



Home Office

Seema Malhotra MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship

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Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Chair, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

2 September 2025

Dear Tonia,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July regarding Citizenship fees for Irish Nationals. I am grateful for your letter and the important work of your predecessor committee.

The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement affords specific rights to the people of Northern Ireland. This means that anyone within that defined group can apply for a British passport through standard domestic channels, regardless of whether or not they hold Irish citizenship. However, this does not apply unilaterally to any Irish citizen.

The British Nationality (Irish Citizens) Act 2024, passed under the previous Government, made provisions for a separate route to British citizenship for all Irish citizens who are resident in the UK for a period of five years. This new application route will offer Irish citizens an easier alternative to current naturalisation and registration routes, reflecting the unique historical and geographical position of Ireland, the Common Travel Area, and the statutory arrangements in place in the Immigration Act 1971. It is designed to address a specific issue for all Irish citizens, when seeking to apply for British citizenship based on residence, and which has been raised many times in the past.

In opposition, we supported these reforms and I am pleased that in Government, we have been able to move these forward. The application fees for this new route have been set at a lower level for Irish nationals in recognition of their unique historical and cultural connections to the UK. We consider this strikes the right balance between offering a cheaper and easier route, allowing for a more streamlined application process which will not require applicants to demonstrate knowledge of English language or sit the Life in the UK test, whilst also protecting the integrity of the department's funding model. This ensures that children who cannot afford the fee will be able to apply for a fee waiver in the same way as other children applying for British citizenship, further supporting access to this new route.

The fee of £853 for adult applicants that you referred to in your letter also includes the £130 fee for the citizenship ceremony, set at cost and collected on behalf of the relevant Local Authority as an administrative convenience to reimburse the costs of the ceremony. The Home Office does not retain any of these funds.

Citizenship ceremonies are an important part of the British citizenship process, and promote social inclusion and community cohesion. As they are hosted by local authorities, they encourage local engagement and often include community representatives. They also provide a shared civic experience, reinforcing a sense of belonging and mutual commitment between the citizen and the state. British nationality law requires that successful adults for naturalisation or registration as a British citizen take an oath and pledge at a citizenship ceremony: the new

Act does not exempt Irish nationals. We think it is right that those using this route should attend a citizenship ceremony, celebrating the significance of becoming a British citizen.

Fees for immigration and nationality applications are kept under review. Any income generated above the estimated unit cost is utilised for the purpose of meeting costs within the wider migration and borders system, reducing reliance on the taxpayer.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seema Malhotra". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Seema Malhotra MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship



Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Seema Malholtra MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Home Office

By email only

10 July 2025

From the Chair
Tonia Antoniazzi MP

Dear Seema,

My committee notes the forthcoming commencement of the British Nationality (Irish Citizens) Act 2024, which will simplify and reduce the cost of acquiring British citizenship for Irish nationals residing in the UK, including Northern Ireland.

In 2021 our predecessor committee [conducted an inquiry](#) into this issue and recommended that the Government abolish the standard naturalisation fee for Irish applicants, waive the requirement to take the 'Life in the UK' test and make attendance at the citizenship ceremony optional - recognising and respecting the unique status of Irish nationals in UK law.

We note, however, that under the new regulations, Irish applicants will still be required to pay 50% of the standard naturalisation fee— currently £853 for adults and £607 for children. Our predecessor committee noted in 2021 that the then naturalisation fee of £1,330 was much higher than the administrative cost of the process (then £372). The revised fee of £853 is still much higher than the current admin cost (£575, according to latest Home Office figures).¹

The previous committee also pointed out that a person of Northern Ireland is already entitled to hold Irish citizenship and apply for an Irish passport, which then cost – and continues to cost around – only £70 for an adult.

The previous Government said in response to that report that, "Setting different fee levels depending on nationality would not be fair and would be inconsistent with our new global immigration system." Now that this Government has set a different fee level and, clearly, moved on from that approach to immigration, we would be grateful for an explanation as to why the cost for this group of people remains as high as it does, at a 50% reduction.

¹ [Fees Unit cost table 1 July 25.ods](#)



Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

Yours sincerely,

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee