

*Dear Sajid Javid and Caroline Nokes,*

*We are writing as a group of concerned education leaders. There are thousands of children and young people across the UK who, even though they have the right to become British citizens by law, are blocked from becoming citizens because their families cannot afford the high cost of citizenship application fees. This currently stands at £1012 for children.*

*Without citizenship young people are ineligible for student loans and home fees and are effectively blocked from going to university. Schools who have multiple pupils in this situation have noticed a real and significant detrimental impact from the cost of this application, including an increase in food insecurity and lack of basic needs being met. This often leads to schools having to step in to fill the gap by providing clothing, food and emotional support as well as subsidising additional extra-curricular activities.*

*We believe that every child and young person who has the right to become a citizen by law should be enabled to become a citizen in practice. If we are serious about social mobility, then this barrier to education must be removed.*

*As a first step, we would like the government to reduce the application fee for British citizenship from its current level of £1012 per individual child to its actual cost price (about £350). This will benefit many talented children and young people currently studying in schools across our country who are affected by this issue.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

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Professor Saul Becker, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Sussex

Nicola Noble and Liz Robinson, Headteachers, Surrey Square Primary School

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