



What are the consequences of changing policies for family migrants in the UK? Post-entry restrictions and entitlements

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Importance attached to integration...

‘To pick up a dictionary rather than relying on a translator.[...] We will keep breaking down the barriers that get in the way of people getting together. Language is our starting point. [...] If we want people to get along it makes sense they speak English. So in 2013 our mantra is simple; integration, integration, integration’.

Uniting our communities: integration in 2013, Speech by Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, 15th January 2013

Migrants should ***‘learn English, so that they can be more integrated into our country’***. Speech by David Cameron to Parliament, 2011 (the Independent, 31 July 2011)



- In some areas, government **grants family migrants access**: e.g. to labour market, healthcare, compulsory education;
- In other areas, **more often restricted**: e.g. non-contributory benefits, social housing, funding and loans for post-compulsory education, political participation.
- Complex system of rules as entitlement depends **who family member is joining** e.g. citizen, settled person, European national, refugee, (accompanying) asylum-seeker, worker, student.
- **The IMPACIM project explores the impact of restrictions and entitlements on the integration of TCN family members**: Is there a potential tension between restrictions and policy aims of integration?
- **How? Very limited data on family migrants' integration**
 - quantitative analysis of border control data and quarterly Labour Force survey;
 - qualitative research(interviews and focus groups) with 40 individuals, including national policy-makers, local council officers, experts, NGOs.

I) Do entitlements facilitate integration?

Series of ‘non-rule’ barriers get in the way of accessing entitlements:

a)Complexity of the rules:

‘we found a lot of confusion, particularly amongst front line health professionals not understanding what people’s health entitlements are, particularly around primary care, & actually the situation around primary care is very straightforward - but people believe it to be very complicated & there’s been a tendency to refuse everybody, to demand people present passports [...]they actually don’t need to provide’ (voluntary services advisor)

‘I was in a Job Centre Plus once – I won’t name which one – and I went there to advocate for a client [...] and at the end a few managers came around just to learn about what we were saying and said ‘can you come back and give us training?’ and I said ‘well I can’t really, I mean this is your own [line of work]. So therefore the person... apologised actually, ‘we do these mistakes every day, we need help, we need training’ (voluntary services advisor)

a)Procedural delays (e.g. issuing NINOs)

b)Shortages of services where eligible (ESOL classes, social housing)

Impacts

- **Time wasted for service-providers;**
- **Fear of getting things wrong:**
‘I think there is a general sense of fear in providers, including education providers in accepting people unless they are fully satisfied that the person qualifies for student finance (expert, education agency)
- **Creating more restrictive system than exists;**
- **Difficulties for voluntary sector in challenging misinformation;**
- **Assessing impacts of these problems in the system on integration more difficult, but some evidence that they impede family migrants’ labour market and social integration.**

II - Do restrictions impede integration?

Restrictions include:

- **no recourse to public funds (NRPF), to social housing**

IMPACTS: Isolation and dependency for spouses: *'it [sponsorship and NRPF] sort of gives the men carte blanche to be abusive to them & they can get away with it because the woman then, if she doesn't stick with it, he says, 'well I'm not signing your visa' which is what happened in this other case [of divorce] she has to go home' (advisor, women's community centre).*

- **3 year rule on funding for post-compulsory education, requirement to pay for ESOL classes**

IMPACTS: Limited opportunities to study English: *'we have loads of learners who are just waiting for 3 years to join our courses & what do we do with them in between? That's the time when they are so vulnerable & we could be doing things with them but of course we're not funded to do that' (council officer, Reading).*

'So that then has an impact, not only on them causing depression, lack of like communication, they can't go to the doctor's on their own and they are dependent on somebody else all the time to help them move forward' (community outreach worker).

Restrictions + non-rule barriers



- **E.g. Complexity:**
on educational funding rules for TCN family migrants: *I have yet to find a provider that fully understands them [...] The example I wanted to give you was that the Skills Funding Agency rules are overlaid of course by the UKBA rules so that ESOL providers have to interpret the immigration status of their prospective learners. And it's entirely possible as well that they may (if that learner was referred through the job centre) [...] they then overlay that with a third set of rules which are the job centre plus eligibility rules. So there are 3 possible sets of guidance (expert, education agency).*
- **Exception: Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) Concession**



Summary and Implications



- Where rights are granted, complexity of rules, procedural delays and shortage of services nevertheless restrict access.

Implications: e.g. Streamlining guidance? Training?

- Where rights are withheld, risks to integration.

Implications: Assessing policies for long-term effects: e.g. reviewing restriction on funding for language learning?

Full project findings



- National Reports and Comparative Reports available end September

- Launch of findings on 30th September 2013 at Institute for Strategic Dialogue 5pm
(please register interest today)

<http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/welfare/impacim/>