

The Cost of Visas

Migrant Voice work on visa/immigration fees

July 2021



After hearing from many people about the devastating impacts of UK visa fees and related immigration costs, Migrant Voice are now stepping up our campaign against extortionate visa fees.

We have been listening to affected migrants and their families and gathering information from other organisations working on related issues to help shape our campaign. Through focus groups, a survey and ongoing meetings we are developing the campaign's strategy and plan, its priority areas, activities and recommendations. We continue to gather evidence of the impact extortionate visa fees is having and how this has been exacerbated due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The issue

Most visa fees have risen exponentially in the last decade, while the NHS surcharge and the extortionate cost of appointments and other associated costs add hundreds of pounds to each application. For example a family of four on the 10 year route to settlement can expect to pay in excess of £50,000.

The costs to migrants aren't just financial - many families suffer mental and physical health problems, with some families sacrificing food, heating and electricity to make sure they can make their payments to the Home Office when the time comes.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

What are the changes we would like to see?

1. All fees reduced to admin costs for adults, free for children.
2. Reforms to the process, including simplifying the fee waiver process to ensure that those who need help receive help
3. Allow mistakes on applications (made by either the Home Office or the applicant) to be corrected for free without penalising the applicant and requiring a whole new application and fee
4. A reduction to the 10 year route to settlement to 5 years. The 10 year route needlessly causes a huge financial burden and keeps families in limbo for far too long.

How to get involved/what can I do:

We welcome involvement in a number of ways:

For those directly affected: Get in touch with the team at Migrant Voice to share your experiences and get involved in any part of our campaign. You are invited and welcome to take part in our network meetings, training, and lobby activities.

For organisations, unions, academics: Share the link to our survey and spread awareness of our campaign with people who are affected. Engage with us in further conversations to share knowledge and information, and see how we can collaborate and add value to each other's work.

For policy makers: We need your help to put an end to the extortionate fees. We want to meet with you and your team to discuss how these visa fees are directly affecting your constituents. Politicians can help us raise awareness of the impact of extortionate visa fees, host our listening and lobby events and help us make change.

Let us know if you would like to stay informed about the campaign.

Migrant Voice is a migrant-led organisation working with migrants from all around the world with all kinds of status. We develop the media skills and confidence of migrants with the aim of strengthening their voices in the media and civil society in order to counter xenophobia and build support for our rights. We have offices and networks in London, the West Midlands and Glasgow.