

BRITISH CITIZENSHIP:

For some time those who are to be granted British citizenship have gone through a small ceremony when their application has been accepted by the Home Office. This involves 'swearing an oath' (i.e. making a promise) to respect and defend the Queen and country. For many immigrants this is a proud moment with many benefits. To find out more about what that involves visit www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/ or call 0845 010 5200.

Once you have British citizenship you can apply for a British passport. As you'd expect, this all costs money. See the table below.

	COST	THE FORM(S) YOU NEED
Single adult applicant naturalisation	£655	AN
Joint adult application for naturalisation (husband & wife or partners)	£735	AN
Adult registration as a British citizen	£480	B(OS), B(OTA), RS1, S1, S2, S3, T, UKM
Adult registration as a British citizen (from Hong Kong)	£200	EM
Adult registration as a British overseas citizen or British subject	£400	S1, S2
Child registration as a British citizen	£400	B(OTA), B(OS), EM, MN1, S2, S3, T
Child registration as a British overseas citizen or British subject	£400	MN3, MN4, S2
Application for a certificate giving a right to abode (live) in the UK	£135	RN1, RN2

Yet soon there will be major changes in the way that foreign nationals can become British citizens. In essence it will become much harder. The political decision to make such changes has been driven by public consultation.

All changes are intended to be clear and fair. And all changes will have to comply with EU law, whatever British politicians want. This is because all EU citizens, and many other immigrants from elsewhere, have rights that the British government cannot easily remove. These are rights established under existing agreements, including those under EU and Human Rights legislation.

At the centre of all such changes planned by the British government there would be a 'Citizenship Contract'.

WHAT THE CITIZENSHIP CONTRACT WOULD DO:

- Broadly speaking the aims are for foreigners to:
- Have the rights and benefits of citizenship
- Demonstrate a commitment to Britain's shared values (for tolerance, opportunity and diversity)
- Contribute to the community
- Learn the English language (or, possibly, the Welsh language)
- Obey British laws
- Play by British rules – this means learn to queue, for instance!

HOW THE CITIZENSHIP CONTRACT WOULD BE ENFORCED:

This might involve:

- A new points-based system to encourage highly skilled immigrants to move to the UK
- Stronger border controls to make it harder for illegal immigrants to enter the country
- A new 3-stage route to citizenship (i.e. entry, a new 'probationary period', then citizenship itself)
- Immigrants must either contribute to the UK economy or leave the country
- Refusing public benefits to immigrants who are not full UK citizens
- Refusing social housing to immigrants who are not full UK citizens

- Tests in spoken English (or, possibly, for Welsh, since this is the UK's 2nd language)
- Refusing citizenship to anyone convicted of serious crimes
- Removing citizenship and deporting any immigrants convicted of serious crimes
- Making those convicted of minor crimes spend more time on citizenship probation
- Making immigrants pay contributions towards the costs of having them enter and live in the UK
- Speeding up the citizenship process for immigrants who volunteer to help their local communities

MORE INFORMATION:

For further information on the most current developments you are advised to use the following links:

- www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk
- www.homeoffice.gov.uk
- www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/pathtocitizenship/