



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2019.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Stop the Service Charge Campaign

Thank you for contacting me about Commonwealth soldiers and citizenship fees.

I welcome the fact that Commonwealth citizens, including Gurkhas, are exempt from immigration control under the Immigration Act 1971, throughout their service. The consequence of this exemption means that they are free from immigration conditions during the time they remain enlisted in HM Forces.

I understand that those who have served as regulars are in a position to apply for settlement upon discharge, under Appendix Armed Forces of the Immigration Rules. In order to meet the requirements of the rules for indefinite leave to enter or remain, the veterans must meet certain requirements of the immigration rules, which include an application and the payment of fees.

The Home Office has said that while some veterans may want to apply to become British, there is no requirement for those wishing to remain indefinitely in the UK to naturalise as British citizens. It is good news that when an individual settles in the UK, and as a consequence ceases to be subject to immigration conditions, they are free to remain in the UK indefinitely.

I support the need for the Home Office to set visa, immigration and citizenship fees at a level that provides the resources needed to operate the border, immigration and citizenship (BIC) system. It is worth noting that general public taxation provides the remainder of the funding for the system. I believe the Government should continue to ensure the system is fair and equitable. Therefore, it is only right that those who use and benefit from the BIC system should make an appropriate contribution towards meeting the associated costs.

I welcome the fact that the Government has committed to supporting service personnel and their families. I understand that the Home Office is in discussions with the Ministry of Defence on this important issue.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alister Jack'.

The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.