



Home Office

Guide UKM

Registration as a British citizen – A guide for certain persons born before 1983 to British mothers

July 2024

Contents

Introduction to the guide	2
OISC and Immigration Advice	2
Applying to register as a British citizen if born before 1983 to a British mother	4
The requirements you must meet	5
Referees	7
Biometric Enrolment	8
Documents	9
Application Processing Times	11
The citizenship you will acquire	12
Citizenship ceremonies	13
Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen	14
Citizenship-related queries	15
Notes	16

Introduction to the guide

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 summarises the legal requirements for applying for registration and 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 put into each section of the application form and which documents you need to supply.

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 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 regulations made under it. 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 www.gov.uk/becoming-a-british-citizen.

Please note: 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 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.

OISC and Immigration Advice

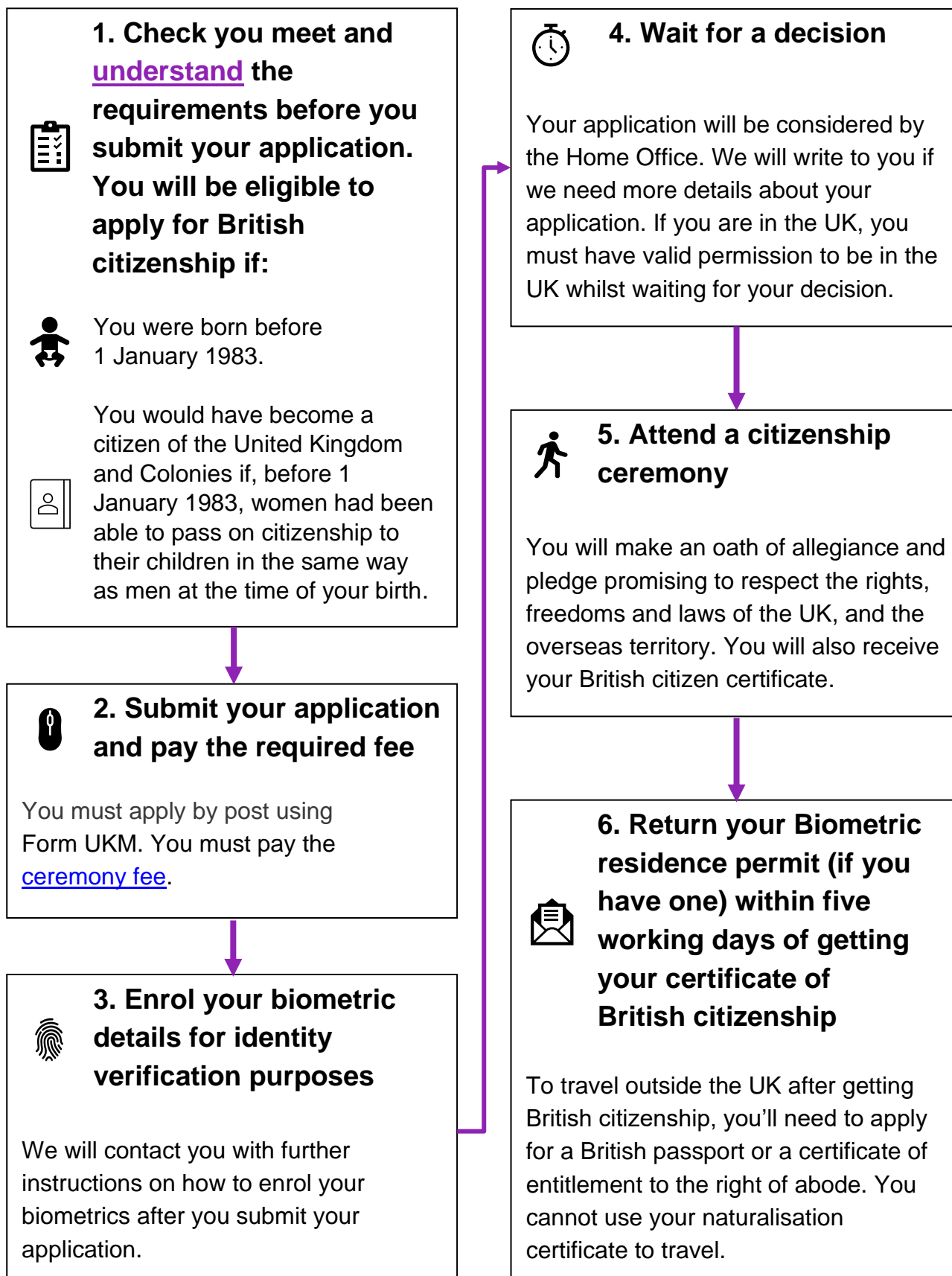
You may, if you wish, use the services of an agent such as a solicitor or other competent adviser to help you with your application.

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. 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 (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 at www.oisc.gov.uk.

[Contents](#)

Applying to register as a British citizen if born before 1983 to a British mother



The requirements you must meet

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

- You were born before 1 January 1983
- You would have become a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by descent if, before 1 January 1983, women had been able to pass on citizenship to their children in the same way as men at the time of your birth
- You would have acquired a right of abode in the UK because:
 - your mother was, at the time of your birth, a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by birth, legal adoption, naturalisation or registration* in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, or
 - one of your mother's parents** was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by birth, legal adoption, naturalisation or registration* in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands or Isle of Man at the time of her birth, or
 - one of your father's parents** was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by birth, legal adoption, naturalisation or registration* in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands or Isle of Man at the time of his birth, or
 - you were resident in the United Kingdom for a continuous period of 5 years before 1983 and had become settled in the United Kingdom by the end of that 5 year period, or
 - you are a woman who, before 1 January 1983, was or had been married to a man with the right of abode in the United Kingdom

* Registration does not include registration on the basis of a marriage on or after 28 October 1971 to a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

** For this section, the terms "parent" and "father" only applied to a child's father where he was married to the child's mother.

It is important that you meet all of the above requirements.

The law has been written in this way to ensure that only those who would have become British citizens automatically on 1 January 1983, had women been able to pass on citizenship before that date now have an opportunity to become British citizens by registration.

There is a registration route for people who would have become British Overseas Territories citizens or British Dependent Territories citizens (BOTC) on 1 January 1983 if women had been able to pass on citizenship before that date – Please see [BOTC M guidance](#).

Citizenship of the UK and Colonies by descent

The second requirement above is that you would have become a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by descent if women had been able to pass on citizenship to their children in the same way as men.

You will meet this requirement if at the time of your birth:

- your mother was:
 - born, adopted, naturalised or registered as a citizen in the United Kingdom and Colonies, or
 - a British subject before 1 January 1949 and was born in a British protectorate, protected state or United Kingdom trust territory, or
- your mother was, at the time of your birth, a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies and:
 - 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:

Katie was born in Canada in 1982. Her mother was born in the UK. If women had been able to pass on citizenship in 1982, Katie would have become a citizen of the UK and Colonies at birth and would now be a British citizen. She can apply using Form UKM.

[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.

[Contents](#)

Biometric Enrolment

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

Where you give your biometric information depends on how you're making your citizenship 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: www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits.

[Contents](#)

Documents

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 unprocessed.

Please send the following documents:

- Your passport
- Your full birth certificate (one which includes the name of your parent(s), which 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 expired citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies 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 the United Kingdom 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 and had you been a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies), you would have had the right of abode and would have become a British citizen.

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 citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by birth, adoption, naturalisation or registration in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, but one of her parents was such a citizen at that time. 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)

If, at the time of your birth, your mother was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies but not by birth, adoption, naturalisation or registration in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, or through one of her parents having acquired it in that way, you will need to provide the following evidence:

- Passports, P60s, details of National Insurance contributions, DSS claims, employers' letters showing that you were ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom for a continuous period of 5 years before 1 January 1983 and were settled in the United Kingdom at the end of that period, or
- If you are a woman who was married at any time before 1 January 1983 to a man with the right of abode in the United Kingdom, your marriage certificate and evidence of that husband's right of abode, e.g. passport or United Kingdom birth certificate.

Please provide any translations if these are applicable.

[Contents](#)

Application Processing Times

We aim to conclude citizenship 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.

You will usually get a decision on your application within 6 months – but some applications may take longer. If we expect that it will take longer than 6 months to decide your application, we will contact you to advise of this.

[Contents](#)

The citizenship you will acquire

All successful applicants will become British citizens by descent. As a British citizen by descent you will not normally be able to pass on British citizenship to any children born outside British territory.

If you are resident in the United Kingdom, you may therefore wish to apply for naturalisation. This would give British citizenship otherwise than by descent, which would mean that you could pass on that citizenship to any children born abroad to you after naturalisation.

Further information about the requirements for citizenship can be obtained on our [website](#) or by contacting:

Citizenship and nationality enquiries: nationalityenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk
Telephone: www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk

[Contents](#)

Citizenship ceremonies

If your application is successful and you are living in the UK, you will be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony. 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 reapply for registration.

If you are living abroad, your citizenship ceremony will take place at the embassy or consulate in the country you are living in.

If you do not attend the ceremony within 3 months without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused.

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.

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 and then only if they are 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.

[Contents](#)

Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen

Once you become a British citizen, you will no longer be able to enter the UK using your BRP or digital status, 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.

Please refer to GOV.UK for information on [how long it may take to get a British passport](#) or [how long it may take to get a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#). You may wish to consider this before applying for citizenship (for example, if you have plans to travel outside of the UK).

[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.

You should also contact them to let them know if you have made an application and 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 0300 790 6268. 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](#).

[Contents](#)

Notes

1. United Kingdom means:

- England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, and
- the Republic of Ireland at a time when it formed part of the United Kingdom (that is to say, before 31 March 1922), and
- (in relation to birth) a ship or aircraft registered in the United Kingdom or an unregistered ship or aircraft of the Government of the United Kingdom.

2. Parent includes the adoptive parents of a child who has been legally adopted.

3. Legal adoption – For the purposes of this guide (and registration under section 4C), this means adoption by order of a court in the United Kingdom and Islands (the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man). A child of any nationality who was adopted in the United Kingdom on or after 1 January 1950, or in the Channel Islands or Isle of Man after 1 April 1959, automatically became a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies on his adoption if the adoptive father (or adoptive mother, if she was the sole adopter) was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies at the time of the adoption.

4. Registration in the United Kingdom includes registration at the British High Commission in an independent Commonwealth country. It does not include:

- registration under section 6(2) of the British Nationality Act 1948 (registration on the grounds of marriage to a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies) if the marriage took place after 28.10.71,
or
- registration under section 7 of the British Nationality Act 1948 (registration of minors) at a High Commission after 28.10.71
or
- registration under section 12(6) of the British Nationality Act 1948 at a High Commission.

Settled in the United Kingdom. Before 1 January 1983, this meant being ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom without being subject to any time limit under the immigration laws.

