



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

Immigration policy: basis for building consensus

Second Report of Session 2017–19



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*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Home Affairs Committee

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Summary

Immigration is a crucial policy area for the UK Government. It has implications for the economy, public services and community cohesion, and has always been part of our history as generations of immigration have brought benefits to our economy and culture.

Yet immigration has often been a very divisive issue, and public concern about it has increased. Recently, the polarising effect of the Brexit referendum debate has highlighted public anxieties on all sides of the argument. Instead, this should be an opportunity for setting the tone and shape of the debate.

Achieving greater consensus on immigration policy will require a transformation in the way it is conducted because in too many areas the current approach has served to undermine trust in the system.

This report starts from the premise that the UK immigration system has to command democratic support. We have not yet looked at specific policy options for EU migration as we expect to return to this issue when we scrutinise the Government's forthcoming White Paper on immigration. Instead we have looked first at the principles behind the immigration system as a whole and at the wider issues that determine whether or not there is a consensus on immigration policy.

We have identified a series of areas where changes are needed to build confidence and heal divisions. We cannot stress enough the importance of action to prevent escalating division, polarisation, anger or misinformation on an issue like immigration. To fail to address this risks doing long term damage to the social fabric, economy and politics of the United Kingdom.

In this report, we set out five key areas, where we believe reforms are needed to build consent around a fair, principled and effective immigration policy in the UK:

- a) There is a lack of trust in official data, targets and decision-making on immigration policy. We need open and honest debate informed by evidence, and a new transparent way of making and debating immigration policy.
- b) Rules are complex and hard to understand, and there is widespread concern that they are not enforced or are unfair. Immigration policy needs to set out fair rules underpinned by clear principles (including on contributions and common humanitarian obligations), effective management and better enforcement and control.
- c) Government should avoid binary approaches which treat all immigration as the same and allow the debate to be polarised. There should be clearly differentiated approaches for different types of immigration and these must be proactively communicated.
- d) Much stronger coordination is needed between immigration policy and labour market policy to ensure that immigration works for the economic and social interests of the UK and its citizens.

- e) Action is needed to address the impact of immigration at local and national level—including appropriate investment in housing and public services, and strong local integration plans. Integration is immensely important but is not embedded in immigration policy. Immigration policy should be underpinned by a strategy to help communities faced with rapid population change, and should be responsive to local and regional issues.

1 Introduction

Background to our inquiry

1. Following the outcome of the referendum on EU membership in June 2016, our predecessors in the last Parliament launched an inquiry to assess whether it might be possible to build greater consensus on immigration policy. We agreed to continue this work.

2. Immigration is a crucial policy area for the UK Government. It has implications for the economy, public services and community cohesion, and has always been part of our history as generations of immigration have brought benefits to our economy and culture. The way countries and communities treat newcomers also goes to the heart of national and local identities. Yet immigration has often been a very divisive issue, and it has risen in public concern. The polarising effect of the Brexit referendum debate has highlighted public anxieties on both sides of the argument. In a separate inquiry, we are looking into hate crime and far-right extremism, as we are very concerned about what happens when division and tensions over issues like immigration are allowed to escalate or are exploited.

3. The process for the UK's departure from the European Union provides us with an opportunity to reset the tone and shape of the immigration debate. We began our inquiry from the premise that the UK immigration system had to command democratic support and be designed in such a way as to allow the Brexit divide to heal, whatever the outcome of the negotiations about the UK's future partnership with the EU. We have not yet looked at specific policy options for EU migration as we expect to return to this issue when we scrutinise the Government's forthcoming White Paper on immigration. Instead we have looked first at the principles behind the immigration system as a whole and at the wider issues that determine whether or not there is a consensus on immigration policy.

4. We sought to conduct a different kind of select committee inquiry, recognising that overcoming division would take a novel approach. Alongside traditional written and oral evidence, we have sought to involve organisations, institutions, businesses, community groups and citizens across the country. Our predecessor Committee held formal evidence hearings and informal community meetings in Bedford and Glasgow. In addition, we have collaborated with British Future on a 'National Conversation on Immigration' to consult the public through citizens' panels in communities across the country. British Future have been working with Hope not Hate to hold 60 citizens' panels in every nation and region of the UK, asking people detailed questions about their attitudes to immigration and immigration policy, as well as conducting online surveys and opinion polling. Findings from the National Conversation have fed directly into our inquiry to provide us with a clearer picture of public attitudes on immigration and the common ground on which people can agree. British Future are publishing their interim findings alongside this report.

5. Our predecessors heard oral evidence from Migration Watch UK, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) and Migration Observatory, and from a range of witnesses from devolved and local government, as well as employers in the care and food sectors. We have since taken evidence from Dr Alan Renwick of University College London's Constitution Unit, and Professor Robert Ford from the University of Manchester. We also heard from British Future—from its Director,

Sunder Katwala and Jill Rutter, Director of Strategy and Relationships, and received many written submissions. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this inquiry, and particularly British Future who gathered so much useful information for us.

Public debate

6. Opinion surveys have demonstrated over a sustained period of time that British people consider immigration to be one of the key issues facing the country, with the number of people saying it is their top concern peaking during the referendum in 2016 and remaining at high levels since then, and with a clear majority wanting the level of immigration reduced.¹

7. However Professor Ford told us that the trends showed that, although “the differences in attitudes between social groups on education, age and so on have got larger over time” and that “comparatively speaking, we see larger divides in Britain than in many other large European countries”, to the extent that attitudes to immigration in the UK have changed over the past 10 to 15 years, “it tends to be in a liberal/positive/less restrictive direction”, and that “movement was pretty consistently in a positive direction”, despite the fact that “the intervening period included the global financial crisis and the largest inflow of migrants in a 15-year period in Britain’s history”.²

8. British Future reports that, on the basis of evidence from their citizens’ panels, most people are ‘balancers’ who believe that there are both benefits and problems arising from immigration and are willing to debate and compromise on different areas of migration policy.³ The National Conversation found significant concerns about the impact of migration on public services, but also support for people coming to the UK to contribute, and recognition of the benefits for the economy. It also found people wanted to know that the immigration system was under control, with proper checks and enforcement in place, and that people were coming to contribute rather than ‘playing the system’. It also identified continued broad support for humanitarian obligations towards asylum-seekers and refugees with the proviso that there should be proper security checks in place. Crucially, it revealed very different attitudes to different kinds of immigration, in contrast to the binary and polarising way that the debate is often presented. It also found low levels of trust in the effectiveness of Government policy, the reliability of official data, and the immigration system more broadly.

9. We recommend that the Government makes it a clear and stated objective of public policy to build greater consensus and trust on immigration. The work of British Future shows that there exists considerable appetite for greater public engagement and for this to be the basis for a constructive and open debate. Our findings chime with this view. Our inquiry has concluded that immigration does not have to be a polarising issue. There will of course always be disagreements over the detail of immigration policy, just as there are in other policy areas. However, we believe that broader consensus can and should be found around the underlying principles of the immigration system, but

1 YouGov, [Top Issues Tracker](#); Migration Observatory, [UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern](#), 28 November 2016; NatCen Social Research, [British Social Attitudes Survey 34](#), 2017

2 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q4

3 British Future and Hope not Hate, [National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee](#), January 2018

the debate requires care, honesty and the opportunity for the public to be involved. We also believe there must be clearer explanation of the different types of immigration and the policy frameworks that govern them.

10. Not everything which must necessarily underpin policy—such as adherence to international humanitarian law, for example—is mentioned in this report. Instead we focus on the key areas which our inquiry has revealed need to be addressed in order to build greater consensus. They are areas where reforms and a change of approach are essential for the Government to achieve the overarching objective of forging broader consensus on an immigration policy which is empirically robust. We have identified a series of areas where changes are needed to build confidence and heal divisions. We cannot stress enough the importance of action to prevent escalating division, polarisation, anger or misinformation on an issue like immigration. To fail to address this risks doing long term damage to the social fabric, economy and politics of the United Kingdom. We must always be the kind of country in which people who come legally from overseas to work or to study, or who are fleeing persecution, feel welcome and valued for the contribution they make. And the immigration system must command confidence, be fair and work in the interests of the entire country.

11. We hope that the evidence we have taken and the views and recommendations set out in this report will provide a useful basis from which to develop a more informed and nuanced public debate.

2 Immigration policy should be informed by honest and open debate and supported by evidence

12. In their National Conversation British Future identified that a lack of trust in immigration facts and figures and lack of say in policy were undermining public confidence in the system. They found considerable willingness among the public to engage with the detail of immigration policy but also considerable scepticism about the current system, as predictions and targets of successive governments have diverged from reality.⁴ As we will set out, there are significant limitations in data and analysis, and public consultation on policy-making has been weaker than in other areas. To build greater consensus, there therefore needs to be an overhaul of the way data is gathered and published, and important changes to the way the public are involved in planning and setting immigration policy.

Targets and forecasts

13. Government targets and forecasts of migration have been a source of common complaint during our inquiry. We heard how the Labour Government's under-estimate of migration flows of EU nationals from eastern European countries and the current Conservative Government's net migration target have both contributed to diminishing the public's faith in immigration policy and the data meant to underpin it.

14. In 2004 the then Labour Government lifted the transitional restrictions on immigration from eastern European Member States (known as the A8 countries) while many other EU countries left them in place for a further seven years. The Government estimated that its action would result in between 5,000 and 13,000 people moving to the UK each year.⁵ This quickly proved to be a huge under-estimate. In 2005, 68,000 nationals from the A8 countries moved to the UK, rising to a peak of 103,000 in 2007.⁶ In addition to problems with government forecasts, official statistics based on survey data have also underestimated the number of people arriving in the UK. As the Migration Observatory at Oxford has noted, "total net-migration between 2001 and 2011 was underestimated by 346,000" due to an underestimation by the Office for National Statistics "predominantly driven by an undercount of migration from the A8 Eastern European countries".⁷

15. In 2010 the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government introduced a net long-term migration target of "tens of thousands" of people per year. It does not differentiate between different types of migration and is affected almost as much by changes in emigration, over which the Government has very limited control, as it is by changes in immigration. The Government has never hit the net migration target since its inception, and the latest figures showed net inward migration to be 230,000.⁸ Net migration of non-EU migrants alone, which the Government can control regardless of whether the UK is in the EU or not, has consistently exceeded 100,000 since 2010.

4 British Future and Hope not Hate, National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee, January 2018

5 Migration Watch, [The impact on immigration of the EU expansion to Eastern Europe](#), July 2003; BBC News Online, [EU migrants settling across UK](#), 30 April 2008

6 ONS, [Migration statistics quarterly report](#), November 2017

7 Migration Observatory, [Long-term international migration flows to and from the UK](#), June 2017

8 ONS, [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report](#), November 2017

16. During our inquiry, we heard that the Government’s net migration target undermined public confidence because it acted as a quarterly reminder that the Government was unable to control immigration in the way it had promised.⁹ Witnesses before our predecessor Committee described it as “a very crude measure” that created “a one-dimensional way of thinking about our immigration system”.¹⁰ The Institute of Directors described it to us as a “completely random number which is not based on any empirical understanding of the needs of UK employers”.¹¹

17. The Government’s existing net migration target set at “the tens of thousands” is not working to build confidence or consent. The continued discrepancy between the target and reality has damaged the public’s view of the immigration system because it undermines trust in the state’s ability to control migration in the way it intends or to deliver on its plans. Setting a long-term target or aspiration does not solve the challenge of achieving credibility, as people want to see practical steps that can be taken in the short-term. As we set out later in this report, the target should be replaced with a new framework of targets and controls based on evidence.

Entry and Exit data

18. Official sources of data fail to accurately capture migration flows. The decennial census can provide information on migrant populations and flows but its data quickly become outdated and recent migrants are more likely to miss census operations or refuse to participate.¹² Net migration is primarily measured using the International Passenger Survey (IPS), based on interviews with people entering and leaving UK ports. The IPS was not originally designed to measure migration but since its introduction in the 1960s it has become the default tool. It has been heavily criticised, particularly due to the relatively small sample size of long-term migrants captured by the survey (around 5,000 out of the 800,000 interviews are with people intending to stay in the UK over a year) and the difficulties in accurately recording people’s reasons for emigration. While statisticians are relatively confident of overall figures of net migration produced by the IPS, there is more uncertainty when the data is used to produce detailed estimates for different migrant groups such as workers and students.¹³

19. A lack of reliable data on who is entering and leaving the UK can lead to unsupported policy decisions and risk undermining public confidence in the system. The large gap in IPS data between the number of international students entering the UK and those leaving led to an assumption by the Government that many students overstayed their visas (an assumption that was always disputed by the higher education sector).¹⁴ In response to this, and other concerns around bogus colleges and fraudulent applications, the Government tightened the rules around student visas.

9 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q16; British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain’s future immigration policy](#), 5 September 2017; Written evidence submitted by Bright Blue [[IBC0016](#)]

10 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q12 [IPPR] and oral evidence taken on [2 March 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q217 [Scottish Government]

11 Written evidence submitted by the Institute of Directors [[CTD0007](#)]

12 Migration Observatory, [Current data on international migration and migrants in the UK: implications for the development of the Migration Observatory at Oxford](#), June 2010

13 Financial Times, [Five reasons to question UK immigration figures](#), 30 November 2016

14 Times Higher Education Supplement, [Theresa May: rules must be enforced on overseas students](#), 6 October 2015

20. In 2015 the Government reintroduced exit checks at the border in order to get a comprehensive picture of those who leave the UK.¹⁵ Although the exit checks programme was designed and introduced for operational purposes, to check compliance with visa arrangements and track the movement of criminals and terrorists rather than to produce statistics, some analysis of migration flow has been published. The first release of analysis challenged concerns of abuse of the immigration system by international students. The exit check data showed a high degree of compliance in that group, with at least 97.4% of those students who were due to leave the UK doing so.¹⁶ In fact the exit check data showed a high degree of compliance across the visit, work and study visa categories. Of the 1.34 million visas granted to non-EEA nationals and which expired in 2016–17, where individuals did not obtain an extension to remain longer in the UK, 96.3% departed on time.¹⁷

21. Entry and exit check data analysis is currently only done for people who have entered the UK on a visa since 2015. This therefore excludes British and EEA nationals entering or leaving the UK, most visitors, and those whose visas expired in earlier years. However, now that checks have been put in place, it should be possible to expand the system to provide more robust data across the breadth of immigration routes into the UK.

22. Accurate analysis of who is entering and leaving the country is vital for effective policy-making and confidence-building. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) has proved to be inadequate for this purpose. We therefore welcome the reintroduction of exit checks and the publication of data on the exit rates in the study, visit and work visa categories. The exit checks programme has been shown to be an important source of data to use alongside the IPS survey and may help to improve public confidence in the immigration system. We recommend that the analysis of exit check data for visa holders be published quarterly alongside IPS immigration statistics. We also recommend that the Home Office examine how all entries and exits from major ports in the UK, including for non-visa travellers, can be recorded and that all entry and exit information is then used to aid the analysis of migration flow and to better inform policy decisions.

23. The data captured by the decennial census is produced too infrequently to be valuable for measuring the impact of immigration on local areas. Beyond the extension of analysis based on entry and exit data, the Office for National Statistics should work with the Migration Advisory Committee, devolved governments and local authorities to develop regular and granular analyses of migration flows by local areas.

Illegal immigration data

24. One of the most common public concerns raised about immigration is the number of people living in the UK without leave to do so. This may be in the form of people entering the country clandestinely, not leaving the country after their application for asylum has been turned down or overstaying the terms of their visa. In June 2005 the Home Office published the outcome of an assessment of whether methods used in other countries

15 HM Government, [Policy paper: Exit checks fact check](#), 29 March 2015

16 HM Government, [Second report on statistics being collected under exit checks](#), August 2017

17 HM Government, [Second report on statistics being collected under exit checks](#), August 2017

to estimate the size of the illegal population could be applied to the UK. The outcome estimated that the total unauthorised migrant population living in the UK in 2001 was approximately 430,000.¹⁸

25. More recently the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has found that, over a six-month period in 2015, 6,429 migrants were discovered to have entered the UK illegally in lorries, and a study at the end of 2016 found that the Home Office had lost track of nearly 60,000 individuals without a legal right to be in the UK.¹⁹ There is no data to show how many refused and appeal-exhausted asylum seekers remain in the country; over a quarter of the annual asylum-seeking population is refused but not removed or known to have departed.²⁰ Similarly, there is no publicly available data on how many refused asylum-seekers do not have national documents or a realistic means of obtaining them, and therefore who could not leave the UK either voluntarily or involuntarily. David Wood, former Director General of Immigration Enforcement, told us that he believed there to be at least one million people illegally resident in the UK.²¹ The Home Office told us that they had not attempted to make a recent estimate of overall levels but that the exit check programme had provided some information on the period since its introduction.²²

26. The longstanding paucity of data on who may be in the country illegally is a serious concern. It has allowed anxiety to grow unchecked and has been perceived as the Government showing indifference toward an issue of high public interest. We recognise the Government's concern that to create an official estimate of overall illegal immigration without any reliable evidence would not add value to the debate. However, we also believe that more analysis of the scale and nature of the problem of illegal immigration is needed in order to develop appropriate policy responses and reassure the public that the issue is being addressed seriously. The Government should use exit data, and other relevant sources of information, to produce an annual estimate of the number of people who have breached the rules in that year to remain in the UK.

Economic data

27. There is a lack of comprehensive analysis of the relationship between immigration and the labour market. In the context of Brexit, it has become clear that the Government does not know how limiting the rights of EU nationals to work in the UK may impact on the UK's public services and businesses. As long as freedom of movement continued, the Government did not have to deal with this question. This has meant that not only does it now lack the data from which to build an effective post-Brexit immigration policy but it is also unable to reassure the public that it knows what it wants the UK's post-Brexit policy and processes to look like or what the costs and benefits of a range of policy options might be. This means it is hard for businesses and employers to have confidence that their skills and recruitment needs have been properly assessed or taken into account.

18 ONS, [Illegal immigrants in the UK](#)

19 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [Hostile environment measures relating to driving licences and bank accounts](#), October 2016

20 Migration Observatory, [Migration in the UK: asylum](#), 26 October 2017; British Red Cross, [Can't stay. Can't go: refused asylum seekers who cannot be returned](#), 2017

21 Oral evidence taken on [10 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q36

22 Oral evidence taken on [17 October 2017](#) (2017–19) 434, Q164

28. Six months after the referendum, our predecessors took evidence from Professor Alan Manning, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC). It was astonishing to learn that the MAC had not yet been commissioned to undertake any work on the potential impact of Brexit (and it cannot undertake such work of its own accord).²³ It was not until July 2017 that the Government commissioned the MAC to “complete a detailed assessment of the role of EU nationals in the UK economy and society”.²⁴ The MAC was asked to consider the regional distribution of migrants, skill levels, industry sectors and the role of the self-employed, and part-time, agency, temporary and seasonal workers. The MAC is expected to report in September 2018, many months after the UK’s negotiations with the EU on the precise terms of their future immigration relationship are expected to have begun.²⁵

29. The data and advice that the Migration Advisory Committee has been asked to provide on the role of EU nationals in the UK economy and society is vital to the development of a successful immigration system and to building confidence in that system. We welcome the commissioning of the MAC to provide this vital evidence, but we do not understand why it took the Government more than 12 months from the referendum to commission this work or why such data is not collected by the Government as a matter of routine. The delay means that the White Paper on immigration, expected early this year, will have been drafted in an acknowledged evidence vacuum. It also means that when the Government begins negotiations on the UK’s future relationship with the EU, it will do so without knowing what it wants the UK’s future immigration arrangements with the EU to be or what the economy needs. We recommend that the MAC have a rolling commission to regularly collect and publish data on the relationship between the labour market and immigration.

Challenging misconceptions

30. There are widespread misconceptions about immigration, including that most migrants come to the UK to access benefits, despite migration to work and to study making up by far the greatest proportion, and significant over-estimates of the number of people arriving in the UK each year to seek asylum. These misconceptions can make it difficult for some people to integrate. They can also be exploited and deliberately manipulated to increase division and accentuate fear. We have already stated that immigration policy should be evidence-based. The Immigration Law Practitioners Association told us that “an evidence-based policy also allows the government to defend it with reference to information and objective data, which is much more difficult to argue with than a particular opinion.”²⁶

31. We call on the Government to be more proactive in challenging myths and inaccuracies about immigration and the asylum system, including by publishing more factual information about the costs and benefits of immigration at local and national levels. As we set out below, this could be achieved by an Annual Migration Report and debate.

23 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q83

24 HM Government, [Home Secretary commissions major study on child migrants](#), 27 July 2017

25 HM Government, [Migration Advisory Committee commissioned by government](#), 27 July 2017

26 Written evidence submitted by the Immigration Law Practitioners Association [[IBC0011](#)]

Annual Migration Report

32. The volume of evidence submitted to our inquiry suggests a strong interest from stakeholders to engage with immigration policy development, whilst the consultations done by British Future showed that most people were willing to discuss and compromise over immigration policy when given the opportunity to engage in informed debate.²⁷ But, unlike in other policy areas such as the annual Budget, there is no framework for regular debate and analysis of the Government's approach to managing immigration. Other countries take a different approach. For example, the Canadian Government conducts an annual engagement and consultation exercise as part of its development of an immigration levels plan which it tables as an Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration.²⁸ The report sets out key details on permanent admissions, temporary residence volumes and inadmissibility and provides context to future projections.²⁹

33. The Canadian Government has also adopted a three-year plan for immigration. The plan details projections for future years and is intended to provide more predictability to the immigration system to help government at a national and regional level, and other stakeholders, improve their planning for permanent residence admissions. The Canadian Government expects to update future ranges on how many people might be admitted to the country each year via the Annual Report on Immigration.³⁰

34. British Future suggests that the Government could increase its public engagement via an annual report and debate in Parliament along similar lines to the Budget Statement. They propose that the 'Migration Day' report to Parliament could detail the previous year's migration flows and their economic and social benefits and costs, measures taken by the Government to mitigate any adverse local impacts and aid integration and the Government's targets for the forthcoming year, underpinned by advice from the Migration Advisory Committee. They argue that such an event could become the focal point for a sustained commitment to public engagement on immigration.³¹

35. An annual report and debate would provide the opportunity for public scrutiny of immigration controls and targets, of the impact on the labour market and on communities, and of the views of employers and other stakeholders. It would require the Government to address fears and concerns to prevent people exploiting anxiety about immigration.

36. Members of the public, organisations and businesses need access to better information about migration flows and the Government's policy approach to managing them. We believe that the Government should table an Annual Migration Report and set aside parliamentary time for debate on that report. The report would detail the previous year's migration flows, the economic contribution from migration to the Exchequer and the measures taken by the Government to manage impacts and pressures. Like the Comprehensive Spending Review, it could set out a three-year plan which would then be reviewed annually. It would be informed by independent advice from the Migration Advisory Committee just as the Budget is informed by the

27 British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain's future immigration policy](#), 5 September 2017; UCL Constitution Unit, [Citizens' Assembly on Brexit: Summary Report](#), October 2017

28 Government of Canada, [2017 consultations on immigration levels, settlement and integration - final report](#), 2017

29 Government of Canada, [2017 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration](#), November 2017

30 Government of Canada, [2017 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration](#), November 2017

31 British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain's future immigration policy](#), 5 September 2017

Office for Budget Responsibility; and it would include public consultation at local and regional level. As we set out later in this report, it should cover targets or controls for different kinds of migration, an assessment of migration levels and consideration of policy requirements for different regions and nations, plans for integration and support for local communities, and parallel labour market plans to deal with skills shortages which are increasing demand for overseas workers or measures to deal with exploitation of low skilled migration.

37. The Annual Migration Report would have an explicit objective towards consensus building, to which all parties should commit. It should become the focal point for a sustained and ongoing commitment to public engagement across the nations and regions of the UK. Migration plans should include measures to challenge misinformation and build trust, support and credibility. The Government should therefore actively seek submissions about its migration targets. Parliamentary committee hearings and public debates in town halls and other settings could scrutinise proposals and recommendations from civil society. The Government should be frank and open in recognising that policy-making involves compromise and that balancing competing interests means that no one can get everything they want. Adopting this approach would have the benefit of normalising a sustained, ongoing commitment to public engagement as part of the annual process of the oversight and review of immigration choices in the UK.

3 Fair and clear rules need to be properly enforced

38. The National Conversation found that most people do not know what the immigration rules are, nor do they have confidence that they are based on fair principles. British Future told us that people want to know that the system is under control and that rules are being enforced, but do not have confidence that this is happening. They found clear support for people coming to the UK to work and contribute, but serious concern about people coming to claim benefits or cause harm, and a strong sense that there are not proper border or criminal checks.

39. British Future stressed to us that, for many people on their citizens' panels, the real issue around immigration was a perceived lack of control. Jill Rutter told us that “almost everybody wants better enforcement, better control, and that is a consistent theme”, but that the idea of control was closely linked to the demand for security checks and ‘criminal vetting’ rather than simply a concern about numbers.³² At the same time we heard considerable evidence of concern that the system is not working fairly for individuals or families and that, given the scale of high profile errors and delays, there is also a lack of confidence in the accuracy or fairness of individual decisions. If the immigration system is perceived as being unfair on those who play by the rules, but too easy to get round by those who do not, then it will not have credibility or public confidence. Based on evidence, we believe there are areas for reform that would improve confidence as well as making the system fairer and more effective

Complexity

40. There have been 11 Immigration Acts passed in the last 50 years and amendments to the Immigration Rules are made on a regular basis with, in reality, little or no significant parliamentary scrutiny and little, if any, public consultation. This has led to many people, including immigration tribunal judges, to complain that the system has become far too complex. Colin Yeo, immigration and asylum barrister at Garden Court Chambers, explained to us that the rules had become so complicated that it was now very hard to make a successful application without a lawyer. He described the current situation as “a terrible way to run an immigration system”.³³ Not only does complexity hinder those who must engage with the system, it increases the challenge faced by officials tasked with making life-changing decisions.³⁴ It is also difficult for the public to consent to a system they cannot understand. Information provided online is complex and sometimes apparently contradictory. The Home Secretary told us that she had ordered a review of the rules:

I have already requested the Law Commission to review our immigration laws with a view to simplifying them. There were 20,000 different pieces of regulation for non-EU regulations and we have now got them down to 4,000. It is incredibly important—I share your frustration—and this is a personal mission of mine to make sure that we simplify the immigration

32 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q6

33 Oral evidence taken on [10 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q52

34 Free Movement blog, [How complex are the UK's immigration rules and is this a problem](#), 1 August 2017; [Oral evidence taken before the Immigration Public Bill Committee](#), 22 October 2015 (Morning)

rules so that your constituents and mine can use it in a more user-friendly way and that it can just be clearer for people where they can and where they cannot apply.³⁵

41. We welcome the Home Secretary’s commitment to simplifying immigration law and look forward to seeing tangible improvements. People are less likely to have confidence in a system which they cannot understand or access easily. These clearer rules should be underpinned by clear principles and values—reflecting for example the importance of contributing to the country and the economy, supporting family life, safeguarding security, meeting international humanitarian obligations, and the rights and responsibilities of those who come. Information needs to be provided in a clear, consistent and easily accessible format, especially online. We recommend that these principles are debated and set out clearly in the Annual Migration Reports. The procedures for making and scrutinising immigration rules and amendments to them require significant change to enhance consultation and parliamentary accountability.

Errors and delays

42. A particularly prevalent concern raised over the course of our inquiry has been the scale of errors and delays in the immigration system. There have been regular reports in recent months of people with a lawful right to be in the UK being caught up in the system, often via errors in the visa application process or problems with the data retained by the Home Office.³⁶ The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has issued repeated warnings about the quality of decision-making for visa applications. For example, in the recent inspection of entry clearance processing operations in Croydon, the inspection team concluded that “the impact of failing to get the first-line quality assurance right is not only that today’s wrong decisions are not identified and corrected, but that the understanding and performance of decision makers does not improve because individuals are not receiving timely and constructive feedback”.³⁷

43. Reports by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman show that the Home Office is one of the main departments receiving complaints and has the highest uphold rate. The main problem identified by the Ombudsman concerned immigration casework, where procedural errors, delays and poor decisions meant people had to endure “prolonged uncertainty”.³⁸ In the second quarter of 2017, 47% of the 14,170 determined appeals against Home Office immigration decisions were granted.³⁹ Errors are highly inefficient, costly, and have a severe impact on the lives of each applicant. ILPA stated that overburdened resources meant the Home Office lacked the capacity to plan effectively or

35 Oral evidence taken before the Home Affairs Committee, 17 October 2017, HC (2017–19) 434, Q84

36 Guardian, [Fighting the Home Office: Woman’s traumatic two year battle to stay in the UK](#), 18 September 2017; Guardian, [Dutch woman with two British children told to leave the UK after 24 years](#), 28 December 2016

37 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of entry clearance processing operations in Croydon and Istanbul](#), November 2016–March 2017, published July 2017

38 BBC News, [Home Office criticised over delays in immigration casework](#), 10 November 2015; Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, [Complaints about UK Government Departments and agencies](#), 2015–16; Written evidence submitted by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants [CDT0019]

39 Ministry of Justice, [Tribunals and gender recognition certificate statistics quarterly - July to September 2017](#), Table FIA 3

anticipate changing service needs.⁴⁰ Instances where Home Office officials have wrongly instructed EU nationals to leave the country have further undermined confidence in the ability of the UK immigration system to operate fairly.

44. Our predecessors warned repeatedly about the need to improve the performance of the immigration system. The sheer number of people within the immigration system means that mistakes, particularly those based on inaccurate data, are highly unlikely ever to be eradicated completely. However, the impact of errors can be deeply damaging and traumatic for individuals and delays can leave families in limbo for long periods. The huge increase in delays in processing asylum applications are particularly worrying. The Home Office needs to do much more to reduce errors and to speed up accurate decision-making. We will examine the Home Office's capacity to deliver effective immigration services in more detail in a separate report to be issued shortly. In the meantime, we urge the Home Office to do more to respond to the recommendations of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and to improve quality assurance and the recruitment, training and retention of immigration officials.

Enforcement and control

45. Statistics show that enforcement performance has deteriorated, causing significant problems for the credibility of the system, and consequently for public confidence in the integrity of the rules. As we have discussed earlier, unofficial estimates of high numbers of people living here illegally cause concern and alarm. Enforced removals have reduced in recent years and the number of voluntary returns has fallen over the last 18 months.⁴¹ Over the last two years the number of illegal working penalties issued has reduced by a quarter with a similar drop in the value of such penalties.⁴² A 2015 report by the ICIBI found that less than a third of the fines levied on companies hiring illegal workers were collected and it took an average of more than two years for the money to be paid.⁴³ Our predecessors noted that the penalty regime was not a sufficiently effective deterrent against employing illegal immigrants.⁴⁴

46. In his November 2017 report, the ICIBI found that the Home Office's Reporting and Offender Management (ROM) processes were seriously compromised by the practical difficulties of managing a large reporting population (individuals found to be in the UK illegally but not yet removed) and by poor communication between staff responsible for the ROM system and other Home Office units responsible for managing and making decisions about asylum or immigration cases.⁴⁵ He found that there were almost 60,000 individuals who had failed to report and had been declared absconders, of which over 750 were former foreign national offenders.⁴⁶

40 Written evidence submitted by the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association [CTD0021]

41 Home Office, Immigration statistics, [Table RT 01](#), November 2017

42 Home Office, Migration transparency statistics, November 2017, Table CP02

43 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of how the Home Office tackles illegal working, December 2015](#), para 7.13

44 Home Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2016–17, [The work of the immigration directorates \(Q1 2016\)](#), HC 151

45 ICIBI, [An inspection of the Home Office's Reporting and Offender Management processes December 2016 - March 2017](#), 2 November 2017.

46 ICIBI, [Management of non-detained Foreign National Offenders](#), 2 November 2017

47. David Wood told us that he believed that the immigration enforcement system had never been well resourced.⁴⁷ Mike Jones of the PCS union believed that the impact of 400 fewer staff in Immigration Enforcement had damaged its capacity to deal with cases properly, as it needed more staff to “act on the intelligence that they get and act on it in reasonable time”.⁴⁸ He also told us that a lack of resources for making decisions in UKVI meant that, by the time information reached Immigration Enforcement officers, people had moved on.⁴⁹

48. The introduction of exit checks and the crosschecking of that data with information held on visas should improve opportunities for early enforcement. It should allow immigration overstayers to be detected early on before they have been living here for a long time and, if the system is adequately resourced, and allowing for due process and adherence to fair rules, their swift removal.

49. The problem of constrained resources is not limited to the UKVI and Immigration Enforcement directorates. A July 2017 report by the ICIBI found that there were long periods of non-attendance by Border Force staff at some locations and there have been recent incidents where Border Force officials have not been available to meet flights, causing passengers to be held until officials could be transferred from other ports of entry.⁵⁰ At the end of December the Home Office announced that it was exploring the use of volunteers to staff small air and sea ports in an effort to bolster the resources available to Border Force.⁵¹

50. Immigration rules need to be enforced effectively if the unacceptable failures of the past, which have led to public anxiety over whether the system is fair, are to be avoided. There must be a much greater focus on early enforcement. Exit checks will assist in the detection of overstayers but more resources must be made available to support enforcement and action against those who knowingly employ people with no legal right to be in the country.

51. We are concerned, in the context of budget cuts and evidence we have received about staffing gaps, to see reports that the Home Office is considering using volunteers to staff the border. We are alarmed by suggestions that volunteers might take on roles that should be carried out by full-time, trained staff, particularly when this involves protecting the integrity and security of the UK border. We will examine this issue in our forthcoming separate report on the capacity of the Home Office to deliver immigration services, which will include our assessment of the capacity of Border Force to fulfil its functions effectively.

Hostile environment

52. In addition to Government-led activity, employers, landlords and others providing a service to migrants are increasingly expected to help enforce immigration rules. They

47 Oral evidence taken on [10 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q32

48 Oral evidence taken on [29 November 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q361

49 Oral evidence taken on [29 November 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q361

50 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of Border Force operations at east coast seaports](#), July 2017; BBC News, [Port Border security under strain](#), July 2017; BBC News, [Passengers unable to leave Inverness terminal](#), November 2016, BBC News, [Passengers held at Newquay airport in Border Force wait](#), October 2017; Written evidence submitted by Daniel Schofield [[CDT0031](#)]; Written evidence submitted by PCS [[CDT0029](#)]

51 BBC News, [Volunteers could guard some UK borders, Home Office says](#), 31 December 2017

can face fines or, in some circumstances, a custodial sentence, if found to be providing a service to an illegal immigrant. Sponsors must report any change in circumstances that may suggest an individual is not complying with their visa rules. Many of the measures designed to make life difficult for individuals without permission to remain in the UK were first proposed in 2012 as part of a ‘hostile environment policy’. The aim of the policy is to deter people without permission from entering the UK and to encourage those already here to leave voluntarily. It includes measures to limit access to work, housing, healthcare, and bank accounts, to revoke driving licences and to reduce and restrict rights of appeal against Home Office decisions.⁵² The majority of these proposals became law via the Immigration Act 2014, and have since been tightened or expanded under the Immigration Act 2016.⁵³

53. David Bolt told us that a major concern he had was that “the Home Office does not have in place measurements to evaluate the effectiveness” of the hostile environment provisions.⁵⁴ In particular, he reported that there had been a failure to “understand the effects of the provisions that have been brought in through the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts”.⁵⁵

54. While the hostile environment is currently aimed at non-EU nationals without valid leave to be in the UK, there are regular reports of people with a lawful right to be here (including UK and EU nationals and non-EU nationals with valid leave) being caught up in the system, often via errors in an application process or problems with data retained by the Home Office. An inspection by the ICIBI of data provided by the Home Office to banks found that 10% of the 169 cases inspected had incorrectly been included on the list of ‘disqualified persons’.⁵⁶ People wrongly identified as being in the UK without leave typically receive a letter stating they are liable to removal and must make immediate arrangements to leave the country. This traumatic experience is often compounded by difficulties in contacting the Home Office and a reluctance by the Department to accept that it has made an error. When we put these figures to David Bolt, he said there had been a “conscious shift towards encouraging compliance rather than enforcing”.⁵⁷

55. In his inspection of the revocation of driving licences, the ICIBI raised further concerns over the quality of Home Office data. He observed:

[...] the Home Office did not appear to appreciate the seriousness of such errors for the individuals affected, and its proposed avenue of redress for individuals who had left the UK with valid leave outstanding, and had subsequently had their licence revoked, was inadequate.⁵⁸

56. People who are lawfully resident in the UK are also being caught up in the hostile environment policy as landlords and employers seek to minimise perceived risk to themselves. In a survey by the Residential Landlords’ Association (RLA), 42% of respondents

52 Free Movement blog, [The hostile environment: what is it and who does it affect](#), May 2017

53 Illegal entry or overstaying have been criminal offences since the Immigration Act 1971. Convictions have declined since a peak of around 1,000 in 2005 and prosecutions have levelled out at around 400-500 per year.

54 Oral evidence taken on [29 November 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q295

55 Oral evidence taken on [29 November 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q295

56 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [Hostile environment measures relating to driving licences and bank accounts](#), October 2016

57 Oral evidence taken on [29 November 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 421, Q302

58 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [Hostile environment measures relating to driving licences and bank accounts](#), October 2016

stated that they were less likely to rent to people who do not have a British passport because they feared criminal sanctions if they made a mistake under the legislation.⁵⁹ There are reports of employers restricting access to job vacancies, for example by insisting that all non-EU applicants provide a biometric residence permit—despite this only applying to recent arrivals; or by limiting the vacancy to applicants with British passports—which is illegal.⁶⁰ ASSIST Sheffield and South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice charities report a reluctance from banks and building societies to open accounts for refugees with leave to remain. They contend that the hostile environment policy fosters social division and discrimination.⁶¹ The ICIBI also noted that the absence of indicators against which to judge the policy’s impact made it harder for the Home Office “to answer concerns about the potential damage to communities and to individuals”.⁶²

57. The Government should not rely on its “hostile environment” policy as a panacea for enforcement and building confidence, especially given the current concerns about accuracy and error. We are concerned that the policy is unclear and, in some instances, too open to interpretation and inadvertent error. Not only can these errors be deeply damaging and distressing to those involved—as with letters being sent to EU nationals about their right to live in the UK—they also undermine the credibility of the system. Recent high-profile reports of the Home Office threatening to deport individuals based on inaccurate and untested information, and before an independent appeal process, risk undermining the credibility of the whole system. This is particularly worrying in advance of the need to register EU nationals in preparation for Brexit.

Immigration detention

58. Individuals who are subject to immigration control may be detained indefinitely by an immigration officer while their case is resolved or until they can be removed. Around 30,000 people enter the detention estate each year and there are typically just under 3,000 people in detention at any one time. While the majority of people in detention will leave the estate within two months, many will remain in detention for far longer, and cases of people being detained for over a year are not uncommon.

59. In 2016 the Home Office asked Stephen Shaw, a former Chief Inspector of Prisons, to review the Department’s approach to the welfare of vulnerable people in detention. In his report, Mr Shaw notes that: “It has been argued internationally that immigration detention is ‘one of the most opaque areas of public administration.’ It would be in everyone’s interests if in this country it was less so.”⁶³ Elsewhere, Stephen Shaw concluded that “there is too much detention; detention is not a particularly effective means of ensuring that those with no right to remain do in fact leave the UK; and many practices and processes associated with detention are in urgent need of reform.” The Home Office has asked Stephen Shaw to conduct a follow up review to his 2016 report. He began the review on 4 September 2017 and is expected to report in the middle of this year.

59 Independent, [Landlords admit turning away EU citizens to avoid Government regulations](#), 6 September 2017

60 Guardian, [No Europeans need apply: evidence mounts of discrimination in the UK](#), 11 September 2017

61 Written evidence submitted by ASSIST and South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice [IBC003]

62 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of the ‘hostile environment’ measures relating to driving licences and bank accounts January to July 2016](#), October 2016

63 [Review into the Welfare in Detention of Vulnerable Persons: A report to the Home Office by Stephen Shaw](#), January 2016

60. It is clear there are serious deficiencies in the effectiveness and operation of detention at present. We are looking further at the use of immigration detention following the revelations of abuse at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre. We welcome the Government asking Stephen Shaw to follow up his 2016 report on the welfare of vulnerable people in detention and expect to consider this issue in more detail once he concludes his important work.

Criminal and security checks

61. The National Conversation found that many people believe there are insufficient security and criminal checks in the immigration system. Jill Rutter told us that satisfying the need for “control and vetting” was a key demand of people in its citizens’ panels.⁶⁴ Many of those who took part in the National Conversation saw this as the most important area where they believed improvements were needed in the immigration system.

62. The public need reassurance that criminal and security checks are properly embedded in the immigration system. The Government should set out the current criminal and security vetting procedures that people are subject to before their arrival in the UK. We recommend the Home Office reviews cross-agency practices for removing foreign national offenders, including where recent arrivals have received custodial sentences and are eligible for removal.

64 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q29

4 There should be different approaches for different types of immigration

63. While surveys show that the public wants to see a reduction in immigration overall, attitudes can vary depending on the type of migration, with fewer people wanting to see a reduction in high-skilled workers, students and some low-skilled workers doing jobs in sectors where supply from the UK labour force is constrained.⁶⁵ Many of those who participated in British Future's National Conversation recognised that immigration could deliver economic benefits and they were happy to accept people coming and 'contributing'. There was however widespread concern that some migrants were attracted to the UK because of its welfare system and there was frequently a perception that migrants received preferential access to benefits. British Future's work also showed that the public supported the principle of humanitarian protection as long as it was not abused, while our sessions in Bedford and Glasgow showed that people are often sympathetic to individual family reunion cases at the same time as wanting national rules to prevent abuse.

64. The central target and driving force in current Government immigration policy is an aggregate target which does not differentiate between different kinds of migration and which also includes flows of British citizens. The net migration target does not allow adjustments for economic needs or international obligations arising from both trade and humanitarian agreements. The majority of evidence to our inquiry recommended that immigration policy be reformed to recognise the desire for different approaches for different types of migration. Participants in the National Conversation regularly drew attention to the Australian points-based system as a good example of a system of differential immigration control but were unaware that the UK uses aspects of a points-based approach for some non-EU migration.

65. Evidence to our inquiry and from the National Conversation suggests that any approach that treats all migration as the same encourages polarisation of the debate. Treating different kinds of migration differently would reflect most people's views of immigration, and allow for much greater consensus to be built into the debate, as well as for greater transparency over immigration policy in general. The Government should replace its net migration target with an evidence-based framework for different types of immigration that takes into account the UK's needs and its international obligations to accept people, arising from both trade and humanitarian agreements. Different targets or controls for different kinds of migration should be set out in the Annual Migration Report, as part of a three-year migration plan. Doing so would allow for more specific consideration of the costs and benefits of immigration and might help to build greater consensus behind different approaches to different kinds of migration.

66. There are four main categories of migration: study, family reunion, protection and work. We discuss the first three below and focus on immigration for work in the following chapter.

65 British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain's future immigration policy](#), 5 September 2017; NatCen Social Research, [British Social Attitudes Survey 34](#), 2017

Migration to study

67. The UK is home to world-leading universities and international students and staff contribute to the economies of every region of the UK. Research commissioned by Universities UK found that in 2014–15 non-EU and EU students contributed £13.8 billion to UK GDP and supported 206,600 jobs.⁶⁶ The majority of non-EU students are temporary visitors and leave the UK after completing their studies.⁶⁷ A proportion will remain in the UK either to continue their education or move into employment via points-based routes.

68. The Government has been clear that there is no cap on the number of international students who can come to study in the UK or remain in the UK to work after their studies if they meet the points-based criteria.⁶⁸ However, the Government includes international students in its target of limiting net migration to 100,000 per year. Although international definitions of long-term migration include migration for the purposes of study, that does not mean they need to be included in the target.⁶⁹ The higher education sector argues that including international students within the target makes the UK look a less welcoming country to prospective students than its competitors.⁷⁰ It also means that, if universities are successful in attracting more international students, as the Government wants them to be, its net migration target is less likely to be met without placing further restrictions on other routes.

69. We heard from witnesses that the public do not see international students as migrants at all. A poll conducted by ComRes for Universities UK showed that 75% of British adults said they would like to see the same number, or more, international students. This figure increased to 87% once the information on the economic benefits of international students was provided.⁷¹ Professor Ford told us:

If you ask, as researchers have done, who do you have in mind when you answer questions about immigration, they never say students. [...] That is a big contribution to the net migration message but it is one that the public are largely completely unaware of and if you tell them about it they are surprised that these people are in that target at all and they do not want them in that target.⁷²

British Future has conducted similar exercises in gauging public opinion. When they asked people who attended their citizens' panels whether they would prefer the number of international students coming to the UK to be increased, reduced or remain about the same, 53% wanted student migration to stay at the same level, while 32% wanted to see an increase.⁷³ Jill Rutter explained that “of the 37 panels so far, we have had only one where there have been any significant negative comments about international students”.⁷⁴

66 Written evidence submitted by Universities UK [[IBC0001](#)]

67 According to the Office for National Statistics, 51% of students leave the UK when they finish their studies and 18% leave and then return

68 HM Government, [Government to commission assessment of international students](#), 24 August 2017

69 United Nations, [International migration: concepts and definitions](#)

70 Financial Times, [Amber Rudd urges removal of students from net migration data](#), 8 November 2017

71 Written evidence submitted by Universities UK to the previous Committee ([IM0203](#))

72 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q16

73 British Future and Hope not Hate, [National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee](#), January 2018

74 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q10

70. International statistical rules require students to be included in the way migration is calculated but we do not believe that it is logical or in the best interests of the UK to include international students in a target based on restricting migration flow, given that they represent a large group of migrants who are in most part temporary and whom the Government is keen to encourage to come to the UK. There should be no national target to restrict the numbers of students coming to the UK. As a minimum, the Government should remove immediately student migration from the net migration target.

71. Although the British public is largely supportive of relaxed rules for student migration, the arrival of students can place a strain on local resources. They can skew housing and labour markets at the expense of local people and they may place a strain on public services and other amenities.⁷⁵ This links to broader issues of community cohesion and integration.

72. In calling for more international students to come and study in the UK, universities must be mindful of local impacts of large numbers of students and work with local authorities to help manage pressures on housing and public services. Universities should be expected to consult local authorities on future student numbers in their area.

Humanitarian protection

73. The UK has a long and proud tradition of providing sanctuary to those in need. The UK played a key role in drafting the 1951 Refugee Convention, which has helped to protect millions of people, and it remains a world leader in providing humanitarian support today.⁷⁶ In the last year the UK has granted asylum to 16,211 people, and continued to work towards meeting its pledges to resettle 20,000 people fleeing the war in Syria and 3,000 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from the Middle East and North Africa. Public support for more assistance to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Europe has seen a number of NGO-led public campaigns, as well as the successful vote in parliament for the “Dubs amendment” to the 2016 Immigration Act and the subsequent “Dubs scheme”. The UK has also pledged £2.5 billion in aid to the Syrian crisis, considerably more than comparable countries.⁷⁷ While people migrating for humanitarian purposes are a component of migration, and are measured as such in Government statistics and the net migration target, it is not strictly correct under United Nations definitions to use the term “migrant” to refer to someone seeking protection.⁷⁸

74. We heard from British Future that the UK’s acceptance of refugees and asylum-seekers continues to receive robust support in principle, but that underlying sympathy for asylum, particularly for women and children, risked being eroded by concerns over vetting, security and benefit dependency.⁷⁹ In their citizens’ panels British Future heard how empathy for refugees was influenced by national and international events. In almost all their meetings, people said that the media reports disputing the age of children

75 Institute of Community Cohesion, [Promoting community cohesion and preventing violent extremism in higher and further education](#), Professor Harris Beider and Rachel Briggs, March 2010

76 Written evidence submitted by UNHCR to the previous Committee [\[IM0545\]](#)

77 Financial Times, [Spending on Syria crisis is ‘UK aid at its best’](#), 16 April 2017

78 House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, [Migration Statistics](#), SN06077, 10 October 2017

79 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q20

accepted from the Calais camp dented their support for refugees. However, British Future's National Conversation also identified positive responses to Syrian refugees in a number of locations, particularly where churches and community groups were involved in initiatives to welcome Syrian refugees.⁸⁰

75. British Future also found that the British public had little understanding of the asylum system. Many people viewed asylum-seekers as people who did not contribute to—but claimed from—the welfare state and were generally unaware that asylum-seekers were barred from working or that levels of state support were far below that available to UK citizens. Professor Ford explained that the belief that asylum is 'a noble principle being abused' must be addressed if one wanted to build greater support for asylum.⁸¹

76. The success of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme shows that a well-funded, well-organised refugee programme can attract public support. This is evidenced by the number of local authorities signing up to the Scheme, under which additional funding is provided to them to provide individuals with housing and access to education, the job market and mainstream services.

77. There should be no diminution in the UK's approach towards its international humanitarian obligations as it leaves the European Union. The UK has a proud tradition in providing support to those fleeing persecution and the principle has widespread public support. The principle of asylum—with the internationally recognised degree of evidence required—must be upheld. The Government should make every effort to honour its existing commitments to bring unaccompanied children from Europe and elsewhere, both as part of the Dubs scheme and the Dublin III Regulation but also through family reunion routes within and outside the Immigration Rules.

78. **We recommend that the Government does more to challenge public misconceptions about people seeking asylum. In particular, a much clearer differentiation must be made between asylum and migration for other reasons. Clear public information should be provided on the entitlements, rights and number of asylum-seekers compared with other migrants to combat myths. A failure to do so risks harming support for asylum and refugee policy. As a minimum, people who enter the UK for humanitarian purposes should not be included in headline figures of net migration including, while it remains in use, the net migration target.**

79. **The success of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme shows that a well-managed and well-funded refugee resettlement scheme attracts strong support. A resettlement scheme along similar lines to the Syrian VPRS should be established on a permanent basis, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, which would apply to refugees from other countries.**

Right to family life

80. Throughout our inquiry we have been made aware of concerns that parts of the immigration system are failing families and children. In particular, our attention was drawn to the additional difficulties, stresses and costs associated with children seeking

80 British Future and Hope not Hate, National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee, January 2018, pp 17 and 46

81 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q21

indefinite leave to remain who are now granted permission to stay for renewable periods of up to 30 months. In 2015 research commissioned by the Children’s Commissioner for England found that the minimum income requirement for UK citizens and settled residents applying to bring a non-EEA partner to the country disproportionately affected women, and had led to 15,000 children being separated from their parents since the policy’s introduction in 2012.⁸²

81. Recent reported individual examples of the rules being applied include the Home Office informing the Filipino wife of a stroke victim and mother of their two children that there were ‘no exceptional circumstances in her case’ and that she must return to the Philippines and make an application for a spouse visa from there.⁸³ A second example involved a 20-year-old Syrian asylum seeker who entered the UK illegally in order to reunite with his family who had been taken in as refugees but now faces deportation to Bulgaria under the Dublin rules.⁸⁴ British Future noted that people were more sympathetic when they were made aware of the details of particular cases of families being disadvantaged by the immigration system.⁸⁵

82. Much of the evidence we received for this inquiry called for immigration policy and those responsible for its administration to be more sensitive to the rights of families and children, particularly where there was evidence—beyond the salary of the key sponsor—that they would be able to support themselves. Fees, requirements for regular visa extensions and salary thresholds and qualifying periods are just some of the barriers that we were told prevented people from being able to live a settled life in the UK. We believe that striving to meet the best interests of families and children should be at the heart of immigration policy. We urge the Home Office to take note of these concerns and review the impact of its policies on families and children.

82 Written evidence submitted to the previous Committee, [IM0172]; BBC News, [Immigration rule ‘has split 15,000 children from a parent’](#), 9 September 2015; Children’s Commissioner, [Family friendly? The impact on children of the Family Migration Rules: A review of the financial requirements](#), August 2015

83 Guardian, [Wife of stroke victim who needs 24hr care must leave UK while he cares for children](#), 17 October 2017; the Home Office have since granted leave

84 BBC News, [Syrian refugee faces deportation from Cardiff to Bulgaria](#), 18 October 2017

85 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q6

5 Immigration should work for the economic and social interests of the UK and its citizens

83. In the year ending June 2017, an estimated 261,000 people migrated to the UK for work, comprising 46% of total immigration to the UK. Over the course of our inquiry, we have heard a wide variety of different views on the relationship between immigration and the economy. While business groups are adamant that the UK needs continued high levels of recruitment from abroad, there is considerable public concern that overall immigration levels are too high.

84. We received evidence from academics and economists about the overall benefits that immigration provided for economic growth and the public finances.⁸⁶ We also heard from businesses and organisations about the need for recruitment from abroad, especially to secure top international talent, or to find employees in areas of skill shortages, or for jobs that local residents do not want to do.⁸⁷ However we also heard concerns in the National Conversation about the impact of migration on the housing market and local public services, as well as real concern that immigration is being used to undermine local employment, wages, and terms and conditions. Despite this wide range of views, on the basis of the evidence we have heard and the work by British Future, we believe that it is possible to build more consensus on immigration and the economy, but there needs to be much stronger coordination between immigration and labour market policies.

Work and benefits

85. The work of British Future suggests that the principle of contribution carries strong support, and the public are broadly in favour of people coming to the UK to contribute but are concerned about people coming to claim benefits.⁸⁸ A study by University College London estimated that migrants coming to the UK since 2000 were 43% less likely to claim benefits or tax credits compared to the British-born workforce.⁸⁹ The British Social Attitudes survey found that 37% think that EU citizens who are working and paying taxes in Britain should be able to access the same benefits as British citizens immediately or after one year, 24% think they should have access after three years and 30% after five years or more.⁹⁰ Professor Ford told us:

[...] the public often regard the migration system, the citizenship system and the benefit system as like clubs that you pay in and contribute for a while and then you should be given the full rights and resources of the clubs.⁹¹

86 Written evidence submitted by the New Economics Foundation [IMM0156], Written evidence submitted by Professor Jonathan Portes [IMM0013]

87 Written evidence submitted by Zari Restaurant [IMM0182], ARM [IMM0183], London Chamber of Commerce and Industry [IMM0176], City of London Corporation [IMM0177], UK Interactive Entertainment [IMM0162], Cancer Research UK [IMM0072]

88 British Future and Hope not Hate, National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee, January 2018

89 University College London, [Positive economic impact of UK immigration from the European Union: new evidence](#), 5 November 2014

90 NatCen Social Research, [British Attitudes Survey 31](#), 2014 Edition

91 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q38

86. **The public need reassurance that the contributory principle is embedded in the immigration system to address concerns that some people might be attracted to the UK because of our system of welfare. As part of the Annual Migration Report which we have recommended, the Government should set out the details of the expected contributions and entitlements of new arrivals in the UK in the different immigration categories.**

87. **We note that there are a range of views on the potential trade-offs between immigration and global trade policy. We have not yet considered the options for a specific migration policy towards EEA citizens post-Brexit, but expect to do so when the Government publishes its forthcoming immigration White Paper.**

High skilled migration

88. Throughout our inquiry we heard of the importance of high-skilled workers, especially for internationally competitive roles, and the need to continue to attract top talent. However, the definitions of high- and low-skilled are not well understood. In the current rules for non-EEA migration such definitions are based on salary thresholds. As a result, however, there are many public sector jobs which the majority of people consider to be high skilled—including nursing and teaching—which do not pay a high enough wage to meet the threshold for a high-skilled visa.⁹² Dr Alan Renwick observed from his work on the Citizens' Assembly that the public do not fully understand the categorisation of high- and low-skilled and that many people were surprised to find out that highly valued professions are defined in the immigration system as low-skilled.⁹³

89. The Government has stated that it wants the post-Brexit immigration system to “continue to attract the brightest and the best” to the UK but, as Professor Jonathan Portes has observed, “migration is not just a matter of the UK choosing migrants; migrants have to choose us.”⁹⁴ Since the 2016 referendum, as the value of the pound has decreased and uncertainty has grown about future residency rules for new EU arrivals, immigration from the EU has declined. This is particularly evident in certain professions. The number of applications from EU nurses has fallen significantly over the last year. Statistics from the Nursing and Midwifery Council show 1,107 nurses from other EU countries joined the NMC's register in the 12 months ending September 2017 compared to 10,178 in the preceding year; while the number of such nurses that left the UK rose by 67%.⁹⁵

90. **We support the idea that the immigration system should treat different skills differently. There is also clear public support for the continued supply of high-skilled (not just highly-paid) workers to provide skills that are needed in the economy. Immigration rules should allow UK businesses and organisations easily to attract top talent in internationally competitive fields, and restrictions and controls should focus more on low-skilled migration.**

92 Financial Times, [UK visa rules likely to hit 'squeezed middle' immigrants](#), 16 March 2017

93 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q12; the basic metric the Government uses to categorise skill level for non-EEA migration is a salary threshold of £30,000, though occupations may be exempt from this criteria if they are included in the Shortage Occupation List.

94 [www.gov.uk, We will create a fairer society: article by Theresa May](#), January 2017; The UK in a changing Europe, [Fantasy island?](#), 10 April 2017

95 Daily Telegraph, [Number of EU nurses registering to work in the UK falls by 90%](#), 2 November 2017

Skills gaps

91. In addition to key public sector roles, there are many other low-paid parts of the economy where there are skills shortages among the UK resident population. For example, Neil Carberry, Managing Director of People and Infrastructure at the CBI, has warned about shortages of skilled technicians in the manufacturing sector. At the same time, we heard concerns that easy recruitment from abroad is being used as an excuse not to invest in training at home. For example, London First stressed that “our economy benefits greatly from semi-skilled and low paid but experienced workers who augment the local workforce, particularly in industries such as construction and hospitality”. However, they warned against relying on migrant labour at the expense of improving the UK skills system and called for “a stronger pipeline of home-grown talent with the right employability and technical skills.”⁹⁶ London First observe that 30% of construction workers in London are EU citizens yet the London Assembly found that London is the worst performing region for apprenticeships in the construction sector.⁹⁷ British Future report that attendees at the citizens’ panels and stakeholder meetings raised the issue of skills and training for those living in the UK with both groups suggesting that not enough was being done to equip local school-leavers with the skills they need to find work and that, as a consequence, employers were more likely to turn abroad to fill vacancies. Lack of employer investment in training and over-reliance by business on migrant workers was a particularly strong theme of the discussions in North Tyneside.⁹⁸

92. We recommend that policy on immigration for work purposes be linked to strategies for improving investment in domestic skills and training with the target of reducing dependency on migrant labour. For skilled jobs where there are shortages or high levels of recruitment from abroad, there should be a joint plan on skills and migration set out in the Annual Migration Report. Government should draw up a three-year rolling plan with businesses, trade unions, training sectors, devolved governments and local councils which identifies the level of immigration needed to fill skills gaps in the short term, but only alongside a clear vision of and commitment to investment to increase domestic training and skills in sectors and regions where this is needed. For example, nurses are currently categorised as a ‘shortage occupation’ for the purposes of non-EU immigration policy. In the case of nursing, easier access to labour in the short-term should be accompanied by a plan to increase nurse training places and domestic recruitment over the next three years. In the cases of, for example, computing skills and construction, the awarding of work permits should be linked to sectoral agreements setting out commitments to training.

Low skilled migration

93. CIPD survey data of employers found that the most commonly mentioned reason for employing newly arrived EU citizens was an inadequate supply of UK-born labour, especially for low-skilled roles.⁹⁹ The CIPD also found recognition amongst some

96 Written evidence submitted by London First [IMM0161]

97 Financial Times, [UK visa rules likely to hit ‘squeezed middle’ immigrants](#), 16 March 2017; London Assembly, [Apprenticeships: an un-level playing field](#), January 2017

98 British Future and Hope not Hate, *National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee*, January 2018

99 Written evidence submitted by CIPD [IBC0010]

employers that the strong labour supply from the EU had substituted efforts to recruit from a wider range of channels for UK workers such as ex-offenders, older workers and women returners.¹⁰⁰

94. Some low-paid, low-skilled sectors where it is hard to recruit, such as social care and the food industry, rely particularly heavily on immigration. The National Conversation found far greater concern about low skilled migration, however there was support for ‘low-skilled workers’ in key sectors such as health and social care and in those sectors in which the public do not typically wish to work, such as seasonal farm work.

95. Until their closure in December 2013 the Government operated seasonal immigration programmes for those employed in the agriculture and food production industries.¹⁰¹ The Migration Advisory Committee reported that most parties had gained from the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS). It found that it was well managed by the Home Office, growers got a supply of efficient labour, migrants received a good wage, British workers were not displaced and integration issues were limited as SAWS workers usually lived on the farm.¹⁰² The seasonal programmes were closed as it became clear that demand for workers could be met from the EU under freedom of movement, particularly once restrictions on the number of Bulgarian and Romanian migrants allowed to come to the UK were lifted on 1 January 2014.

96. The previous Committee heard from employers in the agriculture sector who said that they were unable to recruit sufficient low skilled UK workers—particularly for seasonal work moving from farm to farm. Sarah Boparan from HOPS Labour Solutions described a back-to-work scheme with a guaranteed job, accommodation and transport and a qualification at the end of it. She explained that she had managed to get 100 people on to the scheme, five of whom turned up of whom four left after five weeks.¹⁰³ We heard that the problem was not limited to UK workers. Beverley Dixon, Group HR Director at G’s Group, said in January 2016, they had 750 EU applicants to their website for 900 jobs but in 2017 it had fallen to 350.¹⁰⁴ The employers called for the reintroduction of a seasonal agricultural workers scheme and for it to be open to workers from both within and outside the EU.¹⁰⁵

97. The Government should consider a new Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme as there is already evidence that access to UK and EEA labour markets is insufficient to meet current demand. The objective of any such scheme would be to meet labour and skills shortages in the sector.

98. We also received evidence of concerns that some employers in low-skilled sectors of the economy exploit migrant workers, breaching minimum wage and employment legislation, thereby undercutting the rights and wages of UK labour. The TUC told us that employers taking advantage of the low level of employment regulation and enforcement of employment rules was a source of concern for many of their members.¹⁰⁶ Jill Rutter noted that the National Conversation had identified particular concerns about wider

100 Written evidence submitted by CIPD [[IBC0010](#)]

101 The two schemes were the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme and a Sector based scheme for food production

102 Migration Advisory Committee, [Migrant Seasonal Workers](#), May 2013

103 Oral evidence taken on [2 February 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q181

104 Oral evidence taken on [2 February 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q176

105 Oral evidence taken on [2 February 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Qq 161-215

106 Written evidence submitted by the TUC [[IMM0134](#)]

undercutting of terms and conditions in certain areas such as Chesterfield, Northampton and parts of Scotland.¹⁰⁷ In Chesterfield, where Sports Direct is based, they found that anxieties about job displacement and wage depression were “more strongly articulated than in almost all other places the National Conversation has visited”. Some panellists suggested that when Sports Direct set up its distribution centre there, it promised jobs to local people but the company then used an employment agency to recruit many of its staff directly from Poland.¹⁰⁸

99. For low skilled jobs where recruitment is heavily reliant on workers from abroad, the MAC should assess how far this is because of poor pay, terms and conditions, agency working or location, and therefore what kinds of new restrictions and controls are needed to prevent undercutting and exploitation.

100. Following concerns that exploitation and abuse in the labour market were not being sufficiently tackled, the Government extended the remit of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA), renamed it the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), and provided an addition £2 million for its budget. On 30 April 2017, the provisions to give the GLAA’s Labour Abuse Prevention Officers (LAPOs) powers under the Police and Crime Evidence Act 1984 came into force. This means that LAPOs can use these powers to investigate labour market offences, including modern slavery across the economy. Labour market offences are offences under the following legislation: Employment Agencies Act 1973, the National Minimum Wage Act 1998, the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 and Parts 1 and 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

101. The Home Office has estimated that there are 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK a figure the Chief Executive of the GLAA viewed as “far too modest”.¹⁰⁹ Since its powers were extended to all sectors of the economy, the GLAA has opened more than 200 new cases. Arrests have been made in sectors such as catering, cleaning, construction and textiles for human trafficking and gangmaster offences and non-payment of the minimum wage.

102. We welcome the provision of further powers and resources to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) (formerly the Gangmasters Licensing Authority). However, we recommend the Government considers further reforms to strengthen the GLAA and expand its remit, including considering an increase in regulated sectors where GLAA licences are required. We also recommend that enforcement of labour market standards is included in the Annual Migration Report, so that Parliament can consider the efficacy of the GLAA reforms and monitor its activities.

107 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q39

108 British Future and Hope not Hate, National Conversation on Immigration: An interim report to the Home Affairs Committee, January 2018

109 The Times, [GLAA anti-slavery agency investigating 200 new cases](#), 23 October 2017

6 Action is needed to address the impact of immigration on local communities

103. In every National Conversation panel, there was considerable discussion about the impact of migration on public services and local communities. Many people identified pressure on public services as being their biggest concern about immigration—often referring to local services or housing issues. We also heard evidence of concerns about integration, community cohesion and hate crime. We heard convincing arguments that more needs to be done on integration, on public services and on local strategies. Greater consensus on immigration will only be possible with much stronger action to address these concerns about the impact of immigration.

Increased demand for public services

104. There is little empirical evidence on the impact of immigration *per se* on public services, not least because there is a lack of information on the nationality or country of birth of people who use public services, or on how recently people arrived in the UK.¹¹⁰ However, much of our evidence warned of challenges in areas which have seen rapid population growth but where public spending has failed to keep pace. The Migration Advisory Committee explain that “if public spending does not increase in response to a rise in migration, consumption of public services will rise and so, all else equal, the quality of those services will fall.”¹¹¹

105. We also heard evidence of the role immigration plays in delivering public services—both through higher taxes raised from immigration and from the increasing dependence on migrant labour by many of our public service providers. For example, the Royal College of Nursing attested in written evidence to the significant contribution made by nursing staff from outside the UK to providing healthcare to local communities.¹¹² They pointed out that between 2001 and 2012, the percentage share of non-UK nationals within the practising nursing workforce grew from 15% to 22%.¹¹³

106. British Future argue that where there is rapid or large scale migration there is a need for effective policy that addresses pressures on public services and housing.¹¹⁴ Professor Ford told us that it was often communities that experienced high levels of immigration who did not feel that they had gained from the economic benefits that immigration can deliver at a national level. He explained that “We know that public distrust in immigration is at least in part related to the fact that the pressures feel real and local, yet the benefits often feel distant and abstract”.¹¹⁵ Phoebe Griffith, Associate Director at the IPPR, told our predecessors that there had been a failure in public policy to help communities that faced high levels of immigration as a result of freedom of movement.¹¹⁶

110 Full Fact, [Impacts of migration on local public services](#), May 2015

111 Migration Advisory Committee, [Analysis of the impacts of migration](#), January 2012

112 Written evidence submitted by the Royal College of Nursing [[IMM0085](#)]

113 Written evidence submitted by the Royal College of Nursing [[IMM0085](#)]

114 British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain's future immigration policy](#), September 2017

115 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q36

116 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q25 [IPPR]

107. We heard from Professor Ford that directly providing additional resources in “a rapid, responsive, transparent and high profile way” to communities that had experienced a large influx of migration could be a means of providing a link to any national benefits that are accrued; he summed it up as the Government saying, “The country is benefiting from these people coming in and so is your community because we are providing you with the resources to ensure that you can manage it to your benefit”.¹¹⁷ The response to regional need outlined by Professor Ford was also identified as one of the top priorities by those who attended the Citizens’ Assembly set up by UCL’s Constitution Unit.¹¹⁸

108. The regional responses as outlined by our witnesses are not new ideas. In 2009–10 the then Labour Government introduced a £35 million Migration Impacts Fund (MIF). The annual fund was designed to assist public service providers to deal with the transitional pressures of immigration. Critics of the scheme argued that the MIF was underfunded and lacked public recognition.¹¹⁹ It was scrapped by the Coalition Government who claimed it was ineffective. In the run-up to the 2015 General Election both the Labour and the Conservative parties pledged to introduce a new fund to address local pressures caused by migration. The Controlling Migration Fund for England (CMF) was introduced in the last Parliament.

109. Under the CMF, £25 million will be made available each year from 2016–17 to 2019–20 for projects that “will benefit an established resident community that has been adversely affected by high levels of immigration or that will support wider community cohesion and the integration of recent migrants”.¹²⁰ Examples of such projects include funding to help councils address the problem of rogue landlords, homelessness and the number of teaching assistants. The Fund cannot be used to supplement or support the provision of public services such as healthcare, something many of those calling for the introduction of the fund argued was essential.¹²¹ The Government maintains that funding for mainstream services is already responsive to changes in population. The first payments from the CMF were made in July 2017 and included support for projects tackling rogue landlords who damage neighbourhoods with overcrowded properties, additional funding to boost the number of teaching assistants, and support for the provision of English language classes.¹²²

110. It is imperative that the work of the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) is visible and locally accountable if it is to overcome the perceived weaknesses of its predecessor scheme, the Migration Impacts Fund (MIF). We are unconvinced, however, that the scope of the CMF is sufficient to address the additional pressures that rapid increases in population as a result of immigration can place on local public services or that conventional channels of public spending are sufficiently responsive to such increased demands. We recommend that proper assessment is made of both the positive benefits and negative pressures of immigration on public services. This assessment should form part of the Annual Migration Report, and lead to recommendations for additional funding to be made explicitly available to local authorities where immigration has demonstrably led to an increased demand for public services. The Government should

117 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q36

118 Oral evidence taken on [31 October 2017](#), HC (2017–19) 500, Q36

119 House of Commons Library briefing paper, [A new ‘Controlling Migration Fund’ for the UK?](#), August 2016

120 www.gov.uk, [Controlling Migration Fund Prospectus](#)

121 House of Commons Library briefing paper, [A new ‘Controlling Migration Fund’ for the UK?](#), August 2016

122 www.gov.uk, [Local councils to receive 15 million in extra funding](#), July 2017

also guard against allowing immigration to be blamed for wider funding pressures on public services—including by challenging misinformation and ensuring appropriate funding for public services is in place.

111. Initial applications to the CMF show that the problem of rogue landlords letting overcrowded accommodation blights communities across the country. We do not believe the Controlling Migration Fund alone will be sufficient to tackle this problem. The Government should put in place, and actively enforce, much stronger regulation of houses of multiple occupation.

Integration

112. British Future report listening to “people talking about divided communities and neighbourhood decline where overcrowded properties are rented to transient groups of migrant workers” but also “about integration successes, for example of communities that come together to celebrate shared festivals.”¹²³ Tension between resident communities and migrant populations appear most evident in those areas where new arrivals struggle to integrate, are temporary or lack certainty about their future. In many areas visited by British Future people were generally positive about integration in their local area but at the same time felt there should be more support for specific measures from local and national government. Common issues raised included concerns about private rental accommodation, the lack of availability of English language lessons and increased pressure on public services and housing.

113. The importance of measures to aid integration has risen up the political spectrum in recent years. We have already discussed the Government’s introduction of the Controlling Migration Fund which can fund projects to help integration. In 2016 Dame Louise Casey published her government-commissioned review into what could be done to boost opportunity and integration in the most isolated and deprived communities and last year saw the publication of important reports by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Integration.

English language lessons

114. Successive British Social Attitudes (BSA) surveys have shown widespread support for migrants to be committed to a British way of life, and that worries over the cultural impact of immigration overshadow concerns about the economy. Respondents to the 2014 BSA survey identified the ability to speak English as the most important quality for a migrant to have. During their events across the country British Future also found high levels of support for the provision of English language classes.

115. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are heavily oversubscribed but public funding for them has more than halved over the last seven years, from £203 million in 2009–10 to £90 million to 2015–16.¹²⁴ The Mayor of Bedford told our predecessors that more funding for English lessons was one of the key things the Government could do to improve integration in his area.¹²⁵ This was echoed in reports by the APPG on

123 British Future, [Time to get it right: finding consensus on Britain’s future immigration policy](#), September 2017

124 Times Education Supplement, [ESOL funding falls by £100m](#), 23 January 2017; Independent, [Migrants told to learn English upon entering UK face three year wait for lessons](#), 9 January 2017

125 Oral evidence taken on [2 February 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q160

Social Integration and Dame Louise Casey's review into opportunity and integration.¹²⁶ The Government has made an extra £20 million available as part of an effort to tackle radicalisation and also points to funding available via the Controlling Migration Fund.¹²⁷

116. We recommend that funding for English language courses should be separate from the Controlling Migration Fund and should be restored to previous levels. The ability to speak English has been identified in opinion surveys as a key factor in effective integration of migrants and we agree that it makes an essential contribution in this respect. We are concerned that the Controlling Migration Fund is currently being used to mitigate the impact of cuts in public funding for English-language training elsewhere in the system. Changing the source of funding for English language courses would allow more CMF funding to be used on projects of tangible benefit to resident populations, which may feel their concerns have so far been largely ignored at a national level.

Locally-led integration strategy

117. The responsibility to design and implement an integration strategy should not rest at national level alone. The Casey Review into opportunity and integration stressed the vital role that local authorities play in picking up and acting upon signs that integration is breaking down at the earliest stage.¹²⁸ It noted that in Sheffield, for example, more than 6,000 people of Roma or Eastern European heritage were living predominantly in one ward. The resulting impact on schools had caused considerable problems for the local authority, as the number of EU national children had increased from 150 to 2,500 in five years.¹²⁹ In their January 2017 report the APPG on Social Integration argued that local authorities should identify the biggest integration barriers in their area—be that the economic, civic or social dimension—and seek to prioritise them.¹³⁰ The APPG called on the Government to require all local authorities to draw up and implement 'Local Integration Action Plans'.

118. British Future's submission to our inquiry also highlighted concerns that a lack of integration was leading to a breakdown in community cohesion. Participants in the National Conversation's citizens' panel in Gloucester, for example, expressed deep concerns about the anti-social behaviour of groups of young male migrants in one area and the lack of response from the council or police in addressing the problem. The Casey Review also drew attention to the rise in recorded incidents of hate crime.¹³¹ According to the most recent statistics, recorded incidents of hate crime in 2016–17 rose by 29% compared with the previous year, the largest percentage increase seen since the series began in 2011–12.¹³² The Casey Review urged local authorities to collect and act upon incidences of hate crime in local areas.

119. Efforts by proactive local authorities are essential to tackling at source the problems caused by a lack of integration. We support the recommendation of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration that local authorities should

126 www.gov.uk, [The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration](#), December 2016

127 HM Government, ['Passive tolerance' of separate communities must end, says PM](#), 18 January 2016

128 www.gov.uk, [The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration](#), December 2016

129 www.gov.uk, [The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration](#), December 2016, p. 167

130 All Party Parliamentary Group of Social Integration, [Interim Report into integration of migrants](#), January 2017

131 www.gov.uk, [The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration](#), December 2016

132 Home Office, [Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016–17](#)

develop local integration strategies. On an annual basis, local authorities should report the economic, civic and social barriers to integration in their areas and make recommendations for action, including measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime. They should also be more proactive in tackling immigration myths in their areas to prevent prejudices from taking hold.

120. **The findings and recommendations of local integration strategies should feed directly into the Annual Migration Report. The Government should develop a national integration strategy as part of its three-year migration plans, with the explicit goal of supporting local councils, to address the concerns they raise and following up the recommendations of the Casey Review.**

Settlement

121. Policies that try to discourage long-term settlement and focus instead on continuous temporary migration to fill skill gaps can lead to population churn in communities. For example, filling skills gaps with a series of temporary overseas workers can mean more new arrivals with less incentive to integrate than fewer people staying for longer or settling here. Under current rules, non-EU workers earning less than £35,000 are only able to stay for six years even if the skills gap they fill still remains, so they may end up being replaced by a new temporary overseas worker.

122. Phoebe Griffith, Associate Director for Migration, Integration and Communities at the IPPR, told our predecessors that she felt the Government's current approach to immigration policy acted against integration. She suggested that "the balance has definitely tipped in favour of ensuring that people cannot settle in Britain, and therefore do not have a huge incentive to integrate."¹³³

123. People are more likely to integrate if they are staying for longer. Greater churn of people is harder for community relations. The Government should ensure that immigration rules do not simply encourage higher levels of temporary migration at the expense of long term settlement and commitment to this country. It should review pathways to settlement and citizenship to encourage greater certainty for applicants and promote integration.

Local and regional impact

124. We have consistently heard that the concerns people had about immigration were primarily local and regional. The National Conversation, however, revealed that concerns often reflected local pressure points. Panellists in areas as diverse as Redbridge, Cambridge and Derry-Londonderry, which all face shortages in accommodation, were united in viewing the impact of population pressure on the competition for housing as the primary local concern. In other areas, such as Chesterfield and Gloucester, it was primarily the pressure on public services like schools, GP surgeries and hospitals which concerned local residents.

133 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q37 [Phoebe Griffith]

Regional immigration policy

125. We are aware of calls for the Home Office to apply different rules to different parts of the country or for the Government to allow the constituent parts of the United Kingdom more autonomy over immigration policy. In relation to Scotland, these calls are based not only on economic need but on demographic issues, including projected population increases that are much more dependent on inward migration, an increasing dependency ratio and the knock-on effect this would have on revenues generated by devolved taxes.¹³⁴

126. Our predecessors heard from the SNP Scottish Government that it wants different post-Brexit immigration arrangements for Scotland. Those arrangements would include the continuation of freedom of movement and the flexibility to adapt non-EEA rules to Scotland, for example by reducing salary thresholds for spouses and Tier 2 workers and to introduce a post-study work visa.¹³⁵ Others who have called for a differentiated system include the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, Unison, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Parliament and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration.

127. Currently the only scope for different regional approaches is via the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) where the UK-wide SOL is supplemented by a separate shortage list for Scotland. However, the successful provision of expanded post-study work rights for international students in Scotland suggests that regional variations in migration policy have worked in the past. A number of recent publications have considered the issue of differentiated immigration rules in the UK and how these might be implemented, using comparisons with countries such as Canada and Australia where this already happens.¹³⁶

128. Madeleine Sumption, the Director of Migration Observatory, explained to our predecessors that identifying regional need might be even more difficult than identifying industry-specific need, due to a lack of data. Professor Alan Manning, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee, drew attention to the problem of regional migration once limits on workers' restrictions expired.¹³⁷ He explained: "It is possible that the area that wants permanent migrants ends up with only temporary migrants because they leave, and the area that really only wanted temporary migrants ends up with permanent migrants."¹³⁸ Evidence from Canada which has a regional system shows mixed results in regions retaining immigrants once regional specific restrictions lapse.

129. A recent survey by NatCen found that 63% of people polled in Scotland would like Scotland to keep the same rules on immigration as the rest of the UK.¹³⁹ British Future found limited support for devolved immigration policy in its visits to Scotland with half of those it spoke to raising concerns over the ability of the Scottish government to manage

134 See for example Scottish Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2016–17, [Demography of Scotland and the implications for devolution](#), HC 82

135 Oral evidence taken on [2 March 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864

136 Dr Eve Hepburn, [Options for differentiating the UK's immigration system](#), Research commissioned for the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relation Committee of the Scottish Parliament; IPPR, [An immigration strategy for the UK: Six proposals to manage migration for economic success](#), 5 December 2017

137 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q96

138 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Q97

139 The Times, [Scots reject the SNP's call for immigration powers](#), 10 January 2018

its borders. However, the IPPR report that their studies in the northeast of England show that if regional migration could compensate for the significant regional imbalances in the UK economy, then people were more likely to be persuaded.¹⁴⁰

130. To date, the Government has ruled out regional variation in any post-Brexit immigration arrangements on the grounds that it would add complexity and harm the integrity of the system. However, it has asked the Migration Advisory Committee to consider the regional distribution of migrants as part of the wider study it has commissioned on the role EU nationals play in the UK economy and society. Phoebe Griffith, Associate Director at the IPPR, and Lord Green, Chair of Migration Watch, told our predecessors that they considered regional variations to be a viable option, although Lord Green cautioned that such a system would need to be managed centrally to prevent immigration ‘running out of control’.¹⁴¹ The IPPR further suggest that by giving regions greater powers over immigration, local debates on immigration could become more constructive and “focused on people’s direct experiences and priorities and the local impacts and contributions of migrants, rather than abstract national arguments and statistics.” The IPPR argue that over time such a system could lead to a more consensual and less divisive debate over immigration.¹⁴²

131. We note that much of the British public want a say over the volume and type of immigration in their own area, while recognising that different priorities exist in different parts of the country. However, it is also clear that any regionally-specific migration policy raises concerns about enforcement and public scepticism about whether it is workable and, as we set out earlier in this report, credibility on enforcement is a crucial part of building broader consensus on immigration. However, we note that the changes to entry and exit checks alongside the ‘hostile environment’ might make that enforcement easier for certain kinds of visas, for example making it harder for someone with a study visa for a university in Scotland to live or work in Wales.

132. A future immigration system needs to work effectively for all parts of the UK. It is helpful that the Government has included regional distribution in the work it has commissioned from the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to examine the role EU nationals play in the UK economy and society. The MAC’s intention to engage with stakeholders across the UK as part of this work is welcome, and we look forward to reviewing its findings when they are published later this year. An assessment should also be made of what kinds of enforcement are possible on a regional basis. Until the MAC concludes its work and that assessment has been done, the Government should be open-minded to a future immigration system that allows for different regional approaches to immigration.

140 IPPR, [An immigration strategy for the UK](#), December 2017

141 Oral evidence taken on [24 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 864, Qq55-56

142 IPPR, [An immigration strategy for the UK](#), December 2017

7 Conclusion

133. The decision to hold the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union has triggered a national debate on immigration which is long overdue. The Archbishop of Canterbury told our predecessors that “we never serve ourselves well by neglecting to look facts in the face. The reality is that in many communities there is a great degree of nervousness about immigration.”¹⁴³ Immigration is as much a local issue as a national one. While dialogue is important for building consensus—and the work of British Future and UCL's Citizens' Assembly show that an appetite for it exists—local concerns about such issues as overcrowded rental accommodation, low level anti-social behaviours, and pressures on health, housing and education, and national concerns about the protection of workers' rights, need to be addressed by evidence-led policy responses.

134. This inquiry and the work of British Future has involved meetings where groups of individuals from different backgrounds and with a range of political views came together and engaged in rational debate. People taking part in citizens' panels and assemblies clearly welcomed the opportunity to engage with complex issues, particularly when they were provided with information which enabled them to take a considered approach. They have shown that when issues move beyond general opinions on immigration levels to attitudes towards different kinds of immigration, towards individuals and families, and towards the impact of migration, their views are nuanced; and that when issues are disaggregated there is more common ground between people than there is division to set them apart.

135. The Government should use this evidence of consensus as a foundation on which to build public confidence that immigration policy can work in the best interests of everyone and that it will be fair, principled and robustly enforced.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. We recommend that the Government makes it a clear and stated objective of public policy to build greater consensus and trust on immigration. The work of British Future shows that there exists considerable appetite for greater public engagement and for this to be the basis for a constructive and open debate. Our findings chime with this view. Our inquiry has concluded that immigration does not have to be a polarising issue. There will of course always be disagreements over the detail of immigration policy, just as there are in other policy areas. However, we believe that broader consensus can and should be found around the underlying principles of the immigration system, but the debate requires care, honesty and the opportunity for the public to be involved. We also believe there must be clearer explanation of the different types of immigration and the policy frameworks that govern them. (Paragraph 9)

Immigration policy should be informed by honest and open debate and supported by evidence

2. The Government's existing net migration target set at "the tens of thousands" is not working to build confidence or consent. The continued discrepancy between the target and reality has damaged the public's view of the immigration system because it undermines trust in the state's ability to control migration in the way it intends or to deliver on its plans. Setting a long-term target or aspiration does not solve the challenge of achieving credibility, as people want to see practical steps that can be taken in the short-term. As we set out later in this report, the target should be replaced with a new framework of targets and controls based on evidence. (Paragraph 17)
3. Accurate analysis of who is entering and leaving the country is vital for effective policy-making and confidence-building. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) has proved to be inadequate for this purpose. We therefore welcome the reintroduction of exit checks and the publication of data on the exit rates in the study, visit and work visa categories. The exit checks programme has been shown to be an important source of data to use alongside the IPS survey and may help to improve public confidence in the immigration system. We recommend that the analysis of exit check data for visa holders be published quarterly alongside IPS immigration statistics. We also recommend that the Home Office examine how all entries and exits from major ports in the UK, including for non-visa travellers, can be recorded and that all entry and exit information is then used to aid the analysis of migration flow and to better inform policy decisions. (Paragraph 22)
4. The data captured by the decennial census is produced too infrequently to be valuable for measuring the impact of immigration on local areas. Beyond the extension of analysis based on entry and exit data, the Office for National Statistics

should work with the Migration Advisory Committee, devolved governments and local authorities to develop regular and granular analyses of migration flows by local areas. (Paragraph 23)

5. The longstanding paucity of data of who may be in the country illegally is a serious concern. It has allowed anxiety to grow unchecked and has been perceived as the Government showing indifference toward an issue of high public interest. We recognise the Government's concern that to create an official estimate of overall illegal immigration without any reliable evidence would not add value to the debate. However, we also believe that more analysis of the scale and nature of the problem of illegal immigration is needed in order to develop appropriate policy responses and reassure the public that the issue is being addressed seriously. The Government should use exit data, and other relevant sources of information, to produce an annual estimate of the number of people who have breached the rules in that year to remain in the UK. (Paragraph 26)
6. The data and advice that the Migration Advisory Committee has been asked to provide on the role of EU nationals in the UK economy and society is vital to the development of a successful immigration system and to building confidence in that system. We welcome the commissioning of the MAC to provide this vital evidence, but we do not understand why it took the Government more than 12 months from the referendum to commission this work or why such data is not collected by the Government as a matter of routine. The delay means that the White Paper on immigration, expected early this year, will have been drafted in an acknowledged evidence vacuum. It also means that when the Government begins negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU, it will do so without knowing what it wants the UK's future immigration arrangements with the EU to be or what the economy needs. We recommend that the MAC have a rolling commission to regularly collect and publish data on the relationship between the labour market and immigration. (Paragraph 29)
7. We call on the Government to be more proactive in challenging myths and inaccuracies about immigration and the asylum system, including by publishing more factual information about the costs and benefits of immigration at local and national levels. As we set out below, this could be achieved by an Annual Migration Report and debate. (Paragraph 31)
8. Members of the public, organisations and businesses need access to better information about migration flows and the Government's policy approach to managing them. We believe that the Government should table an Annual Migration Report and set aside parliamentary time for debate on that report. The report would detail the previous year's migration flows, the economic contribution from migration to the Exchequer and the measures taken by the Government to manage impacts and pressures. Like the Comprehensive Spending Review, it could set out a three-year plan which would then be reviewed annually. It would be informed by independent advice from the Migration Advisory Committee just as the Budget is informed by the Office for Budget Responsibility; and it would include public consultation at local and regional level. As we set out later in this report, it should cover targets or controls for different kinds of migration, an assessment of migration levels and consideration of policy requirements for different regions and nations, plans for

integration and support for local communities, and parallel labour market plans to deal with skills shortages which are increasing demand for overseas workers or measures to deal with exploitation of low skilled migration. (Paragraph 36)

9. The Annual Migration Report would have an explicit objective towards consensus building, to which all parties should commit. It should become the focal point for a sustained and ongoing commitment to public engagement across the nations and regions of the UK. Migration plans should include measures to challenge misinformation and build trust, support and credibility. The Government should therefore actively seek submissions about its migration targets. Parliamentary committee hearings and public debates in town halls and other settings could scrutinise proposals and recommendations from civil society. The Government should be frank and open in recognising that policy-making involves compromise and that balancing competing interests means that no one can get everything they want. Adopting this approach would have the benefit of normalising a sustained, ongoing commitment to public engagement as part of the annual process of the oversight and review of immigration choices in the UK. (Paragraph 37)

Fair and clear rules need to be properly enforced

10. We welcome the Home Secretary's commitment to simplifying immigration law and look forward to seeing tangible improvements. People are less likely to have confidence in a system which they cannot understand or access easily. These clearer rules should be underpinned by clear principles and values—reflecting for example the importance of contributing to the country and the economy, supporting family life, safeguarding security, meeting international humanitarian obligations, and the rights and responsibilities of those who come. Information needs to be provided in a clear, consistent and easily accessible format, especially online. We recommend that these principles are debated and set out clearly in the Annual Migration Reports. The procedures for making and scrutinising immigration rules and amendments to them require significant change to enhance consultation and parliamentary accountability. (Paragraph 41)
11. Our predecessors warned repeatedly about the need to improve the performance of the immigration system. The sheer number of people within the immigration system means that mistakes, particularly those based on inaccurate data, are highly unlikely ever to be eradicated completely. However, the impact of errors can be deeply damaging and traumatic for individuals and delays can leave families in limbo for long periods. The huge increase in delays in processing asylum applications are particularly worrying. The Home Office needs to do much more to reduce errors and to speed up accurate decision-making. We will examine the Home Office's capacity to deliver effective immigration services in more detail in a separate report to be issued shortly. In the meantime, we urge the Home Office to do more to respond to the recommendations of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and to improve quality assurance and the recruitment, training and retention of immigration officials. (Paragraph 44)
12. Immigration rules need to be enforced effectively if the unacceptable failures of the past, which have led to public anxiety over whether the system is fair, are to be

avoided. There must be a much greater focus on early enforcement. Exit checks will assist in the detection of overstayers but more resources must be made available to support enforcement and action against those who knowingly employ people with no legal right to be in the country. (Paragraph 50)

13. We are concerned, in the context of budget cuts and evidence we have received about staffing gaps, to see reports that the Home Office is considering using volunteers to staff the border. We are alarmed by suggestions that volunteers might take on roles that should be carried out by full-time, trained staff, particularly when this involves protecting the integrity and security of the UK border. We will examine this issue in our forthcoming separate report on the capacity of the Home Office to deliver immigration services, which will include our assessment of the capacity of Border Force to fulfil its functions effectively. (Paragraph 51)
14. The Government should not rely on its “hostile environment” policy as a panacea for enforcement and building confidence, especially given the current concerns about accuracy and error. We are concerned that the policy is unclear and, in some instances, too open to interpretation and inadvertent error. Not only can these errors be deeply damaging and distressing to those involved—as with letters being sent to EU nationals about their right to live in the UK—they also undermine the credibility of the system. Recent high-profile reports of the Home office threatening to deport individuals based on inaccurate and untested information, and before an independent appeal process, risk undermining the credibility of the whole system. This is particularly worrying in advance of the need to register EU nationals in preparation for Brexit. (Paragraph 57)
15. It is clear there are serious deficiencies in the effectiveness and operation of detention at present. We are looking further at the use of immigration detention following the revelations of abuse at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre. We welcome the Government asking Stephen Shaw to follow up his 2016 report on the welfare of vulnerable people in detention and expect to consider this issue in more detail once he concludes his important work. (Paragraph 60)
16. The public need reassurance that criminal and security checks are properly embedded in the immigration system. The Government should set out the current criminal and security vetting procedures that people are subject to before their arrival in the UK. We recommend the Home Office reviews cross-agency practices for removing foreign national offenders, including where recent arrivals have received custodial sentences and are eligible for removal. (Paragraph 62)

There should be different approaches for different types of immigration

17. Evidence to our inquiry and from the National Conversation suggests that any approach that treats all migration as the same encourages polarisation of the debate. Treating different kinds of migration differently would reflect most people’s views of immigration, and allow for much greater consensus to be built into the debate, as well as for greater transparency over immigration policy in general. The Government should replace its net migration target with an evidence-based framework for different types of immigration that takes into account the UK’s

needs and its international obligations to accept people, arising from both trade and humanitarian agreements. Different targets or controls for different kinds of migration should be set out in the Annual Migration Report, as part of a three-year migration plan. Doing so would allow for more specific consideration of the costs and benefits of immigration and might help to build greater consensus behind different approaches to different kinds of migration. (Paragraph 65)

18. International statistical rules require students to be included in the way migration is calculated but we do not believe that it is logical or in the best interests of the UK to include international students in a target based on restricting migration flow, given that they represent a large group of migrants who are in most part temporary and whom the Government is keen to encourage to come to the UK. There should be no national target to restrict the numbers of students coming to the UK. As a minimum, the Government should remove immediately student migration from the net migration target. (Paragraph 70)
19. In calling for more international students to come and study in the UK, universities must be mindful of local impacts of large numbers of students and work with local authorities to help manage pressures on housing and public services. Universities should be expected to consult local authorities on future student numbers in their area. (Paragraph 72)
20. There should be no diminution in the UK's approach towards its international humanitarian obligations as it leaves the European Union. The UK has a proud tradition in providing support to those fleeing persecution and the principle has widespread public support. The principle of asylum—with the internationally recognised degree of evidence required—must be upheld. The Government should make every effort to honour its existing commitments to bring unaccompanied children from Europe and elsewhere, both as part of the Dubs scheme and the Dublin III Regulation but also through family reunion routes within and outside the Immigration Rules. (Paragraph 77)
21. We recommend that the Government does more to challenge public misconceptions about people seeking asylum. In particular, a much clearer differentiation must be made between asylum and migration for other reasons. Clear public information should be provided on the entitlements, rights and number of asylum-seekers compared with other migrants to combat myths. A failure to do so risks harming support for asylum and refugee policy. As a minimum, people who enter the UK for humanitarian purposes should not be included in headline figures of net migration including, while it remains in use, the net migration target. (Paragraph 78)
22. The success of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme shows that a well-managed and well-funded refugee resettlement scheme attracts strong support. A resettlement scheme along similar lines to the Syrian VPRS should be established on a permanent basis, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, which would apply to refugees from other countries. (Paragraph 79)
23. Much of the evidence we received for this inquiry called for immigration policy and those responsible for its administration to be more sensitive to the rights of families and children, particularly where there was evidence—beyond the salary of

the key sponsor—that they would be able to support themselves. Fees, requirements for regular visa extensions and salary thresholds and qualifying periods are just some of the barriers that we were told prevented people from being able to live a settled life in the UK. We believe that striving to meet the best interests of families and children should be at the heart of immigration policy. We urge the Home Office to take note of these concerns and review the impact of its policies on families and children. (Paragraph 82)

Immigration should work for the economic and social interests of the UK and its citizens

24. The public need reassurance that the contributory principle is embedded in the immigration system to address concerns that some people might be attracted to the UK because of our system of welfare. As part of the Annual Migration Report which we have recommended, the Government should set out the details of the expected contributions and entitlements of new arrivals in the UK in the different immigration categories. (Paragraph 86)
25. We note that there are a range of views on the potential trade-offs between immigration and global trade policy. We have not yet considered the options for a specific migration policy towards EEA citizens post-Brexit, but expect to do so when the Government publishes its forthcoming immigration White Paper. (Paragraph 87)
26. We support the idea that the immigration system should treat different skills differently. There is also clear public support for the continued supply of high-skilled (not just highly-paid) workers to provide skills that are needed in the economy. Immigration rules should allow UK businesses and organisations easily to attract top talent in internationally competitive fields, and restrictions and controls should focus more on low-skilled migration. (Paragraph 90)
27. We recommend that policy on immigration for work purposes be linked to strategies for improving investment in domestic skills and training with the target of reducing dependency on migrant labour. For skilled jobs where there are shortages or high levels of recruitment from abroad, there should be a joint plan on skills and migration set out in the Annual Migration Report. Government should draw up a three-year rolling plan with businesses, trade unions, training sectors, devolved governments and local councils which identifies the level of immigration needed to fill skills gaps in the short term, but only alongside a clear vision of and commitment to investment to increase domestic training and skills in sectors and regions where this is needed. For example, nurses are currently categorised as a ‘shortage occupation’ for the purposes of non-EU immigration policy. In the case of nursing, easier access to labour in the short-term should be accompanied by a plan to increase nurse training places and domestic recruitment over the next three years. In the cases of, for example, computing skills and construction, the awarding of work permits should be linked to sectoral agreements setting out commitments to training. (Paragraph 92)

28. The Government should consider a new Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme as there is already evidence that access to UK and EEA labour markets is insufficient to meet current demand. The objective of any such scheme would be to meet labour and skills shortages in the sector. (Paragraph 97)
29. For low skilled jobs where recruitment is heavily reliant on workers from abroad, the MAC should assess how far this is because of poor pay, terms and conditions, agency working or location, and therefore what kinds of new restrictions and controls are needed to prevent undercutting and exploitation. (Paragraph 99)
30. We welcome the provision of further powers and resources to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) (formerly the Gangmasters Licensing Authority). However, we recommend the Government considers further reforms to strengthen the GLAA and expand its remit, including considering an increase in regulated sectors where GLAA licences are required. We also recommend that enforcement of labour market standards is included in the Annual Migration Report, so that Parliament can consider the efficacy of the GLAA reforms and monitor its activities. (Paragraph 102)

Action is needed to address the impact of immigration on local communities

31. It is imperative that the work of the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) is visible and locally accountable if it is to overcome the perceived weaknesses of its predecessor scheme, the Migration Impacts Fund (MIF). We are unconvinced, however, that the scope of the CMF is sufficient to address the additional pressures that rapid increases in population as a result of immigration can place on local public services or that conventional channels of public spending are sufficiently responsive to such increased demands. We recommend that proper assessment is made of both the positive benefits and negative pressures of immigration on public services. This assessment should form part of the Annual Migration Report, and lead to recommendations for additional funding to be made explicitly available to local authorities where immigration has demonstrably led to an increased demand for public services. The Government should also guard against allowing immigration to be blamed for wider funding pressures on public services—including by challenging misinformation and ensuring appropriate funding for public services is in place. (Paragraph 110)
32. Initial applications to the CMF show that the problem of rogue landlords letting overcrowded accommodation blights communities across the country. We do not believe the Controlling Migration Fund alone will be sufficient to tackle this problem. The Government should put in place, and actively enforce, much stronger regulation of houses of multiple occupation. (Paragraph 111)
33. We recommend that funding for English language courses should be separate from the Controlling Migration Fund and should be restored to previous levels. The ability to speak English has been identified in opinion surveys as a key factor in effective integration of migrants and we agree that it makes an essential contribution in this respect. We are concerned that the Controlling Migration Fund is currently being used to mitigate the impact of cuts in public funding for English-language training

elsewhere in the system. Changing the source of funding for English language courses would allow more CMF funding to be used on projects of tangible benefit to resident populations, which may feel their concerns have so far been largely ignored at a national level. (Paragraph 116)

34. Efforts by proactive local authorities are essential to tackling at source the problems caused by a lack of integration. We support the recommendation of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration that local authorities should develop local integration strategies. On an annual basis, local authorities should report the economic, civic and social barriers to integration in their areas and make recommendations for action, including measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime. They should also be more proactive in tackling immigration myths in their areas to prevent prejudices from taking hold. (Paragraph 119)
35. The findings and recommendations of local integration strategies should feed directly into the Annual Migration Report. The Government should develop a national integration strategy as part of its three-year migration plans, with the explicit goal of supporting local councils, to address the concerns they raise and following up the recommendations of the Casey Review. (Paragraph 120)
36. People are more likely to integrate if they are staying for longer. Greater churn of people is harder for community relations. The Government should ensure that immigration rules do not simply encourage higher levels of temporary migration at the expense of long term settlement and commitment to this country. It should review pathways to settlement and citizenship to encourage greater certainty for applicants and promote integration. (Paragraph 123)
37. We note that much of the British public want a say over the volume and type of immigration in their own area, while recognising that different priorities exist in different parts of the country. However, it is also clear that any regionally-specific migration policy raises concerns about enforcement and public scepticism about whether it is workable and, as we set out earlier in this report, credibility on enforcement is a crucial part of building broader consensus on immigration. However, we note that the changes to entry and exit checks alongside the 'hostile environment' might make that enforcement easier for certain kinds of visas, for example making it harder for someone with a study visa for a university in Scotland to live or work in Wales. (Paragraph 131)
38. A future immigration system needs to work effectively for all parts of the UK. It is helpful that the Government has included regional distribution in the work it has commissioned from the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to examine the role EU nationals play in the UK economy and society. The MAC's intention to engage with stakeholders across the UK as part of this work is welcome, and we look forward to reviewing its findings when they are published later this year. An assessment should also be made of what kinds of enforcement are possible on a regional basis. Until the MAC concludes its work and that assessment has been done, the Government should be open-minded to a future immigration system that allows for different regional approaches to immigration. (Paragraph 132)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 10 January 2018

Members present:

Yvette Cooper, in the Chair

Stephen Doughty	Douglas Ross
Sarah Jones	Naz Shah
Stuart C McDonald	

Draft Report (*Immigration policy: basis for building consensus*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 135 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 16 January at 9.30 am.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 31 October 2017

Sunder Katwala, Director, British Future, **Jill Rutter**, Director of Strategy and Relationships, British Future, **Dr Alan Renwick**, Deputy Director, Constitution Unit, University College London, **Robert Ford**, Professor of Political Science, University of Manchester

[Q1–39](#)

The following witnesses gave evidence on Immigration to the Home Affairs Committee in the previous Parliament. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 24 January 2017

Lord Green of Deddington, Chair, Migration Watch UK, and **Phoebe Griffith**, Associate Director for Migration, Integration and Communities, Institute for Public Policy Research

[Q1–72](#)

Professor Alan Manning, Chair, Migration Advisory Committee, and **Madeleine Sumption**, Director, Migration Observatory

[Q73–107](#)

Thursday 2 February 2017

Dave Hodgson, Mayor of Bedford, and **Philip Simpkins**, Chief Executive, Bedford Borough Council

[Q108–160](#)

Sarah Boparan, Recruitment and Key Account Manager, HOPS Labour Solutions, **Andy Coaten**, Managing Director, Butters Group Ltd, **Beverly Dixon**, HR Director, G's Group; and **Chris Newenham**, Joint Managing Director, Wilkin & Sons Ltd

[Q160–215](#)

Thursday 2 March 2017

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for International Development and Europe, and **Ruth Steele**, Head of Migration Strategy, Scottish Government

[Q216–268](#)

Lorraine Cook, Policy Manager, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and **Dr Donald Macaskill**, Chief Executive, Scottish Care

[Q269–308](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

IBC numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 ASSIST Sheffield and South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice ([IBC0003](#))
- 2 Asylum Matters ([IBC0012](#))
- 3 Bail for Immigration Detainees ([IBC0002](#))
- 4 BIFM ([IBC0018](#))
- 5 Bright Blue ([IBC0016](#))
- 6 Cavendish Coalition ([IBC0014](#))
- 7 Children's Brexit Coalition ([IBC0009](#))
- 8 CIPD ([IBC0010](#))
- 9 Council for Global Immigration ([IBC0007](#))
- 10 Destination for Education ([IBC0013](#))
- 11 Detention Action ([IBC0008](#))
- 12 Detention Action / Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre ([IBC 0026](#))
- 13 Detention Action / Scottish Detainee Visitors ([IBC 0025](#))
- 14 EEF, the manufacturers' organisation ([IBC0021](#))
- 15 Emilio Marcos Sierra ([IBC0023](#))
- 16 Freedom from Torture ([IBC0015](#))
- 17 Guglielmo Meardi ([IBC0006](#))
- 18 Immigration Law Practitioners' Association ([IBC0011](#))
- 19 IPPR ([IBC0022](#))
- 20 Medical Justice ([IBC0019](#))
- 21 Mrs Jean Lambert ([IBC0005](#))
- 22 NASSCOM (National Association of Software & Services Companies) ([IBC0004](#))
- 23 Pact ([IBC0017](#))
- 24 Professor Thom Brooks ([IBC0024](#))
- 25 the3million ([IBC0020](#))
- 26 Universities UK ([IBC0001](#))

The following evidence was received by the previous Home Affairs Committee before the general election in 2017. It can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

IMM numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 27 #WeAreInternational ([IMM0153](#))
- 28 38 Degrees ([IMM0174](#))

- 29 Airport Operators Association ([IMM0005](#))
- 30 Alice Driver ([IMM0088](#))
- 31 Amnesty International UK ([IMM0172](#))
- 32 Andrea Chlebikova ([IMM0104](#))
- 33 Angela Stoddart ([IMM0109](#))
- 34 Ann Richards ([IMM0020](#))
- 35 ARM ([IMM0183](#))
- 36 Ashliegh Yasar ([IMM0124](#))
- 37 Association of American Study Abroad Programmes United Kingdom ([IMM0026](#))
- 38 Association of Colleges ([IMM0086](#))
- 39 Bail for Immigration Detainees ([IMM0110](#))
- 40 Bail Observation Project ([IMM0122](#))
- 41 Barbara Mark ([IMM0111](#))
- 42 Basit Hameed ([IMM0031](#))
- 43 Bedford Borough Council supplementary ([IMM0190](#))
- 44 Brexit Alliance ([IMM0147](#))
- 45 Brighton Migrant Solidarity ([IMM0175](#))
- 46 British Community Committee of France ([IMM0083](#))
- 47 British Hospitality Association ([IMM0158](#))
- 48 British Medical Association ([IMM0058](#))
- 49 Bupa UK ([IMM0163](#))
- 50 Campaign for Science and Engineering ([IMM0130](#))
- 51 Cancer Research UK ([IMM0072](#))
- 52 Cecilia Kokubu ([IMM0074](#))
- 53 Centre for Economic Performance ([IMM0121](#))
- 54 Citizens UK ([IMM0100](#))
- 55 City of London Corporation ([IMM0177](#))
- 56 CLA ([IMM0069](#))
- 57 Convention of Scottish Local Authorities ([IMM0157](#))
- 58 Coram Children’s Legal Centre ([IMM0108](#))
- 59 Cornwall Council ([IMM0186](#))
- 60 Crystal Dickinson ([IMM0032](#))
- 61 D Joshi ([IMM0061](#))
- 62 Daniel Abson ([IMM0180](#))
- 63 David Bell ([IMM0107](#))
- 64 David Goodhart, Head of the Demography Unit at Policy Exchange think tank ([IMM0167](#))
- 65 Detention Action ([IMM0084](#))

- 66 Donald Stickland ([IMM0125](#))
- 67 Dr Bernie Doerer ([IMM0097](#))
- 68 Dr Heather Forland ([IMM0040](#))
- 69 Dr Peter Christie ([IMM0018](#))
- 70 Dr Robert Primhak ([IMM0077](#))
- 71 Dr Stewart Bailey ([IMM0126](#))
- 72 Dr Tom Vickers and Dr John Clayton ([IMM0095](#))
- 73 Ed Sexton ([IMM0014](#))
- 74 English UK ([IMM0080](#))
- 75 Eversheds LLP ([IMM0141](#))
- 76 Felipe Molina ([IMM0060](#))
- 77 Fiona MacGregor ([IMM0029](#))
- 78 Fragomen LLP ([IMM0136](#))
- 79 G5 Group ([IMM0099](#))
- 80 GARAS ([IMM0048](#))
- 81 Gary F S Knight ([IMM0112](#))
- 82 Ged Byrne ([IMM0140](#))
- 83 Genome Research Ltd ([IMM0151](#))
- 84 Giles Waley ([IMM0050](#))
- 85 Greg Fletcher ([IMM0004](#))
- 86 G's Fresh ([IMM0090](#))
- 87 GuildHE ([IMM0041](#))
- 88 Immigration Law Practitioners' Association ([IMM0076](#))
- 89 Immigration Marriage Fraud UK ([IMM0059](#))
- 90 Independent Higher Education ([IMM0133](#))
- 91 Independent Schools Council ([IMM0091](#))
- 92 IPPR ([IMM0085](#))
- 93 Jane Akshar ([IMM0015](#))
- 94 John Cherry ([IMM0044](#))
- 95 John Dunning ([IMM0113](#))
- 96 Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants ([IMM0103](#))
- 97 Jonathan Andrews ([IMM0102](#))
- 98 King's College London ([IMM0120](#))
- 99 Kingfisher plc ([IMM0189](#))
- 100 Lane Ward Labour Party branch - Camberwell and Peckham constituency ([IMM0016](#))
- 101 Liberty ([IMM0139](#))
- 102 Lichfield Hope Support Group ([IMM0049](#))
- 103 Liverpool Asylum seeker and Refugee Association ([IMM0123](#))

- 104 London Borough of Newham ([IMM0057](#))
- 105 London Business School ([IMM0142](#))
- 106 London Chamber of Commerce and Industry ([IMM0176](#))
- 107 London First ([IMM0161](#))
- 108 Manchester Migrant Solidarity ([IMM0046](#))
- 109 Mark Rowntree ([IMM0114](#))
- 110 Martin Price ([IMM0181](#))
- 111 Melanie Fraser ([IMM0017](#))
- 112 Michael Cooper ([IMM0191](#))
- 113 Middlesex University ([IMM0047](#))
- 114 Migrants' Rights Network ([IMM0096](#))
- 115 Migration Watch UK ([IMM0021](#))
- 116 MillionPlus ([IMM0003](#))
- 117 Miss Ana Milusheva ([IMM0045](#))
- 118 Miss Daniah Ceylan ([IMM0066](#))
- 119 Mr and Mrs James Baker ([IMM0053](#))
- 120 Mr Antonio Rocha-Ferreira ([IMM0012](#))
- 121 Mr Axel Antoni ([IMM0001](#))
- 122 Mr Chris Fite-Wassilak ([IMM0034](#))
- 123 Mr David Sellers ([IMM0138](#))
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