



Home Office



Ms Caroline Coombs



Dear Ms Coombs

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 2023 to the Prime Minister about the Minimum Income Requirement. I am replying as a policy official.

The Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) was implemented in July 2012, following advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, reflecting the income at which a British family could no longer access income-related benefits. It was introduced to ensure family migrants are supported at a reasonable level, do not become a burden on the taxpayer and can participate sufficiently in everyday life to facilitate their integration into British society. The level of the MIR has not increased since it was introduced in 2012.

The MIR was set, following advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee, at £18,600 for sponsoring a partner, rising to £22,400 for also sponsoring a non-settled child and an additional £2,400 for each further such child. This reflected the level of income at which a British family or a family settled in the UK generally ceases to be able to access income-related benefits

The principle of having such a requirement was tested through the Courts. Ultimately the Supreme Court endorsed our approach, that setting an income requirement for family migration which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration into our communities, is reasonable. The policy strikes a balance between the interests of those wishing to sponsor a partner from overseas and the community in general by ensuring migration to the UK is not based on access to services funded by UK taxpayers.

Those unable to meet the MIR requirement may still be granted leave where to deny entry, or permission for further stay, would breach their human rights. In these cases, migrants will have a longer route to settlement - 10 years (granted in four periods of 30 months, with a fifth application for indefinite leave to remain). This reflects our obligations under Article 8 of the ECHR.

The Home Office continues to keep the Immigration Rules under review and makes adjustments in light of feedback on their operation and impact.


Human Rights and Family Unit
Migration and Borders Group

