

News > UK > UK Politics

# David Cameron says migrant families could be broken up and mothers deported if they fail new English test

The tests will apply to spouses who have been living in Britain for over two years

Jon Stone | @joncstone | Monday 18 January 2016 | 568 comments



David Cameron AP

Families could be broken up and mothers deported after years of living in Britain if they fail a new mandatory English language test, David Cameron has confirmed.

The Prime Minister today outlined plans to language-test all spouses who immigrate join their partner living in Britain two and a half years after they arrive here.

Failing the language test could lead to the new arrival's right to stay in the UK being revoked and them being sent back to their country of origin, he said.



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Mr Cameron was asked during an interview whether a woman who came to the UK under the spousal settlement programme and had children in Britain could still be deported.

“They can’t guarantee that they’ll be able to stay,” he told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme.

“We’re now going to toughen up so half-way through the spousal

settlement programme – two and a half years – there’ll be another opportunity to make sure your English is improving.

“You can’t guarantee you’ll be able to stay if you’re not improving your language. It is tough but people coming to our country have responsibility too.”



0:00 / 0:33



Cameron defends language plans

Children born in the UK who have one parent “settled” in the UK automatically receive British citizenship and would therefore be allowed to remain in the UK with their fathers, while their mothers were not.

The spousal settlement visa, to which the new English language test applies, requires that the person with whom the new arrival is coming to live is already settled. This means all children born to a couple using a spousal settlement visa have British citizenship.

There is also no guarantee that children born Britain citizens would have a right to live in another country – meaning that in some cases mothers might be unable to take their children back to live with them in their country of origin.

Despite the new emphasis on forcing women to learn English Mr

Cameron admitted that his government had actually previously cut funding for English-language tuition for migrants. He blamed the deficit for the policy.

“Yes, budgets did come down in the past because all budgets were under pressure because of the enormous deficit and the need to pay that down,” he told the same programme.

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“I think we had to make difficult decisions. Now what we’re doing is targeting the language money – it is for those who are in the greatest level of isolation.”

The Government has emphasised Muslim women as the target of the policy. Ministers say some are living in “isolated”

communities and do not learn English.

The Government claims 190,000 Muslim women lack adequate English language skills and that 38,000 do not speak any English at all.

“If you don’t speak the language your opportunities are very much reduced,” Mr Cameron said.

“Saying to people who come to our country that learning English is essential.”

The policy, to be launched in October, is the latest in a series announced by the Government that is likely to make life difficult for immigrants living in Britain.

Theresa May was last week urged to re-think a “discriminatory” new £35,000 earnings threshold for non-EU migrants who want to settle in the UK.

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The threshold, which is being increased from the current £20,500, would see workers from overseas ejected from the country after five years if they fail to earn the new higher salary.

People earning £35,000 are in the top 20 per cent of earners in the UK.

Former director of public prosecutions and shadow immigration minister Keir Starmer warned at the time that policy could have implications for businesses who require skilled workers from abroad.

The Government has already had to take special measures after it was warned that the earnings threshold could lead to a shortage

of nurses.

A petition to the Government to withdraw the policy is nearing 50,000 signatures and is likely to be debated in Parliament.

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**Katoussa**

98 days ago

David Cameron says that people **COULD** be deported if they fail the test, he does not say they **WILL** be deported. Perhaps some readers should take the English Language Test themselves!

Reply Share

0 likes



**bookman**

100 days ago

why on earth add an extra rule ? - the law is already clear that spouses must have a qualification in spoken English.

Reply Share 1 reply

-1 likes  



**bookman**

100 days ago

and they have to provide proof as well when applying

Reply Share

0 likes  



**michaelsiva63**

107 days ago

Spain should do something similar...deport all those Brits who don't speak English in their country.

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+1 likes  



**dearieme**

107 days ago

Is he actually insane? What a gift to "Islamic" terrorism this is!

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+1 likes  



**Kay Parlay**

108 days ago

Joined-up thinking is, quite clearly, not taught at Eton any more - but bullying most certainly is.

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+4 likes  



**Waldemar Zboralski**

108 days ago

This sounds serious. Is it?

Reply Share

0 likes  



**KFiddles**

108 days ago

I certainly hope that other countries apply that same language test to Britons living in their countries. How many Brits speak Spanish, Cantonese, etc?

Reply Share 8 replies

+5 likes  



**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

How many Brits join ISIS, blow people up, and murder soldiers in London?

Reply Share 7 replies

0 likes  



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

Out of 65 million? Perhaps six.

Reply Share 2 replies

+1 likes  



**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

Your lack of knowledge and research betrays you. Your opinions seem very ill informed. According to 2015stats from government and senior politicians there are 480 Muslims in the Army, up to two thousand with ISIS and around 12,000 (14%) in British prisons. So that's FOUR TIMES as many British Muslims with ISIS than with the British Army.

Reply Share 1 reply

+1 likes  



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

"In London" was your question. About six max.

And so all Muslims in UK prisons are ISIS killers? Yeah right. Cuckoo.

Reply Share

-1 likes  



**Mr0011011**

108 days ago

Quite a few Brits join ISIS. That is the problem.

Reply Share 3 replies

+1 likes  



**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

Correct.

Reply Share

-1 likes  



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

It's not a problem for them apparently.

Reply Share

0 likes  



**dearieme**

107 days ago

And this bill will radicalise a whole lot more of them. Stupid!

Reply Share

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**Wellfedup**

108 days ago

After voting to abolish grants for our own children, which would reduce student debt for the poorest in society, Cameron adds insult to injury by announcing this free initiative for Muslim migrants! I am absolutely disgusted with our government. While Cameron discriminates in favour of those who come to our country in need of learning English, he discriminates against our own children in need of an education! Not only that if I went to another country I would have to fund language tuition for myself and my family, that's as it should be. The UK tax payer should not be funding language tuition for anyone who comes to the UK. And it says a lot about Muslim's contribution to the UK and our society if they can not take the time and trouble to learn our language or can not even afford to fund tuition for themselves.

Discrimination against our own children is also evident where UK student loans are concerned. EU students are given UK student loans but there is no mechanism in place for the loan to be repaid once they have finished their education and leave the UK so in effect they are given a minimum £27,000 grant, funded by the UK tax payer, while our own children no longer have the possibility of a grant reducing their student debt!!!

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**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

My goodness, did you even read the article? Cameron stated funding for language tuition has been heavily cut.

Reply Share

+1 likes



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

Once he has the referendum vote safely in his pocket you will hear no more of this. He's simply playing the English for the fools they are.

You read it here first.

Reply Share 5 replies

+3 likes



**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

Drink your cocoa, time for bed old foggy. You can dream about a future out of the EU.

Reply Share 4 replies

-3 likes



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

Personally, I can't wait to see it. THEN the proverbial will really hit the fan.

Reply Share 3 replies

+2 likes



**alias.foxfire**

108 days ago

No it won't. Things will start to go right for a change.

Reply Share 2 replies

0 likes



**Kay Parlay**

108 days ago

Right down the tubes, yes...

Reply Share

+2 likes



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

That's all you people have... wishful thinking.

Reply Share

+1 likes



**shirtugger**

109 days ago

Change the rules. If you are here on a work visa there should be no chance of residency. Just like in the middle east, once you contract is finished or you have no work you go home, there are no exceptions. Job done no need to worry about anything.

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+2 likes



**Foghorn**

108 days ago

Go home? Or disappear into the black economy, thus avoiding income taxes altogether. Good idea son.

Reply Share

+1 likes

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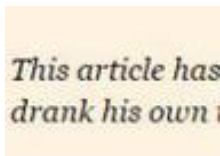
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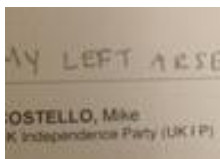
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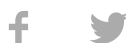
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