

Applying for British Citizenship as an adult “Naturalisation”



- **Applications for British citizenship are likely to become much more difficult.** If you are eligible, don't wait! Even if you are not eligible now, it is important that you are aware of the requirements to be prepared.
- You need to apply for citizenship (“naturalise”) **before applying for a British passport** (they are 2 different applications).
- British Citizenship is **far more secure and grants more rights than Indefinite Leave to Remain.**

Eligibility and requirements – you need to meet **ALL** these criteria

- You are over 18 years old
- You have had continuous **lawful residence for 5 years** in the UK
- You have had **Indefinite Leave to Remain** or Settled Status for at least 12 months
- You haven't been absent from the UK for a long time (no more than 450 days across the 5 year period, no more than 90 days within the 12 months before the application date)
- You were physically present on the exact date 5 years prior to the application date
- You intend to live in the UK permanently
- You have **2 referees**, including a British citizen and a professional (eg: doctor, teacher)
- **You have passed the “Life in the UK Test”.** The test **costs £50** as of 04/12/2025. The certificate has no expiry date. Medical exemptions from the test are only considered for long-term or permanent conditions, with evidence.
- You can prove **English language knowledge level B1** (note that the requirement may increase to B2 level in April 2026). English language certificates are typically valid for two years. Medical exemptions are only considered for long-term physical or mental condition, with evidence.
- You can pay the **application fee of £1,735** (as of 04/12/25). There is no fee waiver available. There is no refund if the application is refused.
- You meet the **Good Character** requirement (see below)

What is “Good Character”?

Good character is the main single reason for refusal. The Home Office “Good Character” criteria were made significantly harsher in February 2025 and is likely to become even harsher in the future. **If you have ever had problems with the police, any previous contact with the Home Office, or if anything in the list below applies, it is essential that you MENTION it in your application and that you seek LEGAL advice before making your application.**

- Any problem with the police, criminality, custodial sentences, fines, etc.
- Illegal entry into the UK, overstaying
- Failing to report to the Home Office
- Illegal working
- Deception in previous immigration applications
- Sham marriages or civil partnerships
- Evidence of deception in a Life in the UK test or English language test

How to find representation / a lawyer?

- Legal aid (free lawyer) is not available for British Citizenship applications. We don't know anyone who offers free representation. If you need a lawyer, you will need to **pay for a private lawyer**.
- Your **Citizens Advice Bureau** is the best place to seek support, but it is minimal.
- **Haringey Council** can provide Assisted Digital support if you need help with the online application form or do not have access to a computer - [Apply for British citizenship | Haringey Council](#)
- If you feel you can make the application yourself but would like someone to check it over before you send it, you can use a **Checking Service**. They cost about £400.
- Free Movement/Seraphus: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/immigration-application-checking-service/> or <https://www.seraphus.co.uk/application-checks/>
- Owens Stevens Solicitors: <https://www.owensstevens.org.uk/fees>
- Edgewater Legal: <https://www.edgewaterlegal.com/services/one-off-consultation/>

Need more info?



Haringey Council



Citizens Advice

