



JCWI PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAMERON'S IMMIGRATION CAP 'WILL STRANGLE BRITAIN'

Habib Rahman, chief executive of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants is available now for interview and to author comment articles in response to David Cameron's plans to cap immigration.

CONTACT:

Brendan Montague
Communications and Campaigns Officer
07590030201
brendan.montague@jcw.org.uk

THE CAP on immigration proposed by Conservative leader David Cameron would stem the flow of highly skilled workers to Britain - suffocating industry and threatening thousands of jobs, a leading charity claimed today.

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) chief executive Habib Rahman said Britain already had one of the most advanced and robust immigration systems in Europe with the Points-Based System, which responds directly to economic needs.

The charity leader said the reality is that Mr Cameron would be seriously constrained in his ability to stem migration. International and European legal obligations mean that people from EEA countries are free to migrate to the UK for work and other purposes.

Mr Rahman also challenged the Conservative leader's claim that immigration was straining public services by pointing to the fact that a high proportion of doctors, nurses, teachers, care workers and other public servants were born and trained overseas.

He said: "No future Government can achieve a reduction of immigration on this scale because of economic, political and legal constraints. We believe that David Cameron must be aware of this fact.

"Immigration has acted as a crucial lifeline to the NHS and to specialised industry. An arbitrary cap on people coming to the UK will strangle industry and suffocate business."

He added: "A cap on immigration at the level proposed could also result in patients going untreated in our hospitals and leave the elderly uncared for in their homes."

His comments were based on the following facts:

- Research from the National Institute of Economic and Social research found that 17 percent of economic growth between 2004 and 2005 was a result of immigration.

- Migrants are net contributors to the public purse and therefore subsidise services for UK born residents. Immigrants paid £41.2 billion in tax during 2003-4, according to IPPR.
- Any reduction in student visas would devastate higher and further education. Students from overseas contribute at least £3.74 billion annually to UK universities and £1 billion in GDP.
- The public sector could not function without immigration: a third of doctors and dentists qualified abroad, according to Migration Watch. Almost half (47 percent) of nurses in London are immigrants.

The Government's Points-Based System has been successful in managing immigration from countries outside the European Union and unskilled migrants are currently barred from entering the UK, the charity added.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) is an independent national charity which exists to campaign for justice in immigration, nationality and refugee law and policy.
- The facts above are based on *UK Migration controversies: A simple guide*, published by the Royal Geographical Society.

ENDS