**LETTER TEMPLATE TO YOUR MP**

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Dear [**name of MP**]

I am writing to you as a constituent and someone who is affected by the current British spouse visa rules which were introduced in 2012. 

As you know, the rules are deliberately designed to separate families where the UK government does not believe that a spouse has the financial capacity to support their spouse.  The UK sponsor must show savings of £65,000, earnings of £18,600 or a combination of the two. Many lower-income earners are already unable to live with their partner and family in the UK - and with British/EU families now required to meet the MIR, far more families like mine will be affected. What I find striking is that as a British citizen, my basic human right to family life is being breached yet this is being wilfully ignored by a government that professes to have family values at the heart of their party.

What you will not be aware of are the many real impacts these rules have had on my family.  **Please add in here some personal information about how the MIR has affected you.** *MPs and their researchers have said that the fact that you have taken the time to craft a personalised and well-informed letter demonstrates to the MP that there are people in their constituency that care deeply about an issue. In turn, your opinions are likely to be taken more seriously as a result.*

With winter approaching, bills soaring, the rising cost of living generally and complex application process, the rules are causing even more extreme mental and emotional difficulties for both adults and children which have a long-lasting impact. 

With a general election likely to be imminent and a possible change of government a real possibility, as my parliamentary representative I would like you to raise the issue of the MIR in the House of Commons and with the Home Secretary and ask that the UK spouse visa requirements are amended to be more in line with the pre-2012 rules.

With this in mind I would like to see the following 8 S’s implemented into your party’s immigration policies:

* **Scrap the salary threshold** [Minimum Income Requirement/MIR] for spousal visas. It's among the strictest rules in the world (2nd after Denmark) and very damaging as attested in numerous reports and personal testimonies done by RFUK.
* **Square deal for the ADR route.** Immigration Rules for the entry of Adult Dependant Relatives (ADR), for instance parents, have been tightened to the point that they are practically impossible, except in very exceptional and extremely rare circumstances. This is a ban masquerading as a rule, and furthermore in our multicultural world with multiple conceptions of family, we shouldn't be artificially limited to a nuclear family. Indeed, on the Ukrainian route, siblings, parents etc should be considered - we should move more in line with that
* **Slash the visa fees substantially.** The profit margin is unjustifiably high and especially now when, as a country we are facing the toughest financial pressures and yet families are expected to find £1,000’s to be able to reunite with their partner here in the UK
* **Shorten the time to ILR - to 2 years.** The time to ILR is currently 5 years minimum – with many also on 10-year routes to settlement. This puts huge stresses and strains on families, limits opportunities (for example to study) and sets people up for failure. It also causes serious mental and physical health damage and relationship damage. This is clearly damaging to society and to the stated aim of integration.
* **Simplify the visa process and broaden the requirements with more flexibility** - add flexibility and sensible consideration of the multiple ways people can meet the requirements for eg: third party sponsorship is not allowed except in extremely limited circumstances; the self-employed are discriminated against in that the evidence is very strict and cannot be combined for example with savings. For families living overseas, job offers for the non-UK partner cannot be used and this is clear discrimination - in most cases this forces a 6-month separation, which is contrary to the stated desire for integration. For savings, they need to be held effectively in cash - other forms of wealth could be considered.
* **Streamline the language requirement** to A1 all the way through, which can be proved in multiple ways (including degrees and other professional qualifications as well as tests, potentially broadening the number of exempt countries). The language requirement went from A1 for entry clearance and ILR to B1 for ILR, a big leap. Later this was made stricter with an A2 requirement for FLR.
* **Scrap the 10-year route to settlement**
* **Stop the reset clock** Combine time as partner/parent on 10 and 5-year routes so once the couple have been in the UK for 5 years, they will be able to include the time done – i.e. not resetting the clock as is currently the case so its effectively a 7.5-year route. And Enable spouse/parent visa applicants to merge time spent in the UK up to 5 years

I would also like to see your party go further to relieve the huge pressures and anxiety I have experienced when trying to reunite with our partner and children by:

* **Provide free visit visas for immediate family** [children, siblings, parents, grandparents of those with leave to remain/settled status/family of British citizen] to be able reunite with their family in the UK for up to 6 months
* **Limiting fees being charged by private independent vis application centres**
* **Have the IDV app for biometrics as an option as well as the application centre routes** (as is possible for some work/EUSS applications currently).
* **Allow anyone on the family route to receive recourse to public funds,** if approved by the Home Office, without the additional residency required for settlement
* **Grant a transition period of no more than six months for ex-spouses to apply for permanent residency**, if they met all requirements before the relationship ended

The current immigration rules are arrogant, inhumane, unjustifiable and must be changed for the better. We pride ourselves as being a global player and yet our immigration policies are utterly shameful and amongst the harshest in the world. We need to do all we can to promote this country as a welcoming, warm, vibrant and prosperous place to live – and a country that doesn’t needlessly tear apart innocent, loving families to prove a point. I would very much welcome a response from you regarding this letter and the matter I am bringing to you - and also to understand what you think about the current immigration policies relating to families and how you’d like to see it look

Yours sincerely,