

**Please change the immigration rules to ensure that migrant domestic workers who accompany a diplomat to the UK can change their employer without losing their immigration status.** This will provide them a vital escape route if they are abused, exploited or trafficked to the UK for forced labour

- The UK Government concluded that migrant domestic workers were peculiarly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and needed the protection of the migrant domestic worker visa in 1998 when they introduced the scheme and again in 2008 when they committed to maintain the protections. If anything migrant domestic workers who come with diplomats are more vulnerable because of their employer's immunity to prosecution and as such the protections should be extended to them.
- The migrant domestic worker visa only allows individuals to change to another employer, they cannot change sector and must always remain in full time domestic work.
- Numbers of migrant domestic worker visas issued are going down each year. The previous immigration minister Phil Woolas concluded that this shows that allowing migrant domestic workers to change their employer has not led to the system being abused.
- There are only approximately 200-300 migrant domestic workers entering each year with diplomats. Changing the visa rules would not result in vast numbers of migrant domestic workers 'flooding' the UK. However although the numbers are small, the effect of the restriction on the individuals concerned is dramatic and leads to human rights violations.
- Migrant domestic workers who accompany diplomats will not be able to report crimes against them if they are concerned that they will be detained for immigration offences.
- Migrant domestic workers should have the same basic employment rights as other workers. If a migrant domestic worker loses her immigration status as soon as she leaves an employer she will be unable to enforce her basic working rights.
- If someone's immigration status ties them to their employer, they have no negotiating power and thus must choose between continuing to suffer or facing deportation. Since many domestic workers cannot go home because they are supporting a family or have taken debts out to migrate the current system facilitates human rights abuses.
- It is important to tackle the behaviour of diplomats directly but the first step is to allow women to escape and rebuild their lives. This may have the indirect effect of gaining a better picture of the scale of abuse, as victims may feel more able to come forward.