

Unions & Migrant Organisations' statement - public sector pay rise

20.07.2023

All workers deserve decent pay, but this should never come off the backs of migrants, or used as a tool to stoke division in our workforce and our communities.

60 trade unions and migrant organisations - including Migrant Voice, the BMA, NEU, NASUWT, GMB and PCS - have come together to call out the government's plan to fund a public sector pay rise through higher NHS and visa fees for migrants.

Joint Statement

As trade unions and migrant organisations, we stand against this Government's attempts to pit worker against worker. We know that an injury to one is an injury to all.

All workers deserve decent pay, safe working conditions and protections if our bosses seek to take advantage of us. Public sector workers deserve pay rises, but we strongly oppose any decision to fund this by further taxing migrants, by hiking visa costs and NHS fees. This is a blatant attempt to sow division within the labour movement and our communities.

Increasing the Immigration Health Surcharge by 66% and increasing visa costs will push ever more people into destitution and poverty. The UK already effectively taxes migrants twice for healthcare, and has some of the most extortionate visa fees in Europe - a migrant family of four often has to pay around £50,000 over 10 years for the right to stay. This massive increase is simply unaffordable - it will price workers out of being able to afford a visa and force thousands further into poverty during the cost of living crisis, or out of the country.

Migrant workers are a vital part of our communities and our workforce. They are the backbone of our public services, and our migrant members already face the hostility of the immigration system. No worker should be pushed into poverty, unsustainable debt or homelessness simply because of the papers they hold.

We urge the Government to abandon its plans to increase NHS and visa fees for migrants and meet the pay demands of our public sector workers through progressive taxation which ensures those with the broadest shoulders contribute more to our vital public services.

Signed by:

British Medical Association

The GMB

NASUWT - The Teachers' Union

The National Education Union (NEU)

Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS)

University and College Union (UCU)

Society of Radiologists

Social Workers Union

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

ASLEF

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)

Asylum Matters

Bradford Rape Crisis

CARAG

CARIS Haringey

Caritas Shrewsbury

Doctors of the World

Duhra Solicitors

English for Action (EFA) London

Evesham Vale Welcomes Refugees

Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)

Fresh Grassroots Rainbow Community

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU)

Haringey Welcome

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)

Kent Refugee Help

Kiran Support services

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

Leeds Anti-Raids Action

Maternity Action

Maternity Stream, City of Sanctuary UK

Medact

Migrant Voice

Migrants Organise

Migrants' Rights Network

Music Action International

Pan-African Workers Association (PAWA)

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

POMOC (Polish Migrants Organise for Change)

Positive Action For Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS)

Praxis

Project 17

Public Interest Law Centre

RAMA (Refugee, Asylum seeker & Migrant Action)

Refugee and Migrants Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL)

Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Action (RAMA)

Reunite Families UK

Right to Remain

Runnymede Trust

Seraphus

South London Refugee Association

The Unity Project

the3million

United impact

We Belong

Welsh Refugee Council

Women's Budget Group

Yorkshire Migrants Solidarity Movement

The Voice of Domestic Workers