



IMMIGRATION AFTER BREXIT: BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

The UK's approach to immigration lies at the heart of our future beyond the EU.

The timetable and shape of Brexit remain uncertain. But it is likely that, after the UK leaves the EU, new immigration rules will close the door to future talent and subject many more people to unfair treatment here.

We are calling for a better approach, so that all those who come to work, study and make a home here are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. Join us!

5 KEY CALLS FOR CHANGE:



The UK must take a confident and positive approach to immigration



Post-Brexit policy must 'level up' treatment of all migrants



Immigration rules must be fair, humane & respect the rule of law



The immigration system must be reformed & improved



Keep our communities welcoming



The UK must take a confident and positive approach to immigration

Immigration has contributed to our culture, our economy and our communities for centuries. The UK has a proud history of welcoming people from across the world, as well as of emigration from its own shores to other countries. We want to live in a country that celebrates this history, and values those who come here.

Instead of a dogmatic commitment to arbitrary 'targets' for reducing numbers of people coming here, we want to see pragmatic, sensible policies that maximise the benefits of immigration.

We recognise that there are valid concerns about inequality and neglect in our society that often dovetail with concerns about immigration. But we call upon government to find lasting solutions to economic and social problems, rather than scapegoating migrants for them.

Progressives must not accept division, suspicion and insecurity as guiding principles for the public debate about immigration. We must build and strengthen bonds of solidarity to ensure that our future beyond the EU is guided by a confident, positive approach to immigration.



Post-Brexit policy must 'level up' treatment of *all* migrants

Whatever the final settlement for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals currently residing in the UK, it is increasingly clear that *future* EEA nationals seeking to migrate to the UK will be brought under an immigration system that has for decades subjected many non-Europeans to harsh and unfair treatment.

Progressives must resist the temptation to argue for a two-tier system and should instead view this moment as an opportunity to fight for fairer, more just immigration laws that guarantee the same rights to both EEA and non-EEA nationals alike.

As those who are hostile to immigration argue that the rights of EEA nationals should be levelled down, we must call for a levelling up of rights for *all* those who come here to work, study and make a home.



Immigration rules must be fair, humane and respect the rule of law

We believe that post-Brexit policies must be evidence-based, considered and guided by basic progressive principles of fairness and consistency. Your country of origin and your immigration status have nothing to do with your inherent dignity as a human being.

The Government is already using EEA migrants as bargaining chips in its Brexit negotiations. As the UK pursues further trading deals across the world, migrants will continue to be bartered over. Short-term 'guestworker' visas could be introduced for low-skilled jobs, leaving many vulnerable to exploitation and potentially spurring an increase in the undocumented population. More families will be affected by some of the harshest immigration rules in Europe.

Brexit is likely to increase the numbers of people subjected to our unfair immigration system. Without improving labour market protections, migrant workers after Brexit will be more vulnerable to abuse. We urge the Government to undertake a full review of immigration policies and wider employment regulations, to introduce new, even-handed rules fit for today's world.



The immigration system must be reformed & improved

The UK deserves an immigration system that is fair, functional and serves the needs of our society. Recent years have highlighted the unfortunate reality that the Home Office does not currently provide this.

Immigration law has become convoluted and difficult for both applicants and officers to understand. The Home Office is overstretched and under-resourced with routine delays and poor decision-making affecting thousands of people every year. High application fees are not matched by the quality of service provided by the Home Office or its contracted partners. The system falls well short of the standards of accountability that the UK should expect. Few have appeal rights and there has been a troubling rise in the reliance on detention – including indefinite detention.

The system is broken. It needs reform if it is to deal with the pressures of Brexit without increasing the human suffering and indignity it routinely generates.



Keep our communities welcoming

We all want to live in communities that are tolerant and welcoming. We all strive to be better neighbours.

Sadly, recent years have seen Government rely more heavily on divisive rhetoric and on its so-called 'hostile environment' policy. This means that immigration rules are policed locally through in-country controls.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, bank clerks and landlords have been enlisted in the service of the Home Office and the border now runs through homes, classrooms and operating theatres. Many workplaces have become the site of discriminatory immigration checks and raids.

After Brexit, Government intends to intensify this hostility, extending the use of biometric ID cards and placing ever greater pressure on public service providers and private citizens to enforce immigration rules.

We call on the Government to end its efforts to build a hostile environment. Ours is a diverse and tolerant society. There is no place here for policies that divide communities or leave people fearful of a visit to the doctor or a letter from school.

Over the coming period we will be campaigning for immigration policy after Brexit that can build bridges, not walls.

Please stay involved and join the fight for a fairer, more just immigration system that works for everyone.

www.jcwi.org.uk
www.runnymedetrust.org