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Priority Service For Citizenship Applications

The Home Office recently introduced a priority service for citizenship applications. This means those applying for naturalisation or registration can now opt to pay for a quicker decision. Guidance published by the Home Office states:

1 Where a customer wants their application to be treated as priority, they can submit their citizenship application through the nationality priority service for an additional fee of £500.

2 Customers submitting a priority service application should normally expect to receive a decision within 30 working days from the date of biometric submission. A citizenship application that has already been submitted cannot be upgraded to a priority service application.

3 Applications requiring enhanced scrutiny, external checks, national security / identity enquiries or applications that are particularly complex may fall outside the timeframe.

4 The 30 working days for a decision to be made starts from the day of your biometric appointment at a UKVCAS centre.

What if you are not eligible to pay for the priority service?

You may consider making a request for a priority decision to be made. The Home Office Guidance states they may consider granting priority in circumstances where a customer:

- is unable to make journeys necessary for compassionate or business reasons on existing documents
- has compelling or compassionate circumstances where they may need to travel to the UK quickly

- is approaching their 18th birthday and may be unable to make the oath of allegiance and pledge as an adult
- can show that they require British citizenship for a particular job
- has been selected to represent the UK internationally in a sport or other event but this is subject to first becoming a British citizen
- is in the immediate family of a civil servant posted, or soon to be posted, abroad
- has already been significantly inconvenienced as a result of administrative error or delay by the Home Office
- has secured the agreement of a minister to priority consideration
- has demonstrated that it would be in the national interest to consider an application out of turn despite the circumstances being otherwise undeserving

Further, they may decide to grant priority:

- If the case is more than 12 months old and the delay is not justifiable
- Where there is evidence that the case has been mishandled or overlooked

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If you would like advice or assistance on any of the issues raised in this note/article, please contact Agnes Lai by email at

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