



Home Office

Affordability fee waiver: Citizenship registration for individuals under the age of 18

Version 3.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells you how to consider applications for a fee waiver from those who are under the age of 18 (or who are applying on behalf of someone who is under 18) and going on to make an application to register for citizenship.

The application process for making a fee waiver request

Requests for a fee waiver must be made through either the online waiver request form or the paper waiver request form. Where a waiver request is made online, the citizenship application must also be made online, with the same principle applying to paper applications.

It is important to note that a fee waiver application is not an immigration or nationality decision, which means the outcome of a fee waiver application should not be taken as an indicator on the outcome of a subsequent immigration or nationality application. It is also not a barrier to entry into the UK.

Online applicants granted a fee waiver will also receive a token to use when completing their application allowing them to proceed without paying the fee. Online applicants without a fee waiver will have to submit the relevant fee in order to resume with their citizenship application. Tokens can only be used in relation to the named individual for whom the waiver request was granted – otherwise the token will be rejected as invalid.

Where applicants have made a request for a waiver using the online form, and where the individual has subsequently reached the age of 18 before applying for citizenship, caseworkers should treat the citizenship application as if it were received on the date the fee waiver application was received. This is to ensure the validity of the application under the relevant provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Where the request is being made using the paper waiver request form, applicants must print and submit the form alongside their main application. Fee waiver requests will be considered before the main application is assessed.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Fees and Income Planning Team. To contact the operational team, email the [Child Citizenship Fee Waiver Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance, then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **3.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **03 October 2023**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated the contacts section to include an email for the Child Citizenship Fee Waiver Team.

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Summary

This guidance explains which applicants are eligible for a fee waiver and the circumstances in which they will qualify for a fee waiver.

The applicant is the child who is making the fee waiver request.

Parent is taken to mean parent or legal guardian throughout this document.

Consideration

A fee waiver must be granted if the applicant and parent or parents are assessed and found:

- to credibly demonstrate they cannot afford the fee
- that their income is not sufficient to meet the child's needs

The primary consideration on whether someone is eligible for a fee waiver is an **affordability test** to assess whether the applicant and parent or parents have credibly demonstrated that they **cannot afford the fee**. This applies when the applicant and parent or parents do not have sufficient funds at their disposal, after meeting their essential living needs, to pay the fee.

Fee waivers should be granted if the applicant and parent or parents have credibly demonstrated that they **meet the affordability test**.

The need to **safeguard and promote the welfare of a child in the UK** should be a primary consideration in deciding any claim. This means careful consideration needs to be given as to whether the applicant's needs are being met and whether being required to pay the fee would deprive a child of having these needs met. The same approach should be applied to children not in the UK but who may be affected by the payment of the fee as per *MM (Lebanon) v SSHD* [2017] UKSC 10 paras 46 and 91.

Evidence

In completing the fee waiver request form, the applicant and parent or parents must provide details and supporting evidence for both their own financial circumstances and those of any individual on whom the applicant is dependent for financial support. It is the responsibility of the applicant and parent or parents to provide a full account as to their financial circumstances, and to demonstrate that those who are supporting them are reasonably unable to provide funding to support the payment of the fee. It is ultimately at the caseworker's discretion as to whether these considerations have been adequately demonstrated.

Evidential flexibility should only be applied to an application for a fee waiver in exceptional circumstances, where the caseworker is satisfied that there is clear and compelling evidence that the individual will not be able to afford the fee, or if there is a compelling reason why the evidence cannot be provided.

Each case should still be considered on its own individual merits, **and the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that they qualify for a fee waiver.**

The fee waiver can be rejected for a range of reasons, including if the applicant, their parent or parents, or a spouse/partner of the applicant or parent or parents have:

- not provided reliable information about their circumstances
- intentionally disposed of funds
- been purchasing items within their income but outside of what is essential or spending excessively
- sufficient savings to pay the fee and income in excess of their essential needs (whether being spent or not) which shows they can afford the fee
- not taken reasonable steps to ensure they have sufficient funds to pay a foreseeable fee

When applying for a fee waiver the applicant and parent or parents will be asked to provide details of their financial circumstances. This will typically be in the form of statements covering the 6-month period prior to the date of application for all bank or building society accounts they hold, and a full breakdown of their monthly income and expenditure at the time of application.

Evidence should be provided where a charity or local authority is providing support, particularly if it is claimed that such support cannot continue.

This is a brief summary, please refer to the complete guidance below before deciding an application.

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Applicants eligible for a fee waiver

Anyone under the age of 18 who is eligible to register for citizenship under the provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981 may make a request for the relevant fee to be waived. This encompasses the following application routes:

This guidance applies to the following types of application:

- [Form MN1](#): Registration of children under the age of 18
- [Form S2 and S3](#): Registration as a British citizen if you are a stateless person
- [Form T](#): Registration as a British citizen if you were born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 and lived here until you were 10 years old
- [Form B\(OS\)](#): Registration as a British citizen if you are a British Overseas citizen, British subject, British protected person, or British National (Overseas) and have no other citizenship or nationality
- [Form B\(OTA\)](#): Registration as a British citizen if you are a British Overseas Territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British protected person, a British subject or a British National (Overseas)
- [Form EM](#): Registration as a British Citizen through residence in Hong Kong before 1997 (paper only)

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Affordability

Affordability definition

The applicant and parent or parents are considered unable to pay the fee when they do not have sufficient funds at their disposal to pay the required fee after meeting their essential living needs, and continuing to meet any other child's essential needs, such as housing and food. This is the primary assessment for whether a fee waiver should be granted.

Assessing affordability

This affordability test seeks to assess the amount of income and savings available once accommodation and essential living needs for the applicant, parent or parents and any of their dependants have been met.

The total amount of resource available to the applicant and parent or parents must be considered, including any savings the individual or individuals may have. This should be applied to the total amount required by the applicant and parent or parents to pay for the applicant's application.

When assessing a fee waiver application and whether the applicant, parent or parents cannot afford to pay the fee, consideration must be given to all the financial circumstances of the applicant and the parent or parents to include whether:

- an applicant and parent or parents are having their, and any dependant's, accommodation and essential living needs met by others but are still in a situation where they can credibly demonstrate they cannot afford the fee - this could be because support is provided by the applicant's or parent's family and friends, a charity or NGO, or a local authority or through support provided by their home country's government
- the applicant and parent or parents have any savings, or made reasonable efforts to save for the fee across a reasonable amount of time in the past 6 months - this is to ensure that only those who genuinely cannot afford the fee or have not had the ability to save for the foreseeable fee qualify for a fee waiver
- the applicant and parents or parents have spent in excess of their essential living needs

The onus on demonstrating that a fee cannot be afforded lies with the applicant and parent or parents. They must provide **clear and compelling evidence that they are unable to afford the fee. If both the applicant and parent or parents have credibly demonstrated that they meet the affordability test, then a fee waiver should be granted.**

Using the information provided, the application needs to be addressed using the questions set out in the Relevant questions in [assessing affordability section](#) as a guide, considering the ability of the applicant and the parent or parents to pay the fee.

There is no fee waiver available for citizenship applications made by adults. However, where such an application has been made, and where a fee waiver has been requested for one or more children from the same family unit, the cost of the adult's application should be taken into consideration when assessing the affordability picture of the family as a whole.

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Family units and part payments

There may be occasions when fee waiver requests are made at the same time in relation to multiple children who share at least one parent. In these cases, requests may be considered as a group, with the affordability picture for the family unit as a whole taken into account.

A fee waiver request form should be completed in relation to each applicant, with documentary evidence of the financial circumstances of the household submitted as detailed in the fee waiver request form. Financial circumstances of all dependants and details of all public benefits that they are claiming should also be included.

Where it is found that the broader affordability picture for the family unit would support payment for one or more of the applicants, but not all, then a part payment fee waiver may be granted such that the fee is waived for only some of the applicants. Payment should then be requested for the applicants for whom the fee waiver has been rejected.

Fees for individual applicants must either be waived or paid in full – there is no option for individual fees to be reduced or only partially paid.

Part payment fee waivers will generally be issued to the oldest child first, to reduce the risk of older children turning 18 and losing their right to register for citizenship. If the applicant makes it clear on their fee waiver request form that this is not their preference, the applicant must make the priority in which a part payment fee waivers should be issued clear on their form.

Applications for Child Citizenship where a previous Child Citizenship fee has been waived, in the same family unit

Previous fee waiver requests from the same family unit have no bearing on current applications. The family unit must continue to qualify for a fee waiver in order for the fee to be waived, but they can generally be expected to do so if they can evidence that their financial circumstances have not changed.

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Assessing a fee waiver

Requests for a fee waiver under this guidance must be made in relation to an individual who is seeking to register for citizenship and who is under 18 at the time of the application.

A fee waiver must be granted if the applicant and parent or parents are assessed and found:

- [to credibly demonstrate they cannot afford the fee](#)
- their income is not sufficient to meet their child's needs

Caseworkers are not expected to have a detailed understanding of the financial options available to applicants, for example whether an applicant or parent or parents could remortgage their property in order to raise money to pay the fee.

Financial values must be provided in pounds sterling if a value has been provided another currency, the caseworker should use the website: Oanda to convert the currency to pounds sterling using the current exchange rate.

Evidential flexibility

Evidential flexibility is a principle which allows the decision maker to decide a case without requiring all the evidence or information set out on the application form.

However, this is only likely to be applicable in exceptional circumstances. For example, if the additional missing evidence is unnecessary because the other evidence provided is clear and compelling, or if there is a compelling reason why the evidence cannot be provided, then evidential flexibility should be applied.

The onus is on the applicant and parent or parents to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the decision maker that a fee waiver should be granted, but there will be some cases where providing evidence is more difficult than in others.

If you are satisfied that the applicant and parent or parents have provided clear and compelling evidence as to their circumstances and that, without a fee waiver, they will not be able to apply for citizenship, then evidential flexibility can be applied. **If you are unsure, please refer to a senior caseworker before applying evidential flexibility.**

In exceptional circumstances, an application may be accepted if an applicant does not complete every section of the relevant application form. Make an assessment based on the information provided to determine if it provides a clear and compelling basis for the decision to be made. It will normally be necessary to have all relevant bank statements to make a decision.

Each case should still be considered on its own individual merits in line with the current guidance. If further evidence is required, further enquiries may be made,

especially where the applicant has provided minimal or no evidence in their application and the information is not sufficient to make an informed decision, but it remains the responsibility of the applicant to sufficiently evidence their claimed financial circumstances, or to provide a credible explanation of why such evidence is not available.

If you believe the applicant may qualify for a fee waiver in circumstances where all requested documentary evidence has not been provided but remain unsure, please refer to a senior caseworker before applying evidential flexibility.

Relevant questions in assessing affordability

Using the information provided, the application needs to be addressed in the following way:

1. Has the applicant stated that they cannot afford the fee?
2. Does the applicant have responsibility for their own finances or is responsibility assumed by another person or people? If so, who assumes responsibility?
3. Does the applicant or parent or parents pay for their accommodation? If not, who does?
4. How does the applicant and parent or parents, meet their essential living needs? (such as, do they pay for them/are they donated? If so, by whom?).
5. What sources of income does the applicant or parent or parents have? This includes all sources of income including that of their partner or partners or provided to them by any adult the applicant lives with.
6. Has the applicant and parent or parents provided evidence of sources of income, including details of all bank accounts or other assets such as bonds or investments that they, or their partner or partners hold? (if not, these details must be requested). This also applies to any savings or investments that may be held for them by another adult that they live with.
7. Does the applicant have surplus income, excluding accommodation and essential living needs, that could be used to pay the fee?
8. Has the applicant made any non-essential and excessive purchases, such as money spent on holidays, or luxury items? Do the bank statements and other financial evidence demonstrate prove that the applicant has sufficient savings to pay the fee?
9. Is the information provided, even if not complete, sufficient to indicate that evidential flexibility, as described above, should be applied?
10. Is the applicant or parent or parents financially dependent on someone who can afford to pay the fee?

Those with a **zero hours contract** or a contract similar to this in principle and whose income is not guaranteed, should be assessed by considering the amount of regular income earned in the 6 months preceding the application.

Surplus income is assessed as income after accommodation and essential living needs have been met. This includes housing or accommodation, utilities, food, clothing, toiletries, non-prescription medication, and household cleaning items.

It would also include the costs of travel and communication to enable the supported persons to maintain interpersonal relationships and access a reasonable level of social, cultural and religious life. A broad breakdown of these essential living needs and the weekly cost associated with them can be found in [the latest report on review of cash allowance paid to asylum seekers](#). See also the [letter](#) from the Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts to Chief Executives of Local Authorities dated 8 June 2020 which sets out a new weekly rate.

These essential living needs and costs are a guide and more broadly caseworkers should consider whether the costs explained by the applicant and parent or parents are reasonable. Applicants and parent or parents should not be spending excessively on items that are clearly not essential for their living needs.

Taking into account the above, **if it is concluded that insufficient efforts have been made to save for the fee, the caseworker can reject the fee waiver application on the grounds that the affordability test has not been met.**

The applicant or parent income is not sufficient to meet a child's needs

Although the needs of children may implicitly have been considered in earlier stages of the request for a fee waiver, this part addresses them directly.

The duty in section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child in the UK means that consideration of the child's best interests, which can also be expressed as the child's well-being, must be a primary consideration in carrying out immigration functions that affect them. This means careful consideration needs to be given as to whether by paying the fee, the applicant parent or parents are unable to meet the needs of a child.

Caseworkers need to consider on a case-by-case basis whether the impact on the child would be significant and also whether it would be disproportionate when considering this against the public interest of funding the broader functions of the immigration system. For example, if by paying the fee a child may not be able to continue an additional activity such as sport lessons that occur outside of school, and there is no evidence provided that this would cause the child particular harm to their wellbeing, the caseworker may feel that this is not significant or disproportionate, therefore the fee should be paid. However, if removal of the sport lessons would particularly harm the wellbeing of the child, the caseworker may feel their removal would be significant and disproportionate, therefore a fee waiver should be granted. **Taking this into account, if clear evidence is provided by the applicant, that by paying the fee the needs of a child will not be met, then a fee waiver should be granted. This applies whether a child is within the UK or abroad.**

The following questions, in addition to the earlier questions, are relevant to assessing if the request should be granted because the applicant and parent or parents are faced with:

- meeting the needs of a child or children, and are unable to do so on account of their low income
- being required to find the amount necessary for the fee would deprive the child of having these needs met

It is also important to understand if the child is supported only by one parent or by both.

Questions to consider:

1. Do the children live with one parent, both parents or a legal guardian who is not their parent?
2. Who provides support? One parent, both parents, or a legal guardian who is not their parent?
3. Have the absent parent(s) ever provided support? If so, could they reasonably provide support in this case?
4. What impact will paying the fees have, given the parent's low income, on the ability of the child to enjoy or maintain full participation in school activities?
5. If it will have an impact, which are the activities in which the child cannot participate (private lessons and activities not provided by the school are not included unless part of a plan approved by the school)?
6. Does the child have further needs based on a protected characteristic, such as extra travel costs through participating, in a faith or other centre providing for children and young people, or does the child have needs based on making adjustments for a disability?

The purpose of this consideration is to assess whether a fee waiver rejection would have a disproportionate impact on the child's well-being or best interests.

The question is not whether a fee waiver would make more money available to a parent that may then be spent on a child. It is whether paying the fee would lead to a disproportionate impact on the child in terms of experiencing a lower level of well-being than they currently enjoy, being deprived of something that contributes to their well-being, or not having access to a specific item or items of recognised benefit.

Grounds for rejection of a fee waiver request

The fee waiver request may be rejected if the applicant or parent or parents have not provided reliable information about availability of accommodation, provision of essential living needs, income level and outgoings, and overall financial circumstances.

It may be rejected if it is reasonable to conclude that the applicant or parent or parents have intentionally disposed of funds, for instance, by voluntarily giving or loaning funds to a third party.

It may also be rejected if the applicant or parent or parents have been purchasing items that are within their income but outside of what is considered as essential living

needs and the evidence is that they are not taking reasonable and proportionate steps, to ensure that they have sufficient funds to pay a foreseeable fee.

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Assessing information provided

Considering documentary evidence

The assessment of whether the applicant qualifies for a fee waiver will be made on their own individual circumstances and those of any dependent family members. This also applies to the applicant's parent or parents.

The applicant must provide sufficient relevant documentation to evidence their fee waiver application, including detailed evidence as to their and their parent or parents financial circumstances.

For example, caseworkers should normally expect to see information and evidence relating to the applicant's and parent's income, their accommodation, the type and adequacy of accommodation, the amount of their rent/mortgage or of their contribution towards this, and their outgoings in terms of spending on things like food and utility bills. This information should be supported by independent evidence, such as their pay slips, bank statements, tenancy agreement and utility bills. The nature of the evidence provided will vary depending on the individual circumstances of the applicant, but the caseworker should expect to see evidence appropriate to the circumstances being claimed.

If the applicant and or parent or parents are being supported by family or friends, by central or local government or a registered charity, **the caseworker should expect to see corroborating documentary evidence confirming provision of support, particularly from charities and government authorities, which details the nature and amount of the support provided.** This can include an explanation as to why support will not be continuing. For friends and families this may be more difficult, so an assessment should be made on the credibility of the account provided by the applicant.

In all cases evidence must be up to date. Documents dating back more than a few months may be useful in establishing how the person's finances have changed over time, but those that confirm the applicant's current circumstances and finances will clearly have greater relevance.

If there is some evidence that support from a registered charity may be being provided, but there is insufficient detail to make a decision, the caseworker should contact the charity to request more detail.

Where the applicant or parent or parents state that relevant documentary evidence cannot be provided, the caseworker will need to be satisfied that the person's account for why this evidence is unavailable and the circumstances are as they claim, by making an assessment of their credibility. The applicant and parent or parents should be able to provide information as to how their financial position has changed over time, and may still be able to provide some evidence, depending on the nature of their circumstances, such as bank statements, or an

eviction notice, or written testimonies from people previously or currently providing them with support.

The applicant and parent or parents will need to establish any physical or mental disability (or that of a dependent family member) by means of independent documentary evidence, such as a letter from a hospital consultant. If the applicant/parent/parents (or a dependent family member) has a physical or mental disability, this does not itself determine the outcome of the application, other than insofar as it affects the applicant's/parent's financial circumstances and ability to pay the fee. Where the caseworker believes that the issue of disability may be material to the decision on the fee waiver request and there is insufficient information in this respect on which to base their decision, they may invite the applicant to submit further information or evidence.

If there is evidence that the applicant or parent or parents have a disability and may need additional support to present their request for a fee waiver clearly, the caseworker can signpost them to other agencies who may be able to assist, such as [Citizens Advice](#).

Timeframe for assessing the request

No specific service standards apply to the assessment of whether the applicant qualifies for a fee waiver. However, **caseworkers must make reasonable efforts to decide such requests promptly**, especially those involving an applicant who is disabled or otherwise in **vulnerable circumstances**.

Applicants who are looked-after by a local authority

Where an application has been made by or on behalf of a child who is looked-after by a local authority (as defined under paragraph 1.8.2 of the [Children looked after by local authorities in England guide](#)), or a child outside the UK under similar arrangements, a fee is not payable, and it is not necessary for the child's financial circumstances to be evidenced before the main application is considered.

Where this is the case, it is not necessary for a fee waiver request form to be completed in respect of the applicant. This should instead be indicated on the citizenship application form using the relevant option.

Applicants in receipt of local authority support

The applicant may be receiving support from a local authority, for example under [section 17 of the Children Act 1989](#). The local authority will have conducted their own assessment of the individual's needs before making a decision to grant support and those needs will generally involve or include destitution.

Such a person may pass the affordability test, even though they are being provided with accommodation and essential living needs by the local authority as long as it is clear, by way of evidence (particularly based on evidence from the local authority), that they meet the criteria in this guidance.

However, the individual will not be able to rely solely on the fact that they are in receipt of local authority support if there is evidence that they have additional assets or income or if support is being provided for social care reasons which do not include preventing destitution.

If there is some evidence that local authority support may be being provided, but there is still insufficient detail to make a decision, the caseworker should contact the local authority to request more detail.

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Assessing income and assets

The following must be taken into account and applies to both the applicant and the parent or parents:

- income:
 - from employment or self-employment
 - from non-employment sources
 - from their spouse or partner (as well as any other adult with whom the applicant and parent or parents live and from whom they receive financial support) or parents from employment or other source
 - from government support received by them or their spouse or partner (as well as any other adult with whom the applicant and parent or parents live and from whom they receive financial support) or parents
 - from other family or friends
- assets:
 - cash
 - money held in bank and building society accounts (including non-UK based accounts), including accounts belonging to the spouse or partner (as well as any other adult with whom the applicant and parent or parents live and from whom they receive financial support), parents or children
 - investments, including any investments belonging to the spouse or partner (as well as any other adult with whom the applicant and parent or parents live and from whom they receive financial support), parents or children
 - land or property, particularly any property that is not their current secure accommodation
 - goods held for the purpose of a trade or other business

The following items need not be declared but it is expected that expenditure on them will be reflected in the financial statements provided:

- cars or other vehicles
- other personal possessions, such as mobile phones, computers

Checks may be undertaken with agencies such as HM Revenue & Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions and Equifax and overseas equivalents to verify information provided by the applicant with regard to their income and finances (see Document verification).

Intentional disposal of funds

Caseworkers should consider whether the applicant and parent or parents have intentionally disposed of funds. This could include circumstances where the applicant, parent or parents, or their dependants are:

- providing support or loans to others without any detail as to how these are being applied
- voluntarily giving funds away to a third party

- paying debts before they are required to do so or paying more in response to a debt than is required
- buying a personal possession that is clearly not essential to their living needs
- spending extravagantly or excessively

For instance, if an applicant or their parent was in possession of sufficient funds for their support when they applied for leave to remain or a visa previously, but upon applying to register for citizenship presents themselves as unable to afford the fee, claiming to have used all their funds and to have not been able to replenish them, then an explanation is needed as to why this has happened.

Similarly, those applicants with significant fluctuations in income should be expected to account for this and to provide an explanation of how payments for regular outgoings are maintained despite these fluctuations.

Applicants and parent or parents who intentionally deprive themselves of capital in order to avoid paying an application fee should normally be rejected a fee waiver on the basis that they may be able to recover their funds (see [Assets](#)).

Employment and self-employment income

Applicants must provide full details of any employment, including how much and how often they are paid. They should include evidence such as pay slips, tax returns, details of their own business if they are self-employed, for example invoices.

Illegal working

If a person discloses in a fee waiver application that they are, or have been, receiving income through working, but they do not have permission to work, their earnings and any cash or savings derived from this work will still be an asset when assessing eligibility for a fee waiver. The applicant should be informed illegal working may be taking place, which may be a criminal offence, and should stop immediately.

Welfare benefits and government support

If an applicant or parent or parents are in receipt of welfare benefits or other government financial support, then this support should be taken into consideration as income when assessing eligibility for a fee waiver.

Assessing joint income and assets with a spouse or partner or child and parent

The joint income of the applicant and their parents should be taken into account. Where an applicant or applicant's parent have a spouse or partner, their income and assets should be taken into account.

Assets

Assets can be overseas or in the UK.

Applicants and parent or parents may be able to raise funds by selling an asset.

An asset could be property or land held in the UK or abroad. It could be a second car or an investment or cash held in a bank account. This is not an exhaustive list.

Caseworkers will need to consider on a case-by-case basis whether it is reasonable, on the basis that an asset has been recently acquired or is not being used, or of any other value to the applicant and parent or parents, for it to be an item that counts against the grant of a fee waiver.

If a secondary applicant, dependent or family member has recently acquired an asset in their name this may indicate the intentional disposal of funds by the main applicant or applicants and should be scrutinised.

The value of an asset must be the value that applies at the time the decision is taken on the application for a fee waiver.

If an asset can be sold to release funds, the 'current market value' is the price a willing buyer would pay for that asset.

The value of an asset may be reduced as a result of the expense incurred in selling it, such as a fee payable in respect of the sale of shares. However, expenses of sale will vary and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The value of an asset may be reduced because a third party has a right to the released funds, either in their entirety or in part, for example where a mortgaged property is sold. The caseworker should reduce the current market or surrender value of the asset accordingly.

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Granting the fee waiver request

If an applicant is granted a fee waiver having submitted their request via the online form, they will be issued with a token to be used when applying for citizenship online. This application should be submitted within 28 calendar days of the actual date of the fee waiver decision and followed by the submission of biometrics at a UKVCAS within 45 calendar days or Visa Application Centre (VAC) if applying outside the UK. Failure to do this could result in the token no longer being valid and a new fee waiver application may be required.

If an applicant is granted a fee waiver having submitted their request on paper, this decision will be communicated alongside the request for the applicant to enrol their biometrics. The applicant will then need to submit their biometrics at a UKVCAS within 45 calendar days. Failure to do so could result in a new fee waiver application being required. The citizenship application will then be considered, and a decision issued.

Citizenship ceremony fee for those who turn 18 during the application process

Where an applicant reaches the age of 18 between the date that their application was submitted and the decision on the application is made, and where a fee waiver has been granted, the citizenship ceremony fee that would otherwise be payable will also be waived for the applicant.

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Rejecting the fee waiver request

After the caseworker is not satisfied the applicant qualifies for a fee waiver then:

where the applicant has applied online:

- they should normally be advised that they do not qualify for a fee waiver within 14 calendar days - in order to have their nationality application considered, the applicant would need to apply with the specified fee or make a new application for a fee waiver
- if the applicant reaches the age of 18 after applying for a fee waiver but before applying for citizenship, for their citizenship application to be treated as though it was submitted on the date of the fee waiver request, they must apply for citizenship, and submit payment within 10 working days of the fee waiver rejection being communicated

where the applicant has applied on paper:

- and payment has not been received within 10 working days of the rejection being communicated, the nationality application must be rejected as invalid

Citizenship fee waiver requests do not benefit from the provision of section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971 because child citizenship registration is not an Immigration decision.

Transitional arrangements

On 04 October 2023 the fee payable to submit a valid application for registration as a British citizen for an individual under the age of 18 increased from £1012 to £1214.

For fee waiver applications submitted before 04 October 2023 and subsequently rejected, customers will be given the opportunity to submit a citizenship application using a paper application form and pay the fee in force prior to 04 October 2023 (£1012), providing it is received by the appropriate receiving authority within 10 working days of the date of the fee waiver rejection.

If a fee waiver application is submitted on or after 04 October 2023 and the application is subsequently rejected, customers will be required to pay the new fee applicable on that date.

Normally, where a fee waiver request is made online the citizenship application must also be made online. However, under the transitional arrangement affected customers will be notified and requested to apply for citizenship using a paper application form in order to facilitate payment of the previous fee.

Applicants who do not respond to requests for further evidence

If an applicant has provided minimal or no evidence in their application, and the information provided is not sufficient to make an informed decision, **their application can be rejected if after a further request to submit further information it still has not been provided.** 14 calendar days should be allowed for further information requested. In exceptional circumstances, where it is clear an applicant needs more time to submit evidence, it may be necessary to make an additional request or to provide more time for the evidence to be provided. But this should only be in exceptional circumstances, such as victims of domestic abuse or if the applicant is homeless. **Applicants should be told in this correspondence that if they fail to provide additional information, their application will be rejected.**

Part payment rejections

A fee waiver request will be decided in relation to the whole of the fee for the individual making the request. Thus, it is possible within a family application for some individual requests to be granted and others not. But it is not possible in respect of any one individual applicant for part of the fee to be waived.

Requests for reconsideration

A fee waiver decision is not subject to a reconsideration request as it is not an immigration decision. A decision regarding the fee waiver application will be made on the basis of the information set out in their application and any supplementary information about their circumstances which they provide in support of their application. It is open for an applicant to make a further request for a fee waiver by way of a new fee waiver application.

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