

UK Marriage Visa Process: New Income Threshold Requirement Causes Extreme Hardship to British Citizens and Their Families

LONDON, U.K., July 11, 2013 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – UKmarriageVisa, a full service immigration consultancy specializing in U.K. family immigration with an emphasis on U.K. [fiancee](#), [partner](#) and [spousal visas](#), today announced that the new financial requirements introduced by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) are creating misery for thousands of couples seeking to reunite in the U.K.

Since new financial thresholds for sponsoring a non-EU/EEA fiancee, partner or spouse for a [U.K. settlement visa](#) came into force in July 2012, thousands of British citizens and U.K. permanent residents have found themselves below the income level needed to bring their foreign partner or family member to live and work in the U.K. It has been reported that thousands of couples have been unable to reunite in the U.K. due to not meeting the [new financial requirement](#) introduced by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) just a little over a year ago.

There are many specific clauses dealing with the self-employed and other more unusual situations but essentially the regulations referring to the sponsorship of a non-EU/EEA partner or spouse and dependent children state that the sponsoring British citizen or legal permanent resident must be earning at least 18,600 pounds a year to meet the new income threshold requirement. The first child being sponsored requires an extra 3,800 pounds and then each additional child included in a U.K. spouse or partner visa application another 2,400 pounds.

There is no limit on the number of children sponsored under the settlement category, but there is also no limit to the number of times the 2,400 pounds is added to the required annual salary to obtain a U.K. visa, meaning that for many people they cannot afford to sponsor their entire family.

Some families claim that children (often with British passports) have been separated from the non-EU parent, often for many months. This is putting a great deal of strain on many marriages and some people who have jobs useful to the British economy have been forced to return abroad so that the family will not be split up any longer. Although the threshold annual earnings set in the new visa arrangements are at or near the national average, this is a misleading statistic.

The “average” weekly wage in the U.K. is not what most people get by any means, as all salaries are taken into account, including the highest earners at considerably more than 1 million pounds plus. This means that in practice, 47 percent of the waged population of the U.K. would be unable to afford to sponsor a foreign fiancee, unmarried partner, husband or wife for a U.K.

settlement visa.

Many examples have come to light in the year since the new thresholds came in that show the weaknesses in the system, many from the self-employed or those who have intermittent earnings which are hard to prove satisfactorily. In some partnerships the high earner is the sponsoring British citizen or permanent resident who in most cases needs to be in the country in order to be able to fulfil their earning potential. This makes for some very complex paperwork and all the time the application is going through, the family cannot be together.

The official line from the UK Border Agency (UKBA) is that the rules have been designed to prevent people becoming a burden on the tax payer and so "high-value" non-EU/EEA spouses would not be refused entry if their British spouse was unemployed but they could instead meet requirements by proving that they had cash savings of 62,500 pounds or more, or could liquidate investments.

The main problem with all of the outstanding cases, whether the couples involved have the financial wherewithal or not, seems to be that everything takes a very long time, resulting in ruined businesses and missed job opportunities, thereby rather cancelling out the thinking behind the ruling; that the families do not become a burden on the state and need in the end to resort to benefits.

About UKmarriageVisa:

UKmarriagevisa.com is a team of experts specializing in U.K. family immigration with an emphasis on U.K. fiancée, unmarried (de facto) partner and spouse visas. As professional immigration consultants, the firm offers U.K. marriage visa services providing assistance to those looking to attain a U.K. settlement visa from around the world.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.ukmarriagevisa.com/>.

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