

Remain in France Together

Bitesize Guide



French Citizenship

As the UK has now left the EU, some long-term residents are wondering whether and how to apply for French citizenship (i.e. nationality). This guide provides links to information sources for those considering this route.

As a good level of French is a pre-requisite for becoming French, we make no apology for pointing to French-language sources.

This guide covers cases where people are entitled to become French through family connections and do so by **declaration** or foreigners who request naturalisation by **decree**.

Are you already French?

There are people who, maybe without realising it, are already deemed to be French by virtue of their family connections.

In this scenario, the French authorities simply examine your dossier to see if you meet the requirements and, if you do, they declare that you are French.

Children of French parents

If you have a French parent you may be able to just apply for a French ID card at your Mairie.

If your paper trail is not complete, you might need to start by requesting a [Certificat de Nationalité Français](#)¹ and if you were born outside France, you may need to start by getting your consular birth certificate or by getting your birth transcribed by the consulate. Contact the French consulate for the country you were born in for more information.

Children born in France

Another scenario is that of children born in France to foreign parents. Full information can be found [here](#)²

Although young people in this case become French on their 18th birthday, life and young people being uncertain, there are good arguments for doing an advance request, possible from age 13.

French siblings

A related case is that young people who move to France before the age of 6, and who have a French sibling, can sometimes become French by declaration. More [here](#)³

Parent or grandparent of a French national

And another one: parents or grandparents of a French citizen who have 25 years residence AND are over 65 years old: Click [here](#)⁴



Remain in France Together

Bitesize Guide



French spouse

Finally, another common one : those who are married to a French citizen, if they meet certain conditions can become French by declaration: Click [here](#)⁵

Alternative routes to French nationality

If you can't become French by declaration, you can apply to become French by naturalisation. Basically, you ask to become French, showing you meet the necessary criteria, and if your request is accepted, France makes a decree that you are now French.

Note that becoming French through naturalisation is a privilege not a right (unlike routes such as marriage) and that reasons for refusal can include:

- insufficient French
- insufficient proof of integration
- insufficient resources

There is an official language test and you will also be interviewed in French and need to show the required level.

The decree route is long (up to several years) and requires a lot of paperwork and patience. It is handled at Préfecture level and every Préfecture does things a bit differently, so although there is a link to the general page in the references section you really **MUST** go and find your own Prefecture's list of documents and procedures as shown [here](#)⁶.

As well as language, naturalisation requires you to demonstrate a desire to really be French, and to integrate into French society.

It is worth pointing out that you can hold French and British nationalities simultaneously - neither country requires you to give up your other nationalities.

If you hold both, when in France you are treated as French, and when in the UK you are treated as British. This means that if you get into trouble with the authorities in one country, you cannot call on the consular services of the other.

In other countries you are treated as a national of the passport you used on the way in, so it's worth thinking about which passport to use when you travel.

Note that if you become French, you will retain Freedom of Movement as well as being covered by the provisions of the withdrawal agreement.

There are a number of helpful Facebook groups, both in English and French.



Remain in France Together

Bitesize Guide



References

The following links all point to official information sources:

1. Certificate of French nationality
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1051>
2. French nationality of a child born in France with foreign parents
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F295>
3. French nationality of the siblings of a French person
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F33800>
4. French nationality of the parents or grandparents of a French person
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F33430>
5. French nationality through marriage
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2726>
6. French nationality by naturalisation
<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2213>

Disclaimer

This is one of a series of guides and information sheets produced by Remain in France Together (RIFT). RIFT is a statutory association governed by French law and managed and run by volunteers. It exists to uphold the rights of British citizens living in, or moving to, France affected by the UK withdrawal from the EU.

The information is for general guidance and does not constitute legal advice. It is offered free for personal, non-commercial use.

The main source of information to keep up-to-date with developments in citizens' rights is our website <https://www.remaininfrance.fr/>

When using our printed guides, you should check the website to make sure that you have the latest version.

This information was last updated: July 2020.



Except where otherwise noted, content in this guide is licensed under a Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial NoDerivatives 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) license.