ANALYSIS OF VISITOR CONSULTATION RESPONSES
June 2008
INTRODUCTION

In ‘Securing the UK Border’, published in March 2007, we said we would modernise our visa system for short-term visits – to sit alongside our points system for longer-term economic migration and for those coming to study, and our reform of spouse visas.

The visitor consultation, published in December 2007, proposed three principal categories of visitor – tourist, business, and sponsored family. Our chief proposals were:

• whether to reduce the maximum length of leave to all tourists from six to three months;
• a system of licensed sponsors for visitors travelling to see family in the UK;
• changes to help sponsors guarantee their obligations to ensure that their family member will leave the UK at the end of their stay; and
• whether to reform appeal rights for family visitors.

In addition to inviting responses to the consultation document, the Minister for Borders & Immigration, Liam Byrne, proactively engaged with UK communities at home and foreign communities abroad by:

• leading a cross-party delegation of community leaders and businessmen to India to discuss the policy proposals on sponsored family visitors with people who use the system;
• holding community events across the UK to discuss how the system can be improved for people here who have family abroad;
• meeting with MPs to discuss proposals for tourists and sponsored family visitors in order to develop a system that allows genuine applicants to get the right decision first time; and
• meeting with Trade Unions to discuss how best to ensure that overseas domestic workers are protected from abuse and exploitation.

The Government has published its policy proposals in response to consultation on visitors. The document sets out the results of the consultation and the Government’s proposals for reform. At the heart of the document are three key changes.

• A new sponsored family visitor category with licensed sponsors vouching for their family members’ visits – but with liability for on the spot £5,000 fines or a 14 year jail sentence for those who break the rules. This new approach will be pressure tested with trials in early 2009.
• New proposals for tourist visas, including group travel and special events visas.
• A distinct, clear category for business and special visitors.

In addition to these changes, this document outlines the commitment to:

• preserve the existing route for overseas domestic workers with a further review in two years time once we have properly road-tested our anti-trafficking strategy; and
• retain appeal rights for sponsored family visitors but subject to some streamlining.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please see Annex A for full details of the consultation findings.

In total, 604 consultation responses were received during the consultation period (18 December 2007–10 March 2008). The majority of responses – 327 (54%) – came from individual members of the public. Notably, 90 (15% of all respondents) were doctors or other medical staff from overseas and 44 (7%) were students and academics. A further 32 responses (5%) from organisations represented a variety of sports and activities and another 16 (3%) were from organisations involved in festivals and other arts or cultural events. One-fifth of all respondents (124 - 21%) did not provide background information or could not be identified as an individual respondent or as being from a particular organisation or sector.

Three petitions were also received in response to this consultation: one from Sarah Teather MP with 636 signatures, one from Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Willesden with 1,589 signatures, and one from Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple, South East London, with 104 signatures. These petitions have been considered alongside the consultation analysis.

Key findings from the consultation are outlined below. Please note that the response base differs between questions, as not all respondents answered all questions. Questions on the length of visitor visas and family sponsorship attracted the greatest number of responses whilst questions on business visas were less likely to be answered.

PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE CURRENT MAXIMUM LEAVE FOR TOURIST VISITORS FROM SIX MONTHS TO THREE MONTHS

There was confusion amongst some respondents about whether reducing the length of a tourist visa would apply to family visitors. Such confusion may have arisen due to press coverage around the time of the launch of the consultation. The consultation sought views on whether the length of leave for tourists should be reduced from six to three months. This proposal was, in fact, not extended to sponsored family visitors. In order to ensure findings accurately reflected the questions asked, we therefore removed from the analysis those 217 responses which mistakenly referred to the tourist visa as applying to or impacting on their family members intending to visit them in the UK. The majority of these respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce maximum tourist leave because of the impacts they thought there would be on family visitors. These individuals would not be classed as tourists, but come under the separate category of family visitor visa, as discussed later in the report. We retained in the analysis those responses that referred to tourist visitors as those coming to the UK for holiday/travel, where the primary purpose was not to visit family.

Of the 282 respondents who appeared to have correctly understood the proposal, 186 (66%) disagreed with the reduction in the current maximum leave for tourist visitors. Seventy-seven (27%) were supportive of a reduction, whilst 19 (7%) did not express a clear view for or against the proposal. The chief concerns amongst those who disagreed with the proposal focused on:

- insufficient time for tourists to spend in the UK given the time, effort and cost required to obtain visas (93 respondents);
- the substantial cost to visitors of making trips to the UK meaning that it may not be worthwhile to make a trip for just three months (46 respondents);
- the potentially negative effect on the UK economy and the income brought into the UK by visitors (47 respondents); and
- suggestions for tourist leave to come in line with other countries; other European countries, the USA, Australia and Canada were given as examples (12 respondents).

Of the 77 (27%) respondents who agreed with the proposal, 74 indicated their preference for a time limit; 52 of these preferred a three-month visa period, whilst nine considered two months as appropriate and 13 considered one month as appropriate. Eleven respondents commented on their agreement with the proposal, with eight agreeing that three months was sufficient time to tour the UK.

Earlier this year the Minister for Borders & Immigration, Liam Byrne, led a delegation of community leaders and businessmen to India to discuss the proposals in the consultation document.
The delegation highlighted the concerns about the proposals to reduce the period of leave for visitors from six to three months.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A GROUP TOURIST TRAVEL VISA CATEGORY**

There was support for the introduction of a group tourist travel visa from 230 (58%) of the 397 respondents who answered this question, whilst 111 (28%) stated they did not know. Fifty-six (14%) did not support the proposal to introduce a group tourist travel visa, and 41 of these elaborated further on their opinions. The key points mentioned were:

- visitors should be treated individually (ten respondents);
- there was no guarantee that visitors would stay in groups throughout their trip and that such groups restricted individual freedom to travel (15 respondents);
- the proposal would not prevent illegal immigration (eight respondents); and
- eight respondents suggested additional points, outlined in the full report.

Of 169 respondents who answered the question, the largest single group – 64 (38%) – were most likely to support a group tourist travel visa for visitors to the Schengen area and the UK on pre-arranged trips whilst 43 (25%) wanted to see the visa available only for pre-arranged travel to the UK. The remaining 36% supported other options and details of these are provided in the full report.

A little over half (202, 54%) of the 374 respondents who answered the question on whether the group visitor visa should be time-limited supported this proposal. When asked how long the group tourist travel visa should be valid for, a three-month period was the most frequently suggested option for the length of a group tourist travel visa, supported by 104 (56%) of the 186 respondents who answered this question.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE AN EVENTS VISITOR VISA CATEGORY**

Of 362 respondents who answered the question, 249 (69%) supported the creation of a time-limited events visitor category. When asked what type of events should qualify for inclusion in an events visitor subcategory, support was particularly high for major sporting events (243 respondents) and cultural events (177 respondents).

Of the 249 who agreed that an events visa should be time-limited, 214 answered the question on what the period of validity should be. These respondents were split on whether such a visa should last for one month – 80 respondents (37%) – or three – 88 respondents (41%). The remaining respondents suggested other options which are detailed in the full report.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A BUSINESS VISITOR VISA CATEGORY**

A business visitor category was supported by a majority of respondents – 286 (70%) of the 406 respondents who answered the question. When asked about the maximum amount of time a business visitor should be allowed to stay in the UK, of the 264 who answered this question, the largest proportion – 117 (44%) – preferred a 12-month visa period whilst 52 (20%) thought six months should be the maximum. The full report outlines the views of the remaining respondents who suggested other options.

When asked what options should be available to make travel more flexible for business visitors, respondents felt strongly that travel would be made easier for business visitors by a longer term multiple entry visa; this was supported by 279 respondents with a further 172 supporting expedited clearance.

Amongst the 163 respondents who commented on the activities business visitors should be able to undertake whilst in the UK, there was greatest support for business-related activities and trade – 99 respondents.

1. The Schengen Agreement removes the internal borders between signatory countries, allowing people to travel without checks across their common borders and strengthening their external borders. The 24 states which have fully implemented the agreement are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

2. Expedited clearance is a fast track process designed to facilitate quicker entry at port to the UK for genuine, trusted travellers.
There was support, to varying degrees, for all the suggested activities to be included in a list of activities permitted for business visitors such as film crews (231 respondents); clinical attachments (229); PLAB\(^3\) doctors (225); dental observers\(^4\) (210); and permit-free performers\(^5\) (205).

During a community event led by the Minister, in response to the proposals contained in the consultation, one attendee remarked that ‘the visa process should be quicker – Indian businesses are willing to pay for this’.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A SPECIAL VISITOR VISA CATEGORY**

There was some doubt about the creation of a special visitor category. Of the 339 respondents who answered the question, 171 (50%) stated they did not know whether a specific subcategory for special visitors should be created and 119 (35%) supported this category.

Of 110 respondents who answered the question on whether academic visitors should be included in the special visitors category, 107 supported the inclusion of academic visitors.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A FAMILY VISITOR VISA CATEGORY**

A family visitor visa category was supported by a majority of respondents – 294 (70%) of the 422 who answered this question; 101 (24%) disagreed.

**PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE SPONSORED FAMILY VISITS**

The concept of sponsorship was clearly misunderstood by some, who felt it necessarily implied payment/provision of financial support. Some respondents referred to a payment or ‘bond’ being put down as part of the sponsorship process – although this proposal was not explicit in the consultation document, but was suggested in press coverage around the time that the consultation took place. The consultation sought views on how UK sponsors should ensure that their family member would comply with the conditions of their visa – by signing a general statement of intent outlining their responsibilities, a written statement signed in the presence of a solicitor or by submitting a financial security. Eighty (19%) of the 439 respondents who answered the question disagreed with the proposal that family visits should be sponsored and referred to bonds or financial sponsorship in the reasons for their response. Five of the 439 agreed with the proposal, but also mentioned bonds along with two respondents who said they did not know about the proposal.

In order to ensure findings accurately reflected the questions asked, we therefore removed from the analysis to this question those 87 responses which mistakenly referred to a bond or payment as automatically being a part of sponsorship, as this was not the case. This question sought views on sponsorship processes in general, not the actual means by which sponsorship would occur. Responses were retained in the analysis regarding sponsorship processes in general, to reflect the actual question asked.

Of the 352 respondents who did not refer to bonds or financial payment as part of sponsorship, the majority, 236 (67%) were in favour of family sponsorship, whilst 84 (24%) disagreed. Thirty-two (9%) did not know. Eighty-one of those who disagreed with the proposal commented further on their responses; the following themes emerged:

- visitors should be financially responsible for their own trip (not in relation to a bond payment) or the financial status of the host should apply only when the family visitor was unable to provide evidence of his/her own financial standing (25 respondents);
- family visits should be sponsored but these cases should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (20 respondents);
- sponsoring family visits would exacerbate family separation (13 respondents);

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\(^3\) Doctors coming to the United Kingdom to take the professional and linguistic assessments board (PLAB) test.

\(^4\) Those wishing to enter the United Kingdom to undertake dental observation post, which is an unpaid position, not involving the treatment of patients, enabling dentists to familiarise themselves with UK working practices.

\(^5\) Permit-free performers are entertainers admitted to take part in specific types of events without needing to obtain a work permit.
• the current system was sufficient, or there were questions over what benefits the new system would have (12 respondents); and

• 28 respondents suggested additional points, outlined in the full report.

Regardless of whether or not respondents perceived sponsorship to imply financial payment, respondents were most likely to agree that immediate family members should be able to sponsor visitors; for example, 318 respondents thought that spouses should be able to sponsor a family visitor and 310 respondents felt that parents should be able to sponsor. There was less support for more distant relations becoming sponsors, for example only 225 agreed an aunt or uncle should be able to sponsor and 198 agreed that first cousins should be able to sponsor.

A total of 231 respondents commented on the immigration status of potential sponsors. Few respondents (just 21) thought sponsorship of visitors should be limited to UK nationals only. Similarly, just ten respondents felt that those on short-term visits (under three months) should be able to sponsor visitors. There was more support for sponsorship by foreign nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (185 respondents) and those with visas of over 12 months (158 respondents).

Just under two-thirds – 254 (64%) – of the 394 respondents who answered the question agreed with penalties for sponsors if a family member did not keep to the terms of a visa, while 112 (28%) disagreed with the proposal. When asked about the penalty a sponsor should face, 211 respondents preferred a restriction on future sponsorship over a financial penalty, while the latter was preferred by 168. Thirty-nine respondents who disagreed with the imposition of a penalty suggested that visitors should be responsible for themselves and that a sponsor could not be held responsible for the actions of their visitor.

During a community event led by the Minister, in response to the proposals contained in the consultation, one attendee remarked that ‘we are ready to give any guarantee that you want for our family to come and visit us’.

At the same event, a number of attendees stated that the appeals system should not be reformed.
Please see Annex B for the consultation methodology. Annex C provides details of the respondent profile and Annex D provides a list of responding organisations.

TOURIST VISITORS

Question 2.4 Do you think the current maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced? If no, why not?

There was confusion amongst respondents about whether the proposed length of a tourist visa would apply to family visitors. Such confusion may have arisen because of press coverage around the time of the launch of the consultation. The consultation sought views on whether the length of leave for tourists should be reduced from six to three months. This proposal was not extended to sponsored family visitors. There were 217 respondents identified as having misunderstood the proposal in this way and they were therefore removed from the remaining analysis of this question. The majority of these respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce maximum tourist leave because of what was thought to be the impact on family visitors. Family Visitors would not be classed as tourists, but would come under the separate category of family visitor visa discussed later in the report. We retained in the analysis those responses that referred to tourist visitors as those coming to the UK for holiday/travel, where the primary purpose was not to visit family.

The following quotes are typical of responses that were excluded from the analysis.

“Majority of people do not stay for 3 months anyway. Thus reducing the duration will cause inconvenience to people who are mostly spending time with their family and is an unnecessary exercise targeting the most harmless visitors.”

“The only people affected by this measure will be genuine family members intending to spend some time with their relatives in UK for longer than 3 months.”

Of the 282 respondents who appeared to have correctly understood the proposal, 186 (66%) disagreed with the reduction in the current maximum leave for tourist visitors. Seventy-seven (27%) were supportive of a reduction, whilst 19 (7%) did not express a clear view for or against the proposal. Results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Do you think the current maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced?

![Percentage chart](image)

Response base: 282

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6 The current tourist visa includes family visitors.

7 These 282 respondents include 110 who provided no further clarification that could identify them as having correctly or incorrectly understood the question so they have still been included in this analysis.

8 Respondents mentioning family excluded.
The Schengen Agreement removes the internal borders between signatory countries, allowing people to travel without checks across their common borders and strengthening their external borders. The 24 states which have fully implemented the agreement are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Proposed variations included needs-based assessments: allowing longer visas for visitors from countries with no history of abusing immigration rights or basing length of visa on the judgement of entry clearance officers or the visitor’s ability to prove independent means.

“Entry clearance officers should grant 3 to 6 months depending on the needs of the visitor. For most visitors 3 months would be more than adequate, but for some 6 months would be beneficial.” (Individual)

One respondent suggested variations whereby visitors are allowed multiple visas of increasing length. So an initial visa could be just for a one month visit and subject to meeting all the terms of this visa, a visitor could apply next time for a three month visa and so on up to a year in length. Another respondent suggested a ten-year visa (as issued by the US) allowing multiple visits of up to three months.

A charity, whilst accepting a three-month limit, was concerned about a potential effect on the economy and felt that lower application costs could help to mitigate this and make the UK a more attractive tourist destination.

Of the 77 respondents who correctly understood and agreed with the proposed reduction in leave, 11 provided further comment on their agreement.

Eight respondents gave general support to the proposal, agreeing that three months was sufficient time for a visit. Three of these respondents were academics who talked of sufficient time for student or academic visits. An overseas student who felt three months was enough time to see the UK summed up this view.

“Firstly, I don’t object to your changing 6 months’ stay to 3 months’. UK is a beautiful country and 3 months is enough for one to have a tour.” (Individual)

One response, from an academic, was supportive of the proposal only if the six-month period was retained for the Student Visitor Visa.

Two respondents said that a three-month limit would bring the UK in line with other Schengen9 countries but both looked for a reduction in application costs in return for a shorter visa length.

“We have no objection to reducing the maximum leave to three months which would bring it in line with Schengen visas. However, we feel strongly that any reduction in validity should be matched by a reduction in cost.” (Commercial organisation)

One respondent felt the proposal would enable genuine holidaymakers to be identified.

“If this is properly worked out, I think it will help the British government to be able to identify genuine holiday makers from those who intend to stay forever. Brilliant idea. Keep it up.” (Individual)

A further 11 respondents who provided further comment agreed somewhat with the proposals but suggested exceptions or variations to the scheme.

Excluding those who make any reference to family visitors, of the 186 respondents who disagreed with the proposal, the key themes that emerge are as follows.

The substantial cost to visitors of making trips to the UK was mentioned by 139 respondents. The nature and cost of the trip to the UK for many visitors meant it may not be worthwhile to make a trip for just three months. The costs of visas, tickets and other arrangements did not justify a shorter visit.

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9 The Schengen Agreement removes the internal borders between signatory countries, allowing people to travel without checks across their common borders and strengthening their external borders. The 24 states which have fully implemented the agreement are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
An Analysis of Visitor Consultation Responses

10 Monks and priests may also enter the United Kingdom under the Points-Based System depending on the purpose for which they are seeking entry. Someone’s profession or calling is irrelevant if they are coming as a tourist.

11 Skilled migrants would not enter the UK under the visitor visa route and would have to apply for entry under the Points-Based System.

“Short visa will cause inconvenience and will cost us economically [in terms of the monks and priests10 who travel over].” (Charity)

Forty-seven mentioned that a reduction in the current maximum leave could have a negative economic impact on the UK. These respondents felt that visitors brought income to the UK, some of which could be lost if the maximum leave for tourist visitors was reduced. Three respondents also suggested the reduction in current maximum leave may limit the number of skilled migrants coming to work in the UK11.

“They are a valuable source of income. They also promote cultural exchange. As long as they are law abiding and do not rely on state aid I can only think of advantages in enabling them to stay longer.” (Individual)

“Tourists are an extremely important segment of the UK economy. We must encourage more of them to come here, stay longer, and spend more. The longer they stay the more jobs they support and the more tax will flow into HM Treasury. Reducing the time they can stay for sends all the wrong signals.” (Individual)

Six respondents specifically mentioned that a three-month time limit may discourage visitors and performers to the Edinburgh Festival and three further respondents mentioned issues for festivals in general.

“I think it would discourage people from performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and quite possibly other UK arts festivals.” (Individual)

Twelve respondents wanted to see tourist leave come in line with other countries. Other European countries, the USA, Australia and Canada were given as examples. Five suggested retention of the current six-month period, two that up to 12 months should be given or that a ten-year visa should be granted, as in the USA.

“The duration of the visit/visa should be based on the time requested by the visitor up to a maximum of 6 months similar to other European countries.” (Individual)

Other responses, each suggested by one person, which did not fit into any of the main themes were that there was a need for longer visas in a small proportion of cases; general unhappiness with the proposed change; and suggestions that the proposed policy could be viewed as racist, with specific reference to ethnic groups such as South Asians and Jamaicans.

Question 2.4 If you agree that the current maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced, do you think the maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced to one month, two months or three months? Please select one option.

Among those 77 respondents who agreed with the suggested reduced leave for tourists, 74 gave an opinion on their preferred length of stay. The majority (52) thought the length of stay should be reduced to three months. Only nine respondents thought it should be two months and 13 respondents considered one month to be appropriate. Full results are shown in Figure 2.
Sixty-one respondents commented on their response to the proposal for a group tourist travel visa.

Of the 397 respondents who answered the question, 230 (58%) agreed with the proposal for a group tourist travel visa (see Figure 3). A little over a quarter

**Group Tourist Travel Visa**

**Question 2.9** Do you think we should introduce a group tourist travel visa? If no, why not?

(111 respondents – 28%) said they did not know and 56 (14%) disagreed with the proposal.

Sixty-one respondents commented on their response to the proposal for a group tourist travel visa.

**Figure 2.** If you agree that the current maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced, do you think the maximum leave for tourist visitors should be reduced to one month, two months or three months? Please select one option.

**Figure 3.** Do you think we should introduce a group tourist travel visa?
Twenty-three respondents, of the 230 who agreed with the proposal, raised the following points (the number of mentions is shown in brackets).

There should be leeway for visitors to travel separately from the group if necessary, for example if an earlier/later return becomes necessary, or to facilitate holidays before/after group events. This should be noted on the group visa in order to keep track of all visitors (three respondents).

- The visa should be extended as far as possible, especially to Commonwealth countries (two respondents).
- The visa period should be longer than 30 days – three months was suggested (one respondent).
- Visas should be issued for groups of ten or more individuals (one respondent).
- Both pre-arranged trips and groups wishing to travel at any time should be accommodated under this visa (three respondents).
- Group leaders should be held responsible for groups and all group members should be scrutinised (three respondents).
- Using known travel agents, trips could be arranged with the visa issued on arrival in the UK (eight respondents). It was suggested by one of these respondents that this would make the UK a more attractive destination.
- One respondent supported the proposal if it benefited the UK economy and another if this proposal made it cheaper for the UK taxpayer.
- There should be an initial trial period (one respondent).

Forty-one respondents, of the 56 who disagreed with the proposal, commented on their disagreement with the proposed group tourist travel visa. The main themes raised are detailed below.

- Fifteen respondents felt that group members would not stay in a group throughout their visit and that requiring tourists to stay within groups limited them.

“The group tourist travel visa would be in addition to the individual tourist visa.” (Individual)

- Ten respondents were very concerned that each tourist should be treated as an individual.

“People should be treated individually for the sake of their dignity.” (Individual)

- Eight respondents did not see a group visa as providing safeguards against illegal immigration. They felt it would be relatively easy for less desirable visitors to be brought in within a group and that such individuals could leave a group once in the UK. One respondent suggested that tour companies might sell places in such a group at a price and another that this proposal could increase human trafficking.

“Facilitators could hide people in group applications or poor people who would normally be a doubtful visitor would get a visa.” (Individual)

“Group status is not a guarantee that a visitor will be intending to visit as a member of that group only, with an intention to leave the United Kingdom with that group.” (Individual)

- Four respondents felt the proposals were too restrictive.

- A further four felt there were no reasons to bring in a new scheme or to change the existing scheme.12

“We are trying to fix a boat that is not broken. Also not everyone travels in a group. I came to Edinburgh on my own accord and would wish to continue to do so. I trust UK’s border security.” (Individual)

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12 The group tourist travel visa would be in addition to the individual tourist visa.
**Question 2.9** If you agree that we should introduce a group tourist travel visa, for which groups should the group tourist travel visa be made available? Please select one option.

**Figure 4.** If you agree that we should introduce a group tourist travel visa, for which groups should the group tourist travel visa be made available? Please select one option.

Of 169 respondents who answered this question, the largest single group – 64 respondents (38%) – supported group tourist travel visas being made available for groups with pre-arranged travel in the Schengen area and the UK only (see Figure 4). Forty-three respondents (25%) wanted to see the visa available only for pre-arranged travel to the UK. Much smaller numbers of respondents supported any visitors coming at any time (i.e. not on pre-arranged visits) to the UK only (32 respondents – 19%), to Schengen countries or the UK (12 respondents – 7%). Additional groups suggested as being included in the group visitor visa were as follows (the number of mentions is shown in brackets).

- Attendees at Indian wedding parties (one respondent).
- Performers (two respondents).
- Temporary workers covering permit-free festivals (one respondent).
- Tennis officials and supporters attending championships (two respondents).

**Question 2.10** Do you think the group tourist travel visa should be time limited? If no, why not?

As shown in Figure 5, a little over half the 374 respondents who answered the question supported the group visitor visa being time limited (202 respondents – 54%). Almost a third were uncertain about this proposal (118 respondents – 32%) and 54 (14%) disagreed.

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13 Permit-free workers are entertainers admitted to take part in specific types of events without needing to obtain a work permit.
14 Tennis officials would only be classified as tourists if they were seeking entry to the UK in relation to a one-off event. If seeking to enter the UK to work for a longer period they would need to apply for entry under the Points-Based System.
Question 2.10 If you agree that the group tourist travel visa should be time limited, how long do you think the visa should be valid for? Please select one option.

Three months was the most frequently suggested option for the length of a group tourist travel visa, supported by 104 (56%) of the 186 respondents to this question. A one-month visa length was supported by almost a quarter of respondents (43 respondents – 23%). Two months (19 respondents – 10%) and two weeks (eight respondents – 4%) had less support. Twelve respondents (6%) did not know what the visa length should be. Results are shown in Figure 6.

NB. Owing to rounding the total may not equal 100%.
EVENTS VISITOR

Question 2.12 Do you think a specific category of events visitor, included under the tourist category, should be created for major sporting and cultural events? If no, why not?

A majority of respondents (273 – 64%) of the 427 who answered the question agreed with the creation of a specific category of events visitor for major sporting and cultural events (see Figure 7). Less than a fifth of respondents (82 – 19%) disagreed with this proposal with a further 17% of respondents (72) saying they did not know. The events visitor visa would apply only to those entering the UK to attend an event, and not those seeking entry to perform at an event.

Figure 7. Do you think a specific category of events visitor, included under the tourist category, should be created for major sporting and cultural events?

Among those 82 (19%) who disagreed with the suggestion for a specific events visitor category, 15 gave an opinion on why this category should not be created. The majority (eight respondents) thought that the category was unnecessary. One respondent described it as “unnecessary bureaucratic paperwork”.

- Three respondents felt the category would be too restrictive.

“Amy opinion this will affect the tourism industry as the visa will be very restricted and it will not let people visit other places in the country and hence not fit for purpose.” (Individual)

- Two respondents felt creating such a category could lead to abuse of the system, for example with visitors to the Olympics arriving and then disappearing.

- A further two respondents felt that adding this category would create confusion.

“There are hundreds of events occurring daily and it will create additional confusion for tourist and Visa office. More option, more confusion”. (Individual)
Question 2.12 If you agree that a specific category of events visitor should be created, what type of events do you think should qualify for inclusion in an events visitor subcategory? Please select all that apply.

A total of 255 respondents indicated the type of events they thought should be included in an events visitor subcategory. As shown in Figure 8, there was very strong support for the inclusion of major sporting events in an events visitor subcategory (243 respondents). A large number (177) agreed that cultural events should be included. Support was a little lower for local or regional sporting events (159 respondents) and local or regional music and arts events (130 respondents). Respondents could select multiple options.

Thirty-one respondents suggested that other events should be included in the events visitor subcategory. These included:

- religious festivals or events (six respondents);
- ethnic or other cultural events, including the Notting Hill Carnival (four respondents);
- youth exchanges (including Scout jamborees and school sporting events) (three respondents);
- historical, scientific conferences or exhibitions (two respondents); and
- exchange trips for adults and young people (one respondent).

Figure 8. If you agree that a specific category of events visitor should be created, what type of events do you think should qualify for inclusion in an events visitor subcategory? Please select all that apply.

![Bar chart showing responses](chart.jpg)

**NB.** Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.

Question 2.13 Do you think the events visitor visa should be time limited? If no, why not?

A majority of the 362 respondents who answered the question (69% – 249) thought that the events visitor visa should be time limited. Just ten per cent of respondents (36) disagreed with this proposal.

A fifth of respondents (21% – 77) were unsure about time limitations on the events visitor visa. Results are shown in Figure 9.
Fifty-six of the 249 respondents who supported the proposal that an events visitor visa should be time limited also provided further comments.

• Forty-seven respondents considered the length of the event to be the most important factor. Of these, 15 noted the need for additional time for preparation and also for sightseeing, of benefit both to the individual and to the UK economy. Six respondents drew attention to the varying time periods required for different sporting events, competitions and festivals.

  “Duration should take into account the duration of the event, and make sensible provision for combination with purely touristic visit to the UK. (e.g. one would hope that a visitor for the Olympics would take the opportunity to see some of the other sights the UK can offer).” (Sporting organisation)

  “Special events visas should have a time limit which is appropriate to the duration of specific events. A visa for a summer Test Series for example, would require far greater time allowance than a one-off football match or one-day cultural event.” (Voluntary organisation)

• Nine respondents suggested a time period of less than three months as they felt the majority of events are generally no longer than this.

• Five respondents wanted no time limit on event visitor visas, although some suggested maintaining the six-month period offered by the current visitor visa.

Seventeen of the 36 respondents who disagreed with a time limit on events visas provided further comments.

• Twelve respondents reiterated that they felt the event visa to be unnecessary. This is mainly due to the ‘special’ visa and some confusion over the categories. Nine respondents noted that the current tourist visa and its time limitations are appropriate for this purpose.

  “If it has not been necessary in the past why is it necessary now? I can see no benefit to this country other than to create a new side of bureaucracy with more fees for the lawful visitor making it more difficult for that class of visitor to come here.” (Individual)

  “I don’t think any convincing case has been made for introduction of an ‘Events Visa’.” (Individual)

Figure 9. Do you think the events visit visa should be time limited?

- Yes 69%
- No 10%
- Don’t know 21%

Response base: 362
Other points were raised by 11 respondents in relation to time limits being applied to events visas, but these were excluded from the analysis because they implied the respondents thought that the events visitor visa would also apply to those entering to perform at an event, however, it will only apply to those seeking entry to the United Kingdom to attend an event as a spectator.

Further comments were as follows.

- Clearer details are needed but any time limit should always be over 30 days (five respondents).
- Current system is fine and can see no reason for change (four respondents).

**Question 2.13** If you agree that the events visit visa should be time limited, how long do you think the visa should be valid for? Please select one option.

Of the 249 respondents who agreed that a visitor visa should be time limited, 214 answered the question about length of time that the visa should be valid for (see Figure 10). They had a similar preference for three months (41% – 88 respondents) and one month (37% – 80 respondents) validity for events visitor visas. Fourteen per cent thought it should be valid for two months (30 respondents) and seven per cent were unsure about the length of visa (16 respondents).

**Figure 10.** If you agree that the events visit visa should be time limited, how long do you think the visa should be valid for? Please select one option.

![Bar chart showing time limits for events visitor visas](Image)

*NB. Owing to rounding the total may not equal 100%.*
BUSINESS AND SPECIAL VISITORS

To provide some context to responses regarding the business visitor visas, background information on respondents to this question is provided in the following two respondent profile questions.

Respondent profile question: How often do you receive business visitors in your organisation?

Figure 11. How often do you receive business visitors in your organisation?

![Bar chart showing frequency of business visitors]

Response base: 60

Respondent profile question: How long do your business visitors tend to remain in the UK?

Figure 12 shows the length of stay of employers’ and employment agencies’ business visitors. Eighteen of the 59 business visitors who responded stated that they stay for over six months, while ten out of 59 reported staying for a month and a further 12 stay for less than one month.

Nineteen of the 60 employers and employment agencies who responded receive business visitors once a week, with 15 of the 60 receiving business visitors every month. Full results are shown in Figure 11. Of the seven who responded ‘other’ to this question, one received business visitors occasionally, one received business visitors for specific events and training, four received business visitors for festivals, and one received academic business visitors.
**Question 3.4** Do you think a specific category of business and special visitors should be created? If no, why not?

As shown in Figure 13, the majority of the 406 respondents who answered the question (70% – 286) agreed with the creation of a specific category of business and special visitors. Just 11 per cent (43 respondents) disagreed with this proposal with a further 19 per cent (77 respondents) stating that they don’t know.
Twenty-five of the 43 respondents who disagreed with the proposal commented on why they did not think a specific category of business and special visitors should be created, raising the following issues. Some respondents made more than one comment.

- Nine respondents saw no reason to create a special category for these visitors. These respondents felt the current system was adequate and that business and special visitors should use the same route as all other visitors.

  “There is no reason why such a special category needs to be created.” (Individual)

  “Other visa categories should cover it.” (Individual)

- One respondent stated that applicants under this category should be treated as visitors, the same as tourists would be, with no access to UK employment or benefits.

  “Applicants under this category should be treated as visitors as tourists would be as they are not allowed to undertake paid employment and should not have access to services such as the NHS.” (Individual)

- Eight respondents had concerns that the proposals would be open to abuse.

  “Good idea – but prone for misutilisation. Business visitors including IT professional should be granted different kind of visa for up to 2 years.” (Individual)

- Five respondents thought a specific category for business and special visitors may cause more confusion as there are already many definitions surrounding immigration approval. One respondent thought a specific business visa category already existed.

  “Introducing too many layers of bureaucracy and confusion. Also it would be too cumbersome to manage and operate.” (Charity)

  “It would simply cause more confusion as there are already a little too many definitions around immigration approval.” (Individual)

- Two respondents were concerned about the costs and bureaucracy involved in the proposed special category.

  “I can see no benefit to this country other than to create a new side of bureaucracy with more fees for the lawful visitor making it more difficult for that class of visitor to come here.” (Individual)

- One respondent was concerned that the proposals have negative implications for events management, and could be potentially seen as discriminatory.

  “The current proposals for a business and special visitor visa discriminates against new or one-off events, adding unnecessary costs and administration which could potentially cripple some events.” (Employer/trade association)

- Another respondent thought time was the important factor and a visa should give sufficient time for business visitors.

  “Again if a business visitor comes he should not be pressurised that he has only a couple of months or so.” (Individual)

**Question 3.11 If we have a business and special visitor category, what do you think the maximum length of time a business visitor should be allowed to stay in the UK should be? Please select one option.**

This question was answered by 264 respondents (see Figure 14). The largest proportion of respondents favoured a longer leave allowance, with “up to 12 months” being the most common response, given by 44 per cent of respondents (117). A further 20 per cent (52) thought six months should be the maximum, and 14 per cent (38) thought the limit should be up to three months. Only eight per cent (20) suggested one month, while five per cent (12) suggested two months.
Question 3.12 What activities do you think business visitors should be able to undertake whilst in the UK? All views are welcome.

This open-ended question resulted in 163 respondents commenting on the activities that business visitors should be able to undertake (results shown in Figure 15). Many of these respondents suggested ‘business activities’ such as attending meetings, making site visits, installing and maintaining equipment, receiving training, conducting marketing activities and attending conferences. A small number of respondents thought specific business visitor activities should be stipulated on the visa for each visitor. Figure 15 shows the activities suggested by respondents. Of those who suggested allowable business activities, the following were proposed.

- Specified business-related activities or trade (99 respondents).
- Academic, educational and training activities (34 respondents).
- Promotional activities such as networking and conferences (32 respondents).
- Twelve said all activities should be legal and legitimate and should not be paid through the UK (also, the visitor should not be seeking employment).
- Five thought business visitors should be unrestricted and able to undertake any activity.
- Travel and tourism were seen by some as permissible activities for business visitors. Eleven respondents were concerned that those visiting on business should also have opportunity to be tourists.

“It should be guaranteed that the business activities such visitors should be allowed to undertake should be in addition to, not instead of, all the activities that an ‘ordinary’ tourist may undertake.” (Other organisation)

- Eighteen mentioned that all activities undertaken by business visitors should benefit the UK economy. Two of these 18 were concerned that visitors may take advantage of their visa conditions, and so should be monitored.

“All legal business activities which directly or indirectly generates revenue for UK govt.” (Other organisation)
Expedited clearance is a fast track process designed to facilitate quicker entry at port to the UK for genuine, trusted travellers.

Other activities suggested were:

- visit to employers’ UK offices for short periods (four respondents);
- commercial training courses, e.g. company – or product-specific (six respondents);
- software/hardware IT servicing, installation or repairs (three respondents);
- specific equipment/machinery servicing, installation, repairs or decommissioning (two respondents);
- music recording sessions where the artist/band hold a contract with a UK company (two respondents);
- one-off TV/radio appearances, e.g. talk shows, documentaries, news items but not when actors are coming to the UK to work for a longer period (two respondents);
- attending festivals (six respondents);
- taking part in sports events (four respondents);
- and driving (two respondents).

**Figure 15.** What activities do you think business visitors should be able to undertake whilst in the UK? All views are welcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business-related activities or trade</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/education/training activities</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional activities (networking, conferences)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities to boost economy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As long as it is legal/legitimate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism/leisure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not for paid work/to seek employment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities related to visa stipulations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must pay tax</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response base: 163

**Question 3.13** What options should be available to make travel more flexible for business visitors? Please select all that apply.

Options were suggested by 289 respondents to make travel more flexible for business visitors. A longer-term multiple entry visa was supported by 279 respondents (see Figure 16). Expedited clearance through a Registered Traveller scheme was supported by 172 respondents. Twenty-three respondents said there should be other options available and 48 said they did not know which options would make travel more flexible for business visitors. Respondents could select multiple options.

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15 Expedited clearance is a fast track process designed to facilitate quicker entry at port to the UK for genuine, trusted travellers.
**Question 3.27** Please indicate which of the following activities, if any, should be included in the list of activities permitted by business visitors? Please select all that apply. If you do not agree that any of these activities should be permitted by business visitors, please state why.

Respondents were provided with a list of potential activities and required to select which of these, if any, should be included in a list of activities permitted by business visitors. Of the 295 respondents who answered this question, respondents were most likely to agree that film crews be included in the list of activities permitted by business visitors (231), followed by clinical attachments (229) and PLAB\(^{16}\) doctors (225). Slightly fewer respondents supported the inclusion of dental observers\(^{17}\) (210) and permit-free performers\(^{18}\) (205). Just 16 respondents said that none of these activities should be included. Results are shown in Figure 17.

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\(^{16}\) Doctors coming to the United Kingdom to take the professional and linguistic assessments board (PLAB) test.

\(^{17}\) Those wishing to enter the United Kingdom to undertake dental observation post, which is an unpaid position, not involving the treatment of patients, enabling dentists to familiarise themselves with UK working practices.

\(^{18}\) Permit-free performers are entertainers admitted to take part in specific types of events without needing to obtain a work permit.
Eighteen respondents gave an explanation of why they thought the listed activities should not be permitted by business visitors.

- Ten respondents said that the system should be kept simple and there should be appropriate visa types for all business visitors. Two of these respondents suggested that there should be separate categories for medical and entertainment visitors. One respondent felt a group business visa would be more appropriate, and that medical visitors could have a tourist visa with a note detailing the reason for their visit.

  “1. Doctors should take student visa for test/exams. 2. Permit-free performers/film crews should enter on the visa which lets them perform and shoot without any business criteria this is leading to confusion and too many options on a tourist visa. (It should be kept simple and straightforward).” (Individual)

  “Clinical attachments, dental observers, PLAB applicants can be given with a tourist visitor visa with a special note on the visa citing their aim in UK, and they must return back to their home country once the visa expires. They can apply again for a similar or different visa if they want to come back to UK.” (Individual)

- Four respondents were concerned that some of the activities proposed for business visitors were not business but professional work and as such did not fit into this category.

  “A business person should not be allowed to work and earn money, a business person is in the UK to settle a business.” (Individual)

  “Clinical attachments/dental observers are not business visitors as they do not fit in with standard business definitions (idea, investment, activity and economic result), they are professionals they should be given a standard visitor visa limited to 183 days and not a business visa. Doctors taking PLAB are not business visitors, they are professionals looking for future employment in UK, they should be issued with a standard visitor visa limited to 183 days. Film crews should be subject to a group visa (a film producer/financier/director could have business visa).” (Individual)
A further four respondents felt that some of the activities covered professions not needed in the UK. Three respondents said that medical professionals were less needed in the UK at the current time and that those seeking training in these professions should not be encouraged to come to the UK. One respondent felt that dental observers were not required in the UK.

“Allowing any more doctors or dentists from visa-requiring countries to come to work in the UK is morally wrong and very unfair. Many of us have been severely exploited and left high and dry in the hope of ‘training’ and this is only likely to get worse because of the current jobs situation for British doctors (and dentists in the future, I am sure). The only conditions under which a visa-requiring doctor or dentist should be allowed to visit the UK in a professional capacity should be for fully charted training programmes for which they already have admission guaranteed pending a visa (including for conferences).” (Individual)

**Question 3.30** Do you think that within the business/special visitor category there should be a specific subcategory of special visitors to bring together the current special visitor routes? If no, why not?

Of the 339 respondents who answered the question, half stated that they did not know whether there should be a specific subcategory of special visitors to bring together the current special visitor routes (50% – 171 respondents). A little over a third of respondents supported the creation of this subcategory (35% – 119 respondents) whilst 15 per cent (49 respondents) disagreed with this proposal. Results are shown in Figure 18.

![Figure 18](image-url)
Of the 47 respondents who disagreed, 13 commented on why they did not think that a subcategory of special visitors should be created. Respondents could give more than one reason for their answer.

- Six visitors feared that complication of the system could lead to abuse, for example:

  "Try to keep the number of different Visas as small as possible, less chance of abuse" (Individual).

- There was concern among the same six respondents and one other person of elitism if a special subcategory of visitors was introduced.

- Four respondents saw this proposal as an unnecessary complication.

  "Too many categories will lead to too many definitions, too much administrative work and expensive." (Individual)

- Two respondents felt it would be difficult to bring together the current special visitor routes, and that the current system was sufficient. One of these respondents said that any redesign of the system should incorporate the existing routes. The other respondent felt that the standard tourist visa already sufficiently covers non-work-related activity.

- One respondent felt that length of leave and conditions should be decided separately for each group.

  "Each group has very distinct characteristics, and there are few common threads." (Charity)

**Question 3.31** If you agree that there should be a special visitor subcategory, do you think that we should include academic visitors under the special visitor route? If no, why not?

As shown in Figure 19, all but three per cent (3) of the 110 respondents to this question agreed that academic visitors should be included under the special visitor route.

![Figure 19](chart.png)

**Figure 19.** If you agree that there should be a special visitor subcategory, do you think that we should include academic visitors under the special visitor route?
All three of the respondents who thought academic visitors should not be included under the special visitor route commented on their view. A further 13 respondents who agreed with the proposals commented on safeguards they felt were needed. Five respondents took academics to include students and commented on this basis. Replies wholly focusing on students have been excluded from all the analysis for this question. The remaining comments are summarised below.

- Eight respondents were concerned that the length of stay of academic visitors should remain at the current 12 months. These respondents referred to typical academic sabbaticals of 12 months and the important contribution made by visits from overseas academics.

  “Any movement of academic visitors into a category which gives less than 12 months residence would be detrimental to the academic purpose of visit and the UK’s position as a world-leading academic destination.” (Educational institution)

  “The staff in [organisation] feel strongly that any possible reduction of the current maximum time limit of twelve months would be detrimental to the research projects being carried out during such visits.” (Educational institution)

- Six respondents thought that clarification of categories was required. Some saw academics as fitting into the business visitor category whilst others wanted a distinction between academic and business visitors and felt this could be important for some overseas countries.

  “Makes sense for the category of ‘special visitor’ to encompass academic visitors. Maximum permitted stay should be in line with that for business visitors. Care should be exercised however if ‘academic visitors’ to the UK are labelled as ‘business visitors’, i.e. cultural sensitivities in sending countries need to be taken into account.” (Individual)

  “Academics are not business visitors; the various Special Visitor routes should be retained as entirely separate from Business Visitors.” (Individual)

- One respondent suggested that other groups could be included in the special visitor category, including those on clinical attachments, dental observers and doctors taking the PLAB test. Another respondent wanted more special categories to cover the medical, sporting and entertainment worlds.

  “Ideally there should be Special Categories for Business, Academic, Sports, Arts & Entertainment, and Medical/Dental; which can then have appropriate Rules relating to the realities of the various sectors.” (Individual)

**FAMILY VISITOR VISA AND SPONSORED FAMILY VISITORS**

To provide some context to responses regarding the family visitor visas, background information on respondents to this question is provided in the following two respondent profile questions.

**Respondent profile question:** How often, if at all, do family members from overseas visit you in the UK?

Forty-one percent (90 respondents) of the 222 respondents who provided a response, stated that their family members visit every year, while only seven per cent (15 respondents) stated that they visit every two or three months. See Figure 20 for full results.
Figure 20. How often, if at all, do family members from overseas visit you in the UK?

Respondent profile question: How long do your family visitors tend to remain in the UK? Approximately half the respondents (49%, 107 respondents) reported that their family visitors tend to remain in the UK for six months, while only six per cent (13 respondents) stay for one month and a further nine per cent (20 respondents) stay for less than one month. See Figure 21 for full results.

Figure 21. How long do your family visitors tend to remain in the UK?
**Question 5.4:** Do you think a separate category for those wishing to visit family in the UK should be created? If no, why not?

As shown in Figure 22, the majority of the 422 respondents who answered the question agreed with the creation of a family visitor category (70% – 294 respondents). Just under a quarter of respondents disagreed with this proposal (24% – 101 respondents) and six per cent (27) answered “don’t know”.

**Figure 22.** Do you think a separate category for those wishing to visit family in the UK should be created?

Of the 422 who answered the question, 160 commented further on the creation of a family visitor category.

There was some confusion among respondents as to the relationship between the proposed new family visitor category and the existing tourist visitor category. Fifty respondents requested clarification on whether the proposed three-month visa period would apply to family visitors or if they would still be able to obtain a six-month visa.

Eleven respondents of the 101 who disagreed with the proposal stated that they did not think a specific category of family visitor should be created, saying that:

- relatives visiting those in the UK are essentially tourists and so do not need a separate category; and
- another category would make the system too complex.

Ten respondents supported a separate category in certain circumstances:

- if the shorter tourist visa period were introduced, a six-month visa period should be retained for family visitors; and
- if a bond payment was required for those sponsoring tourists coming to the UK, a special category should be created for family visitors which does not require a bond payment.
Question 5.8 Do you think family visits should be sponsored? If no, why not?

From the follow-up question in 5.8, where respondents were asked to provide comment if they disagreed with the proposal that family visits should be sponsored, it was clear that the concept of sponsorship was misunderstood by some who felt it necessarily implied payment or provision of financial support. The consultation sought views on whether UK sponsors should ensure that their family member would comply with the conditions of their visa by:

- signing a general statement of intent outlining their responsibilities;
- a written statement signed in the presence of a solicitor, or by submitting a financial security.

Some respondents referred to a payment or ‘bond’ being put down as part of the sponsorship process – although this proposal was not explicit in the consultation document.

- Eighty respondents who disagreed with the proposal that family visits should be sponsored referred to bonds or financial sponsorship in the reasons for their response.
- Five respondents who agreed with the proposal also mentioned bonds, along with two respondents who said that they did not know.

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents (236) of the remaining 352 who responded agreed with family visits being sponsored but 24 per cent (84) disagreed with this proposal. Nine per cent of respondents (32) stated that they did not know. Results are shown in Figure 23.

In order to ensure findings accurately reflected the questions asked, we therefore removed from the remainder of the analysis to this question, those 87 responses which mistakenly referred to a bond or payment as automatically being a part of sponsorship, as this was not the case. This question sought views on sponsorship processes in general, not the actual means by which sponsorship would occur. Responses were retained in the analysis regarding sponsorship processes in general, to reflect the actual question asked.

The following quotes are typical of responses that were excluded from the analysis.

“MY MUM WOULD LOVE TO COME AND STAY WITH HER GRANDDAUGHTER FOR A FEW MONTHS, IF I CANNOT AFFORD TO SPONSOR HER, DOES THIS MEAN SHE CANNOT COME?”

“How many teachers, nurses, etc. in this country can afford to pay £1000 to sponsor relatives especially when you want more than one relative (parents) to come visit? Already paying too much to renew residence, Indefinite, visas etc.”

Figure 23. Do you think family visits should be sponsored?19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Excluding 87 respondents who mentioned bond or financial sponsorship as their reason.
Excluding those who mentioned bonds or financial sponsorship, the following themes emerged, raised by 81 respondents.

- Twenty-five respondents made comments pertaining to financial obligations, but not in relation to bonds. They felt that either visitors should be financially responsible for their own trip or that the financial status of the host should apply only when the family visitors were unable to provide evidence of their financial standing. Furthermore, 20 respondents felt that family visits should be sponsored but thought that these visits should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The following comments illustrate these views.

  “Visits can be sponsored, but should not be compulsory. If the visiting family member can fund his/her own visit and stay then they should be allowed to.” (Individual)

  “It’s not necessary to sponsor family visits always. Family members who can provide own financial statements and who visit not only to visit family, but also to travel around (which is often the case) need not be sponsored.” (Individual)

  “It depends on individual case and just “support” may be sufficient in some cases but necessary paperwork must be done in all cases.” (Individual)

- Thirteen respondents felt that the sponsoring of family visits would exacerbate family separation. Strong feelings expressed on this matter were similar to those raised in reaction to the shortening of the length of tourist visas.

  “Do I not have a right to family union?????????? Don’t you think this is against the human rights????” (Individual)

  “Why should they be?? They just want to visit relatives. It would be impossible to get work, so why not just make it easy for them to visit their family????” (Individual)

- Twelve respondents thought that the current system was sufficient, questioning what benefits the new system would have. One respondent was concerned that it would be inconvenient and would delay visitors unduly.

  “What do we achieve by sponsored family visits – it is very clear that a family visitor is applying for a visa because they wish to visit their close relatives settled/living in UK. This is not going to assist in anyway either the families living here in UK or family visitors applying to visit UK. At present the sponsor normally sends a written confirmation anyway requesting for a family visitor to be allowed to visit UK.” (Individual)

  “They are already being sponsored by the family members in UK and no visa is given without a sponsorship letter. Paying money to the UK government to get family members to UK is a ridiculous and an unfair idea.” (Individual)

- Other concerns, raised by 28 respondents included:

  - causing delay in case of emergencies or short-notice visits (three respondents);
  - lack of clarity of the meaning of sponsorship (one respondent);
  - targeting the wrong people (three respondents);
  - adverse impact on tourism (economy) (five respondents);
  - pressure on migrants to sponsor unwanted guests (three respondents);
  - not easily enforceable (two respondents);
  - culturally it may not be correct for children to sponsor their parents (two respondents);
  - system easily misunderstood (one respondent);
  - burden on sponsors (ten respondents).

Question 5.9 Do you think that the documents required for a family visitor visa should be clarified? If no, why not?

Almost three-quarters of the 385 respondents who answered this question (74% – 286) thought that the documents required for a family visitor visa should be clarified (see Figure 24). The remaining respondents were almost equally divided between disagreement (13% – 50) and those that stated “don’t know” to this proposal (13% – 49).
Twenty-one respondents of the 50 who disagreed with the proposal commented on their view that there was no need for clarification on the documents required for a family visitor visa.

- Nineteen respondents felt the requirements were already clear, although five respondents found the amount of documentation required a little onerous.

  "As it stands now – they are very clear and in too much detail – At present the persons applying for a visa at an Embassy have to submit so many documents like for example – biometrics finger prints, medical reports, proof of stay, bank statements, flight details and financial standing, I guess there nothing more which is left out to ask for someone simply visiting a family member in UK." (Individual)

- Two respondents could not see the purpose of this proposal or felt that it added further unnecessary complexity to applications for a family visitor visa.

Figure 24. Do you think that the documents required for a family visitor visa should be clarified?
Twenty-seven respondents of the 286 who agreed with the proposal commented on why they agreed that there was a need for clarification. Some respondents made more than one comment.

- Twenty-one respondents felt there was a need to make document requirements clear to applicants. It was felt that requirements should not be too prescriptive and that guidance could be improved.

  “The documents required should be clarified, but flexibility should be retained to not make this too prescriptive to recognise the different types of documents that may, or may not be, available in different countries.” (Individual)

  “Yes very much so, with the need for very much improved advice and guidance – currently overpriced and about as much use as a hole in a parachute.” (Individual)

- Seven respondents were concerned that document requirements should not disadvantage or put an undue burden upon applicants.

  “But not in a way that would be detrimental to the ECO’s workload and the potential visitor. Checking should not cause undue hardship.” (Individual)

- Four respondents (6%) suggested that the process needed to be simplified.

  “It is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure visitors are aware of what is required, although those requirements need to be simplified, not made more complicated.” (Local government)

- One respondent stated that document requirements should be the same across borders so that it is not more restrictive in the UK than it is in other countries.

  “Documentation requirements to be standardised across embassies.” (Individual)

**Question 5.10** What documents do you think should be submitted in support of a family visitor application? Please select all that apply.

Three-hundred and fifty-one respondents indicated what documents they thought should be submitted in support of a family visitor visa. As shown in Figure 25, proof of identity (329 respondents) and address (328 respondents) were seen as the most important documents to submit in support of a family visitor visa. Between 104 and 275 respondents supported each of the other options. Respondents could select multiple options.

**Figure 25.** What documents do you think should be submitted in support of a family visitor application? Please select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage slips</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank statement</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of address</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of identity</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of intent</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth certificate</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage certificate</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.
Respondents offered further suggestions for the documentation that should be included:

- letter from university confirming student status (one respondent);
- council Tax bills (two respondents);
- formal letter of invitation with full details of visit (five respondents);
- fingerprints (one respondent);
- joint bills to prove marital relationship (one respondent);
- National Insurance Number (one respondent);
- details of rental/mortgage arrangements (to prove accommodation exists) (one respondent);
- health insurance (ten respondents);
- tax certificate (one respondent); and
- details from employer on type and length of employment (one respondent).

**Question 5.13** Who do you think should be defined as a family member, and, if sponsorship is introduced, do you think they should be able to sponsor a family visitor? All sponsoring family visitors will be required to be aged 18 and over. Please select all that apply.

There was a wide variation in the number of respondents saying whether a particular type of relative should be defined as a family member, and therefore, able to sponsor a family visitor (see Figure 26). The level of support depended first on the degree of relationship (e.g. there was more support for parents than grandparents) and then on seniority (e.g. there was more support for parents than children to be sponsors). Respondents were more likely to answer these questions if they were in agreement with the proposal.

Other suggested sponsors, not listed in the consultation document, were in-laws, nephews and nieces and ‘anyone else’.

![Figure 26. Who do you think should be defined as a family member, and, if sponsorship is introduced, do you think they should be able to sponsor a family visitor? Please select all that apply.](image)

**NB.** Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.
Question 5.14 Sponsors will be limited to those aged 18 years and over. Do you think sponsors should also be limited to those with a particular immigration status? If no, why not?

As shown in Figure 27, over half the 381 who responded (59% – 224) agreed with sponsorship being limited by immigration status. A little under a third of respondents disagreed with this proposal (31% – 119) and ten per cent stated that they did not know (38).

Figure 27. Do you think sponsors should also be limited to those with a particular immigration status?

Question 5.14 If you think sponsors should also be limited to those with a particular immigration status, what immigration status do you think a person should hold in order to sponsor a family member? Please select all that apply.

Of the 231 respondents who indicated what immigration status sponsors should have, just 21 respondents thought ‘only British citizens’ should be able to sponsor visitors. There was significant support for sponsorship by foreign nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain (185), EU and EEA nationals (162) and those on work permits of longer than 12 months (158). There was less support for those with less than 12 months leave to remain (96 respondents) or students (106 respondents) sponsoring visitors. Just eight respondents supported those of all immigration statuses being able to sponsor visitors. Full results are shown in Figure 28. Respondents could select multiple options.
Of the 119 who disagreed with restricting sponsorship by immigration status, 118 gave their reasons. Three key themes emerged from the reasons given by respondents who opposed the proposal.

- Thirty-four respondents felt all individuals should have the right to see their family members and noted the importance of family relations.

  “Everyone has the right to stay in touch with their family member and to support them.” (Individual)

  “Because anyone legally resident in the UK should be able to invite relatives – this is their basic right as human beings.” (Individual)

  “Family visits are important for all people living legally in England. Thus the right to sponsor should not be limited to a particular Immigration status.” (Individual)

- Twenty-nine respondents believed that family sponsorship should be open to everyone, provided they were in the country legally and could meet the requirements of the sponsorship process.

  “If some one is here legally and have sufficient funds to sponsor, one should be able to sponsor.” (Individual)

  “If the sponsor can legally sustain himself and accommodate the visitor without recourse to public funds, he/she should be allowed to sponsor.” (Individual)

  “All people have rights to bring family members to stay with them irrespective of their visa status so long as they can satisfy the financial situation of the sponsor with other documentations.” (Individual)

- Other reasons given for not limiting family sponsorship to those with a particular immigration status, included:

  - too restrictive (six respondents);

  - it will discourage tourism and will have an adverse effect on the economy (four respondents);
Sixty-four comments were made by respondents regarding the way in which those sponsoring family members should ensure visitors comply with the condition of their visa. Respondents made multiple comments on these themes.

- Immigration status is not an appropriate gauge of one’s ability to sponsor a family member (two respondents); and
- Should not be based on immigration status but rather length of stay in the UK (one respondent).

**Question 5.18** How do you think a sponsor should ensure that their sponsored family member complies with the conditions of their visa? Please select all that apply.

In contrast to question 5.8, this question specifically asked about potential methods of compliance with visa conditions. By some margin, the best supported approach to ensuring sponsored family members comply with conditions of their visa was by a ‘general statement of intent outlining responsibilities’ (305 respondents). Respondents were less supportive of ‘financial security’ being used to ensure compliance with visa terms (118). Seventy-one supported ensuring compliance through a written statement in the presence of a solicitor and 56 supported other ways of ensuring compliance. Results are shown in Figure 29.

**Figure 29.** How do you think a sponsor should ensure that their sponsored family member complies with the conditions of their visa? Please select all that apply.

![Bar chart showing responses]

Response base: 351

NNB. Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.

- Thirteen respondents stated that whatever method is implemented, it should be at a reasonable cost, and preferably, means tested. Any cost penalty was felt to potentially discriminate against ‘less well off’ visitors from Asia and Africa.

“This measure in reality is not designed to keep risky people out, but to keep poor people out.” (Commercial organisation)

- Five respondents make particular reference to students, who were more likely to be on a limited budget.

“Financial security should be according to a person’s means, and should not be a standard security, as proposed.” (Immigration adviser/Law practitioner)

- Eleven respondents wanted to see penalties for the sponsoring individual if the visitor broke the conditions. This might be financial, in the form of a fine or expenses, a formal warning, or future restrictions on sponsorship.
Seven respondents commented that a written statement in the presence of a solicitor would impose too much bureaucracy and extra cost for the visa application, and would provide minimal extra protection against illegal immigration. It was felt that sponsors are already putting up a lot of financial backing for the visitor in the first instance and that financial security "at the level stated in the news media" may be excessive for families with limited means.

"The process and cost for inviting our overseas family is already significant and requires considerable documentation and preparation time. Elderly and Retired UK Citizens inviting overseas family would find such requirements both expensive and time consuming to complete." (Individual)

Two respondents thought that sponsors providing financial security for the sponsored family member would incur extra cost for the sponsor and would mean that meetings would be arranged either in a neighbouring Schengen Country (France, Italy or Spain) or in the family’s country of residence. One respondent stated that this would be problematic because:

"This would surely result in a significant reduction in overall tourist revenues from family visitors to the UK Tourism Industries, which would be diverted to the more open Schengen Region." (Individual)

Another respondent stated that, in addition to a general statement of intent outlining the sponsor’s responsibilities, they would like to see a signed contract of liability to financial costs for any medical treatment, legal process against their visitor including criminal costs incurred through prison, and any costs incurred by the Home Office for any application for leave to remain and appeals resulting from any refusal of any such application. Similarly, it was thought that a general statement of responsibilities should:

"Make it clear that the sponsor understands that the visitor cannot work, claim benefit and must return to their home country." (Individual)
Five respondents felt strongly that the sponsor should take the majority of the responsibility for the person visiting the UK. It was thought that the sponsor should be held accountable and it should be an offence to sponsor someone who disappears, works illegally or overstays his/her allotted time.

“This would make potential sponsors think carefully before signing their name to an application and in the event of a misdemeanour occurring the Police could be involved much quicker.” (Individual)

Another respondent stated that if there were embarkation controls in the UK, the ECO could clearly see how long a person had stayed in the UK and that this could be compared to what was originally intended, with the ECO thus determining if the sponsor was trustworthy. This respondent went on to say that as it is the visitor who is applying for the visa, it is he/she who should be assessed and that the decision should not be made on the sponsor alone.

Three respondents felt that a warning letter/written statement should be sent to the sponsor if visitors exceed their time in the UK, and that the immigration status of the sponsor could be suspended. On the other hand, one respondent stated that if the written statement was from a solicitor, this may be expensive and time consuming.

Two respondents could see no need for change and thought the letters of invitation and sponsorship that are currently written for every family visit to prove that financial support can be provided were adequate.

A further two respondents suggested any visitors overstaying the visa be returned home and not be allowed to visit the UK again.

One respondent wanted the visitor to register with the police and the Border and Immigration Agency (now the UK Border Agency) and another suggested the sponsor should advise the Home Office when the visitor was leaving the country.

**Question 5.20** Do you think a sponsor should face a penalty if their family member fails to comply with the conditions of their visa? If no, why not?

Just under two-thirds of the 394 respondents who answered the question (64% – 254) agreed with a penalty for sponsors if a family member failed to observe the terms of their visa. A little over a quarter (28% – 112) disagreed with this proposal and seven per cent stated that they did not know (28). Results are shown in Figure 30.

![Figure 30](image)

**Figure 30.** Do you think a sponsor should face a penalty if their family member fails to comply with the conditions of their visa?

NB. Owing to rounding the total may not equal 100%.
Sixty-eight respondents of the 112 who disagreed with the proposal provided reasons why. Multiple reasons were given.

- Thirty-nine respondents felt that behaviour is the responsibility of the individual and so the sponsor should not face a penalty. It was suggested that a warning process should be implemented before any action is taken. These respondents felt that adult or other visitors are independent individuals and others cannot be held responsible for their actions. One respondent stated it is not right for one person to provide a guarantee for another person, be it spouse or offspring, unless the sponsored member is a child under 16 years old. Another respondent stated that:

  “It goes against human rights to penalise a sponsor for the behaviour and violations of a completely independent adult.” (Individual)

  “It’s not fair. It may not be always that the adult family members (who take their own responsibility and accountability for their actions) would be compliant with what the sponsor wants. It’s not right for an adult to provide guarantee for another adult – may it be spouse or offspring, unless the sponsored member is a child less than 16 years old.” (Individual)

- Nine respondents said that this proposal was unreasonable and inappropriate.

- Four respondents felt that any violation by a visitor has to be prosecuted against the visitor according to the law and not against the sponsor as a sponsor only has moral and ethical responsibility for his or her visitors. It was felt that the sponsor should not be held responsible as he or she does not have the right/authority to restrain/deport the family member. These respondents felt that:

  “sponsors can’t be baby-sitting visitors all the time.” (Individual)

  “Family members can dupe family as well – it would be totally unfair to expect a sponsor to keep an eye on their visitor for 24 hours a day – what if the visitor has ulterior motives for coming to the UK and they decided to abscond at the earlier opportunity? It is unreasonable to expect someone to have this type of responsibility.” (Individual)

- Five respondents stated that there can be numerous reasons why a sponsor is unable to send a family member back on time. One respondent stated that reasons for delay may include an accident or emergency, a dispute, or that it may be unsafe for the family member to go back. It was thought that these reasons may mean that it is considered harsh and unjust practice for a blanket policy to be introduced.

  “To introduce these measures is very controversial, and highly unacceptable.” (Individual)

- This respondent also stated that families were working hard to ‘make ends meet’ and the option to impose fines for these issues would not help them to integrate more into society.

- Two respondents thought that it was unfair to penalise a sponsor, suggesting that in many cases a family member not complying is usually due to a delayed flight or airport delays and in these cases:

  “If there is a valid reason, they should be allowed a grace period”. (Individual)

- Three respondents stated that they felt it was unfair to treat people as criminals when “no crime has been committed”.

  “This sort of draconian measure can only serve to alienate British Asians, Africans, Australians etc.” (Not specified)

- Nine respondents said that this proposal was unreasonable and inappropriate.

- Four respondents felt that any violation by a visitor has to be prosecuted against the visitor according to the law and not against the sponsor as a sponsor only has moral and ethical responsibility for his or her visitors. It was felt that the sponsor should not be held responsible as he or she does not have the right/authority to restrain/deport the family member. These respondents felt that:

  “sponsors can’t be baby-sitting visitors all the time.” (Individual)

  “Family members can dupe family as well – it would be totally unfair to expect a sponsor to keep an eye on their visitor for 24 hours a day – what if the visitor has ulterior motives for coming to the UK and they decided to abscond at the earlier opportunity? It is unreasonable to expect someone to have this type of responsibility.” (Individual)

  “It is quite unreasonable to expect family members (UK Citizens) such as ourselves to provide such ‘visitor bonds’.” (Individual)
Question 5.20  If you think a sponsor should face a penalty if their family member fails to comply with the conditions of their visa, what do you think these penalties should be? Please select all that apply.

Of the 253 respondents who stated what they thought the penalties should be, respondents were most likely to support the penalty of restricting the future right of sponsorship (211 respondents) but 168 would support a financial penalty. Forty-six respondents suggested other penalties. Results are shown in Figure 31. Multiple responses were given in some cases.

Figure 31. If you think a sponsor should face a penalty if their family member fails to comply with the conditions of their visa, what do you think these penalties should be? Please select all that apply.

- Details of financial penalties were suggested by ten respondents:
  - there should be a financial penalty only after three infringements (one respondent);
  - there should only be a financial penalty after a warning (one respondent);
  - general support for a financial penalty (two respondents);
- both the visitor and sponsor should be penalised (two respondents);
- a substantial fine should be imposed (two respondents);
- sponsor to pay deportation and legal costs (one respondent);
- visa or other status should be removed from the sponsor (one respondent).
• Seventeen suggested the nature of future restriction on sponsorship:
  • restrictions on future sponsorship (15 respondents) of which two respondents suggested a scale from three months to a year, three respondents specified a period, and one respondent said several years;
  • suspend the visa of the sponsor (one respondent);
  • remove the right to sponsor (one respondent).

  “The sponsor should be barred from sponsoring anyone else for a certain period, depending upon severity of breach of conditions.” (Commercial organisation)

• Six respondents felt the penalties should be less strong, and suggested a formal warning system or a points system where a penalty is given only after several breaches.

  “The general statement of intent should be reviewed and reasons for the non compliance assessed, with a possible letter to the sponsor warning them against further occurrences.” (Individual)

  “Official warning with a note on the persons home office records.” (Individual)

• Eight respondents felt a prison sentence or being sent home would be most appropriate.

• Exceptional circumstances such as health, which may restrict a visitor’s ability to comply with the visa conditions, should be considered according to three respondents.

  “Have to assess the reason for family member’s failure to comply & then decide.” (Individual)

  “A financial or legal penalty would not be appropriate for students being visited by their family members.” (Educational institution)

  “I think it is essential that there is some penalty on those who sponsor people who do not comply with the conditions of their leave; although equally it is essential for them to have a right of appeal against such a penalty where it can be shown, for example, that they genuinely tried to prevent the breach. I think financial penalties have to be optional; otherwise there is a serious risk of certain sponsors (particularly those from SE Asian families under pressure to sponsor large numbers of people for (say) weddings) being put at significant financial risk.” (Immigration adviser/Law practitioner)
Question 5.24 Do you think that the current appeal rights for family visitors should be revised? If no, why not?

Views were mixed on this question but the largest single group of respondents was in agreement with the proposal (39% – 146) while a third of respondents (34% – 126) stated they did not know and a little over a quarter disagreed with the proposal (26% – 98) (see Figure 32).

Figure 32. Do you think that the current appeal rights for family visitors should be revised?

NB. Owing to rounding the total may not equal 100%.

Forty-nine of the 98 respondents who did not feel that the current appeal rights for family visitors should be revised noted several reasons for their views. These included the following themes.

- Sixteen respondents said the appeals process should be retained to check the quality of the decision-making process.

  “I don’t trust the quality of decisions!” (Individual)

  “Visa consulates to be honest do a lot of mistakes.” (Individual)

  “Entry Clearance Officers’ decisions should be challenged and heard by the Immigration and Asylum tribunals as often their decisions are unfair, unjustified and far from the immigration rules.” (Individual)

- Ten respondents felt that the current system works well.

  “It is still functional; there is no reason why it should be changed.” (Individual)

  “The current visa regulations/rules are very much efficient. There won’t be any need to revise the rules.” (Individual)

- Nine respondents felt the appeals process was fair and transparent.

  “From first hand experience, I think that current appeal rights for family visitor is fair and very robust.” (Individual)

- Six respondents said that families have basic human rights to see each other when they choose.
“Family visitors may have very important reasons for needing to visit a family member in the UK including family sickness or death. For this reason should their visa be refused they need the opportunity to make their case.” (Individual)

- Two respondents suggested that alternative solutions would be less adequate than current processes.
- A further two respondents felt that an appeals process should be in place as the applicant is required to pay a fee.

“Visa application involves fee. If rejected needs to be justified.” (Individual)

- Six respondents mentioned other more diverse reasons but highlighted the importance of visitors to the economy and tourism.

“It is providing the good balance that is required in terms of countries’ tourism economy as well as the family ties & relationship boosting the resident’s social life & values.” (Individual)

Question 5.25 If you think that the current appeal rights for family visitors should be revised, how do you think rights of appeal should be revised? Please select all that apply. Of the 153 respondents who commented on how they thought appeal rights should be revised, 107 thought introducing wider rights of appeal was the key revision required (see Figure 33). Fifty-three respondents thought appeals should be replaced with administrative reviews and 27 wanted to see the visa applicant contributing financially to the appeal or other revisions. Just 24 respondents sought more limited rights of appeal. Respondents could select multiple options.

**Figure 33.** If you think that the current appeal rights for family visitors should be revised, how do you think rights of appeal should be revised? Please select all that apply.

![Figure 33](image)

**Response base: 153**

*NB. Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.*
Twenty-seven respondents noted other suggestions for how rights of appeal should be revised.

- Ten respondents said that consideration of any financial burdens or contributions needed to be taken into account, with no further cost for an appeal hearing.
  
  “The visa applicant has spent enough money and to ask for a further financial contribution is unfair.”
  
  “The initial visa fee should be increased to cover the cost of any subsequent appeal.”

- Six respondents thought a revision should simplify the process.
  
  “Length of appeal is currently too long and bureaucratic.”
  
  “It is quite clear that the appeals system for family visitors (and all other appeals) is not suitable for either the applicant or for the EU as the application process is too long.”

- Five respondents wanted a review of administrative procedures.
  
  “Administrative review, with a Right of Appeal against unsuccessful outcomes – with specific reasons for cases rejected.”
  
  “Defining the requirement more clearly makes any decision to refuse a visa more evidence based and as such less possible to abuse.”

- A further five respondents commented on having the rights of appeal broadened.
  
  “We object to the narrow availability of the right of appeal if entry clearance is refused.” (Educational institution)

- Three respondents thought the process should be based on individual circumstances.
  
  “If a family visitor appeals then an officer who is sensitive and understands the social and cultural circumstances of the sponsored and family visitor should review the application with extreme caution and thoroughness. Should consider individual circumstances rather than having blanket rule.” (Individual)

- One respondent commented on equality.
  
  “If we are looking at equality, then these people should be supported and not discriminated against.” (Individual)
ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY

This consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Better Regulation Executive (BRE, 2004) Code of Practice on Consultation.

The consultation document and questionnaire were made available on both the UK Border Agency and Home Office websites. Respondents could return either hard copy or electronic responses. Late responses were accepted for one week after the deadline. Ten additional responses were excluded from the analysis because they comprised solely of abuse and/or no discernable comment or relevant response to the consultation.

Some identified stakeholders, including the Visitor Taskforce, members of the Arts & Entertainment Taskforce, Joint Education Taskforce and Higher Education Regulation Review Group, were contacted to alert them to the consultation and encourage response. Reminders were sent to increase response rates. A business visitor group was also established, comprising government departments and businesses, to obtain further feedback on the proposals.

The results are based on 604 responses to the Visitors Consultation. Most responses (560) were received electronically, either as a completed questionnaire (80%) or as a free-form e-mail (20%). Forty-four responses (7%) were received in hard copy.

Three petitions were also received in response to this consultation: one from Sarah Teather MP with 636 signatures, one from Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Willesden with 1,589 signatures, and one from Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple, South East London, with 104 signatures. These petitions have been considered alongside the consultation analysis.

Responses are represented as either Yes (agreed), No (disagreed) or ‘don’t know’ within this report in accordance with the response options to the consultation questions. As far as possible we incorporated free-form email responses into the questionnaire format and analysed them with the questionnaire responses. We coded open-ended responses into key themes and determined a quantitative response according to whether the response appeared to be generally in agreement or disagreement with the proposal.

Please note that question numbers are not sequential and some questions come in two parts. For ease of reference the questions are listed according to the paragraph numbers assigned to them in the original consultation document.

Quality assurance played an important part in each stage of the analysis. Independent checks were carried out to ensure free-form responses were correctly inserted under relevant question headings.

To identify key themes we produced lists of responses and discussed and consolidated them into the main themes for each question.

The response base (number of respondents) changes between questions, often quite dramatically. Questions on the length of visitor visas and family sponsorship attracted the greatest number of responses whilst questions on business visas were less likely to be completed. Respondents sending in free-form text responses were most likely to be commenting only on family visitor visas and family sponsorship. Some comments were pertinent to more than one theme.

We have given quotations to highlight typical responses to the questions; these are shown as they were written and we have not edited them.

Please note that in some instances respondents misunderstood the proposals being presented; where this has occurred, analysis of the response base has been changed to reflect those who correctly understood the proposal. Responses from those who misunderstood the proposal have also been taken into consideration. These issues are outlined under questions 2.4, 5.8 and 5.9.

The findings are based on a relatively large sample size; but they cannot necessarily be taken as representative of the general population because the sample is non-random and self selected. This shows clearly in some over-representation from particular sectors, such as NHS workers. Therefore the findings cannot be considered representative of the general population. As would be expected for a public consultation of this sort, it serves to show the range of perspectives that exist to inform consideration of policy.

### ANNEX C: RESPONDENT PROFILE

#### GROUPS REPRESENTED

Figure 34 provides a classification of the respondents. One-fifth of all respondents (21% – 124) did not provide background information or could not be identified as an individual respondent or as being from a particular organisation or sector.

Over half of all respondents (54% – 327 respondents) said they were a member of the public or were classified in this group according to their response to the consultation. A further six per cent (39 respondents) were from charities or voluntary or community organisations and four per cent (26 respondents) came from educational institutions. Please note, respondents could classify themselves in more than one category.

Ninety respondents (15% of the total) indicated that they were doctors or other medical staff from overseas, or employed by the NHS. There was some ambiguity as to what type of organisation they worked for. Many did not select ‘public sector’ and said they worked for a ‘large company’ but that the ‘industrial sector’ was an NHS Trust. These respondents came from different regions of England and Wales, including London, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, the West Midlands, Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Surrey, Lancashire, Swansea and South Glamorgan. These responses were classified as being from individual members of the general public and not organisations.

Students and academics accounted for 44 respondents (7% of all respondents). Many of these individuals submitted free-form text responses. Again, these respondents were classified as individual members of the public.

A range of sporting bodies based in the UK responded to the consultation. Thirty-two respondents (5% of all respondents) came from organisations representing individual sports and activities, wider sporting interests and the Scout Movement. These responses were classified as organisations.

Other responses came from 16 respondents (3% of all respondents) who were involved in festivals and other arts and cultural events. Seven of these were received from those with an interest in the Edinburgh Festival. These respondents were classified as organisations.

#### Figure 34. Respondent types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member of general public</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary/community organisation/charity</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education institution</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration advisor/Immigration Law Practitioner</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An employer/trade association</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist visitor</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An employment agency</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business visitor</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family visitor</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response base: 604

**NB. Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.**
Figure 35 shows the industrial sector of respondents who were not classified as members of the public or voluntary or community organisations. Of the 111 respondents who provided an industrial sector, 31 per cent (34 respondents) were from organisations involved in education and cultural activities. A further 19 per cent (21 respondents) were from bodies or organisations involved in sporting activities and 15 per cent (17 respondents) were from government.

Figure 35. Industrial sector of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; cultural activities</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment &amp; leisure services</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law related services</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration, business &amp; management</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality, hotel &amp; catering</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; land services</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social care services</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response base: 111

*NB. Respondents could indicate multiple factors so totals may not add up to the response base shown.*

CITIZENSHIP OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 36 gives the breakdown of citizenship for the 396 respondents who provided details for this question. More than half (55% – 216 respondents) were British citizens. A little under two-fifths (39% – 154 respondents) were non-British residing permanently (12% – 49 respondents) or temporarily (27% – 105 respondents) in the UK. Seven per cent (26 respondents) had ‘other’ citizenship. Seven of those who selected ‘other’ were organisations indicating they were not responding as any of these options, whilst the remainder (19) classified themselves according to the nature of their visa (e.g. work, study or visitor) or their specific nationality.
Figure 36. Citizenship of respondents

NB. Owing to rounding the total may not equal 100%.
ANNEX D: RESPONDING ORGANISATIONS

Aberdeen City Council
ABTA
Agrecultur
AHRC Research Centre for Law, Gender and Sexuality
AKL Solicitors
Amateur Rowing Association
Asian Voice
Association of American Study Abroad Programmes
BAA Ltd
Bach-Bukowski
BaseballSoftball UK
BBC
BHC Abuja (FCO)
Birmingham City Council
Bangor University
Bournemouth University
British American Football Association
British Canoe Union
British Consulate General Rio de Janeiro
British Cycling Federation
British Dragon Boat Racing Association
British Embassy Sarajevo
British Equestrian Federation
British GO association
British Gymnastics
British High Commission, Accra
British Pentathlon MPAGB
British Swimming /ASA
British Universities Sports Association
Business in Sport & Leisure Limited
Buxton Festival Fringe
C Venues
Cardiff University
CBI
Central Council of Physical Recreation
Centre LGS (Research Centre for Law, Gender and Sexuality)
Children’s Services Directorate Salford City Council
Church of England Archbishops’ Council
City of Edinburgh Council
Cloud Valley Music
College of Chinese Physical Culture
Coventry Muslim Resource Centre
Coventry University
Edinburgh Festival Fringe
Edinburgh International Festival
Edinburgh Principal Hotel Association
Embassy of Japan
England & Wales Cricket Board
England Squash
English Amateur Dancesport Association
English Volleyball Association
Equity
Ernst & Young LLP
EventScotland
Festivals Edinburgh
Fiona McTaggart MP
Fringe Management LLC
GB Productions Ltd
GGS Gurdwara & Community Centre
Gilded Balloon
Girlington Advice & Training Centre
Glasgow Caledonian University
Guru Nanak Durbur Erith and Belvedere
Guyana Safer Injection Project
Harrison Bundey Solicitors
HERGG
Ice Hockey UK
Immigration Advisory Service
Immigration Law Practitioners’ Association
Imperial College London
Indian Workers’ Association
Institute of Education
Ithaca College
Kalayaan
Kingston University
KLARS (Kings Lynn Area Resettlement Support)
Korea Arts Management Service
KPMG Immigration Team
Lambeth Crime Prevention Panel
Lambourne Estate Agents
Lancaster University
Law Centre (NI)
Lawn Tennis Association
London Federation of Sport & Recreation
London School of Economics & Political Science
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Loughborough University
Macgregor Events & Consulting Ltd
Mahavir Foundation
Martyn Jones MP
MENTER (The Black & Minority Ethnic Network for the Eastern Region)
Midlands Ethnic Albanian Foundation
Migration Watch UK
MLegal
National Campaign for the Arts
National Council for School Sport
National Rounders Association
National Small-bore Rifle Association
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
The Minister for Borders & Immigration, Liam Byrne, was accompanied by the following delegation to India:

- Dr Rami Ranger MBE, Chairman;
- Ms Maria Fernandes;
- Lord King of West Bromwich;
- Ms Teji Singh;
- Mr Gurpal Singh;
- Cllr Parmjit Singh Gill;
- Cllr Pritpal Singh; and
- Mr Hanif Pathan.

The Minister for Borders & Immigration also met with the following unions:

- BECTU;
- Equity;
- TUC;
- Unison; and
- Unite.