

Overseas Territories Citizenship Newsletter

November 2024

3rd Edition

Welcome to the third edition of the Overseas Territories Citizenship newsletter!

This edition gives an update on the Border Security Command, revised guidance on registration as a BOTC in special circumstances, Microsoft Teams Workspace, a spotlight on the Turks and Caicos Islands, and an update on training and future activities.

Thank you to the Turks and Caicos Islands for their contribution of the Spotlight feature of our OT Newsletter. The article highlights key facts about the Islands and their immigration and nationality system.

BORDER SECURITY COMMAND



In the previous edition, we informed you that the Home Secretary had asked the Home Office to set up a new Border Security Command (BSC). In September, the Home Secretary announced the appointment of Martin Hewitt CBE QPM as the commander of the new UK BSC. Martin has over 30 years of experience in policing and crisis management, having served with distinction in both the British Army and UK law enforcement, including four years as chair of the National Police Chiefs Council.

The BSC will sit as a new Director General group within the Home Office, working collaboratively with colleagues across the Department and beyond.

As Border Security Commander, Martin will oversee the crucial work required to protect our border and tackle the smuggling gangs, providing strategic direction and drawing together the work of the National Crime Agency (NCA), intelligence agencies, police, Immigration Enforcement and Border Force.

Border Security Commander, Martin Hewitt, said:

"I am under no illusions of the challenges that lie ahead leading this new and groundbreaking Command, but I am determined to face those challenges head-on, and I am honoured to have been appointed to the task."

MICROSOFT TEAMS WORKSPACE

We are currently working to set up a Microsoft Teams External Collaboration (EC) Workspace (subject to Home Office approval).

When established, we intend for the Workspace to enhance communication and collaboration between the Home Office and citizenship network of the British Overseas Territories. It will act as a hub for us to share nationality guidance and resources with you, so you will be able to access them at your own convenience.

We hope to share further information with you in due course once we have made more progress with this initiative.

TRAINING

We continue to deliver on our commitment to training and support for the Overseas Territories' nationality functions.

Best Practice

Following the summer leave, on 29 October 2024, we held an online training session on best practice for application and casework processes. Delegates attended from 7 Overseas Territories and the session lasted for an hour. Carl Garside from UKVI Operations led the session which covered the following areas:

- Receiving applications
- Application enrichment & validation/allocation
- Caseworker consideration
- Minute sheet
- Approve decision or compose refusal letter
- Produce certificate & invite to ceremony
- Ceremony held

Jane Whitehead, Carl Garside and Matthew Smith led a Q&A session where delegates asked questions covering a wide range of issues relating to ceremonies, good character, residency, and the registration of minors.

The slides covered during the training and a sample of a minute sheet have been sent out to the network. If you did not receive it and would like to have the slides, please contact the Nationality Policy Team.

Future Training

The next online training session will take place in December 2024. This will be on Stateless registrations. A date and an invitation will be sent out in due course. We encourage everyone who deals with citizenship applications to attend.

In the new year, we plan to have a case conference on minor registrations. We welcome any suggestions you may have on future training subjects.

Training Needs

We would like to understand your training needs so we can structure and tailor the training we offer.

In the coming days, you will receive a questionnaire. Please complete and return the questionnaire within the specified time. We hope to identify training opportunities to build on skills already held throughout the network and to support you in your work.

REGISTRATION IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES GUIDANCE

Over the summer we published revised guidance on registration as a BOTC in special circumstances. Section 17I was introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. A person will qualify for registration as a BOTC if they would have been, or been able to become, a BOTC but for: historical legislative unfairness, an act or omission of a public body, or exceptional circumstances relating to that person. You can find the guidance here: [BOTC registration in special circumstances: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/botc-registration-in-special-circumstances-caseworker-guidance).

We have included new examples in the guidance to help you consider whether a person will qualify. We will add further examples as different scenarios arise. Please let us know of any cases that you deal with that would be useful to include as examples in guidance for others to see.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS



Turks and Caicos Islands: A Glimpse into Geography, Citizenship, and Government Operations

The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), a United Kingdom Overseas Territory, is located southeast of the Bahamas, with which it shares a physical connection, and north of Hispaniola. This stunning archipelago, with its rich history and geographic diversity, has intrigued historians and geographers for centuries.

Historical Overview

There is some speculation that the islands may have been the first landfall for Christopher Columbus during his 1492 voyage. However, Juan Ponce de León is credited with the European discovery of the islands in 1512. Throughout history, the islands have been geographically linked to both Jamaica and the Bahamas, though today, they stand as a distinct territory.

Geography of the Turks and Caicos Islands

The Turks and Caicos Islands consist of two main groups: the Turks Islands, including Grand Turk and Salt Cay, and the Caicos Islands, which lie northeast of the Turks, separated by the Turks Island Passage—a 22-mile-long, 7,000-foot-deep underwater trench. The Caicos group includes South Caicos, East Caicos, North and Middle Caicos, Providenciales, and West Caicos. The islands are formed by coral reefs, creating a low-lying landscape, and experience a tropical savanna climate with mild winters averaging 75-80°F (24-27°C) and warm summers reaching 85-90°F (29-32°C).

Demographic and Citizenship Insights

According to the 2012 census, the resident population of the Turks and Caicos Islands was projected to reach 50,833. The population is a mix of nationalities, reflecting the territory's diverse composition. The British Overseas Territories Citizens (BOTC) of Turks and Caicos

make up 40.04% of the population, followed by 33.49% from Haiti, 6.34% from Jamaica, and smaller percentages from the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Philippines, and other nations.

Government Operations and Citizenship Services

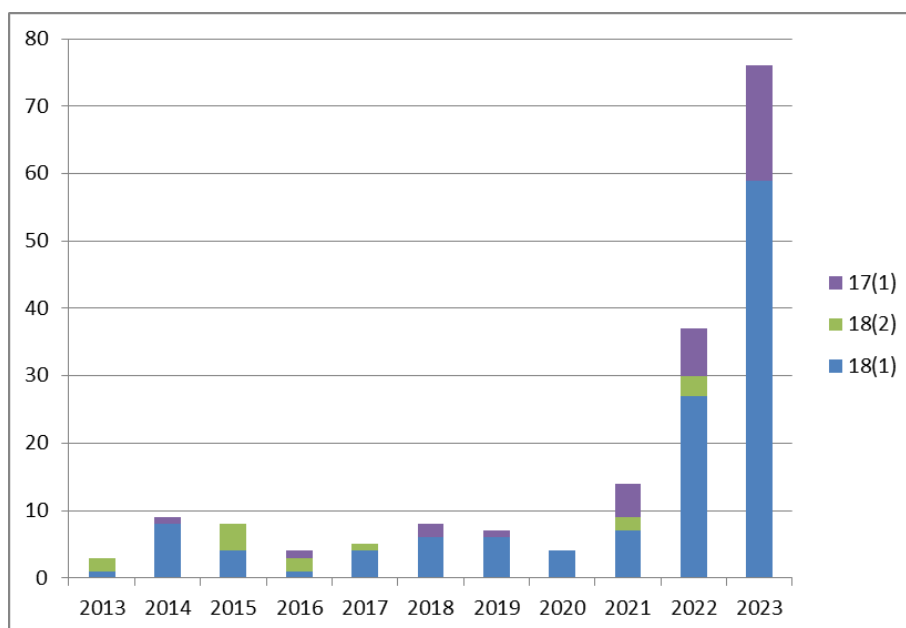
The Department of Citizenship & Naturalization under the Ministry of Home Affairs plays a crucial role in administering citizenship-related matters. The department consists of 15 full-time employees who operate under various ordinances, including the British Nationality Act and the Turks and Caicos Islander Status Ordinance. They manage processes related to naturalisation, registration, permanent residency, and issuing British Overseas Territories Citizenship (BOTC) passports.

In the last six years, there has been a significant increase in the number of applications for naturalisation and citizenship-related services. Applications for naturalisation under section 18(1) and 18(2), particularly through marriage to a BOTC, have grown, as well as registrations for minors under sections 15(3), 17(1), and 15(4).

Trends in Citizenship Applications (2018-2023)

- 2018: 301 applications
- 2019: 401 applications
- 2020: 580 applications
- 2021: 700 applications
- 2022: 640 applications
- 2023: 688 applications

Number of Nationality (BOTC) applications processed per year (2013-2023) by BNA section



In turn, this has led to an increasing number of applications being made for registration as British citizens under section 4A which are also initially processed through our service.

GET IN TOUCH

We would welcome your contributions, questions or suggestions for future versions of this newsletter.

Would you like to highlight nationality work in your Overseas Territory in a future edition and any challenges you face?

Also, if anyone needs to be added to distribution lists – either for training events or general communications – please let us know.

Contact us at: nationalitypolicy@homeoffice.gov.uk