

Petitions Committee: Immigration fees for healthcare workers

Activity

The Petitions Committee ran an online survey to ask petitioners for their views on the cost of indefinite leave to remain fees (ILR) for health workers.

The survey was sent to people who signed the following petition:

[Reduce Indefinite leave to remain fees from £2389 to £243 for Health workers](#)

We have summarised the key themes below and illustrated them with quotes from respondents.

Response

There were **6,991** responses to the Committee's survey

Methodology

Committee staff manually reviewed hundreds of individual comments and answers, using both subject searches and randomised selection. Survey questions which produced statistical results have also been analysed.

About the respondents

- **63%** of respondents said they were a health worker and intend to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
11% of respondents said they were a health worker and had been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

- **77%** of respondents said that they were a non-UK health worker. Of these:
 - **53%** of respondents said they were a nurse.
 - **20%** of respondents said they were a medical practitioner.
 - **11%** of respondents said they were a healthcare assistant.
 - **7%** of respondents said they were a care worker.
- **16%** of respondents said they were a friend, colleague, or family member of a health worker.

Key Themes

Almost all respondents said that the fees for indefinite leave to remain in the UK should be reduced for health workers

The current cost of applying for indefinite leave to remain is £2,404. The petition calls for fees for applying for indefinite leave to remain to be reduced to £243 for health workers.

- **98%** of all respondents, and every respondent who said they were a health worker intending to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK, said the cost of indefinite leave to remain fees should be reduced for health workers.

- **91%** of respondents said that £243 would be about right for indefinite leave to remain fees. **6%** said that £243 was too high, and **3%** said £243 was too low.

Respondents said that they found it difficult to save up for indefinite leave to remain fees because of low salaries and the high cost of living, especially where they would need to pay ILR fees for multiple family members

- Nurse: "I work as a deputy sister. I'm a single mum and my 2 kids have recently joined me in the UK. I cannot afford the ILR fees for me and my 2 children. With the salary of nurses and the cost of living here, a single mum like myself cannot afford it."
- Medical practitioner: "As with current pay and cost of living crisis, it's impossible to save this much. I am forced to buy used and second hand items only. I buy the cheapest groceries. Try and only use heating when absolutely required [...] I am forced to work weekends to save. I am hardly spending time with family. My mental health is affected. It feels like I'm a slave forced to labor [...] I don't understand why the government would keep a fee that would force workers to leave NHS and UK [...] I survived through all waves of covid and staffing pressure. Had multiple illnesses because of my work. I don't think I'll survive this one. I believe these fees will break me."

- Health worker: "It is so difficult to save money after the payment of rent, bills and food. It is little or no money left from each pay check and to compound it now, the gas and electricity exorbitant increase has made it virtually impossible to live well [...] I live in fear of the day I will have to apply for myself and 3 kids."

Some health workers who are non-UK nationals said they plan to leave the UK due to the high cost of ILR fees

- Of the respondents who said they do not intend to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK, **71%** said this was because the fees are too high.
- Of the respondents who said they had delayed making their application for indefinite leave to remain, **28%** said this was for financial reasons.
- Nurse: "I couldn't raise the money [for ILR] for the last 2 years to apply, so I've gotten a better salary offer in New Zealand [...] so I'll be leaving the UK."
- Health professional: "I am a GP trainee who is expecting to qualify as a GP after 6 months. With paying for exams and training, I don't have enough money to apply for ILR, which makes me think to leave the UK and work in Australia after I qualify as a GP."

Respondents spoke about the impact on their mental health due to the stress of saving for ILR

- Healthcare assistant: "With the ever rising cost of living, [saving for ILR] becomes mentally draining for an already overwhelmed health worker. Reducing the cost shows the government care about the wellbeing of health workers and promotes work life balance because families have to work odd hours to meet up with the fees."
- Healthcare assistant: "The current fees for ILR are too high for a normal nurse to afford especially in this present situation of financial crisis. Based on the salary a nurse gets, it is unaffordable for a nurse to apply for ILR for the applicant and their family of 4 or 5. Many of them are in debt after applying for a permanent residence. This leads to mental stress on top of what the health care workers are facing during their shift."
- Medical practitioner: "[If the indefinite leave to remain fees are lowered] The relief will be great for the mental health of these Doctors many of whom have to work several locum shifts to keep up."