

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 from those who answered the free text question – “If you could speak directly to the UK government about the right of dependants to work, what would you want to say?”

We have ordered the comments into two sections – general and economic aspects, and social aspects - although there is some overlap when people commented on both. 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 you could speak directly to the UK government about the right of dependants to work, what would you want to say?”

General and economic aspects

“Given that my dependants have come through a thorough screening process (through my application), this is an unnecessary hurdle as working in the UK would add to the economy and prosperity of the country - without the country having invested in their skills!”

“The right of dependants to work is essential for attracting qualified migrant workers with high levels of education and professional experience.”

“The UK has a great deal to offer top performing international people. And these people have a lot to offer the UK in return. In my case, making a leadership contribution to world-leading research. Many top performing people have equally top performing partners. If partners cannot find meaningful work then the UK will only attract top performing people whose partners cannot make a substantial contribution to the UK international standing and culture. It would be like the UK saying, “Yes we want the benefits of attracting high performing people to the UK but we only want half of what we could have.”

“Having highly qualified dependants working in the UK is a great opportunity for the UK economy and diversity. Having them not working is a waste of available resource and a motivation for their highly qualified partners not to stay in the UK.”

“Tier 2 employees are skilled labour. Their partners generally don't tend to do unskilled jobs. They definitely add to the productivity of the country.”

“We have no access to public funds, yet we pay taxes as any UK citizen. Thus, we directly support anyone entitled to state benefits and as I don't see a skilled jobs shortage the maths are very simple.”

“It would be a loss for the UK government and economy to stop skilled legal immigrants contributing to the growth of the UK economy and industry as well as paying their fair share of tax.”

“Even though I have chosen not to work at the moment to be able to care for my little children, the option to work when I'm ready is a strong motivating factor. I can contribute to the economy through taxes and social responsibility. It would be a mistake to take away the right of spouses to work in the UK, they are not the cause of the un-employment crisis. The UK government should quit looking at a small population in the UK and start concentrating efforts on the bigger issue. Not all accompanying spouses actually work so stopping this privilege may not have any impact on the employment/un-employment issue in the UK. Accompanying spouses who want to work should have the right to!”

“I would hope that the UK government would focus on the longer-term impact and not curb the right of dependants to work in order to achieve a short-term reduction of immigration levels. More often than not it would have a significant impact on the choice of the destination as there is a higher cost to the spouse's career. The government needs to recognize that we are now living in a more globalized and inter-connected world where human capital should not only be restricted to domestic sources. By being more restrictive and more insular to human capital inflows, it would be counter-intuitive to the growth of the UK and it would not enable the nation to gain a competitive edge on the global platform. In my opinion, establishing a closed or partially closed policy to immigration would set the country backward. While it may seemingly create more opportunities for the domestic labour force, the nation loses out on having a potentially larger workforce with a global diversity of talents and skillsets. While I recognize there is a need to manage the level of immigration, there can be other longer term and less restrictive approaches to balance the flow of immigration.”

“You are hitting your own economy where it hurts the most - skilled individuals that have trained in other parts of the world. UK science relies on a multi-collaborative environment and people from different backgrounds and experiences. Making it more difficult for skilled individuals to come here will affect your ability to compete with more welcoming nations, such as (I can't believe it), the USA.”

“Outside of my personal situation, as a leader in this company, I realize the importance of being able to develop the best people by allowing them the ability to contribute in many global roles. If their spouses are unable to work in certain countries, it will limit [...] ability to build a truly global workforce.”

“Skilled immigrants are a very important part of the UK's development at all levels, from science and technology to humanities and social work. The 'dependants' of those who hold a visa like the Tier 2 bring further unmeasured benefits to the country as many of them are as skilled as the person they 'depend' on, work, pay taxes and benefit the communities where they live in so many different ways. If our families are not allowed to thrive in the same way we do, I would certainly not consider the UK as the place I wanted to be, where so far it has been great to grow and contribute to knowledge and science. The idea of restricting the work of dependants will not bring benefits to the country or solve real issues such as the lack of jobs; it's not the immigrants who cause these problems. Historically, the UK has been a country built on the work of immigrants. As such, restricting the work of families who come to contribute skills that are scarce in the country will just make them take those skills elsewhere.”

“Restricting a partner's ability to work may well eliminate the majority of T2 workers, an approach that would cripple the UK's global thought leadership and economic advantages. This is not the type of migration that needs to be targeted.”

“I would say that restricting the ability of professional working families to migrate to the UK under a company sponsorship is not a smart way to try to reduce immigration levels, and will only make it harder for British businesses to find qualified employees and grow the economy.”

“If Tier 2 worker's dependants do not have a right to work in the UK, it places an unnecessary and heavy burden on them, either making them fully support their family financially or having to live separately in different countries. This will impact strongly on their considerations to move to the UK under a highly skilled migrant programme. In addition, dependants moving with Tier 2 workers to the UK will be adding economic benefit to the country by paying taxes, spending their incomes in the UK and bringing in international background and skills, which are highly demanded in today's competitive global job market. It is also important to note that Tier 2 migrants and their dependants do not have recourse to public funds (benefits), so their economic value is only positive. If their skillset and experience are competitive, they will get a job in the UK and will bring benefit to the country. If not - then they will not get a job and it will be fair that a more suitable person will get it.”

“It is one of the most essential advantages that the UK offers, which makes it one of the most global and best countries to work for. The right to work for dependents is really necessary as millions of individuals' livelihoods depend on it. The UK gets a diverse skill set and highly qualified individuals because of this right.”

“To attract skilled, educated, creative workers – it is absolutely critical that both spouses are be able to work. Without the ability of my spouse to work, I wouldn't be able to choose to live here - and we certainly wouldn't be able to afford to live in London.”

“It is not feasible for many families to only have one source of income, especially living in a city like London.”

“Preventing dependants from working would create a disproportionately negative impact on the development and progression of a family, especially where they were previously accustomed to 2 salaries. The emotional impact of such a situation is damaging to family life and if dependants can't work the UK will definitely fall to the bottom of the list when being considered as an option for migration. Immigrants are very highly educated and contribute significant sums in taxes to this country. This unfair treatment is economically damaging to these families and is a very unfair situation for a group of people that are not a burden on society.”

“Additional jobs mean paying more tax and higher spending power which in turn is good for the govt. Besides that, having a job boosts self-confidence, provides additional income for the family and, particularly in our case, having 2 jobs helps us meet our financial goals sooner which means going back to our home country sooner than we initially planned. So please do not curb the right of dependents to work.”

“Removing this right will have a certain negative impact on the willingness of many skilled workers (who are married or live with their partners) to move to the UK. Especially for international employees, the spouse's career is a major issue; where the spouses are limited or restricted to exercise their right to work the frustration results in family tensions and in some cases separations; so I strongly believe removing this right will substantially diminish the attractiveness of the UK for such employees.”

"I believe all spouses should have the right to work in the UK if they have the opportunity."

"If you want to attract people with skills into the country, you must make it worthwhile. Skilled people tend to have skilled partners so it is counterproductive to restrict their right to work."

"People should be allowed to work under dependant visas for two key reasons a) it helps balance the increased in cost of living and fund the large amount of moving expenses, which might be small from a UK perspective but for someone coming from an emerging economy may mean life savings and b) an option to work also means that the careers of both the partners can progress at the same speed and are not negatively hampered by the choice to move to the UK."

"It is critical to allow the dependant to legally work in the UK to attract skilled workers like me!"

"Restricting the right of dependants to work would mean that less skilled migrants with families would relocate to the UK. If the right of dependants to work was repealed, it should be done so only for new applicants who can take the new measure into consideration."

"The ability for my wife to accompany me with a visa that allowed her the right to work in the UK was absolutely critical in 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."

"If they are not worried about the economy they can introduce this rule. They should understand people like me will consider going back to home country leaving their UK job behind."

"Like all immigration matters, it is the profile of the individual and their circumstances that must be considered. Reducing immigration for the sole purpose of meeting a quota is similar to culling. There are numerous highly skilled 'immigrants' in London, most of whom are here to contribute and expand their own professional careers. The city of London, while of course not representative of the entire nation, is heavily dependent on skilled 'immigration', and in turn the UK is dependent on London."

"I would say that they should have the right to work, and should be given enough assistance to help find something that suits them. "

"It's very important to retain the right for a partner to work to make the UK attractive to foreign workers."

"Let them work. They are not here to settle for good and can contribute their skills while they are here."

"In my opinion, it is one of the most important factors for a dependant to have the right to work. It can be beneficial in many ways - rather than being idle and simply consuming the income of his/her partner, a dependant can use his/her skills to contribute positively to UK economy. Also, it is really UNATTRACTIVE for a potential immigrant to move a place where his/her dependant has no right to work."

"Since we are a highly skilled workforce we have spouses who are highly skilled too. In this case, if they are not allowed to work it will hamper family life and make it difficult for the UK to attract skilled labour in the future."

"I think the possibility for spouses to work is an important factor to stay attractive for highly skilled migrants. If the UK government has to set some limit on the work spouses can do they could consider asking for a university degree or more, but any limitation beyond that would direct highly skilled migrants to other countries where they have better options."

"Dependants of assignees should have the ability to work through their VISA, just like the assignee."

"As most people are in a relationship, if you want to attract skilled personnel for job vacancies, their partners will need to have the opportunity to work. Otherwise, you will greatly reduce the potential pool of skilled personnel. Working couples are not going to come to the UK if one has to stop working."

"Dear UK Govt. Please encourage the right type of migration - the best talent from around the world and their families. Stop confusing illegal migration with legitimate work permit migration. They keep telling the world they want to build business with various countries, yet they make it harder and harder for the well educated, successful professionals, entrepreneurs, health workers, etc. from these countries to establish themselves in the UK. Stop thinking short term and start thinking long term. Educate your people to take on the roles where there are skill shortages and in the meantime allow businesses in the UK to continue to get the best talent from the world to allow London/UK to compete in the global forum. We have had nothing but headaches due to the restrictions and ever changing migration policies in the UK and have been discouraging Canadian friends from moving here. It is a shame as I believe the Tier 2 population and their dependents bring a lot more to the UK than they take away and I'm certain the MAC and other economic groups would agree."

"Is it really good for economy and society not to employ a highly skilled person because he/she is categorized as "dependant?"

"If you want to attract people with skills into the country, you must make it worthwhile. Skilled people tend to have skilled partners so it is counterproductive to restrict their right to work."

"The right of recognized dependants to work has been well established in the UK for many years under both Tier 2 and its predecessor schemes. Restricting this right would make the UK less attractive for families on business-related assignments and thereby impact the economy as well as having negative social implications."

"It is an absolute must to attract high quality talent."

"The UK is becoming less and less attractive as a country to work with the new limitations."

"Restricting skilled people from working is an object waste of talent. This will impact both the skilled personnel and the UK's competitiveness in the labour market."

"My partner and I are both high earners working for a top professional industry. We came here not just to learn from our UK colleagues, but also to transfer our knowledge and expertise about Asian markets. This is a valuable and mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge. The right of my partner to live and work here with me is the key, determining factor in my decision to move to UK. I therefore strongly support the view of our firm that restricting the right of dependants to work in UK would make the UK less attractive for families on business-related assignments. This would have a significant impact on the UK economy as well as having negative social implications."

"They should take into account experience, education and the business potential of the Tier 2 dependent person before banning him/her for working. The existing Visa should be valid until it expires."

"This decision will definitely have a bad impact on a lot of people who are working in the UK who already have their families here or plan to bring them later. Life is expensive here, sometimes it's necessary for both partners to be employed to earn a reasonable income to afford living expenses and a well-earned holiday. Consequently, the majority of professionals will look for a destination other than UK where they get that right."

"My wife is self-employed at the moment, which will help to create more work places in UK."

"While you have every right to administer your migration policy, your reasoning on Tier2 visas defies logic. Well-qualified and experienced professionals have the flexibility to move freely around the world. Regressive policies like the ones in place and the new ones being proposed will only serve to drive the brightest and best away from the UK."

"Sacrificing the basic right to work for any individual is demeaning. I am surprised the government would consider this while on the other hand it is supporting and funding illegal immigrants showing up on the EU shores. My wife would start working soon. And stripping away these rights would make me re-consider whether to stay here long term or not. We are here because somebody in the country needed us. It is for our mutual benefit. We pay taxes and we don't take benefits from the government until we become permanent residents. The UK gov. needs to think why locals are not being employed in place of the legal migrants. Those of us who are able to make it here legally through a pre-offered job are usually from an educated background who add value to the workforce."

"If the UK wants to limit immigration based on family status, then the best way to do this is by eliminating visas for dependents altogether. However, if dependents are welcome, they should be treated as such."

"Do not remove the working rights of Tier 2 dependents because this would lead highly skilled, qualified and expert workforce to chose other countries like the USA who have been opening up opportunities for highly skilled immigrants in recent times. Perhaps, you could implement a restriction on the type of jobs partners can do, like no unskilled jobs. But, unreasonably restricting the right to work would result in a drop in the family's wellbeing, health and standard of living. It would also impact the UK economy by reducing the spending power of the immigrants' families."

"Restricting dependents' right to work would be very negative on the overall attractiveness of the UK to an international worker. In particular - London would lose its appeal as a global, multicultural city if this was to go ahead. "

"We have no access to public funds, yet we pay taxes like any UK citizen. Thus, we directly support anyone entitled to state benefits and, as I don't see a skilled jobs shortage, the maths are very simple."

"The UK Government needs to be more open-minded. My husband and I are working for multi-national organizations and the biggest benefit of working for such companies is that it allows employees to work and gain experience in different countries. Restrictions like this would limit career growth and would discourage international talent from contributing to the UK economy."

"If dependents do not have the right to work in the UK, professionals will not come here to work, period."

"I would like to ask why this law is being considered? If I am willing and able to work and contribute to the economy in a positive way why should I be punished, and why should my husband have to consider a job based on whether I can work or not? It is not a healthy law and would definitely change our minds about continuing to live in the UK. If this law was introduced it would not only affect the family, it would affect the local community, local businesses and UK businesses from which we purchase a product or service."

"Having an opportunity to work and prove oneself shouldn't be decided based on the visa type one holds but it should be on merit and capabilities. We can understand if the government would like to prioritize UK citizens for a job opening but denying others citizens a job would be unfair."

"I see myself and the many co-workers around me holding a Tier 2 visa as very hard-working and productive members of society. We pay taxes, we spend the majority of our money within the UK economy and, as scientists, we spend a huge part of our lives pushing the boundaries of knowledge. Who wins anything by trying to place walls between us and our families?"

"When a migrant enters the UK he intends to do so for the betterment of his family and curtailing the rights of the dependents does exactly the opposite. Moreover, working dependents contribute positively to the UK economy without any burden on public funds."

"It was important for my company to have me transition into this position in the UK to support our European business, but it is equally important for my spouse to maintain her professional work experience. Her priorities were very much considered in the decision-making process. It's critical to understand that these assignments are mutually beneficial to my company, myself and the host country. For example, in our case, I have been made aware that there is a demand for health professionals such as nurses, and my wife can support such a critical need in the UK."

"People will leave the country if their dependents cannot work, as surviving in UK with a single salary is really difficult. So, instead of struggling here I would prefer to go back to my country."

"Instead of restricting the Tier-2 dependants work, the government should work on improving the screening process for the Tier-2 visa process. A truly skilled migrant will always have a positive impact on the system and encouraging such skilled migrants by allowing their dependants to work is the right thing to do. Even the USA has recently made a change to their skilled migrant scheme by allowing the primary visa holder's spouses to work. So, I believe the UK government shouldn't make any changes to rules that allow Tier-2 migrant dependant to work."

"Dependents are labelled as dependents because of the provisions of the visa. In reality, both partners are equally skilled and by having a right to work the dependents contribute to the UK economy as well. Working dependents pay for their National Insurance and Taxes, which helps fund government programmes."

"Well-qualified dependants can only help the UK economy as they not only pay taxes without having recourse to public funds (except the NHS) but they are consumers who would invest in the UK, which ultimately helps British businesses, etc. It is hard to understand the negative impacts of them working apart from the potential for lesser qualified native individuals missing out on a possible job but that is general competition. Allowing dependants with STEM qualifications to work could also bridge the huge gender gap we see in STEM professions in the UK."

"I do not understand why immigration rules would be restricted for professional workers. I gained a PhD in the UK and naturally stayed after finding a job here. My partner is in the exact same situation. It is in the interest of the UK to keep individuals such as ourselves contributing to the economy with high value jobs. We both need to work to make ends meet, particularly in the very expensive environment of London. Only having one of us working is not an option for us because of personal finances as well as our professional aspirations. You would reduce your intake of people that can really contribute with highly valued work!"

"It would be unfair and wrong to not allow dependents to work as we live in a democratic and a developed country where an individual's capability to take up a certain job must be by virtue of his/her qualifications/skills and not contingent upon their status (dependent) especially if they are paying taxes and contributing to the economy. It works both for the country and for the progress of an individual."

"Please do not go down this road! In this day and age, it is almost unbelievable that a government would seek to restrict the productivity of high-functioning families (which most Tier 2 ICT families would be) within its borders. Doing so negatively impacts the balance of power at home, sidelines skilled workers so that they can't contribute and sends a message to the world that Britain is not interested in cultivating a dynamic, ambitious and diverse workforce. We, like our expat friends, love living and working in Britain and trumpet that to anyone that will listen on a daily basis. Please don't jeopardize that enthusiasm by restricting the ability of highly qualified individuals to contribute to your economy."

"I would simply say that it is very unfair to tag partners of hardworking people like us as the dependant who can't have their own career. I have invested in this country by studying, paying my taxes in full so why should I be mistreated just on the basis that I have a partner!"

"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."

Social aspects

"To integrate better in a society, a person needs to work and feel productive, otherwise he will always live in a world of his own."

"Most of the time the dependants of highly skilled applicants are highly skilled themselves. By working they contribute positively to the economy, enhance the wellbeing of the family, and keep themselves independent. If the UK government is planning to stop that, it will be really sad and will seriously hinder the integration of migrants into the society."

"Having the right to work in the UK as a dependent would significantly aid the settling-in process. Keeping the mind 'busy' and occupied actively helps with mental engagement and a good social life. If working was not permitted under the Tier 2 Visa as a dependent, it would seriously disadvantage the families that would need that extra help from both a financial and personal well-being aspect."

"I wasn't able to work for the first 5 months of living in the UK because I was waiting for my license/registration to be processed, so I have actually experienced this from both perspectives. My satisfaction in living in the UK, and thus my husband's satisfaction, was very negatively impacted while I was unable to work. I went from being an educated, competent, sought-after professional to being a housewife for 5 months. It was not mentally stimulating, and it was bad for my confidence, left me feeling without purpose, and made me less able to deal with everyday stresses. I am so much happier and more fulfilled now I am able to work again, and both my husband and I appreciate how much easier day-to-day life is when I have that kind of direction again."

"Allowing dependants to contribute to society creates a far more favourable outcome than requiring them to be idle."

"The potential for a person to undergo depression is very high and I have seen my wife going through this, this not only affected her health but also my work. I feel that it is critical that the spouse is allowed to find a job for themselves to keep them occupied. Nobody should be coerced by a Visa process to give up their own life and career, regardless of their choice to move with their spouse, out of love and family commitment."

"I am strongly against restricting the right of dependants to work in the UK as this impacts negatively on the wellbeing of the entire family in terms of limited income if one spouse has to support the entire family on their own. This will also discourage skilled workers from accepting jobs in the UK if they could not live with their partner given that the partner does not have the right to work in the UK."

"My wife's ability to work has contributed greatly to her happiness and adjustment to life in a new country. Her workplace has given her things that I couldn't, namely a way to meet new people and gain knowledge about the city and country from those who have been living here all of their lives (or at the very least for many years). Working allows her to feel like a productive member of the community and our family. Having worked and earned an independent income for 10 years prior to our move, it would have been unacceptable to expect her to give up that kind of routine and responsibility. While we did discuss the opportunity to start a family during this time, this is not an option for every family - in particularly those in which the male is the partner. To hamstring the partner by not allowing for the right to work would be extremely detrimental to the partnership and the original visa holder's happiness in his or her new position and in the country as a whole."

"There is a big difference in mind-set when you chose not to work, versus being barred from working. At this time I chose to stay at home and raise the children, but as they start to enter full time care I would like to explore the option to do small part-time work. I'm glad that today I have this option."

"Please do not take away the basic rights of a person for scoring political points. If an individual wants to work and is capable of working, he/she should not be denied by law to do so. Not only is this morally incorrect but this is against equality for women. A person will come to a new country where they know no one, and they are not allowed to work so they cannot engage socially and are left with no other choice than sitting at home. This is so wrong."

"For partners in the young age brackets of 25-34, this will have a serious implication on both their financial and personal wellbeing if they are not allowed to work. It will make coming to the UK on a short assignment very unattractive."

"While I understand the government's concern about rising levels of immigration, cutting the right of dependants to work is not the way. The proposed measure would rip families apart, cause divorces, forced moves and severe loss to institutions in unimaginable ways. On a personal level, I rate my wife to be better qualified (and more intelligent) than me and restricting her right to work would be a severe loss to the British economy considering her current senior role in a world leading [...]. On an intellectual level, it would be a strong blow to her self confidence and make her feel less valued by the society (i.e. second class citizen). If her right to work were taken away, I would be forced to move away from my current position leaving several of my PhD students and several projects running in a limbo."

"If my partner was not allowed to work in the UK, it would impact our life from the following perspectives: She has academic degree and skills that society can benefit from. So, she will not be happy to sit at home and do nothing. She will be socially isolated, which will affect our life."

"I think this policy is regressive for several reasons. It discourages skilled immigration, disrupts family life and unnecessarily forces people to make the hard decision to virtually destroy the dependents' career prospects. The proposed policy also fails to recognise the contributions dependents can make to the UK. Most critically, I believe it is a heavily gendered policy: I suspect that many dependents are women. The expectation that they should follow their husbands' career needs, and then suffer personal and professional losses, is unfair and outdated."

"Please understand that a family is a unit. Government policies that treat family members differently have a negative impact on the peace and wellbeing of the household. This includes not only financial contributions by both spouses. Most importantly, when one spouse is unable to work that person is isolated and depressed, not to mention both professionally and socially stagnated. There is no way my family would have accepted this opportunity if both spouses were unable to secure intellectually satisfying work."

"Each inter-company transfer is not only a big change for myself, but also for my family. It's impossible for me to take an assignment without consideration of my wife's career."

"It is very critical for my family that, along with me, my spouse can work in the UK. It will greatly help us with her contributing towards the household income and at the same time she will also get chance to adjust and integrate with life in the UK."

"Losing this right will lead to a lot of stress and possibly divorce for effected families."

"Allowing spouses to work in UK is a huge incentive for highly qualified professional people to come to work in the UK and contribute to the country's development. Highly qualified people are usually married to other qualified people. My wife is a dentist and she had to give up her career because of a mobility and working visa issue. She was quite good at her work and if the UK had being the first country of assignment I am sure she would continue to practice."

"It is very important to give a dependant the right to work in the UK - this is basic human rights."

"The right to stay and work in the UK for dependants should not be repealed as that will have a drastically negative effect on the integrity of families of foreign workers, will decrease productivity of their work, and will have last-longing negative effect on the UK economy, decreasing attractiveness of the UK for highly-skilled professionals. Speaking personally, if the right of my spouse to work in the UK becomes restricted, I will consider terminating my current contract and leaving the UK."

"All spouses need to be able to work today."

"This policy will very likely reduce net immigration. However, I wonder what sort of immigrants this policy would tend to discourage. It seems to me that it would primarily discourage immigrants who value their professional lives and freedom, and so are likely to be educated, skilled, and productive members of society. I would not think that this is the sort of person who would be considered undesirable. Certainly, it would have prevented my immigration to the UK, not because my partner and I need a second income, but because my partner (who is a skilled and educated professional) would not be satisfied living here without the right to work. This scenario must be very common amongst skilled and educated immigrants (i.e. they have similarly skilled and educated partners who are unwilling to be professionally sidelined). I am not familiar with the pros and cons of immigration for a nation, but as a scientific researcher and educator in academia, I would expect this policy to be damaging to higher education and research institutes in the UK by preventing recruitment of international experts and leaders."

"If my wife could not work here, I would leave immediately."

"It can be challenging for an accompanying spouse who is used to working to adjust to a non-working lifestyle, especially for longer duration assignments. A successful assignment for the company and employee means a happy household. Having the option for the spouse to work is very important in my view."

"Right of dependents to work definitely helps positively in deciding whether to move to the UK and contribute to the economy. If this right was removed, families like mine would have huge hesitation in moving here as it would affect our living standard."

"They should be free to work if they want to, and not be held captive because their spouse is working."

"Every dependent should have the right to work in the UK. I think it's against to human rights to put a restriction on this. I believe working as a Tier 2 has already lots of restrictions. And being a non-EU citizen, I think current policies are already unfair. The possibility of further restrictions will make it even more unfair."

"If the right to work is not available to an accompanying spouse or partner it seriously negates any incentives for a family to be able to move and accept an assignment in the UK that would be beneficial and a positive experience for the whole family. Additionally, if the accompanying spouse or partner can work in the UK, they are also then a contributing member of the society and community that they are joining - thus helping overall adjustment and integration."

"It's important to allow spouses to work when relocating - especially if they have been previously employed in their home country."

"Even though I'm not working at the moment, and I decided to accompany my wife for this work opportunity, it is very important to have this option available as it allows me to keep my independence and the emotional stability in our relationship. Plus, it makes it easier to adapt our lives to the culture we are now living in, as I can learn from direct interactions and not through the eyes of my wife."

"It is an absolute necessity to be able to work. Without being able to work, we would not be able to contribute positively to the country or to our own family and personal development."

"If partners are not allowed to work, it will probably force many families to reconsider their willingness to accept assignments in the UK. Partner's happiness - which includes his/her career development - is a very important factor in considering accepting assignments. Also when you factor in the cost of living, it may not be economically appealing for many professionals to come to the UK if their partners are not allowed to work."

"I would only work here if my partner could work, as we are both educated professionals."

"The right to work for spouses has been one of the best things the UK has offered to expats. It has been instrumental in maintaining a positive and balanced environment at home for expat families in UK."

"I would love to speak to the UK government. My humble request is that - if you don't want highly skilled migrants to come and work in UK, then please don't issue a VISA to them. If you do issue a VISA and let them come and work, then please create a level playing field and ensure they are treated in same way as other legal residents. Please bear in mind that, by framing policies that discriminates the hard working migrant, you are in fact playing with their and their family's life."

"Dependents and partners should be able to work so as not to stump the career progression or personal development of the accompanying partner."

"It makes no sense to give someone the right to live in the UK and not the right to work. For the wellbeing of the children first and foremost they need to be healthy parents and that comes with integration and integration can't come without work."

"Allowing a tier 2 dependant spouse to work in the UK is essential to illustrating the nation's view on family and well-being. As I was offered a job in a highly skilled profession, I was clearly a desirable employee for the university. Since arriving just one year ago, I have already been promoted. I would not have even considered the position if my husband would not have been allowed to work here as well. And while he joined me only recently in the UK and is still looking for employment, we know that working here is important to his social integration in the country. And, of course, it is crucial to maintaining our family income, something I could not do alone."

"It's fundamentally 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."

"Not allowing immediate family members accompanying tier 2 visa holders to work will drastically drop acceptance rates. A lot of people in this category have families (at least a partner if not children) and are not students. Nobody would move overseas leaving family behind."

"If you were asked to live and work in a place without your family, how well would you live your life?"

"Everyone should have the right to work. It is also an individual's self-respect. Why should he/she sit at home? Also, London is a very expensive city. It requires two to earn and support a family."

"I think that it is against Human Rights to deprive anyone who is able and willing to work from his right to work."

"I think the right of dependants to work is a critical issue for many (probably the majority) of expat couples. This right needs to be retained in order for the UK to continue to be an attractive destination for the best talents from around the world. Usually these dependants are themselves highly skilled and can make a solid, positive contribution to the UK economy."

"The process of obtaining a Tier 2 visa to work in the UK is hard enough and means that you are getting very highly educated and qualified individuals. Why would you want to limit the capacities of working families coming to live in the UK? It is important that a family nucleus is able to function within its social context (e.g. by working and contributing to society in a just and egalitarian manner) - something that is in the best spirit of Britishness. So, why would you want to change that? It is time to move the target to deal with real immigration issues such as illegal immigration, human trafficking, illegal housing, etc."

"After having acquired a higher education (I am a doctor), it would not only be disappointing to be not allowed to work (work that would also help me contribute to the society and economy) but would also affect the finances at home (as we planned our future here knowing both of us would be working). This might put our family in a totally different situation as envisioned and also lower the standard of living of a family and lowering the Human Development Index (HDI) as a whole."

"Please do not implement this policy blindly. At least carry out a quality check or point based skill and qualification test, then at least those who can contribute to this country's economy will be able to work. If my spouse is not allowed to work I am not going to work in this country. Please think about what will happen to my family."

"The ability for us both to work has made a big difference in our initial decision to accept the job and also in our capacity to perform well while here."

"To me, restricting a partner's right to work delivers a few messages to us - 1. Do not bring your partner along if you are offered a job. 2. Compromise your living standard. 3. Compromise your partner's career. To me, in any of the above cases, this is a very irresponsible and selfish decision and a complete violation of human rights."

"Based on the fact that dependents of Tier 2 visa holders can work, my husband is in the process of opening a small business. We are investing a significant amount of time and money in this venture. It will be hugely detrimental to us if the government decides dependents cannot work. I am already unsure how we will afford the rising visa costs, and this is one more measure where the UK government is making me feel like my contribution as a worker and researcher in the UK is not at all appreciated. How do you expect people to be able to afford the rising visa costs on a single salary? It is likely that if this measure is carried out, my family will need to leave the UK as it is becoming increasingly difficult to get by on only my salary, and the emotional blow of having a new business venture shut down by the government would be hard to handle. "

"We were lucky in that I (the dependant) have been able to work the entire time we've been in the UK because we came here in 2005. We have been on a Tier 4, Tier 1 and now Tier 2 visa. I know that now the regulations are a lot tougher, and it would have made it very difficult for us if I had not been able to work. In fact, for a couple of years, I was the one who was earning the money to put food on the table while he finished his PhD. It's not easy to find work, especially in this economic climate, so it's not guaranteed that the spouse will be able to find work. However, it's only fair to give them the chance."

"As a professional couple, to take a job in a country where the accompanying spouse could not work would be completely unthinkable. As academics, that kind of hiatus would destroy a career, and put a severe strain on our marriage. Restricting this right would seriously impact on the UK's ability to recruit top talent in academia and STEM fields."

"I would like the UK government to continue allowing dependants to work in the UK for the sake of keeping our life happy."

"This right is like any other essential human right. Many of these dependents (including my wife) spent many years to study and get high degree with the hope that one day they can work and use their knowledge and expertise to improve the society, economy... I believe working is the dream of any person. Killing this dream is like killing any other essential human right. I really hope that the UK government will keep this essential right. Many foreigners came to work in the UK with very high education levels. They were formed in other countries, but they are now helping the UK economy. They should be compensated by at least giving the right to their dependents to work in the UK."

"It is imperative that dependents have the right to work in order to continue to attract the most qualified candidates. This is a global economy and market. Good workers will go where they are most appreciated and valued. The UK must compete for the very best and helping dependents find quality work is an essential part of that strategy. "

"The right to work is an essential part of living in any country and being able to contribute to both society and family is a critical part of any person's mental and emotional well being. We wouldn't even consider the UK as a temporary or permanent home if one person felt as though they had to put their life on hold for the other."

"I would say that having my spouse's support to leave his entire world and career back in Mexico to pursue mine for a while has been and incredible act of commitment to our marriage and the fact that we have taken that decision at this stage of our life should not constrain his career opportunities at all, he should have the same rights to find a job and keep growing as a professional or I would definitely not asked him to follow me in this career opportunity, we would rather look for conditions where both of us have the same rights."

"As much as I'm contributing to the economy of this country, my wife also wants to. Let her work. I cannot imagine that we are discouraging someone to work. If she is qualified and has the capability and willingness, why are we depriving her of work? Working is not just for financial reasons but rather gives a person self-worth, fulfilment and the pride that she is contributing to the development of the country. "

"Inside every person there is a huge potential and richness – preventing a person to work means losing the opportunity to take advantage of this richness. Focusing on creating new job opportunities is more attractive than limiting people to work just to control the number of migrants – for this last one other measures can be undertaken."