

## RETIRED PERSONS OF INDEPENDENT MEANS

### Q & A

#### **What changes are you making to the retired persons of independent means route?**

We will delete the provisions within the Immigration rules which allow migrants to apply for leave to enter the United Kingdom as a retired person of independent means (paragraphs 263-265).

#### **Why are you deleting the retired persons of independent means route?**

The Government is currently taking forward the most radical reform of the immigration system in a generation. We have made it clear that there will be three key routes to citizenship and three stages in the process. We welcome all those who can make a positive contribution to our society. However we are conscious of the limited take-up of this route (only 20 applications a year) and the fact that these migrants may place future demands on public services. We therefore believe it is right to remove this route.

#### **How many consultation responses were in favour of abolishing the retired persons of independent means route, and how many were against?**

Of the 508 respondents who responded to this question, similar proportions were in favour of abolition of the 'retired persons of independent means' route (20%, 104 respondents) or were unsure about abolition (22%, 111 respondents). 293 (58%) of respondents did not think this route should be abolished. Those who were in favour of abolition considered that this group of migrants can be a burden and do not contribute to society. Also, many of those commenting on their opposition to the abolition of the route felt that this group should not have full access to benefits and the NHS.

#### **When will these changes take effect?**

The changes to the Immigration Rules will take effect on 27 November 2008. Applications made before 27 November will be considered under the existing rules.

#### **How many people will be affected by the changes to the retired persons of independent means route?**

On average we receive less than 20 applications for leave to enter the United Kingdom under this route each year.

**How will this affect those already here in this category?/Can I still apply for an extension to remain/indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom as a retired persons of independent means route?**

We will retain provisions which enable a migrant who has already entered under this route to seek indefinite leave to remain or to apply for an extension to take them up to the point at which they can apply for settlement.

**Will my partner/child(ren) still be able to join me in the United Kingdom?**

We will retain provisions which allow a partner or child of a person with leave under the retired persons of independent means route to continue to be able to apply for leave to enter/remain the United Kingdom.

**Background on the previous rule:**

- Paragraphs 263-276 of the Immigration Rules set out the requirements for leave as a retired person of independent means and as a dependant of a person with leave under this route.
- Retired persons of independent means can come to the United Kingdom if they are aged 60 or over, have an income of at least £25,000 a year, have a close connection with the United Kingdom, intend to make the United Kingdom their home and are able to financially support themselves.
- This route provides an avenue to settlement after five years. Migrants entering the United Kingdom through this route are not required to have worked or paid taxes in the United Kingdom but have free access to healthcare on arrival and full access to the benefit system after 5 years in the United Kingdom.
- The consultation 'The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System' published in February set out our proposals of the path to citizenship to reinforce our shared values. Within this consultation we asked whether the retired persons of independent means route should be abolished.