

THE REUNITE FAMILIES UK LETTER

ISSUE NO 1. | MARCH 2023

Welcome to the first Reunite Families UK Letter! With our new newsletter we will be able to share with you what has been happening in the Reunite Families UK community as well as keeping you up to date with the latest developments/news with everything spouse visa! If there is anything you'd like to see in the newsletter do get in touch with the team at hello@reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk

CALLING ALL FAMILIES

We are co-producing a research project with families affected by the MIR and an expert advisory group and as such your input is extremely important.

Thanks to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, we have recently started a research project which explores the impacts of the spouse visa rules on children and the prolonged separations they cause. If you would be willing to share your/your children's experience with us and a group of mental health experts in a safe focus group setting, we would love to hear from you ASAP.

You can contact us by emailing Caroline at caroline@reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk

PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH ANYONE YOU KNOW IS AFFECTED

CALLING PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM A PARENT

As part of the focus groups we would also like to invite professionals who work closely with children separated to hear their opinion on the issue. This is a critical point of view that will provide extra insight into the impacts of the rules. If you are a parent willing to be involved/know a professional working with children separated by the spouse visa rules, we love to hear from you ASAP.

You can contact us by emailing Caroline at caroline@reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk

PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH ANYONE YOU KNOW IS AFFECTED

NB: Whilst the adult focus groups by their nature will most likely not be anonymous, information used in the report can be done so anonymously

Our letter to the PM and his response (or lack of)

Back in December, our Christmas break was cut short by a briefing to the press that indicated the Government was planning to increase the Minimum Income Requirement at a time of increasing cost of living pressures.

For this reason, we coordinated a [letter](#) which was signed by so many of you (thank you !!) that asked for the Minimum Income Requirement not to be increased and instead to be scrapped altogether.

However, we were extremely disappointed by the response received on behalf of the Prime Minister to the letter. The response we received only repeats government lines we have heard countless times before without addressing the substance of our arguments or the offer we have made to the government of meeting with people who are affected daily by the UK spouse visa rules. We are now working with RAMP to respond to this and to engage, educate and update MPs accordingly

Stop the Increase in the Minimum Income Requirement [MIR]

Date: Wednesday 11th January 2023

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you on behalf of Reunite Families UK [RFUK] and our members. RFUK is an organisation that supports and advocates for couples and families affected by UK spouse visa rules and we want to ask you to ensure that the Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) for spousal visas is not increased in 2023.

On 26th December, whilst people across the country came together with their loved ones to celebrate, share joy and happy memories, it was reported in The Times that the Home Secretary plans to increase the MIR for spousal visas - a policy that has already ripped thousands of families apart, many of whom were separated over the holidays as a result. For families that already did not earn enough to be with their partner or children over the festive period and for those who had hoped to be on track to earn enough money in 2023, the news that the Home Office is looking to increase the MIR is beyond devastating.

The journey to settlement is overly complex, bureaucratic and expensive. The reality is that families will be apart from their loved ones for over a year before they stand a chance of being reunited. If they are self-employed, that time apart is even longer. An initial spouse visa can cost around £4,000 [with legal fees which have become more necessary] with around another £3000+ every 2.5 years for further leave to remain. It's a huge price to pay for any household also dealing with a cost-of-living crisis. The economy is struggling, the health system is crippled, and public services are crying out for help. People across the country are already finding it impossible to make ends meet, and so it is hard to fathom why, given all this,

Does the Appendix FM route baffle you?

Well, you're not the only one!

But the good news is that RFUK/Fragomen Law are putting on what we hope will be a very useful webinar which is free for you to attend. A team from Fragomen will go through this unnecessarily complex visa route. Please note they will not be able to answer specific case queries. The webinar will be at **11am on 28th March**. Please share this event on your social media/with those affected by the rules.

To attend please register here:

<https://bit.ly/3Lbht6P>

Spouse Visa Rules Webinar

28 MARCH 2023 11 AM

Register on Zoom here:

<https://bit.ly/3Lbht6P>

We will be covering:

- What is Appendix FM
- Which family members can be included in the application
- Eligibility requirements
- Type of Leave granted following successful application

FRAGOMEN



Share our Unreunited Mothers cards !

Thanks to our amazing colleague Cian who prepared this "unreunited mothers" cards for Mother's Day.

With it we want to highlight the countless policies with which mothers in our communities are blocked from being reunited with their loved ones.

Share them in your social media post to ask the Government to finally scrap the MIR. Download them from [here](#) !



To all you incredible mothers, grandmothers and mothers-in-waiting out there who have navigated or are navigating the UK spouse visa process. In the face of uncertainty, great personal struggle and sacrifice, whilst you may not feel it, your strength and resilience is inspirational and we honour you today.

For more information go to: www.reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk

Are you our next volunteer?

As a small (but rapidly growing!) organisation we are looking to recruit more volunteers to help us grow more organically and support even more families affected by the spousal visa rules.

We are looking for a variety of skills (from admin to event organising to comms and social media wizardry) so if you can give us a hand give us a shout at hello@reunitefamiliesuk.co.uk !



Become part of our spokesperson network through the media training sessions!

In the coming weeks we will be putting on a media training for people in our community who would like to help us share with the media the devastating impact of the Minimum Income Requirement.

Follow our Facebook page and website for more information including how to register for it



Reports continue to prove failure of family migration policies

The last few weeks have seen the publication of several hard-hitting reports that highlight once again the failure of family migration policies as well as the permanent limbo in which many people on the 10-year route are forced to remain due to harsh immigration rules.

Family migration policies are failing both families and society as a whole. This was one of the key conclusions (not surprising for us unfortunately) contained in the **report** published by the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee.

We were really pleased to having been asked to provide in person and written evidence.

A new research report by Praxis, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and Institute of Public Policy Research shows the devastating impact of extortionate fees and long waits as a result of the 10-year route to settlement.



HOUSE OF LORDS

Justice and Home Affairs Committee

1st Report of Session 2022–23

All families matter: An inquiry into family migration

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