



FAMILY MIGRATION IN THE 2024 ELECTION MANIFESTOS

The 2024 UK General Election is a key moment for British families where one partner is from outside the UK (including from the EU) and who wish to live together in the UK. It comes in the middle of a set of increases to the Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) for spouse/partner visas. In April 2024, the amount a British citizen or resident must earn to bring a non-British spouse or partner to live with them in the UK increased from £18,600 to £29,000, with further planned increases to £38,700 by Spring 2025. At that level, around 75% of British workers could not sponsor a partner to join them. Visa fees and the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) have also risen substantially. This briefing examines key immigration pledges in party manifestos that may affect such families.

Key points:

- The **Conservative** Manifesto restates plans to increase the MIR to £38,700, then by inflation, and to continue to increase visa fees & the IHS. A 'legally binding' immigration cap will also affect family migrants.
- The **Labour** Manifesto makes no mention of the MIR, but pledges to cut net migration. (Elsewhere, Labour have said they would ask the Migration Advisory Committee to [review the level of the MIR.](#))
- The **Green Party** Manifesto commits to removing income requirements from all applications, including spouse and partner visas.
- The **Liberal Democrats** pledge to reverse the increase to the MIR, whilst **Plaid Cymru** would oppose increases to the MIR.
- The **SNP** Manifesto makes no mention of the MIR but would devolve immigration powers to Scotland. (Elsewhere, 2023 Scottish Government proposals on [immigration policy](#) in an independent Scotland state that the MIR would be removed.)
- **Reform UK** do not refer to the MIR, but would freeze immigration where not 'essential' (e.g. healthcare).
- **Conservative** and **Reform UK** manifesto commitments to 'a future where family is always supported' (Conservative) and to 'support family formation' (Reform) are in tension with their wish to restrict British families' rights to live together in the UK if one partner is subject to immigration control.

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2024 Manifesto Pledges	Minimum Income for spouse/partner visas (MIR)	Pledges with direct impacts for spouse/partner and family migration	Pledges that may impact bi-national and migrant families
Conservative	Raise MIR to £38,700. Raise MIR and Skilled Workers threshold with inflation.	Increase Immigration Health Surcharge or require additional health insurance, pre-travel health check Increase all visa fees Legal cap on migration, including work & family visas, decreasing every year.	Remove the student discount to the Immigration Health Surcharge.
Labour	<i>No mention of the MIR</i>	Pledge to reduce net migration.	Reform points-based immigration system. Link immigration & skills policy, working with relevant bodies. Strengthen Migration Advisory Committee.
Liberal Democrats	Reverse the increase to income thresholds for family visas.	Overhaul the Immigration Rules to make them simpler, clearer and fairer, and ensure greater parliamentary scrutiny of future changes.	Reduce child citizenship fee to admin costs Automatic Settled Status to EU citizens with Pre-Settled Status, physical proof of rights. Replace work visa salary threshold with merit-based system. Reform refugee family reunification and child refugee resettlement. End child immigration detention, 28-day limit and as last resort for adults. Work & student visa policy removed from Home Office.
Reform UK	<i>No mention of MIR</i>	Freeze all 'non-essential' (mainly healthcare) immigration. Introduce new visa rules for international students that bar dependents. 5-year residency and employment requirement to access benefits.	Immediate deportation for foreign criminals after prison sentences. Withdraw citizenship from immigrants who commit crimes (with some exceptions). Employer Immigration Tax – raise National Insurance to 20% for foreign workers.
SNP	<i>No mention of MIR</i>	Devolved powers for Scottish migration system to: value those who work, live, study and invest here; address demographic & economic needs.	Press the government to extend visa rights for Ukrainians whilst the conflict continues.
Plaid Cymru	Oppose increases to skilled worker and family visa threshold and fees.	Abolish 'No Recourse to Public Funds' condition and restrictions on employment while awaiting decisions.	Family reunification scheme for those caught up in Gaza conflict. Retain the graduate visa route.
Green Party	Remove income requirements from all applications, including spousal visas.	Abolish 'No Recourse to Public Funds'. Abolish ten-year route to settlement. Migrants inc. students can bring family members.	Replace Home Office with new Department of Migration, separate from criminal justice. End immigration detention for all migrants unless they are a danger to public safety.