

# The Monarchy

## Who is the Head of State?

The Queen is the UK's Head of State. She acts as a focus for the nation to join together, she stands over ceremonial occasions, visits local communities and represents the UK around the world.

The Queen is also Head of the Commonwealth. During her reign she has visited all the Commonwealth countries.

## How did Elizabeth become Queen?

When she was born in 1926 no one expected Princess Elizabeth to become Queen. She was the oldest of two children. Her father George was not the King and he didn't think he ever would be.

George had an older brother called Edward. Because Edward was the eldest son he would naturally become King. However, Edward abdicated (gave up the throne) so he could marry the woman he loved.

As George was next in line to the throne, Princess Elizabeth's father took over the job and became King George VI. King George led the country through the second world war but in 1952 he died of lung cancer. Princess Elizabeth was his eldest child, so on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952, she acceded to the throne and became Queen Elizabeth II. She was in Kenya at the time and became the first sovereign in over 200 years to accede whilst abroad.

Elizabeth was crowned at her coronation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953 in Westminster Abbey. Her coronation was broadcast live across the nation on television. The service began at 11:15am and lasted almost three hours. A total of 8,251 guests attended the ceremony at Westminster Abbey whilst 27 million people watched on television sets and 11 million people listened on the radio.

## Who gets to be the monarch?

Many Royals are said to be in line to the throne, the line is like a queue to rule the country. Where you are in the queue depends on who your parents were.

### *It's not about how old you are*

Prince William is younger than many people behind him in the line for the throne. He is ahead of them because his dad, Prince Charles, was first in line for the throne because he is the first born male child of the Queen.

If someone in line for the throne has a baby, their child is not sent to the back of the line. Instead they slot in just behind their dad or older brothers. These are called the rules of succession

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### Rules about girls

The rule has always been that a king or queen's eldest son (no matter if there are any older daughters) takes over the throne when their parent dies. On the monarch's death, the crown passes to his eldest son. The crown would only pass to a daughter if the monarch didn't have any male children. For example, Princess Anne is the Queen's second oldest child but she is ninth in line to the throne because the crown will be passed down the male line.

This has always been the case, however, in 2011 the succession rule changed. From 2011, all sons and daughters of any future monarch have the equal right to the throne. Under the old succession laws the heir to the throne is the first-born son of the monarch. Only when there are no sons, as in the case of the Queen's father George VI, does the crown pass to the eldest daughter.

### Who is in line for the throne?

The Prince of Wales is the Queen's eldest son and **first in line to the throne**. On 29 July 1981 he married Lady Diana Spencer, who became the Princess of Wales. The couple had two sons, William and Harry. They later separated and their marriage was dissolved in 1996. On 31 August 1997, the Princess was killed in a car crash in Paris. Prince Charles married Camilla Parker Bowles on 9 April 2005. As heir to the throne, his main duties are to support the Queen in her royal commitments.

Prince William is the eldest son of the Prince of Wales and Diana, Princess of Wales, and is **second in line to the throne**. He went on to study at St Andrews University, where he met his future wife, Kate Middleton. The couple were married in 2011. On his 21st birthday he was appointed a Counsellor of State - standing in for the Queen on official occasions. In July 2017, he left his role in the RAF to take on more royal duties on behalf of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

Prince George of Cambridge was born on 22 July 2013 at St Mary's Hospital in London. He started primary school in September 2017. Prince George is **third in line to the throne**, after his father and grandfather.

The Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to her second child, a baby girl on 2 May 2015, again at St Mary's Hospital. The duke and duchess named her Charlotte Elizabeth Diana. She is **fourth in line to the throne** and is known as Her Royal Highness Princess Charlotte of Cambridge.

The Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to her third child, a baby boy on 23 April, 2018 at St Mary's Hospital in London.

Prince Louis (pronounced Lou-ee, not Lou-iss) is **fifth in line to the throne**.

Prince Harry is **sixth in line to the throne**. He trained at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and went on to become a lieutenant in the Army, serving as a helicopter pilot. He has been a Counsellor of State since his 21st birthday, standing in for the Queen on official duties. He left the Army in 2015 and to focus on charitable work, including conservation in Africa and organising the Invictus Games for injured members of the armed forces. He has since stepped down from most royal duties.

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23272491>

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