

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

13th August 2016: A Consultation event took place as a first of its kind in exploring how in the modern times the voices of the global Sikh population can be factored into key decisions which have an impact on the community. Event: Modelling a global governance in line with Sarbat-Khalsa traditions-Putting consensus based decision-making into action

15th August 2016; Ernst and Young - The above event was repeated for professional Sikhs working in the City event.

Sikh Council UK circulated The Worship Security Funding Scheme as part of the wider cross-government work to stop all forms of hate crime, and will help provide protective security measures to places of worship. Security equipment. Initial closing date of 20th September was extended to 4th October 2016

BBC Sunday morning religious show queried the influence and relevancy of religious leaders in modern society. Sikh Council UK response:

- We don't have a system of priesthood
- Religious authority come from AKal Takhat Sahib. This is the highest authority which can convene teams to discuss matters and give direction
- In the modern world for most people day to day the leadership and guidance comes from our code of conduct and SGGS ji

Home Office Tier 5 consultation: SCUUK response:

Thank you for the opportunity to correspond with yourselves in connection with requesting our views to Tier 5 maintenance requirements.

Please note that it must be remembered that Tier 5 is separate to Tier 2 and the requirements are different, and Tier 5 are for temporary workers and not permanent staff and thus to get parity on the maintenance issue is intricate.

Even though we do welcome that Tier 5 and Tier 2 requirements should be equal in the aspect for maintenance the provisions for the two types of opportunities are different and the specifications of the job roles are different. The issue could become that if you want the rules to be exactly the same as of Tier 2 on maintenance what is to stop the government to state that the English requirement needs to be exactly the same too or the application fees need to be the same.

In essence though the current rules do not hinder the sponsor or the migrant worker as the sponsor only needs to certify that the migrant worker will not claim public funds. There is no need for the sponsor to certify that they have funds available to the end of the first month. Does this actually harm the application? Is it necessary for the rules to be changed? Well the rules do not make much sense as the migrant worker cannot claim public funds anyway during their stay and thus such a certification is unnecessary. It would be worthwhile just for the sponsor to certify maintenance for the first month of their stay in line with Tier 2 this makes the rule clear and understandable.

When considering dependants this is again a difficult area to discuss as the sponsor is only sponsoring the worker, it is up to the worker to maintain their dependants. The issue is how many Tier 5 applicants request that their dependants also come to the UK? Can all establishments cater for the needs of the migrant workers dependants? The role is only a temporary one of which the migrant worker has to leave the UK before the expiry of 2 years, will it be beneficial for them to bring their dependants with them for such a short period of time?

We do suggest that the UKVI considers each establishment upon its merits and with the supporting information provided by the establishment to show that they can accommodate the dependants. We also suggest that the rules make it clear that A rated sponsors can if need be on a Tier 5 application state that they maintain and accommodate both the migrant worker and their dependants for the first month of their stay in line with Tier 2, after the first month it is up to the migrant worker to maintain and accommodate their dependants, how they will show that will be demanding.

A broader question to consider is that a lot of applications get refused and refused on grounds that do not make much sense, there is now no chance to appeal the decision and you can however request an administrative review of which those of us who have requested it have noticed that these never get reversed and the original decision stands. Therefore a suggestion is that if an application is refused the applicant should be entitled to a fee remission towards a new application or a refund (either in full or based upon a percentage say 75-50%) this will then mean that the ECO making the decision will need to consider the application appropriately and come to a sensible decision. As currently it seems as though this is a money making scheme where applications are refused and applicants lose a lot of money on the application fees and legal/agent fees in having their paperwork prepared. In addition before lodging their application there should be a screening process where if the documents lodged are not original or papers missing these need to be told to the applicant prior to submission so these can be obtained and added to the application rather than the application being submitted and then refused to say bank books/statements are not original, adverts are missing etc. This will have a better impact on applications help migrant workers obtain visas and be cost effective.

2. It on the face of it seems very favourable however there are fears for sponsors along the lines that salary rates for tier 2 are much higher and i have not heard of anyone sponsoring under tier 2 for the last decade or so since the current system has been in force.

There is a danger that conditions for tier 2 Minister of Religion category could be adapted to tier 5 Religious Worker thereby raising qualification entry requirement standards for applicants beyond the level required for standard granthi duties. This could create a terrible shortfall of staffing essential for providing core Gurdwara services.

3. With reference to your proposal for sponsors to certify maintenance for Tier 5 Dependents of a sponsored migrant, I am in the opinion that the current maintenance clause is sufficient to cater for the Gurdwara needs. My concern is that it will put more responsibility on sponsors and it could lead to misuse of the sponsored route.

4. *We would agree that the Immigration Rules should be amended to bring the rules concerning the certification of maintenance by A-rated Sponsors of Tier 5 Migrants and their dependants in line with those Tier 2 Migrants.*

Tier 5 Sponsors just as Tier 2 Sponsors have gone through a vigorous Home Office application and checks in order to become A-rated licence holders. The Home Office has accepted that they meet compliance and HR criteria.

It appears only logical that the certification of maintenance requirements for Tier 5 migrants and dependants be brought in line with that of Tier 2.

The Tier 5 Sponsor licence holder is in a position to certify maintenance for the Tier 5 Migrant and dependant but at present not being offered the same opportunity as a Tier 2 licence holder to certify maintenance.

Given that appropriate checks have already been carried out by UK Visas and Immigration and hence the award of an A-rated licence, we can see no reason why the opportunity to certify maintenance in this way would not be afforded.

As a Tier 5 Licence holder we can think of many situations where we would be more than happy to certify maintenance for the Tier 5 Migrant and their dependants if it meant securing the right person for the post at hand. We can see no reason why we should not have the opportunity to offer accommodation and subsistence to Tier 5 Migrants and their dependants.

An enquiry was made for insurance cover for gatka classes- unfortunately none of the Brokers approached could provide cover so the matter was passed on to those running the Gatka classes to pursue.

Following an incident of Beadbi of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji having been thrown over gates of a Gurdwara Sahib by a person. The Council actively liaised with all parties and the Pardan of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara in Bradford over the matter which materialised as an insensitive and clumsy manner in which a person threw the suroop of SGGGS ji over the gate by way of returning this to the Gurdwara having lost both parents and no longer required the Suroop. The Gurdwara was closed at time of arrival. Fortunately the Suroop was not extensively damaged and the individual was identified by the Police. The person was a female who apologised for the offence caused due to poor knowledge.

Several meetings took place with differ not parties to try an amicably resolve the issue of alleged discrimination of people with disabilities at a Gurdwara Sahib in Wolverhampton. As a result several refinements were agreed but regrettable it would appear that the matter may yet go before the courts.