

Seek advice before applying for British citizenship

Before applying for British citizenship

Applying for British citizenship is a complex and extremely costly process; fees are generally non-refundable. Before making an application for citizenship or to register your child as a British citizen, you should speak to your adviser or legal representative.

Why seek advice

There are certain requirements that you must meet before you can successfully apply for citizenship (naturalisation) or register your child for British citizenship. Determining whether you meet all of the requirements can be a difficult process. And completing the application correctly can be further complicated by your personal circumstances. Seeking professional advice, at the earliest opportunity, will reduce risk of mistakes and help to avoid complications and unnecessary delays.

An adviser or legal representative can:

- provide individual advice;
- ensure you are using the latest version of the application form;
- identify any changes to requirements or changes within citizenship rules; and
- help you with the necessary paperwork needed to ensure your application meets requirements.

Your application **will be refused** if you do not meet all of the requirements.

Where to find advice

Scottish Refugee Council **cannot** provide advice on applying for citizenship or registering your child as a British citizen. However, there are numerous organisations and individuals that offer trustworthy guidance, often for free. Scottish Refugee Council can give you a list of legal representatives that work in the field of immigration.

It is important that you only seek advice from an organisation or person legally recognised by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (the OISC) to provide immigration advice, or the Law Society of Scotland.

You can search a list of recognised advisers on the OISC website:

http://oisc.homeoffice.gov.uk/how_to_find_a_regulated_immigration_adviser/adviser_finder/

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Citizens Advice Direct

Citizens Advice Direct is a telephone-based service that offers free confidential advice and information. Citizens Advice Direct complements services provided by Bureaux.

Call 0844 848 9600 for advice. Calls from BT land lines cost 5p per minute. Calls from mobile may cost more.

You can also complete an advice request form on their website:

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/enquiry-form.aspx>

An adviser will respond to your query within 48 hours, based on the information you provide.

Nationality Checking Service

South Lanarkshire Council now offers a checking service for citizenship applications. Areas include: East Kilbride, Edinburgh, Hamilton, Lanark, Rutherglen. In return for a small fee, an officer will help you complete your application, copy and certify required documents and ensure the application fee is paid.

The service allows you to apply for British citizenship at their office, but you **must** make an appointment before you go there.

Find your nearest Nationality Checking Service in Scotland on the UK Border Agency website:

http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/applying/checkingservice/checkingservice/locations/ncs_scotland/.

Or call the Liverpool Contact Centre on: 0845 010 5200. Lines are open Monday – Friday from 9:00am – 5:00pm.