

Birmingham City Council

Licensing and Public Protection Committee

14 May 2024



Subject: Register Office – Update on Statutory Fees for Citizenship Ceremonies
Report of: Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement
Report author: Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement & Registration Services

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to the Review of Licensing and Public Protection Fees and Charges 2024/25 report dated 17 January 2024.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the report is for information only and is to be noted.

3 Background

3.1 There are several fees and charges applied by the Register Office that are governed by statute and hence may not be changed except by legislation.

3.2 There was a general statement in the report referred to in section 1.1 that the General Register Office (GRO) had given an indication that a review of the statutory fees was due to take place.

4 Update

4.1 GRO advises that legislation was laid on 20 March 2024 that set out amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Fees Regulations 2018.

4.2 The Immigration, Nationality and Passport (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 revised fees for a number of Home Office services including for the Citizenship ceremony provided by the local registration service, and following completion of the parliamentary process, came into force on 10 April 2024.

4.3 The fee for the arrangement of a citizenship ceremony by the local registration service will increase from £80 to £130.

- 4.4 Applications to become a British citizen include the fee for the Local Registration Service to arrange a citizenship ceremony.
- 4.5 The GRO clarified on 10 April 2024 that applications made before 10 April 2024 will be subject to the £80 fee. All applications made to the Home Office to become a British citizen from this date will attract the £130 fee.
- 4.6 The fee is paid to the Local Authority once the citizenship ceremony has been held.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The increase in the statutory fee for citizenship ceremonies represents an increase in income for 2024/25, if the number of ceremonies remains the same.
- 5.2 There is no timeframe from when an application is received by the Home Office to when and if citizenship is granted. Upon receipt of notification that citizenship has been granted however the statutory citizenship ceremony must take place within three months.
- 5.3 Assuming that approximately 75% of approved new British citizens who attend a citizenship ceremony in 2024-25 will have paid the increased fee, an additional £187,500 of income will be received.

6 Public Sector Equality Duty

- 6.1 This is a statutory fee and there are no specific implications identified.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 Please see appendices.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Proper Officer Letter dated 20th March 2024
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - GRO Alert: Fees in connection with nationality applications or services April 2024



HM Passport
Office

General Register Office

PO Letter 02/2024

20 March 2024

Dear Proper Officer

Fees in connection with nationality applications or services

Legislation was laid on 20 March 2024 that set out amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Fees Regulations 2018.

The Immigration, Nationality and Passport (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 will revise fees for a number of Home Office services including for the Citizenship ceremony provided by the local registration service, and subject to completion of the Parliamentary process, will Come into Force on 10 April 2024.

The fee for the arrangement of a citizenship ceremony by the local registration service will increase from **£80** to **£130** on that date.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Blay', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Carly Blay

Deputy Director of Civil Registration and Citizenship
Passports, Citizenship and Civil Registration Directorate
Customer Services

Q&A

1. How was the fee set?

The Fees and Funding Working Group, a subset of the National Panel worked with GRO colleagues to identify an average cost for the service.

2. What about the cost of the British Overseas Territory oath and pledge?

The increase in fee reflects the additional cost to provide the oath and pledge for the British Overseas Territory Certificate conducted at the Citizenship ceremony.

Further guidance will be issued closer to the time.

OFFICIAL

From: GRO LRS Engagement <grolrs.engagement@gro.gov.uk
<<mailto:grolrs.engagement@gro.gov.uk>> >

Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 12:30 PM

**Subject: GRO Alert: Fees in connection with nationality applications or services
April 2024**

GRO Alert: Fees in connection with nationality applications or services April 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Fees in connection with nationality applications or services

On 20 March, Circular 05/2024 explained that amending regulations to The Immigration and Nationality Fees Regulations 2018 had been laid and were expected to come into force on 10 April 2024. This Alert is to confirm that the changes have now gone live. In summary, the regulations make changes to a number of fees for Home Office services including the fee for the arrangement of a citizenship ceremony by the local registration service (LRS), which will increase from £80 to £130.

A previous Alert, issued on 30/10/2023, stated that registrars would be able to administer the British Overseas Territory Citizenship (BOTC) oath and pledge at a citizenship ceremony in England and Wales from 8 November 2023 but, at that point, interim arrangements were to continue. This Alert confirms that the interim arrangements have now ended and registrars can administer both the BOTC and British Citizenship oaths and pledges, where required, at a citizenship ceremony. Note: Applications for citizenship made before 10 April 2024 are subject to the current £80 fee payable to the LRS.

The Citizenship Ceremonies Handbook has been amended to reflect the changes which also includes additional guidance relating to the BOTC oath and pledge and issue of the certificate - Citizenship ceremonies handbook | GRO Registrars website (gro-extranet.homeoffice.gov.uk)

<<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgro-extranet.homeoffice.gov.uk%2Fhandbooks%2Fcitizenship-ceremonies%2F&data=05%7C02%7CAndrea.Haines%40birmingham.gov.uk%7Ce0f6bd5f91894401fb5d08dc62a5ccd8%7C699ace67d2e44bcdb303d2bbe2b9bbf1%7C0%7C0%7C638493711465233368%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=DXNs%2BEpPDK%2FDV7JOOGIH4w5u2NoAPT75Jj2464doc%2FQ%3D&reserved=0>> .

Yours faithfully

Business Support | Passport, Citizenship and Civil Registration | Customer Services |
Home Office | Smedley Hydro | Trafalgar Road | Southport | PR8 2HH
grolrs.engagement@gro.gov.uk <<mailto:grolrs.engagement@gro.gov.uk>>

Q&A

1. How was the fee set?

The Fees and Funding Working Group, a subset of the National Panel worked with GRO colleagues to identify an average cost for the service.

2. What about the cost of the British Overseas Territory oath and pledge?

The increase in fee reflects the additional cost to provide the oath and pledge for the British Overseas Territory Certificate conducted at the Citizenship ceremony.

3. What about applications made before 10 April?

Applications made before 10 April 2024 will be subject to the current £80 fee payable to the LRS.