

Fast-track British citizenship through volunteering now a legal right

By Kaye Wiggins, Third Sector Online, 22 July 2009

New act speeds up approval for applicants who have been 'active citizens'

Immigrants applying for British citizenship will have their applications fast-tracked if they do voluntary work, under measures contained in the [Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act](#), which became law yesterday.

The act introduces an "activity condition" that allows immigrants who have been in the UK for five years to gain citizenship within a year rather than three if they can prove they have been an "active citizen" by volunteering.

But it does not create a definition of volunteering or indicate how much activity would be required to get citizenship faster. *Third Sector* [reported last week](#) that volunteering organisations felt the bill was being rushed through Parliament and were worried it could make volunteering a tick-box exercise.

A [Home Office](#) spokeswoman said it would announce a consultation on how the volunteering aspect of the law would work in practice.

The consultation, which will be open to anyone and will start within the next few weeks, will involve discussions with selected figures from the voluntary sector.