

## THE IMPACT OF REMOVING THE UNRESTRICTED RIGHT OF DEPENDANTS TO WORK IN THE UK

### - Further comments from our survey of Tier 2 visa holders and their partners

This appendix should be read in conjunction with our [report to the UK Migration Advisory Committee](#) (MAC) on the impact of removing the unrestricted right of Tier 2 visa dependants to work in the UK.

Permits Foundation conducted a survey of over 1,000 Tier 2 visa employees and their partners to gather data and opinions to include in our submission to the MAC. Just over half of the respondents had partners who were also working in the UK. The large majority (77%) said they would have been unlikely to accept their current assignment if their partner did not have the right to work in the UK.

Below, we have gathered a selection of responses to those who answered '**definitely not, or probably not**' to the question: "**If your spouse or partner did not have the right to work in the UK when you were considering the transfer, would you have accepted the current assignment?**"

The reasons employees give span from respect for their partners own skills and career aspirations, to concern that partner may feel isolated or less integrated with society, frustrated, bored or depressed if unable to work. Financial considerations also play a major part, with many saying they would struggle on one salary with the high cost of living and housing in the UK, especially in London:

Occasionally, we have removed a word or two that identified a particular organisation, sector, or profession where we felt that anonymity, which had assured in the survey, might be at risk. This is indicated in the text by [...].

### **Q: "If your spouse or partner did not have the right to work in the UK when you were considering the transfer, would you have accepted the current assignment?"**

### **A: "Definitely not, or probably not"**

*"The ability to work is a hugely important and integral part of my partner's life."*

*"I had multiple job offers and decided to accept the one in the UK because of the job profile, language consideration, and positive growth prospects for science and innovation sector. But if my spouse would not be allowed to work then I would definitely consider moving to other European countries or to the North America."*

*"I think the ability for both people to work is quite crucial for a modern world, especially for young employees. It's also easier to integrate into society if both have a job and can meet different people and contribute to society, including through paying tax. Furthermore, it's becoming more and more difficult for families to maintain a good standard of living with only one income. I also don't see family 'separation' as an option."*

*"Giving the spouse the opportunity to work is a great way to understand the culture in another country, supports the family financially, and is a way to contribute to the society economically."*

*"My partner is as qualified as I am and she would not want to put a halt to her career on account of visa restrictions. This would not only cripple her global career aspirations but also hamper London's appeal as a global city for fast moving, aspirational, and highly educated individuals."*

*"The ability for my spouse to work either full time, part time or on a casual basis is very important for us. We need him to retain his skill level for when we leave the UK. It is also an important factor for his own sense of worth and responsibility to contribute financially towards the family. His ability to continue in his occupation is of great importance to us as a family as well."*

*"It is very difficult for my spouse, mentally, emotionally, and socially, to not have gainful employment. Adding more stress to her life also adds more stress to my life, makes it more difficult to perform my job, and overall, decreases enjoyment and quality of life for both of us."*

*"My partner is a nurse and she is working in the NHS and apart from the income she likes to integrate into the society and participate in the work she describes the only way to stop her to being isolated from the society that she lives."*

*"My spouse is successful and accomplished in her field. She, like me, holds graduate degrees in her area of focus from top global universities and is ambitious in her pursuits. Moving to the UK was a great career opportunity for me and an experience we were very excited about, but my wife had to have the ability to continue her own professional growth for it to make sense. Restricting her ability to work would have been a waste of on-the-ground talent and would likely have created an unhealthy imbalance within our home. I wouldn't have felt comfortable making the move under those circumstances."*

*"My partner is the other half of my life - I simply would not have taken the role if he could not have joined me in the UK and found meaningful employment for himself."*

*"Who in today's dual income society does not consider their partner's career? The UK should want to attract the best talent to continue to compete in the global market."*

*"It gives the family flexibility if the Tier 2 ICT dependent can work or at least flexible to work. Without this option, it is not possible for people to transfer to countries. a big family risk."*

*"Without any work to do or even the possibility of getting a job, the social and economic impact on their life would have been extreme, creating resentment in the relationship."*

*"It is like taking the freedom to grow from an individual. Moreover, if spouses work, they also contribute to the NI as well as HMRC tax contributions. The additional income assists families to gain better economic stability and promote work/life balance. The increased disposable income tends to increase consumerism and that also contributes to local UK businesses and their earnings. I do not see the purpose of introducing this rule - it is like taking 2 steps backwards in time. At a time when the US is considering allowing spouses of certain visa categories to work, the UK is now looking backwards."*

*"Restricting family members from work is ridiculous and I would not take a job in a country with such a policy. Policies should encourage people to work and to assimilate into the community, not create a class of unwanted residents"*

*"It is unfair to put my spouse under forced unemployment due to migration. That can end up leading to resentment especially if they have sought after experience and skills in the labour market. We need two incomes to afford to live a comfortable life which is the reason for migration. Furthermore we are not entitled to benefits that citizens get. With the job climate as it, we need flexibility of both of us working to ensure we can provide for the family without government help."*

*My wife currently is not working . However, it is good to have the option to have her work , if needed.*

*"The ability of my wife to accompany me with a visa that allowed her the right to work in the UK was absolutely critical to our decision to accept my employment offer here in London. Should the regulation change and her right to work be revoked, we would have to leave the UK for both personal and financial reasons."*

*"It is just so difficult emotionally to cope with prolonged separation. Both raising a family under and performing our work these conditions is too stressful and difficult."*

*"My spouse also have dreams and may not be competent to find a good job but still can do a simple job if opportunity found."*

*"Family comes first. My wife would never want to remain idle and out of the workforce, abandoning her career. I would consider the prospects of the whole family."*

*"We accepted the current assignment only because my husband can work in the UK as a dependent. If my husband did not have right to work his skill set would be wasted sitting idly at home. It is also essential to our livelihood as well, considering how expensive London is. My husband is searching for a job in the UK and is very positive of getting a job because of the right to work."*

*"My spouse has a successful career of her own. It would simply be selfish and unfair to jeopardize or restrict her career by accepting a job that restricts her freedom to practice her own personal interests or individual rights."*

*"It's pretty much against basic human rights to not allow someone the opportunity to work. Restricting the right of dependents to work would go against this basic fundamental right."*

*"My partner is well educated. Denying her the right to work will strongly affect the well being of the family. It will simply mean that whatever hard work she did to study is a waste of time. I strongly feel women need freedom to work if they can. Taking away this right would cause distress to them."*

*"Its imperative for my wife to work in the UK because: 1) Standard of living in London is very high. 2) My wife is a working professional. 3) Restricting the main applicant's spouse to work, given a long-term visa, is draconian."*

*"It's important for the equilibrium of a family that both husband and wife have the ability to work and be financially independent. Otherwise, there will be one of them who is sacrificing himself / herself for the professional career of the other and that is fundamentally wrong."*

*"My spouse would need to stop her career progression, which is not favourable or fair to her. In addition, it would not be easy to support a family on one income given that the cost of living in UK is so high."*

*"My partner also needs a normal life, same as me."*

*"My partner currently works as a Senior Manager for a global IT services company in our home country. He possesses over 10 years work experience and has a promising career. I would not want him to compromise on his career for mine. Moreover, as a skilled migrant we have no access to public funds or any other welfare schemes, and if only one of us is allowed to work it will have serious impacts on our social life. We still contribute to the economy by paying taxes. It just feels unfair and a one-dimensional approach to reduce immigration."*

*"It would be unfair to my spouse if she was not allowed to work, despite having qualifications, just because she was not allowed."*

*"My husband is highly trained and cannot afford to stay jobless at home in the UK. This could then mean family separation, which would bring devastating consequences upon our marriage and family."*

*"The UK is not a place for single income family. My wife also needs to work to keep her sanity she is not used to sitting at home doing nothing."*

*"It is absolutely essential that a family nucleus is able to function within its social context. For this we need to promote educated masses entering the UK to work and not the contrary. This helps the economy (both parents contributing to taxes, etc.) and benefits institutions and corporations (e.g. by having expertise and a cultural/social understanding beyond what is available in the British Isles). It is hard enough to obtain a work permit in the UK, so why now handicap highly educated and qualified families working in the UK, or future applicants who may bring tremendous benefits to this nation?"*

*"The impact of distance on my family life and relationship would not be worth the move. That's not acceptable to me at all and is a recipe for the break up of a family."*

*"My husband is on a dependent visa and it would not be acceptable for him to come to the country and not to be able to work."*

*"Living in London is expensive, and with a child we can no way afford it as a family if only one of us is working."*

*"Quite simple really: the UK is too expensive for only one family member to work and feed a family with children."*

*"Living in the UK has to work for the whole family, spouse included. The overall salaries in the UK are not high enough to fully support a family on a single income, especially as no benefits are given when on Tier 2."*

*"The fact that my wife would be able to work here made the decision to come much easier. If she did not have that option, the assignment would have been quite a difficult choice for us. The option for her to work gives us financial and practical flexibility, which was a great factor in choosing to come."*

*"We are a dual income family and wouldn't consider a move to another country if my spouse could not work. This would be detrimental to her self-esteem and her willingness to work. My own salary cannot support the whole family."*

*"Living in the UK is very expensive, my salary alone cannot support our family. It is important for my family that my spouse and I both work."*

*"The fact that my spouse could work on my visa was a large factor in accepting the transfer to the UK. I would not want her to sacrifice her career to transfer."*

*"My husband is also a professional, and as such, both of us like to work. Work is an important part of life and dignity, therefore, we would not consider living in a place where one of us couldn't flourish or bring benefits to the community through our work."*

*"I won't work in any country that my spouse can't work."*

*"One income would not be sufficient to maintain our family."*

*"My spouse is currently working and should continue to work as part of her career development and also to contribute to our financial resources (that will be heavily impacted once we will move to the UK, especially if she does not work). Moreover, my spouse is used to working. Staying without professional activity would impact her and us emotionally and socially."*

*"When I was offered the assignment in the UK, one of the main reasons for accepting the offer was that my wife would be able to have her career and job in the UK."*

*"I would not be willing to force my spouse to put her career on hold and/or live apart from me."*

*"She should not necessarily be trapped in my world."*

*"Leaving my country of origin due to job demands is a difficult challenge. Equally, the impact this has on my family is enormous since it implies that my spouse would have to terminate her current job and join me in the UK as a result of the transfer. It would be psychologically damaging for someone with a career to come to the UK and become an ordinary housewife due to the restrictions in the UK. Above all, if this proposed restriction was in place prior to the transfer, I would not consider coming over here due to the negative impact it will have on me as a family man, as well as on the career progression of my wife."*

*"I would never jeopardize my partner's career by restricting her to move to the UK and not work."*

*"My spouse will feel bored at home, she needs to build her career as well."*

*"We are both working and would not have transferred if both of us did not have an assignment in the UK."*

*"My spouse's career is as important as mine. Without the right to work my spouse's career would have come to halt. My spouse has a Masters degree and she has skills much sought after in the finance industry. Without the right to work, the company in the UK for which she works would not have benefited from her skills/experience."*

*"I don't want to break my wife's career path for mine."*

*"My partner is a highly qualified Clinical Researcher in Oncology with fluent English and Spanish. I would never allow her to stop her career and development only based on my career."*

*"As working couple, my wife and I will only consider relocating to the UK if both of us can continue working."*

*"If my partner didn't have the right to work, it would make no sense in accepting the assignment."*

*"We need a dual income to maintain our lifestyle and to meet our children's requirements."*

*"It would be unfair for my spouse to compromise their career."*

*"My husband would prefer not to join me in the UK if he did not have the right to work here. Even if he did, surviving on one person's income becomes very difficult considering the living standards in the UK."*

*"What is there to explain? Why would I move somewhere where my partner is not allowed to pursue her own life, including professionally? Equally, I would not relocate somewhere where her civil liberties were restricted or compromised."*

*"My wife is a well engineer - we want the flexibility for her to be able to work while we are living here in the UK. It would be such a waste of talent and experience if she couldn't go back to work. We have another offer elsewhere which would allow her to work as well. Having a dual careers option will always be one of our main decision points for our next assignment."*

*"I would definitely not like my spouse to let go of her career aspirations and to sit at home doing nothing. She is an independent woman and she has the right to have a career."*

*"As a young couple, it was essential that both of us were able to work within the UK to further develop both of our careers."*

*"My wife is a primary school teacher. She had just completed her Master's Degree in Education (a 2 year program) about a year before we moved to the UK. She was obviously looking to continue her career and keep working even if we moved to the UK. If she did not have the right to work that would have caused an uncomfortable and untenable situation for us as a family, and we would not have been able to accept the assignment and move."*

*"It is really important for my partner to have an opportunity to work. He wouldn't join me on my assignment if he would not be allowed to work in UK, so I also would not take the assignment."*

*"My husband also has career ambition and if he would not have the right to work in the UK, I could not consider the transfer."*

*"My spouse was working in banking and financial services in our home country and had to resign to accompany me to the UK. She has a career of her own and we were willing to re-locate only because there were good chances for her to continue her career in the UK. I would have been unable to accept my current assignment if it meant that she had to sit at home in the UK."*

*"My partner's ability to fulfill her career aspirations is one of integral factors of our common happiness. An expat's life is full of sacrifices, and if you make this burden even heavier you will lose a share of these expats."*

*"My wife works to be able to support the family so that we can maintain our standard of living as the UK in general is much more expensive than our home countries.. If my wife was not able to work then I will most probably leave the UK for another country that will allow my dependent to have the freedom to work."*

*"This will impact my partner's career prospects and it would be like prioritising my career over the partner's career."*

*"At the time when I was given the opportunity to work in the UK, my wife was also working and earning a comparable income to mine. I would definitely not accepted the current assignment if she did not have the right to work in the UK, as that would have meant a substantial decrease in our household income."*

*"I would not sacrifice my partner's work life for my own."*

*"Having a job for your partner is important not only for financial support but also for them to have self-respect and to fulfill personal aspirations. In this day and age where men and women are equal in all fields, it will be unfair to expect one or other to sacrifice their aspirations."*

*"The UK supports equal rights I believe? And everyone should be allowed to work."*

*"There is no way I would move to the UK if my spouse was not allowed to work. One of the biggest reasons that the UK is a better place to work compared to US is the fact that the spouse can work here without applying for sponsorship."*

*"If I wanted to live in a backward retrograde country where civil liberties are curtailed, I would have stayed in my home country."*

*"Dependents' right to work is essential when considering an option to work in the UK. With the cost of living so high, especially in London where majority of highly skilled choose to work, spouses having an option to pursue a career if needed for any reason is vital."*

*"Restriction on my spouse's right to work while she is in UK would curb her freedom to pursue a career and have her own financial freedom."*

*"It is very important for my spouse to be able to be gainfully employed and if it were not allowed then that would be a deal breaker for me to consider employment in UK."*

*"Absolutely and definitely NOT. Firstly, the UK cost of living is extremely high and it's impossible to live here with single income. Secondly, why would my partner sacrifice his career and earning potential just so I can further my career here? This is like saying that in a British family only one member is allowed to earn and the rest have to sit at home!!!"*

*"My wife is a qualified person who earns good salary. Not only does this assist with the cost of living (including to the economy) in the UK, it means my family can stay together while assigned to the UK."*

*"I would not have taken up the transfer if my spouse was not allowed to work in the UK. We are a dual career couple and it is equally important that my spouse has the opportunity to work. My spouse has found herself employment since we moved into the UK and is doing well in her professional career. If the migration rules change, we would have no hesitation in leaving UK."*

*"I would not have even considered this position if my partner was not able to locate work and had the right to pursue quality work."*

*"The University of [...] was a great opportunity for me, but I would not have accepted the offer if my partner did not have the right to work in the UK. He was willing to move to the UK with me and to pursue career opportunities here, but we certainly weren't willing to move if he was going to be restricted to sitting around the house all day doing nothing!"*

*"My partner is as highly skilled as I am. Like most human beings, we both need meaningful work for a high quality of life. Therefore, if only one of us could work we'd have a lower quality of life, as well as unhappiness due to the lack of meaningful work for my partner. Since we had many different opportunities internationally for employment, we would choose the place that had the highest opportunity for success for us both."*

*"My wife has a PhD in [...]; consigning her to 3-5 years of unemployment is not something we would have ever considered. I honestly can't believe this is something anyone in my position (skilled, with a highly educated spouse) would ever do."*

*"The ability of both my spouse and I to work was critical in our decision to move to the UK."*

*"Having spent a year in the UK as a student prior to my employment, I can say that it is extremely difficult to maintain a household on a single income. Raising a child on top of that would be next to impossible. These factors combined led me to believe that I would not have decided to take up employment in the UK if my spouse did not have the right to work here."*

*"Family consists of two people with equal rights to express themselves. A career for one should not kill the career of the partner."*

*"It is a fundamental right of a spouse/partner to have the right to work in the country where his/her partner/spouse has been invited to work. Treating the skilled workers in such unfair way will lead to all skilled staff that have this option leaving for places that treat them fairly."*

*"I don't have a partner, but if I did, I would never subject them to the demeaning and professionally disadvantageous situation where he is forced to remain unemployed in a country and treated as unwanted baggage. This is quite bluntly what the government is proposing - to treat foreign spouses and partners as pariahs who are not permitted to have a meaningful life in the UK. If the government sanctions this level of hostility towards skilled migrants and their partners, I would definitely not have accepted this assignment if I had a non-EU partner."*

*"It would be impossible for me to ask my highly educated wife who has a degree and many years of experience to sit at home. Not in this century!!! Also, life is very expensive in the UK and with families it would be very hard to have one earner."*

*"Restricting my spouse to work would hamper her professional path and I believe every individual has a right to grow professionally."*

*"I did not have a spouse at the time I commenced my tier 2 visa, however I am confident that if I had it would have significantly reduced the attractiveness of the position."*

*"There is nothing to explain here. As a highly qualified person I would not separate from my family to take a job in the UK."*

*"Very hard to support a family of 5 with only one PostDoc salary. My wife's income is essential for our family to survive."*

*"One of the key considerations to work in the UK is the right to work for the spouse or partner. Not only does it help to keep them engaged at work and allows them to grow their CV but it also allows them to generate more household income and disposable cash. Without this, the choice to work in the UK is less favourable."*

*"We are a young family and both need to be able to work and support ourselves financially. London is an expensive city and we both need to work to meet ends meet. It will be horrendous to take that right from my wife just because she is a partner! She is an educated woman and a young mother who wants to have her own career too. I would simply look to go back home or to move to other countries if my wife is restricted on the basis that she is my wife and therefore has to be treated as dependent without the right to work."*

*"We are a dual career couple and respect each other's wishes to continue with our career aspirations. We would definitely not consider the option where either of us can't work."*

*"My spouse has professional career in a different industry to mine. There would be no point in moving to the UK if she did not have a right to work there. That would not only affect her career but also our family relationship."*

*"My wife is highly trained and needs the ability to work - removing that would be a significant downside on the UK in making our assessment of other jurisdictions."*

*"Spouse would definitely like to be gainfully employed rather than sat at home and secondly a second income does help, no matter how small."*

*"It would depend on whether the company I work for takes into consideration my spouse's remuneration had she been able to work and made my contract offering accordingly to enable me to sustain/improve my existing lifestyle."*

*"My spouse and I are both engineers working for the same company under a 'dual career' with international mobility. If my spouse cannot work due to visa restrictions, we would have to transfer out to a country that would allow us both to work."*

*"I am in a long-term assignment and this would have not worked out."*

*"My partner is also a highly skilled worker and our career is a priority for the both of us. I would not move to a country that did not allow my partner to work; we could put our skills to better use in another country that welcomed highly skilled and taxpaying workers."*

*"We both need to work in order to support our family."*

*"My wife is a professional like myself, changing country is a serious decision and if that limits my wife's career I wouldn't accept it."*

*"I am looking to work in a place where my spouse can work. If that is not the case, I would choose to work in other locations."*

*"Our family relies on a dual household income. Without the ability to work we would not have been able to accept the transfer."*

*"I would definitely not consider the transfer if I have to be separated from my spouse."*

*"Both of our jobs are important to us, and I want my husband to enjoy having a career as much as I do. We would not consider moving anywhere one of us would not be able to work."*

*"The household is sustained on the basis of both partners working, this was a key consideration."*

*"Moving to a different country with family is already a big step. Having the economic support of my partner to raise our kids is vital for the goodwill of the family unit."*

*"My wife has aspirations that I need to take into account."*