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Mrs Anne Main – Chair
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

09 NOV 2010

Dear Anne,

Immigration and Nationality (Fees) (No 2) Regulations 2010

Following up on questions asked at the Commons debate on 1 November 2010.

1. I promised to write to you to clarify points helpfully raised in the debate on the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) (No 2) Regulations 2010, which took place on 1 November 2010.
2. I want to reassure you that no fees or charges are imposed on MPs who make enquiries about the progress of an immigration application on behalf of a constituent.
3. I was asked to provide further detail on the alignment of fees charged in the UK to those charged overseas. Over time we are looking to further align the visa model overseas with those applications made within the UK. As we do this we plan to keep volumes under close review to manage that transition carefully.
4. We are aiming to maintain service standards (time and quality) as we reduce costs but improve productivity. We are achieving this through investment in technology, moving to electronic rather than paper applications and case files, improved workflow management and more efficient security checking arrangements.

5. These fee proposals will ensure that whilst we are reducing costs we are maintaining income levels as we shift the contribution for the migration system from the UK taxpayer to the migrants who benefit.
6. I also discussed how complex migration systems and fees are and how difficult direct comparisons can be because we cannot easily compare like with like. It is also worth noting that a comparison of international fees is not necessarily the key deciding factor for the migrants' decision to come to the UK.
7. During the debate, I compared visa fees for Tier 1. In Australia Tier 1 migrants are granted permanent status on entry, compared to the UK where migrants are granted three years leave and must submit further applications if they wish to remain.
8. I have therefore taken this opportunity to provide you with some tables showing comparisons of fees for entry visas, extensions and the full end to end costs payable to reach permanent settlement for Tiers 1 & 2 respectively.

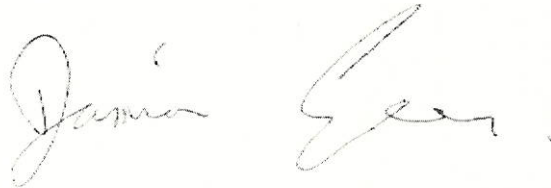
| Comparison of proposed Tier 1 fees with international equivalents as at 25/10/2010 | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Entry visa fee | In country extension fee (where applicable) | Permanent settlement fee | Total end-to-end fee |
| Ireland* | £943 | £2,225 | - | £3,168 |
| USA** | £918 | - | £1,875 | £2,794 |
| UK | £750 | £850 | £900 | £2,500 |
| Australia | £2,117 | - | - | £2,117 |
| Netherlands | £668 | £256 | £357 | £1,281 |
| New Zealand | £1,248 | - | - | £1,248 |
| Canada | £651 | - | £304 | £955 |

*Ireland fees include visa and permission to work.
 **The US fees are for an application as an investor.

| Comparison of proposed Tier 2 fees with international equivalents as at 25/10/2010 | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Entry visa fee | In country extension fee (where applicable) | Permanent settlement fee | Total end-to-end fee |
| Ireland* | £943 | £2,225 | - | £3,168 |
| UK | £350 | £500 | £900 | £1,750 |
| Australia | £1,074 | - | - | £1,074 |
| New Zealand** | £672 | - | £336 | £1,008 |
| Netherlands | £385 | £256 | £357 | £999 |
| USA*** | £301 | - | £646 | £947 |
| Canada | £341 | - | £304 | £645 |

*Ireland fees include visa and permission to work.
 **New Zealand entry fee includes a migrant levy that must be paid before the visa is issued.
 ***The US has a two stage process of applying for entry and then permission to work.

9. I am copying this letter to all committee members present at the debate, and Hansard, and I will place a copy in the House library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Damian Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail for the 'n'.

DAMIAN GREEN