

County Council

20 July 2018

Item No. 6(d) - Notice of Motion by Mrs Mullins on Costs of Citizenship for Children

Amendment by Ms Lord

In the UK today, there are significant numbers of children who do not currently have British citizenship, but have rights to register as British citizens. Many of these children were born in the UK, and others have lived here from a young age, been raised here, educated here, and have never known any other home. Without access to their citizenship rights, children may find themselves denied opportunities extended to their peers, such as the chance to participate in a school trip, or to be eligible for funding, so they can undertake higher education.

There are a number of barriers to children registering their citizenship. Registration can be a complex process of prohibitive cost. Children are charged £1,012 for a process whose administrative cost is published at £372, meaning government is making a profit of £640 from every child who claims their rights. No child should be denied their citizenship rights by reason of a fee. There is no substitute for citizenship, which is vital to future security and sense of belonging.

This Council recognises:

- (a) That the profit-making element of the fee, to register citizenship, discourages the best outcomes for many of the UK's children;
- (b) Because of their duties as corporate parents, the fee for children to register will fall on councils, in the many cases where children looked after qualify for citizenship; and
- (c) The fee puts councils, in the unacceptable position, of having to weigh the benefits of citizenship, to a child in their care, against the cost to the council of assisting a child in claiming that right.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:

- (1) To write to the Minister of Immigration, demanding that the fee for children to register as British citizens is reduced to the administrative cost; and demanding that children looked after are exempted from the fee in its entirety; and
- (2) To identify children in the Council's care who are entitled to citizenship **or other leave to remain**, and make sure they are aware of their rights and **fully financially and administratively** supported to claim them, **including those aged between 21 and 25 if requested by the care leaver**.