



Home Office

Guide UKM

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

August 2026

Contents

Introduction to the guide	2
Before applying	2
The Windrush Scheme	2
IAA and immigration advice	3
Applying to register as a British citizen if born before 1983 to a British mother	4
The requirements you must meet	5
Citizenship of the UK and Colonies by descent	6
Referees	7
Biometric Enrolment	8
Documents	9
After you have submitted your application	11
Application Processing Times	11
Travel after submitting an application	11
The citizenship you will acquire	12
Citizenship ceremonies	13
Arranging a citizenship ceremony	13
At the ceremony	13
Exemptions	14
Next steps	15
What to do if there is an error on your citizenship certificate	15
Returning your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)	15
Will I get digital status showing I am a British citizen?	16
Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen	16
Citizenship-related queries	17
Notes	18

Introduction to the guide

Becoming a British citizen is a significant life event. It allows you to apply for a British citizen passport and gives you the opportunity to participate more fully in the life of your local community.

The law covering registration is contained in the [British Nationality Act 1981](#) and the regulations made under it. You will need to show that you satisfy the relevant requirements. This guide is intended to help you apply; it is not a complete statement of the law or policy. Further information about applying for citizenship is available on [GOV.UK](#).

Before applying

You should check whether your country of nationality allows dual citizenship. Some countries do not 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 authorities of the country of which you are a citizen before submitting 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 or a requirement to vote in elections.

If you are currently living in the UK

A nationality application **does not** provide any immigration status while it is being considered. You must ensure you **have valid permission to stay in the UK** until you have had a decision on your application and attended your citizenship ceremony.

The Windrush Scheme

The Windrush Scheme is for people who arrived in the UK many years ago and do not have documentation confirming their immigration status.

If you are eligible under the Windrush Scheme, you should use the form available from GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-scheme-application-form-uk>.

There is no charge for applications made under the Windrush Scheme.

Please note: If you are not honest about the information you provide, and you are registered based on 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.

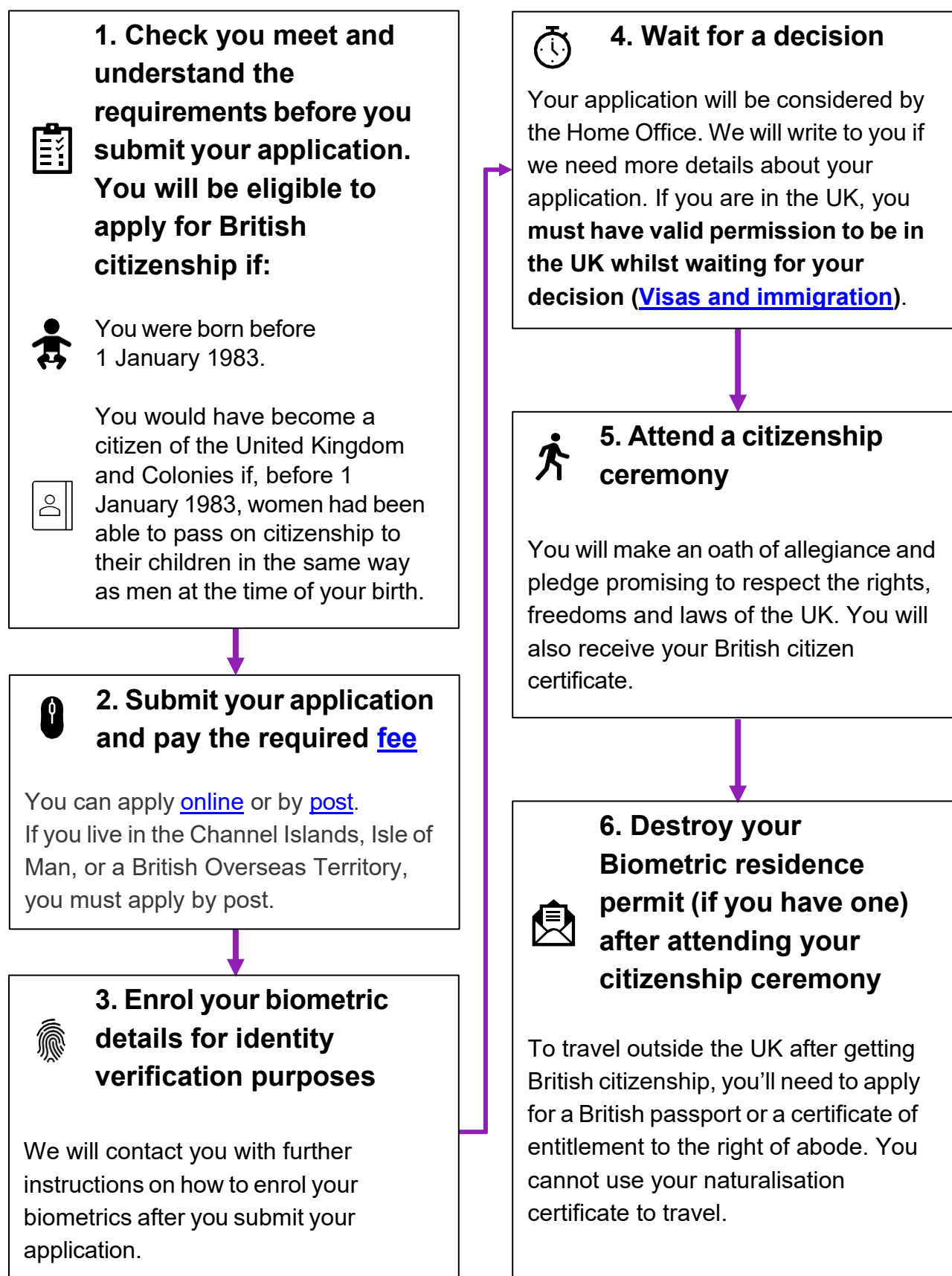
IAA and immigration advice

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 Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), an independent body. Nationality advice should only be provided by a person who works for an organisation registered with, or exempted by, the IAA 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 IAA regulated advisers are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-advice-authority>.

[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 the 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 (BOTC) or British Dependent Territories citizens (BDTC) 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](#) 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.

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

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

An application may be rejected as invalid if the person does not enrol their biometrics when requested.

For more information about enrolling biometrics and the current fee, please visit GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits.

[Contents](#)

Documents

This section tells you about the sort of documents you will need to provide to help us 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. You may find it helpful to enclose a family tree as we understand that these lists of supporting documents are complex. You should approach this by identifying the family member that holds a connection to the UK and how, then establish a connection to them through official documents.

If you are unable to provide all the documents that we need to deal with your application, we will make a decision on the balance of probabilities. A balance of probabilities decision is one based on all the evidence provided. We will proceed with the application if we are more satisfied than not that the information and documents show the event occurred (for example, your birth or the marriage of your parents).

[Contents](#)

After you have submitted your application

Application Processing Times

We currently 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.

If you want a quicker decision you may wish to apply to the priority service [Get a faster decision on your visa or settlement application: Applying for a faster decision - GOV.UK](#). If you use the priority service, you'll usually get a decision within 30 working days, but may not do so if we need to make additional checks with other government departments about your application, or if it is particularly complex.

Travel after submitting an application

After submitting your application, you are free to travel using your valid passport – and evidence of your valid immigration status – while you are waiting for a decision on your application.

You do not need to tell us about your travel plans, however, please note:

- You will usually be required to **enrol your biometric information within 45 days** of submitting your application. Failure to do so will invalidate your application.
 - You will receive instructions on how to provide your biometric details once you have submitted your application.
- If your application is successful, you will need to **arrange and attend a [citizenship ceremony](#) within 90 days**.

Otherwise, there is nothing during the citizenship process that would prevent you from travelling while your application is being considered.

A citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK, and you will need to demonstrate your entitlement to [enter the UK](#) at the UK border.

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

[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](#).

[Contents](#)

Citizenship ceremonies

Arranging a citizenship ceremony

If your application is successful, you will be invited to attend a [citizenship ceremony](#).

If you reside in the UK

You will receive an invitation from the Home Office, and this will confirm the local authority you should contact to arrange your ceremony.

You must ensure you have immigration permission to remain in the UK until you have completed your ceremony. A citizenship application does not provide you with immigration permission in the UK.

If you reside outside of the UK

Arrangements will be made for you to attend a ceremony at a British Embassy; High Commission; Consulate; Governor's Office or Lieutenant-Governor's Office.

Your ceremony invitation may be sent to you via email if you have applied online. If you have not received this, we recommend that you check your email's spam or junk folder before contacting us.

You must arrange and attend your ceremony within 90 days of receiving your invitation. The date by which you must attend your ceremony will be given in your invitation.

If you have special needs or concerns about attending your ceremony, please bring these to the attention of the local authority once you have received your invitation.

If you do not attend your ceremony within 90 days without good reason, your application for citizenship will be refused and you will need to re-apply.

At the ceremony

You will be asked to affirm or swear an Oath of Allegiance to the Monarch and to pledge your loyalty to the UK. This is a legal requirement for adults and is the point at which you will become a British citizen. Following this you will be presented with your certificate of citizenship as a British citizen.

Exemptions

Successful applicants are rarely exempted from attending ceremonies. Exemptions may be granted where applicants are physically unable to attend or if their mental state would make it inappropriate for them to attend. If you wish to request an exemption, you should explain your reasons and provide any supporting evidence.

[Contents](#)

Next steps

What to do if there is an error on your citizenship certificate

If you notice a mistake on your citizenship certificate, you will need to use [Form RR](#) to request an amendment to it.

Send your completed form and your original certificate to the following address:

Department 201
UKVI
The Capital
New Hall Place
Liverpool
L3 9PP

You may need to pay to change the details on your certificate, depending on if the mistake is your fault (for example, if you provided incorrect details when you applied). UKVI will send you a letter telling you if you need to pay.

Destroy your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you still hold a Home Office issued immigration document, such as a BRP (or a Biometric Residence Card (BRC)), you must destroy it after you have attended your citizenship ceremony.

You can do this by following these steps:

1. Cut your BRP/BRC into pieces.
2. Make sure you cut through
 - Your personal details
 - The royal coat of arms
 - The god biometric chip, if your card has one

Will I get digital status showing I am a British citizen?

There are no current plans to provide digital evidence of British citizenship. If you wish to travel, you will need to get a British passport or certificate of entitlement to the right of abode.

Travelling to and from the UK after becoming a British citizen

Once an individual becomes a British citizen, they will no longer be able to enter the UK using their BRP or digital status, or by presenting their citizenship certificate at the UK border.

For travel purposes, an individual can [apply for a British passport](#) or for a [certificate of entitlement to the right of abode](#).

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](#). Individuals may wish to consider this before applying for citizenship (for example, if they 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, [contact UK Visas and Immigration for help](#).

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.

If you require anything else, please [contact UK Visas and Immigration](#).

[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.

