

Citizenship

Details

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FEES FOR CITIZENSHIP – IS IT POSSIBLE FOR THE GROUP TO HELP WITH THIS AND ALSO THE OCCASIONAL NEED FOR LARGE SUMS OF MONEY? - some Guidelines

The issue of Fees for Citizenship and also the occasional need of some clients for a sizeable sum of money, was fully discussed at the MAG meeting on the 10th October. Several of our clients who now have leave to remain are keen to obtain British citizenship. However, some have great difficulty in finding the fees of £800. Some clients may need funds for other reasons - family reunification, special equipment, etc.

It is very understandable that some visitors may wish to give or loan additional funds to a person they have come to like and wish strongly to support in every way they can. However, the SWVG has a very clear policy about the use of Personal Money (see the SWVG's Handbook and Members website) It is only through being a member of the SWVG that each visitor is enabled to have contact with a client.

Working through the Group offers a guarantee of certain standards of support and protection to both clients and visitors. The agencies and individuals who refer clients to us expect us to use SWVG, not personal funds, and our funders require that we have clear, fair criteria for the allocation of resources. If individual visitors give personal financial support, this undermines our collective decision-making process, and unfairly advantages some clients over others.

When a client needs a large sum for a special reason, their visitor should approach the Money Allocation Group (MAG) which may be able to help, and has information about other charities which have funds that can be applied for. Several visitors have done this with great success.

MAG also discussed how high a priority fees for citizenship should be given. Our clear view was that the first priority for our funds is ASSIST, which helps destitute individuals in their applications for leave to remain. And that if spare monies became available, we would want to prioritise raising the subsistence allowance to £30 a week. At the moment, we see no way in which the SWVG can fund fees for citizenship.

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group *Working with asylum seekers and refugees*
Patrons: Miriam Margolyes OBE, John Pilkington, Dr Shirley Firth **Registered charity:** 1103093

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