).

Notes

1. For the purposes of this guide, and form MN3, 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 (in Cyprus); Turks and Caicos Islands; Virgin Islands.

2. “Parent” means:

(a) the mother i.e. the woman who gave birth to the child

(b) the mother’s husband (if she was married at the time of the birth)

(c) (if the person was born on or after 1 July 2006, and conceived before 6 April 2009) a man who is treated as the father under section 28 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990

(d) (if the person was conceived on or after 6 April 2009):

- any person who is treated as the father under section 35 or 36 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008, or
- a person who is treated as a parent of the child under section 42 or 43 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (second female parent)

(e) (if the person was born on or after 1 July 2006 and neither (b), (c) nor (d) apply) a man who can satisfy certain requirements as regards proof of paternity i.e. he is named as the father on a birth certificate issued within 12 months of the birth or he can satisfy the Home Secretary that he is the person’s father (by means of DNA test results, court orders or other relevant evidence).

How to fill in the application form

You must ensure that the child's name, date of birth, and the place and country where they were born are clearly written in **BLOCK LETTERS**, in black or blue black ink. These details will be shown on their certificate. Any mistake you make is likely to end up on their certificate and may cause difficulties and delay in obtaining a British passport.

Make sure that all the information is correct before you submit an application. It is a criminal offence to give false information knowingly or recklessly. You may, if you wish, receive help completing the application form. You may use the services of an agent such as a solicitor or other competent adviser. For more information about competent advisers, see [OISC and Immigration Advice](#).

If you live in the United Kingdom, you may also apply via the Nationality Checking Service. This is a partnership with local authorities, which has been introduced by a number of local authorities in the United Kingdom. The Nationality Checking Service enables people wanting to apply for British citizenship to make their application in person at their local Register Office. In return for a small fee, local authority officers will help applicants to complete their application forms and check that the correct fee has been paid. They will also copy valuable documents and certify them as true copies, before returning the originals to you in person.

Local authorities provide the Nationality Checking Service at the point of application only, and will not act as agents while the application is being considered. Local authorities are, like other competent advisers, registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

To check whether the Nationality Checking Service is available near you refer to our [website](#). Please note that you may use any local authority offering Nationality Checking Service not just the one where you live. The service is being expanded over time to cover more local authorities.

However, applying for registration is a straightforward process which does not require the use of specialist agencies. You should be capable of applying successfully by following the guidance provided in this guide and ensuring that the child is able to satisfy the requirements.

Guides and application forms are issued free of charge.

Information you give will be treated in confidence, but may be disclosed to other bodies, for example, other 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 functions. We may also consult some

of these organisations with the information when we carry out enquiries concerning your application.

Section 1: Personal Information

1.1

Enter the father or mother's Home Office reference number if they have one (or the child's reference if they have one). This usually consists of a letter followed by up to seven numbers eg S1003752. It can be found on any previous correspondence you may have had with the Home Office.

1.2

Tick the box appropriate to the child's title or write in their title if it is different. Please note that royal titles should not be used.

1.3

Enter the child's surname or family name as you want it to appear on the certificate.

1.4

Enter the child's other names as you want them to appear on their certificate.

For example, if the child's name is Taher Mohamed Hashim Al Hassan, and they are known as Master Al Hassan then put Al Hassan in section 1.3 and Taher Mohamed Hashim in section 1.4.

If the names shown in section 1.3 and 1.4 are different from the names shown in the child's passport or they are spelt differently then please provide an explanation in your application.

NB. We are unable to print certificates containing accents/special characters.

1.5 – 1.6

If the child is or has been known by any other names apart from those given and in sections 1.3 and 1.4, say what the other names are/were, when the child was known or started to be known by these names and why. The child's name at birth must be given on the application form for identity purposes, but may be omitted from the certificate of registration if there is a special reason for requesting this – for example children who were adopted or are no longer living in the gender they were considered to have at the

time of their birth.

NB. Please note that the name, place and date of birth should be the same as those given in passports or birth certificates. They will appear on the certificate of registration and can be changed only in the most exceptional circumstances.

1.7

Enter the child's present nationality.

1.8

Enter the child's National Insurance number if they have one.

1.9 – 1.11

Enter the child's date of birth, the village, town or city where they were born, and the country where they were born. Please take care over these entries as they will appear on the certificate of registration. If they are different from the details shown in their passport/birth certificate, then please provide an explanation in your application.

NB. Place and country of birth names shown on the certificate will be names in current acceptable use (and will be in English where an English version exists).

1.12

Indicate the child's sex by ticking the appropriate box.

1.13

Indicate marital/civil partnership status by ticking the appropriate box.

1.14

Enter the child's present address and ensure that you give the postcode. If the postcode is not given it may cause delay. It would also be helpful if you would provide your contact telephone details to enable us to contact you quickly.

1.15

If someone is acting on your behalf such as a solicitor or you are making the application through a consulate, you should provide their details so that we can contact them.

1.16 – 1.17

Unless you are being represented by a private individual, it is the agent's business name, telephone number, etc. which should be put here.

OISC and Immigration Advice

Immigration or nationality advisors 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 practise (like solicitors and barristers) by a designated professional body.

Certain categories (e.g. 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 advisors, is available on the OISC [website](#).

1.18 – 1.30

The child might already be a British Overseas citizen without you realising it. To decide whether they already have British Overseas citizenship, we need details about their parents.

1.31 – 1.38

If the child is married or in civil partnership, or lives with someone as if they were a husband, wife or civil partner, we need the details of that person to help us make some enquiries. If the child's partner is not a British Overseas citizen and would like to apply, they will need to make their own application on a separate form.

Section 2: Residence

2.1

For an application in respect of a child who is now living in the UK or a British overseas territory, please say where and when they first arrived.

2.2

Provide details of all addresses in the last 5 years.

2.3

Please say where the child will live if they are registered as a British Overseas citizen.

Section 3: Good character

The British Nationality Act 1981 contains a statutory requirement that those seeking to register as British must be of good character, which applies to children aged ten or over.

This means the child must observe UK laws and show respect for the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Checks will be made on children aged 10 years and over to ensure that this requirement is met.

Before you complete this section in respect of a child, 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 they are registered on the basis of incorrect or fraudulent information they will be liable to have their 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 given to the child, both within the UK and overseas. This includes if the child went to prison, or has 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 they have failed to pay and there were criminal proceedings as a result, or they 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 the child has had any endorsements on their driving licence they must access the [DVLA website](#) to download and print a summary of your record and send it with the application, or provide the paper counterpart.

Criminal record checks will be carried out in all cases. If the child has been charged with a criminal offence and are awaiting trial or sentencing, you are advised not to make any application for the child's registration until the outcome is known.

You must give details of all civil judgments which have resulted in a court order being made against them, as well as any civil penalties under the UK Immigration Acts. For applicants from Scotland any recent civil penalties must also be declared. If the child has been declared bankrupt at any time you should give details of the bankruptcy proceedings. (The application is unlikely to succeed if they 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 made against the child.

You must say if the child's details have been recorded by the police as a result of certain sexual offences, or if they 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 the child may go to court, or which is awaiting hearing in court. This includes having been arrested for an offence and waiting to hear if they will be formally charged. If they have been arrested and not told that charges have been dropped, or that they will not have to appear in court, you may wish to confirm the position with the police. You must tell us if they are arrested or charged with an offence after you make their 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 the child has had any involvement in terrorism or whether they have been involved in any crimes in the course of armed conflict, including crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide, or if they 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

Among the duties and obligations which you are expected to fulfil is payment of income tax and National Insurance contributions. We may ask H.M. Revenue & Customs for confirmation that the child's tax and National Insurance affairs are in order. When you sign the application form you will be giving your consent for us to approach them.

If a child is liable for income tax but does not pay through PAYE, you must demonstrate that their obligations towards the H.M. Revenue & Customs have been discharged by attaching a Self-Assessment Statement of Account.

You must tell us if the child has ever been declared bankrupt, engaged in fraud in relation to public funds (including claiming public funds to which they were not entitled or were prohibited from accessing, or failing to declare their full circumstances), or have an unpaid NHS debt of £500 or more.

Deception

You must tell us if the child has ever practised deception in their 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 their behaviour and comply with the law. For example, any voluntary or charity work the child participates in, or where they have engaged with programmes or activities aimed at addressing the cause of their offending, such as treatments aimed at reduction of alcohol consumption, drug dependency, or successful engagement with a youth diversion or turning point scheme.

You can tell us about this at the end of section 3 of the application, in the box titled 'further information not covered in other sections'.

Section 4: Referees and identity

The application must be endorsed by two referees and a recent passport size photograph. You must write the child's name and date of birth on the back of the photograph and this should then be glued or pasted into the space provided on the application form.

The photograph must show the whole of the front of the child's face in reasonable

light. It should not show the face wholly or partly concealed by hair (beards, sideburns and moustaches excepted) or by a scarf or traditional dress. It should not show the child wearing dark glasses or a hat, hood, cap or scarf.

One referee should be a professional who has engaged with the child in a professional capacity, such as a teacher, health visitor, social worker or minister of religion.

The other referee must normally be the holder of a British citizen passport and either a professional person or over the age of 25.

Each referee must have known the child personally for at least 3 years, and should be:

- not related to the child
- not related to the other referee
- not acting as a solicitor or agent in connection with this application
- not employed by the Home Office

We will not accept a referee who has been convicted of an imprisonable offence during the last 10 years.

If the child is living abroad and does not know a British citizen who is qualified to act as a referee, a Commonwealth citizen or citizen of the country in which they are residing may complete and sign the form, provided they have a similar standing in that country.

Checks may be carried out to ensure that the referees do not have unspent convictions and are qualified to act and that their signature is 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.

Section 5: Consent to the application

We require the consent of all those with parental responsibility for the child. If only one parent has consented, please explain why at section 5.3.

If it is not convenient for one of the parents to sign the form, consent can be provided in a separate letter.

In cases of children born to unmarried parents, where the father is making the application, we would expect the mother to have consented.

Section 5.4 is to be completed if the application is being made by a guardian.

Section 5.5 is to be completed by a child if he or she is making his or her own application.

If the application is being made by a guardian, we will expect to see evidence that person has parental responsibility for the child, such as a deed, will or court order.

If the child's parents are living we would normally expect them to be British Overseas citizens.

Section 6: Declaration

Read this section carefully before inserting your name clearly in box 6.1 and ticking each box at 6.2 – 6.7 to confirm the points raised.

This should normally be the parent/guardian's name, not the minor's name. (Although an older minor, e.g. aged 16 or over, who is making his or her own application can complete the declaration.)

If the requirements and criteria described in this guide are met, sign and date the form in box 6.8.

If the requirements or criteria are not met and you want the Home Secretary to exercise discretion in the child's favour, you should provide the special circumstances in their case. If the special circumstances are not accepted the application will be refused and the fee retained.

Applications that fail generally do so because:

- applicants do not tell us about offences and convictions, or
- the child already has another citizenship or nationality, or
- the family's stay in the country in which they are living is not at risk.

If the declaration in section 6 of the form is not completed, the application will be invalid.

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What you will need to send with the form

NB. If you require your valuable documents to be returned by secure post you should enclose a pre-paid self-addressed Royal Mail Special Delivery (or Recorded Signed For delivery) envelope with your application. The pre-paid self-addressed envelope should be sufficient to accommodate the size and weight of your documents and be insured to the appropriate level for the value of your documents. If this is not enclosed your documents will be returned to you using Royal Mail 2nd class post.

Please consult Royal Mail's [website](#) for further information.

This section tells you the sort of documents you will need to provide in order for the application to be considered. We cannot consider the application unless we have supporting documents. If you do not submit the application with supporting documents and the correct fee then the application will be returned to you unprocessed.

The fee

The fee must be sent with the application form. Details of the current fee are available on our [website](#). NB. If you do not send the correct fee, the application will be invalid.

Documents

Please also send evidence:

- of the child's birth and citizenship
 - Please send the child's birth certificate and passport
- of the parents' citizenship
 - Please send any birth, naturalisation or registration certificates or passports which show their citizenship
- that the child is experiencing genuine difficulties because he or she does not have a passport

- Please explain, in a separate letter, what problems the child is having and enclose any supporting documents
- that custody of the child has been awarded to one parent or a guardian (if this has occurred)
 - Please send the court order
- that the child is adopted (if this is so)
 - Please send the court order
- of any other fact that may be relevant to the application – e.g. if the child is married, please send the marriage certificate
- of identity
 - Please send the child's:
 - passport or travel document, or
 - birth certificate, or
 - driving licence, or
 - bank, building society or credit card statement issued to them within the last 6 months

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Where to send the application form

Once you have completed and signed the application form and enclosed the documents, you must arrange to pay the correct fee. If you are paying by debit/credit card you should complete the payment slip attached to the fee leaflet. If you are paying by cheque you should ensure that funds are available in your account. Only cheques issued in sterling and drawn from a bank which has a UK based presence will be accepted. Those applying from overseas who wish to pay by cheque should therefore ensure that the issuing bank has a branch in the UK where the cheque can be cashed. Cash, transcash or postal orders cannot be accepted.

If the fee is paid through an account which belongs to someone else, please give their details in the space provided on the payment slip attached to the fee leaflet in case it is necessary to refund all or part of the fee.

If the child is in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland send the form with the fee and supporting documents to:

Department 1
UK Visas and Immigration
The Capital Building
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

If they are in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man you should send them to the Lieutenant Governor.

If they are in a British overseas territory you should send them to the Governor.

If they are in Hong Kong you should send them to the nearest British diplomatic post.

If they are elsewhere, including in a Commonwealth country, you should send them to:

Department 1
UK Visas and Immigration
The Capital Building
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

You must submit your application as explained above. The date of application

will be the date your form is received by the Home Office or the local British government representative as shown above. It is not the date on which you send it.

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What happens next?

What you can expect from us

This guide is intended to help you to apply. It is not a statement about law or policy. Other information about citizenship and immigration is available on our [website](#). Representations must explain why you think we have not applied the law and policy in your case.

The information you have provided will be treated in confidence, but may be submitted for checking against the records held by other Government agencies where it is necessary for immigration and nationality purposes or to enable these bodies to carry out their functions.

We will check the application against the documents you have sent in and make a number of enquiries. The documents may be checked to ensure their authenticity. If you provide forged or fraudulently obtained documents you will be investigated under section 46 of the British Nationality Act 1981. We will press for prosecution which may include up to 3 months imprisonment or a fine not exceeding £5,000 or both.

If we need more documents, we will write and ask you for them. We will give you three weeks to respond. If you do not respond within the time we allow you, then we will decide the application on the information we already have, but there is a risk that your application will not succeed. We will try to complete our enquiries quickly, usually within six months, but sometimes it takes longer.

We undertake to process applications quickly and in accordance with the law and agreed policy and procedures. We will deal with any enquiries courteously and promptly. You must keep us informed of any changing circumstances including change of address or agent.

If the application is unsuccessful we will write and tell you why. Although there is no automatic right of appeal or review we will consider representations if you consider that a decision to refuse the application was not soundly based on nationality law or prevailing policy and procedure.

Information on average waiting times can be found on our [website](#).

The length of time you will have to wait for your application to be decided will not affect your existing rights in the UK.

We strive to provide a first-rate service, but occasionally difficulties arise that prevent us from dealing with applications to our usual high standards. In the unlikely event that you

wish to complain, details of how to make a complaint are given in the [citizenship-related queries](#) section.

What we expect from you

Applications are considered quickly usually within six months of receipt. We expect you to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that you can respond to our enquiries or requests for documents within the period we allow.

While the application is under consideration we expect you to tell us about anything which alters the information you have given us. This will include changes of marital or civil partnership status or home address or agents acting on your behalf. It also includes police investigation or anything that may result in charges or indictment.

We also expect to be treated politely and with respect by you and any agent acting on your behalf. If the application is successful and the child has reached the age of majority (18 years of age) the child will be asked to take an oath of allegiance. Full instructions on taking the oath will be sent to you. We expect the oath of allegiance to be taken within 3 months of being asked. If the oath of allegiance has not been taken within 3 months, and there are no special reasons for the delay, the application will be refused and the child will not become a British Overseas citizen.

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Citizenship-related queries

If, having read the information set out in this guidance, you have questions about applying for British Overseas 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 you have made an application and your circumstances change (for example, you move house, get married or are arrested).

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

Alternatively, you can also write to:

Department 1
UK Visas and Immigration
The Capital Building
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

Or you can get in touch via telephone on 0300 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](#).

Please quote any Home Office reference number from a previous application or correspondence.

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