

How to apply for a correction to a birth registration

1. General Information

A correction can only be made when the information on the certificate is wrong. The certificate cannot be corrected to show new information if your circumstances change after the birth is registered.

A correction is always made in the register held at the office responsible for the area where the birth took place.

Generally, corrections fall into **two** categories :

1. Corrections that can be made at the register office for the area where the person was born – these tend to be minor mistakes made in an occupation, a parent's place of birth, an address etc
2. Corrections that need to be sent to the General Register Office (GRO) – these tend to be mistakes involving names.

2. How do I apply for a correction?

First of all, you should contact the register office for the area where the birth was registered to find out if it is a mistake that they can correct. Alternatively, you can ring GRO on **0300 123 1837** who can also confirm where your application needs to be sent.

If the local register office can make the correction, you will need to arrange an appointment with them.

If it is an application that must be sent to GRO, you will need to complete an application form.

3. Where can I get an application form?

- by downloading it from www.direct.gov.uk
- your local register office may be able to supply you with one
- you can get one from GRO by ringing **0300 123 1837**

4. Who can apply for a correction?

- the mother
- the father (if his details are included on the certificate)

If neither parent is available it may be possible for the child named on the certificate to apply themselves. If you are applying for a correction to a child's name, the application form will need to be signed by both parents if they are both named on the birth certificate.

5. What does a correction look like?

The original information will always be shown as it was first given, but a note will be written against the registration explaining what the correct information should be and the date when the correction was made. Any full certificates issued from that point on will include the note in the margin.

Short birth certificates, which show only the child's correct name, sex, date and place of birth, do not show the note in the margin.

6. Do I need to prove that the birth certificate is wrong?

You need to show that the information originally given at the time of the registration was wrong. You will have to produce document(s) that clearly shows what the correct information should have been and these document(s) should be valid or dated around the date of birth.

It is not possible to list every example of what will be acceptable but it should be an official document which shows the correct information. Typical examples will include :

- passport
- identity card
- photocard driving licence
- letter from a government department
- bank/building society statement
- utility bill
- credit card statement
- letter from a hospital/doctor

If you cannot send us any proof, then normally a correction will not be possible. Further advice can be obtained by ringing **0300 123 1837**

7. Do I need to send in original documents?

You should only send in photocopies of documents certified as true copies by a professional person or a person of good standing in the community. A list giving examples of the type of person that would be suitable can be found at : www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports/Applicationinformation

Acceptable certifiers are listed in the section 'Who can countersign your application'.

The person should not be related by birth or marriage to the applicant(s), be in a personal relationship with the applicant or live at the same address.

The person certifying documents should :

- include the words -

"Certified to be a true copy of the original seen by me"

- sign
- print their name
- confirm their occupation
- add their address and telephone number

However, the General Register Office reserves the right to ask you to submit the original document if requested.

8. Do I have to be there when the registration is corrected?

If the correction is being carried out by the register office in the area where the person was born, you need to organise with them a time when you can go to witness the correction being made and to sign the note in the register.

If it is a correction that needs to be sent to GRO, you can indicate on the application form whether or not you want to be present when the correction is being made.

However, if the correction involves a serious mistake you may be asked to make a statutory declaration. This declaration must be signed by someone who is legally qualified to attest an oath – a solicitor or a magistrate for example – a fee may be charged for this service. In these cases, you will not have to be present when the correction is made.

9. How long does a correction take?

For corrections that can be done at the register office in the area where the person was born, you will need to contact them to arrange an appointment. As local register offices vary from office to office, we cannot give precise timescales.

For corrections that have to be sent to GRO, if there are no problems with your application, you can expect the paperwork authorising the correction to be sent out within **5 working days**. If GRO ask you for more information or you need to send in more paperwork or make a statutory declaration, each further reply may take up to **20 working days**.

However, you should be aware that in exceptional circumstances, it may not always be possible to meet these targets.

10. Where can I find out more?

You can contact the register office in the area where the person was born. They will be happy to explain what you need to do. Alternatively, you can telephone GRO who will advise you on your individual circumstances and how to apply for a correction.

Our contact details are :

Address: GRO Casework Team, PO Box 476, Southport, PR8 2WJ

Phone: 0300 123 1837 Option 2

E-mail: corrections.re-reg@ips.gsi.gov.uk

Internet: Go to <http://www.direct.gov.uk> and search for *Registering life events* to find forms for downloading

The information contained in this leaflet is based on the **Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953** but is not a full statement of the law.