



Home Office

# Registration as a British citizen: children of British parents

Version 9.0

Guidance on how to consider applications for registration under sections 4C and 4F-4I of the British Nationality Act 1981

# Contents

Contents.....	2
About this guidance .....	4
Contacts .....	4
Publication.....	4
Changes from last version of this guidance .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Oath and pledge .....	5
Fees .....	5
Children of British mothers.....	7
The Law.....	7
People born to British “by descent” mothers.....	7
Persons born between 1 January 1949 – 1 January 1983 .....	7
Persons born before 1 January 1949 .....	8
Evidence to be supplied.....	8
Evidence of birth .....	8
Evidence of the mother’s status .....	8
Evidence that the applicant would have had a claim to CUKC under sections 5(1)(a), 5(1)(c) or 5(1)(d) of the British Nationality Act 1948 .....	8
Evidence that the applicant would have had the right of abode .....	9
Children of British or settled fathers.....	10
Proof of paternity.....	10
Birth certificate issued before 10 September 2015.....	11
Birth certificate issued on or after 10 September 2015.....	11
Type of British citizenship.....	12
Parents who married after the child was born .....	12
Registration under section 4F .....	13
The Law.....	13
Evidence to be supplied .....	13
Registration under section 4G.....	14
The Law.....	14
Evidence to be supplied .....	14
Registration under 4H .....	15
The Law.....	15
Evidence to be supplied .....	15
Registration under section 4I .....	16

The Law.....	16
Persons born between 1 January 1949 – 1 January 1983.....	16
Evidence to be supplied:.....	16

# About this guidance

This guidance tells Nationality caseworkers how to consider applications for registration as a British citizen from:

- children born before 1 January 1983 to British mothers
- children who would have become a British citizen but for the fact that their father was not married to their mother

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email the Nationality policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Review, Atlas and Forms team.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **9.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **07 August 2025**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

Changes to clarify paternity made to pages 10 and 11.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Introduction

This page tells you about applications for British citizenship made by children of British mothers or fathers.

Before 1 January 1983 British women were not able to pass on citizenship to their children born abroad in the same way as British men. Children born before 1 January 1983 to British mothers can apply for registration as a British citizen under [section 4C of the British Nationality Act 1981](#). They will normally qualify if they would have become British citizens automatically under that Act had women been able to pass on citizenship in the same way as men.

Before 1 July 2006 a British man could not pass on citizenship to a child born outside the UK if he was not married to the child's mother. Similarly, a child born between 1 January 1983 and 30 June 2006 in the UK to a settled or British citizen father might not have become a British citizen if the parents were not married.

Children born to unmarried British or settled fathers can apply for registration as a British citizen under [sections 4G – 4I of the British Nationality Act 1981](#). They will normally qualify if they would have become British citizens automatically under that Act had their parents been married.

In addition a person who would have qualified for registration as a British citizen had their parents been married can apply for registration under [section 4F of the 1981 Act](#).

A child can also register under these provisions if they were born on or after 1 July 2006, but did not become a British citizen because their mother was married to someone else.

When considering an application you must consider whether the applicant has an entitlement to registration under another provision - [section 4\(2\), 5, 10\(1\), 13\(1\), or paragraph 5 of Schedule 2](#)

This is because registration under [section 4C](#) and some registrations under [sections 4F-I](#) will give British citizenship by descent.

## Oath and pledge

An applicant who is over the age of 18 on the date of decision must attend a citizenship ceremony and make an oath of allegiance and pledge.

## Fees

Applicants under [section 4C](#) or [sections 4G-4I](#) only need to pay the ceremony fee. Applicants under [section 4F](#) must pay a [fee](#).

## Related content

## [Contents](#)

Nationality policy: general information all types of British nationality

# Children of British mothers

This page tells you how to consider applications for British citizenship from people who were born before 1983 to women who were British subjects or citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

## The Law

A person will qualify for registration under [section 4C of the British Nationality Act 1981](#) if:

- they were born before 1 January 1983
- they would either:
  - have become a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) under [section 5 or schedule 3, paragraph 3 of the British Nationality Act 1948](#), if those sections had provided for women to pass on citizenship in the same way as men
  - have become a CUKC under [section 12\(2\), 12\(3\), 12\(4\) or 12\(5\), of the British Nationality Act 1948](#), if those sections had provided for women to pass on citizenship in the same way as men, and women had been able to pass on British subject status in the same way as men before 1949
- they would have had the right of abode in the United Kingdom by virtue of [section 2 of the Immigration Act 1971](#) if they had they become a CUKC as set out in the previous bullets

For the purposes of registration under [section 4C of the British Nationality Act 1981](#), a woman is regarded as having been a CUKC by descent if she acquired that status by virtue of:

- [section 12\(2\), \(4\) or \(6\) only of the 1948 Act](#)
- [section 13\(2\) of that Act](#)
- [paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to that Act](#)
- section 1(1)(a) or (c) of the British Nationality (No. 2) Act 1964

Registration under [section 4C](#) gives British citizenship by descent.

An application must normally be made on [Form UKM](#).

## People born to British “by descent” mothers

### Persons born between 1 January 1949 – 1 January 1983

Where a person was born outside the UK between 1 January 1949 and 31 December 1982 (inclusive) to a British by descent mother you must disregard the requirement that their birth must have been registered with a UK consulate in the 12 month period after their birth.

## Persons born before 1 January 1949

Where you are considering registering a person born outside the UK to a British by descent mother before 1 January 1949, you must be satisfied that their birth was registered with a UK consulate in the 12 month period after their birth.

### Evidence to be supplied

You must take into account any evidence already on the file. If documents have been seen and noted in the past you do not need to ask to see them again. If the parents' marriage or a parent and child relationship has been accepted as valid by an Entry Clearance Officer, Immigration Officer, Home Office official, or any tribunal or court in the United Kingdom, you do not need to ask for further evidence unless you have reasons to doubt the previously accepted position.

You must see the evidence below.

### Evidence of birth

Evidence of the applicant's date of birth, such as a birth certificate.

### Evidence of the mother's status

Evidence of the mother's British subject status or CUKC at the time of the applicant's birth such as:

- a birth certificate showing the mother's birth in the United Kingdom and Colonies
- a passport describing the mother as a CUKC at that time
- a certificate confirming the mother's earlier naturalisation or registration as a CUKC
- an adoption certificate showing the mother's legal adoption in the United Kingdom or Islands, together with evidence to establish that she became a CUKC as a result (see adoption guidance for an explanation of the nationality effects of adoption orders prior to 1983)
- a passport or certificate of naturalisation showing that the mother was a British subject before 1949, together with relevant evidence to show that she became a CUKC at commencement of the British Nationality Act 1948

### Evidence that the applicant would have had a claim to CUKC under sections 5(1)(a), 5(1)(c) or 5(1)(d) of the British Nationality Act 1948

To evidence a claim to CUKC under sections 5(1)(a), (c) or (d) an individual would need to provide:

- evidence of the applicant's or his mother's place of birth - [s.5\(1\)\(a\) or \(d\)](#)



- evidence of his mother's Crown service - [\(s.5\(1\)\(c\)\)](#)

## Evidence that the applicant would have had the right of abode

Evidence of the claim to the right of abode in the United Kingdom which the applicant would have had, immediately before 1 January 1983, had they been a CUKC at that time:

- where the claim would have been based on the applicant's mother's birth, legal adoption, naturalisation or registration in the United Kingdom or Islands:
  - the applicant's birth certificate showing parents' details or adoption certificate
  - the mother's birth certificate showing her parents' details, adoption certificate, or naturalisation or registration certificate
- where the claim would have been based on the applicant's grandparent's birth, legal adoption, naturalisation or registration in the United Kingdom or Islands:
  - the applicant's birth certificate or adoption certificate showing their parents' details, the relevant parent's birth certificate or adoption certificate showing their parents' details
  - the relevant grandparent's birth certificate or adoption certificate showing their parents' details, naturalisation or registration certificate
  - if the claim would have been through the father or a grandfather the appropriate marriage certificate(s)
- where the claim would have been based on the applicant's residence and settlement in the United Kingdom:
  - evidence of the applicant's ordinary residence or settled status, such as passports, P60s, details of National Insurance contributions, benefit claims and employers' letters
- where, in the case of a female applicant, the claim would have been based on the applicant's marriage before 1983 to a man with the right of abode:
  - the marriage certificate
  - evidence of the husband's right of abode, such as a British citizen passport or United Kingdom birth certificate

### Related content

#### [Contents](#)

British citizenship: automatic acquisitions

# Children of British or settled fathers

This page tells you how to consider applications made by children of unmarried British or settled fathers under [sections 4F, 4G, 4H and 4I of the British Nationality Act 1981](#).

These sections apply to people who would have automatically become British citizens, or would be entitled to register under other provisions of the 1981 Act, had their parents been married at the time of their birth.

These provisions apply to:

- those who could qualify for registration under [section 1\(3\), 3\(2\), 3\(5\) or paragraph 4 or 5 of Schedule 2](#), had their parents been married at the time of their birth ([section 4F](#))
- those born after 1 January 1983 who would have become a British citizen automatically had their parents been married at the time of their birth ([section 4G](#))
- those born before 1 January 1983 who were citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) immediately before that date and would have become British citizens had their parents been married at the time of their birth ([section 4H](#))
- those born before 1 January 1983 who would have acquired British subject or CUKC status and would have gone on to become a British citizen had their parents been married at the time of their birth ([section 4I](#))

These provisions do not apply to those who:

- could have become a British citizen had their parents registered their birth or registered them as a British subject or CUKC, but did not do so
- would have become British citizens but for the fact that their grandparents were not married
- acquired British citizenship in another way and have since renounced or been deprived of that status

These provisions apply to a person whose natural father was not married to the person's mother at the time of their birth. This includes people whose mother:

- was not married at the time of their birth
- was married to someone else who was not their natural father at the time of the birth (the person's "natural father" is a person who can meet the proof of paternity conditions at [section 50\(9B\) of the British Nationality Act 1981](#) read with the [British Nationality \(Proof of Paternity\) Regulations 2006](#))

## Proof of paternity

[The British Nationality \(Proof of Paternity\) Regulations 2006](#) (the “2006 regulations”) came into effect on 1 July 2006 and were amended on 10 September 2015. These regulations set out the requirements to be met to prove paternity in cases where:

- the mother was not married at the time of the child’s birth
- no provision is made by section 28 of the [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990](#), or sections 35, 36, 42 and 43 of the [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008](#) as to the identity of the father, see the Surrogacy guidance (internal) or the [Surrogacy guidance \(external\)](#)

In such cases the ‘father’ will be any person who is shown to be such by either:

- being named before 10 September 2015 as the child’s father on the birth certificate issued within 12 months of the birth
- in all other cases any evidence such as DNA test reports, court orders or birth certificates considered by the Secretary of State to establish paternity

You must not mandate DNA evidence as this is not a requirement. Customers can choose to volunteer DNA evidence, either proactively or in response to an invitation to submit further evidence. Where a family choose not to volunteer DNA evidence, no negative inferences can be drawn from this. See DNA policy guidance for full instructions on the use and consideration of DNA evidence to prove a biological relationship.

## Birth certificate issued before 10 September 2015

Where a person is named as the child’s father on a birth certificate issued within 12 months of the birth before 10 September 2015, he must be recognised as the father, unless there is conclusive evidence that the paternity claim was made fraudulently.

## Birth certificate issued on or after 10 September 2015

Where the child’s birth was registered on or after 10 September 2015 you must take into account the fact that a man is named as the father on a birth certificate along with any other evidence that is available. In most circumstances the fact that a father is named on the birth certificate will be sufficient evidence of paternity, unless there is any information to suggest that the details on the birth certificate are not true. This might be where the parents were not in the same country at the time of conception, or another man claims to be the father, or there is DNA evidence to suggest that the child is not related as claimed to the man named on the birth certificate. In such cases, the birth certificate can be discounted if there is evidence, on the balance of probabilities, to show that another man is in fact the child’s natural father.

Caseworkers may carry out additional checks to determine who is the natural father of an applicant, which could include requesting further information or evidence, or conducting interviews with either or both the mother and father.

The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities (see the section on Automatic Claims). Documents must be from a reliable source.

## Type of British citizenship

Following registration under [sections 4G-4I of the British Nationality Act 1981](#), a person will be a British citizen 'by descent' if they would automatically have become a British citizen by descent had their parents been married at the time of their birth

A person registering under [section 4F](#) whose only route to registration as a British citizen (had their parents been married) would have been under [section 3\(2\)](#) will be a British citizen by descent.

## Parents who married after the child was born

If a person's parents were not married at the time of the birth, but later married, the person may have been "legitimated" in accordance with section 47 of the British Nationality Act 1981 or [section 23 of the British Nationality Act 1948](#) – see Nationality policy children of unmarried parents.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Registration under section 4F

## The Law

A person qualifies for registration under [section 4F](#) if:

- their mother was not married to the natural father at the time of their birth
- they have never been a British citizen
- their parents had married, they would qualify for registration under:
  - section 1(3)
  - section 3(2)
  - section 3(5)
  - paragraph 4 of Schedule 2
  - paragraph 5 of Schedule 2
- they would have qualified under section 3(5) - the consent of the natural father and mother must normally be provided (this can be waived in exceptional circumstances, subject to SCW approval, general guidance on consent can be found in the guidance on registration as British citizens: children)
- they would have qualified under section 1(3), 3(2) or 3(5) and they are of good character if over the age of 10

They must meet the requirements for registration on the date of application apart from the requirements relating to a 'father' or 'parent'. This means, for example, that a person seeking to rely on an entitlement to registration under section [1\(3\)](#), [3\(2\)](#) or [3\(5\)](#) would need to be under 18 on the date of application. This provision does not apply to those who could have registered in the past but no longer qualify.

## Evidence to be supplied

You must see the following evidence:

- documents to establish a registration entitlement – see the guidance on registration as British citizen: children
- parental consent if you are considering the application against the requirements for [section 3\(5\)](#)

### Related content

#### [Contents](#)

Registration as British citizen: other British nationals

Registration as British citizen: stateless persons

Registration as British citizen: children

British citizenship: automatic acquisition

# Registration under section 4G

## The Law

A person qualifies for registration under section 4G if:

- they were born after 1 January 1983
- their mother was not married to the natural father
- they have never been a British citizen
- they would have become a British citizen automatically if their parents had been married at the time of their birth, for example:
  - under [section 1\(1\)](#) – born in the UK to a father who was a British citizen or settled in the UK
  - under [section 2\(1\)](#) – born outside the UK to a British citizen father
  - under the [British Nationality \(Falkland Islands\) Act 1983](#)
- they are under 18, their mother and natural father have consented to the registration, unless:
  - one of the parents has died
  - there are special grounds to waive consent in the exceptional circumstances of a particular case (for more information see the section on parental consent in registration as British citizen: children)

## Evidence to be supplied

You must see the following evidence:

- documents to establish that the child would have had an automatic claim had their parents been married, such as their birth certificate and father's birth certificate, passport or evidence of settled status
- proof of [paternity](#)
- parental consent if the person is under 18

### Related content

#### [Contents](#)

Registration as British citizen: other British nationals

Registration as British citizen: stateless persons

Registration as British citizen: children

British citizenship: automatic acquisition

# Registration under 4H

## The Law

A person qualifies for registration under [section 4H](#) if:

- they were born before 1 January 1983
- their mother was not married to the natural father at the time of their birth
- they have never been a British citizen
- they were a citizen of the UK and Colonies (CUKC) on 31 December 1982
- they would have become a British citizen automatically had their parents been married at the time of their birth

## Evidence to be supplied

You must see the following evidence:

- documents to establish a claim British citizenship had their parents been married, for example:
  - evidence that the person was a CUKC on 31 December 1982, such as a CUKC passport or birth certificate (if the person claims to be a CUKC through birth in a former colony, you will need to be satisfied that they did not lose that status on independence)
  - evidence to show that they would have become a British citizen had the parents been married, such as the father's birth certificate or British citizen passport - (if the person was born overseas you must be satisfied that the father could pass on citizenship)
- proof of [paternity](#)

You must be aware that a person who was a CUKC on 31 December 1982 may have acquired British citizenship automatically if they lived in the UK for a period of 5 years before that date, and so obtained a right of abode in the UK.

## Related content

### [Contents](#)

Registration as British citizen: other British nationals

Registration as British citizen: stateless persons

Registration as British citizen: children

British citizenship: automatic acquisition

# Registration under section 4I

## The Law

A person will qualify for registration under [section 4I](#) of the British Nationality Act 1981 if:

- they were born before 1 January 1983
- their mother was not married to the natural father
- they have never been a British citizen
- they would have become a British citizen on 1 January 1983 had their parents been married at the time of their birth because either:
  - they were a British subject before 1 January 1949, and would have become a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) on that date if the parents had been married at the time of their birth (such as under [section 12\(2\) of the British Nationality Act 1948](#))
  - they became a CUKC on or after 1 January 1949 and lost that status on the independence of a Commonwealth country, but would not have done so had their parents been married at the time of their birth
  - they never acquired British subject or CUKC status, but would have done so had their parents been married at the time of their birth (such as under [section 12\(2\), 5\(1\) or schedule 3, paragraph 3 of the British Nationality Act 1948](#))

You must be satisfied that the person would have met each of the relevant criteria to become a British citizen had their parents been married at the time of their birth.

This means that they:

- would have become a CUKC before 1 January 1983
- would have retained that status on the independence of any Commonwealth country that they had a connection with
- would have acquired the right of abode under the [Immigration Act 1971](#) as in force immediately before commencement of the [British Nationality Act 1981](#)

## Persons born between 1 January 1949 – 1 January 1983

Where a person was born outside the UK between 1 January 1949 and 31 December 1982 (inclusive) to a British father you must disregard the requirement that their birth must have been registered with a UK consulate in the 12 month period after their birth.

## Evidence to be supplied:

You must see the following evidence:

- documents to establish a claim British citizenship had their parents been married, for example:



- evidence that they would have become a British subject or CUKC had their parents been married, such as the father's birth certificate or UK passport, and the applicant's birth certificate - if the person was born overseas you will need to be satisfied that the father could pass on citizenship
- proof of [paternity](#)

**Related content**

[Contents](#)