

How to apply for a correction to remove the wrong father's details

1. General Information

A correction can only be made when it has been proven either by a DNA test or a court order that the man named on the certificate is not the natural father of the child.

A correction is made in the register held at the register office responsible for the area where the birth took place. However, all corrections involving paternity always need to be authorised by the General Register Office (GRO)

2. How do I apply for a correction?

You will need to complete an application form and send it to GRO

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 natural father
- the man named on the birth certificate

You will need to supply a contact address for the mother, the man named on the certificate and the natural father (if he took part in the DNA tests) and the form will need to be signed by all person(s) making the application

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

You will need to prove that the man currently named on the certificate is not the natural father of the child. You will have to produce a recognised DNA test report or a court order which either excludes the man named of the certificate from paternity or confirms the name of the true biological father.

6. Are all DNA test results accepted as evidence?

Only certain types of DNA tests are acceptable. Tests shown as being for 'peace of mind' or 'not suitable for legal purposes' cannot be accepted. Only DNA tests where the identities of the persons tested have been established can be used to support a correction. A list of acceptable DNA testers can be found at :

www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-and-rights/accredited-list.htm

Alternatively, GRO can provide an up to date list of approved testers on request.

7. Do I need to send in original documents?

You should only send in documents which have been certified by a professional person or a person of good standing in the community as a true copy of the original. 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/DG_174151

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. What does a correction look like?

A correction is made by a registrar inserting a note in the margin of the child's birth registration. The birth entry is the legal record of the birth and is kept at the register office responsible for the area in which the child was born. The note will show that the details of the named man should not have been registered. The correction will not put the true father's details into the birth entry, for this to take place the birth will need to be re-registered (see Section 12).

The correcting marginal note and the original information will still appear in all full birth certificates issued from the birth entry in future. This is because birth certificates must show the same information as the birth entry.

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

9. Can I change the child's surname as part of the correction?

Only information found to be wrong can be corrected in a birth entry. For this reason, the child's surname cannot be changed as this was the surname in which it was intended to bring the child up.

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

You will not have to be present at the register office when the correction is made. A correction can only be made if statutory declarations about the error are made by two people with knowledge of the facts. A statutory declaration is a legal statement made before a solicitor or some other person who is legally able to witness an oath. The people who would be considered acceptable to make a statutory declaration would be :

- the mother
- the named man
- the natural father, if he took part in the DNA tests and was proven to be the father
- the DNA tester (it is likely the DNA tester will charge a fee for this service)

GRO will provide statutory declaration forms and instructions for making them once it is clear who will be available to make the declarations.

11. How long does a correction take?

If there are no problems with your application, you can expect to be contacted within **5 working days**. If we ask you for more information or you need to send in more paperwork, 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.

12. Can the natural father be put in the birth entry?

After the correction has been made, the mother and the true father can apply together to register the birth again. This re-registration will then show the true father's details. More information on re-registrations can be found at :

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Registeringlifeevents/Birthandadoptionrecords/Registeringorchangingabirthrecord/DG_175620

13. 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
E-mail: corrections.re-reg@ips.gsi.gov.uk
Internet: Go to <http://www.direct.gov.uk> and search for '*Correcting a record*' 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.