



[Your address]

Dear <MP's name>,

I am writing on behalf of the [Families Together](#) coalition, made up of over 90 organisations who support the expansion of the UK's refugee family reunion rules.

I am writing to express my concerns over the proposals laid out in the Government's Nationality and Borders bill. I am deeply concerned that the Bill seeks to cement many of the harmful proposals outlined in the New Plan for Immigration into UK law. The proposed legislation outlined in the bill effectively creates a discriminatory two-tier asylum system, undermining how the UK fulfils its international obligations to those seeking asylum. The Bill will criminalise and punish refugees, depending on how they arrived in the UK, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of women, men and children who are able to access family reunion, one of the few existing safe and regular routes into the UK.

I am asking you to stand against proposals which would create a two-tier asylum system and to stand against proposals which will keep refugee families apart.

Clause 10 of the bill proposes to categorise refugees into two distinct groups, with different rights depending on how they have arrived in the UK. This includes whether their family members will be granted family reunion, the length of leave given and whether a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition is attached.

Any restriction on family reunion rights will result in family members being left with the heartbreaking choice to either stay permanently apart, or risk their lives on treacherous journeys in order to reunite. **All** refugees should have full and equal access to family reunion rights, regardless of how they enter the UK.

When the New Plan for Immigration was introduced, the Home Secretary stated "*We should ask ourselves, where are the vulnerable women and children that this system should exist to protect?*". Yet, these restrictions to family reunion rights will predominantly impact women and children. In the last five years, 29,000 people have arrived in the UK through existing family reunion routes, 90% of whom were women and children. Therefore, these vulnerable groups whom the Home Secretary vowed to protect will be left in an even more vulnerable, precarious and risky situation.

For the vast majority of those people, there is no viable alternative for them to be reunited with family members. Limiting this route therefore risks incentivising more dangerous journeys – made by people seeking to live with their family members – rather than reducing them.

Studies show that family reunion boosts integration outcomes and allows those who've come to the UK seeking safety to rebuild their lives here, together. Research has highlighted that mental health struggles including anxiety, depression, guilt and social isolation are reported amongst

those who are separated from their families. Being reunited with family members leads to positive integration outcomes and provides a support system which is vital when integrating into a new community.

*'Since my wife came to the UK my life has changed and I am able to plan and have focus in life. I am now working part-time at a hotel in Bradford and I have applied for another job at East Side. I am taking driving lessons to help with my employment. I also study at college to improve my English. When my wife first arrived, she felt very depressed. Being alone had been very difficult for her. I started taking her to college with me and now she is much better. We are now expecting a baby and are looking to move to another house.'*

- Justin, Voices Network Ambassador

The Families Together Coalition has provided a [full briefing](#) on the bill ahead of the Second Reading. At the Second Reading I am asking you to raise one simple proposal

1. To oppose the differential treatment of people seeking asylum and ensure that **all** refugees have access to full family reunion rights, regardless of how they've entered the UK.

If these plans are implemented, the number of family reunion visas issued would decrease substantially, and a vital safe and legal route to the UK would be weakened. More people are able to safely come to the UK via family reunion than resettlement routes. Over the last 5 years 29,834 family reunion applications were granted, compared with 23,665 resettlement applications.

I hope that you will stand with us and stand up for refugee families so that they can be together again and live a life in safety in the UK.

Yours sincerely,  
<Name>