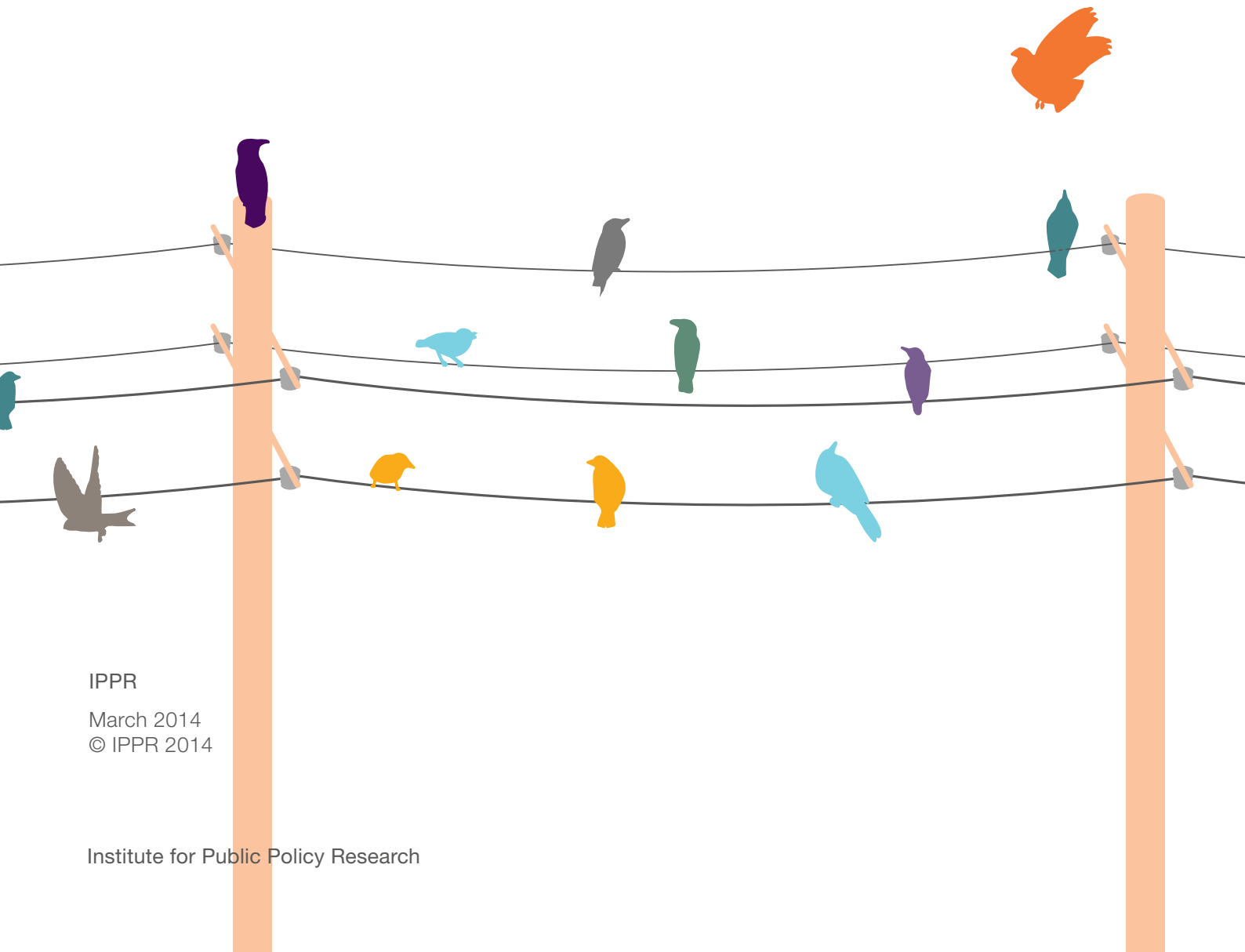


# A FAIR DEAL ON MIGRATION FOR THE UK



IPPR

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The research and authorship of this report was a joint effort by the Migration and Communities team at IPPR. The following people were involved: Alex Glennie, Alice Sachrajda, Jenny Pennington, Ipek Gencsu, Brhmie Balaram, Miklos Szilard, Phoebe Griffith, Sarah Mulley and Tim Finch. Freelance consultant Miranda Lewis also contributed.

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## ABOUT IPPR

IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is the UK's leading progressive thinktank. We are an independent charitable organisation with more than 40 staff members, paid interns and visiting fellows. Our main office is in London, with IPPR North, IPPR's dedicated thinktank for the North of England, operating out of offices in Newcastle and Manchester.

The purpose of our work is to assist all those who want to create a society where every citizen lives a decent and fulfilled life, in reciprocal relationships with the people they care about. We believe that a society of this sort cannot be legislated for or guaranteed by the state. And it certainly won't be achieved by markets alone. It requires people to act together and take responsibility for themselves and each other.

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IDEAS to  
CHANGE OPINIONS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report we set out a new, comprehensive progressive position on migration, which we call the 'Fair Deal'. The report crystallises IPPR's thinking on this issue as it has developed over the last five years. It springs from two important observations.

First, despite strenuous efforts by successive governments to reduce migration, there are no signs that we will see a return to the low levels of migration of the mid-1990s. Rather, the relatively high levels of the last 20 years are likely to be the norm for the foreseeable future. Second, despite the failure of what we term 'crude restrictionism' – that is, trying to reduce migration by whatever means and at whatever cost – other responses to this dominant narrative have failed to win over mainstream public opinion and therefore open up space in which politicians can pursue more rational and coherent migration policies.

Within the Fair Deal we endeavour to be both realistic about the world we live in and ambitious about the society we want to create. The world is increasingly interconnected and characterised by the movement of capital, goods, services, knowledge – and people. Prosperity is spreading, but far from evenly; and while progress is being made, the world remains beset by multiple and frequent crises.

UK society remains relatively open, tolerant, dynamic and humane. The majority of people in the country recognise that our future depends on being competitive in world markets and co-operative in wider international affairs. However, from the progressive point of view the UK needs to become fairer and more equal, prosperity needs to be shared more evenly, and stronger communities need to be built which bring people together around a set of shared values.

In this context, a new progressive approach to migration should be more open and welcoming to migrants who make a clear contribution to our society, and should set no arbitrary limits on such migration. However, it should also move away from a focus on maximising the net economic benefits of migration, and recognise that the varied distributional impacts of migration are such that many British people feel that it disadvantages them economically. This means that migration policy must be framed not simply to meet the demands of business and sectoral interests, but rather as part of a wider effort to create a fairer economy. Migration needs to be a facilitator of, not an obstacle to, increasing labour market participation and raising living standards for people on low and middle incomes.

We also need to recognise that migration has more than just economic impacts. It can result in social and cultural change which host communities sometimes struggle to come to terms with – particularly if it happens quickly and in an unplanned way. Our Fair Deal recognises these factors, and in doing so moves away from an emphasis on the transactional, laissez faire 'come and contribute' approach, and towards one that is more reciprocal and managed, and which can be summed up in the phrase, 'Play a full part'.

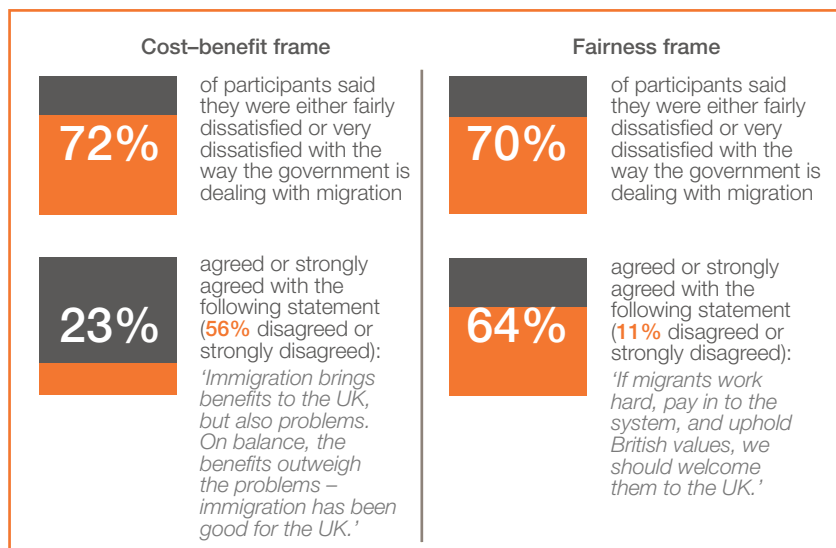
The Fair Deal is based upon three 'pillars' – public consent, a framework of principles and an evidence base – all of which are given due weight. In other words, it carefully balances what is rational, what is right and what is realistic. We contend that if it is clearly articulated over a sustained period, the Fair Deal stands a better chance of winning mainstream support than other progressive responses which, in our view, tend to focus too much on either the net economic benefits of migration, or on migrants' rights.

Our confidence is based partly on new research on public opinion which suggests that the key to winning support is the development of a set of policies which ensure that migrants

who come to the UK are seen to work hard, contribute, play by the rules and ‘fit in’ to British society. Framing migration in this way is seen as demonstrably fair – and it is fairness, rather than the economic benefits of migration, which has greater traction with the public.

In our research we tested two different message ‘frames’ with four focus groups and an online community. Each of these groups was selected because the participants had expressed concern about migration.<sup>1</sup> The fairness frame received a much higher degree of support compared to the cost–benefit frame, as is demonstrated by the table below, which illustrates our findings from the online forum.

**Figure A.1**  
Results of message ‘frame’ testing among online community forum participants who were sceptical about migration



This insight has helped us to develop a programme that we call the Fair Deal, which acknowledges the public’s dissatisfaction with recent governments’ handling of immigration, and recognises the public’s desire for limits on immigration. However, its response is informed above all by the proposition that ‘if migrants work hard, pay in to the system and uphold British values, we should welcome them’.

In this report we lay out the Fair Deal as a series of position statements which, taken together, constitute a comprehensive narrative of how the UK should respond to migration over the next decade or so. (In some cases, these positions are underpinned by specific policy changes, which are also set out briefly in this executive summary).

- 1. The Fair Deal acknowledges public anxiety over the high level of immigration over recent years, but argues that the government needs to be honest about the extent to which it can and should attempt to reduce some inflows. The current government’s net migration target illustrates the damage that is caused when migration policy is crudely directed towards a single aim. We propose replacing this with a differentiated approach that would take a more practical stance towards numbers, but would aim to control and manage migration in a**

<sup>1</sup> The focus groups took place in Manchester and Gravesend; each of the two frames was tested once in both locations. Around 10–12 respondents attended each group session. Group participants were selected from larger groups in which a mix of genders, ethnicities, ages and social classes were represented. At this stage each potential recruit completed a short questionnaire, and was then invited to attend our focus groups if they expressed concern about immigration (people with more extreme pro- or anti-migration views were screened out at this point).

way that would make migrants more clearly seen to be working hard, paying into the system and upholding British values.

2. Policymakers should look beyond the immediate demands of big business and particular vested interests, and instead design migration policy as part of a wider effort to create a fairer and more stable economy that delivers sustainable growth and increased prosperity for everyone. The Fair Deal would assess migration policy against its impacts on growth, productivity and the public finances, but its foremost concern would be its impact on economic inequality and the economic prospects of the poorest and most vulnerable. This would mean paying particular attention to assessments of the impact of migration flows on median incomes and the employment rates of existing UK citizens.
3. Ensuring a Fair Deal on economic migration in the UK will require fundamental reforms to the UK economy, such as a more proactive industrial strategy to boost growth, productivity and skills; greater focus on creating better quality and better paying jobs; increased policing and uprating of the national minimum wage; more protection and job security for workers; and stronger requirements on UK citizens who are out of work but able to work to take up available jobs.
4. Our Fair Deal approach to managing migration would mean that for some types of migration (high-value, and for study), policy would generally be geared towards increasing numbers and maximising benefits to the UK. For others, such as high-skilled migration, entry would be encouraged where it meets the specific needs of the economy. In the case of EU migration,<sup>2</sup> free movement would be respected but renegotiated where appropriate, so that the rules reflect the needs and reality of an expanded EU. Other types of non-EU immigration would either be carefully controlled (such as for family migration) or there would be no entry (for low-skilled and irregular migrants, for example).
5. The routes by which migrants can enter the UK should be made simpler and clearer so that there is no confusion, among either migrants or British people, over who can enter and who cannot. For economic migration from outside the EU, we would consolidate the various current entry routes into a single Migrant Worker programme in order to maximise the benefits to the UK from attracting high-value migrants and those with skills we need.

This position involves making changes to the UK's system of managing non-EU migration in the following ways.

- The Tier 1 and 2 categories – for high-value and high-skilled migration from outside the EU – would become part of a single new programme, the Migrant Worker programme, which would include two pathways: the High-Value Individual pathway and the Skilled Worker pathway.
- The Tier 3 category – for low-skilled migration from outside the EU – would be removed altogether. It has been closed since 2008, and there is no economic or political prospect of opening it in the foreseeable future.
- The Tier 4 category – for non-EU students – should be renamed the Foreign Student programme to make it clearly distinct from migration for work. IPPR favours maximising student numbers (while ensuring there is no abuse of the route) but maintaining controls on economic migration from outside the EU.

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2 Much of the policy that applies to migration from the EU also takes in the wider European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, but for simplicity we use the term 'EU' throughout this report

- The Tier 5 category – which covers the 50,000 young people visiting the UK on ‘working holidays’ annually – would become a small element of the Migrant Worker programme (see above)

This would leave the UK with four clearly named and differentiated routes of migration for non-EU migrants:

- the Migrant Worker programme
- the Family Migrant programme
- the Foreign Student programme
- the Refugee programme.

Each would be managed and reported on separately (see below).

The Migrant Worker programme would have two ‘pathways’:

- The High-Value Individual pathway would largely operate as Tier 1 does now, but would have no upper limit, and the range of potential sponsors would be increased to include professional and sectoral bodies and regional and national bodies (such as devolved administrations and combined local authorities). Measures would be introduced to ensure that investors and entrepreneurs coming through this route are genuinely making worthwhile economic contributions to the UK, and additional incentives would be introduced to attract foreign investors and entrepreneurs who are prepared to invest in the UK economy beyond London and the South East.
- The Skilled Worker pathway would remove the cap on numbers (currently 20,700 a year) under the current Tier 2 category, as it makes no sense in the context of migrants who are coming to the UK to fulfil a specific UK economic need. The shortage occupation list would be retained but would operate more strictly than it does currently: jobs would be allowed to be added to this list only when the market cannot adjust to meet sectoral or occupational shortages (by increasing wages, for example). In practice, this might mean restricting the shortage list to public sector jobs (where scope to increase pay is limited), jobs with long ‘lead times’ on training, or jobs in strategic occupations identified as key to a proactive industrial strategy.

**6. To balance the minor changes (including relaxations) to the system governing economic migration from outside the EU, the Fair Deal on migration would place a requirement on big employers to increase apprenticeships and training opportunities for UK citizens. This would help to deliver on the wider aim of developing a fairer economy and, in the longer term, to make the UK economy less dependent on migration to cover skills shortages.**

Specific proposals arising from this position include the following.

- Big businesses – that is, employers with more than 250 staff – would be required to offer at least as many apprenticeships or graduate traineeship places as the number of non-EU Skilled Workers (excluding intra-company transfers) they employ. Otherwise, they would be able to make an equivalent contribution to a relevant sectoral or occupational training fund. Companies would be given one year to comply with this requirement. Existing apprenticeships and graduate traineeship places that companies offer would be taken into account.



- Smaller employers (those with more than 50 staff) would be given a three-year window in which to bring their training systems into line with the requirements outlined above.
- Small businesses (those with less than 50 staff) would be exempt.

- 7. A set of reports on each category of migration flow should be delivered to parliament annually, setting out predicted numbers and impacts for the coming year and accounting for those of the previous year. The purpose of these reports would be to establish greater openness and transparency on migratory flows to the UK, to hold responsible ministers more directly to account, and to make clear what is guiding policy decisions.**

These reports would include information on the following:

- best estimates of numbers coming in and out under each category (prospectively and retrospectively)
- an economic impact assessment
- a social impact assessment.

In our view, the organisation best placed to prepare these reports for government is the Migration Advisory Committee.

- 8. Our Fair Deal on migration would involve taking into account the impact that migration has on the UK economy, on business and other sectors, and on local communities. It is therefore important that HM Treasury, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Communities and Local Government have an equal role with the Home Office in the active development and assessment of migration policy, guided by a strengthened Migration Advisory Committee reporting to all four departments. The Home Office would, however, retain its role in implementing migration policy.**
- 9. The Fair Deal recognises that the UK benefits economically from being part of the EU, and respects its fundamental principle of free movement of persons as a key element of the benefits of EU membership. However, there remains the possibility of ‘shocks’ when domestic labour markets are opened up to new accession states. With that in mind, under the Fair Deal the UK would always make full use of transitional controls, and would lead discussion in the EU on whether, for future accession states, the length of these controls could be extended in certain circumstances. It would also argue that where UK workers are directly discriminated against, or where EU economic migration is clearly disadvantaging or crowding out UK workers, the UK government should take steps to either ban practices or mitigate their negative impacts.**

Examples of this would include the following.

- Banning employment agencies from exclusively advertising UK-based jobs outside the UK.
- Where evidence shows that sectors are overly dominated by EU migrants, government, employers and unions would be required to set out a joint strategy to raise wages, job quality and tenure (including progression and length of contracts), thereby performing a role similar to that of the sectoral wage boards which used to operate in the agriculture industry.

- 10. As part of a Fair Deal on migration, both UK citizens and settled migrants should be able to clearly demonstrate that they can support any non-EU**

partners and dependents they may wish to bring into the UK. However, in our view some changes should be made to the income requirements currently imposed on sponsors, to make them less onerous. Beyond the income requirement, partners entering the UK should be able to speak and write English to a high level before they arrive in the country.

The current minimum income requirement for UK citizens or settled migrants wishing to bring in a spouse or partner is £18,600, with this level rising to £22,400 for one dependent child and by a further £2,400 for each additional child. We recommend that this minimum be reduced to the level of the Living Wage, which for 2014 was set at £17,160 per annum in London and £14,918 outside London.<sup>3</sup>

11. **A key element of the new Fair Deal on migration is greater recognition of the fact that the disruptive social and cultural impacts that immigration can have on communities is a major concern of the public, and that there should be a stronger emphasis on mitigating these impacts with the aim of achieving a more cohesive society with stronger social bonds.**
12. **Integration policy should put greater stress on togetherness, solidarity and shared values in order to build stronger local communities in which all people look out for each other, more so than they do currently. As part of this strengthening of social bonds, the Fair Deal would place more of an onus on immigrants who are welcomed to the UK to play a full part in British society, while being clear that discrimination against migrants is unacceptable and integration is always a two-way street.**
13. **A clear responsibility should be put on migrants coming to live and work in the UK to speak English, as this is vital in enabling people to participate fully in British society. To aid this process, the government should put more funding into the provision of English language classes for adults and children. The Fair Deal on migration would work to end any cases in which people in the UK live in isolated communities where it is not necessary to speak English.**

The thrust of government policy should be steered away from the provision of translation and interpreting services, and towards equipping more migrants to the UK to speak English. Specific measures in this area would include the following.

- All public funding for migrant groups or migrant support organisations should be contingent on those groups making arrangements for members and attendees who don't speak English well to enroll in accredited English classes.
- GP practices or NHS trusts which currently make high use of translation and/or interpretation services should develop links with English courses in their areas so that once their patients have received their treatment, those who would benefit from these courses are directed towards them.

The Fair Deal would also require a higher standard of English language proficiency of migrants before they are able to take jobs in the UK, particularly publicly-funded, public-facing jobs.

14. **As part of a Fair Deal on migration, education policy should be used to ensure that schools are key sites of integration, bringing children of all backgrounds and faiths together and promoting shared British values.**

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<sup>3</sup> Assuming a 37.5-hour working week.

Specifically, we recommend that schools should not be their own admissions authorities: this should fall to an independent body such as the local authority. In administering admissions, these independent authorities should take particular care to ensure that the social and ethnic mix of a school helps to promote, rather than hinder, community cohesion.

15. **The Fair Deal would put a greater emphasis on encouraging migrants who have been in the UK for a number of years to become citizens. The citizenship process would become more locally focused, cheaper, more welcoming, more inclusive and more interactive. Migrants would need to demonstrate that they were taking up this status not just because it confers certain rights on them, or because they may find it administratively convenient, but because they have a true commitment to this country, its institutions and its values.**

Particular proposals which this position entails include the following.

- All migrants – including EU citizens – who have been in the UK for a five-year period of permanent residence should be auto-enrolled onto a ‘Pathway to Citizenship’.
- The fee for citizenship should be reduced from the current £800 to £500.
- All would-be citizens should be required to attend a short programme of local citizenship classes, culminating in a test. These classes should be run directly by local authorities or contracted out to local voluntary bodies, be held in central places like libraries or community centres, and involve interactive discussions with existing UK citizens.
- A ‘record of contribution’ (notably through working and paying tax, but also through such things as volunteering and acting as a carer) should be required of applicants before citizenship is granted.
- More citizenship ceremonies should be held in public places such as schools, civic buildings or even shopping centres, to make them more visible to the wider citizenry.

16. **The Fair Deal on migration recognises that some local authorities can experience particular pressures due to rapid inflows of migrants into their area. It therefore proposes that migrants be required to register with their local authority on arrival, so that up-to-date information on migrant numbers is available for all areas. Where numbers ‘spike’, councils and local bodies should be able to access a centrally controlled Migration Impacts Fund to help them to deal with the issues that may consequently arise. Local registration would also allow migrants themselves to get up-to-date and useful information on local services, their entitlements having paid council tax, and their obligations as local citizens.**
17. **The Fair Deal on migration is predicated on wider reform of the UK’s welfare system to make it more of a contributory social insurance system, establishing a clearer link for everybody that makes use of it – migrant and UK citizen alike – between what you put in and what you can take out.**
18. **The UK government should continue to restrict migrants’ access to benefits for qualifying periods, on the basis that it is only fair that pay-outs from the social security system are based on contributions to that system: newly arrived migrants will not have made contributions in the same way as UK citizens who have lived and paid taxes here for years have. While the UK is more limited in regards to applying such policies to EU migrants, the Fair Deal asserts that the UK should negotiate with its EU partners to restrict the entitlements of EU migrants wherever not doing so would be manifestly unfair to local populations.**

There are a number of issues that we think the UK government should be discussing with its EU partners.

- Strengthening reciprocal arrangements between EU member states.
- Increasing qualification periods for access to benefits.
- Clarifying the application of the ‘habitual residency test’ with regard to EU citizens.
- Reviewing the payment of benefits to people who are not living in the state that is dispensing those benefits (the principles of ‘exportability’).
- Clarifying the principle of free movement with respect to those migrating without a firm job offer to go to or the ability to support themselves without access to benefits.

**19. A public services levy of £200 should be made payable by all non-EU migrants coming to the UK for more than 12 months, as an upfront contribution towards their use of public services.**

The public services levy should be payable on top of the visa application fee once a visa is granted. Half the money raised from this fee could go into general government funds, and the other half towards a restored Migration Impacts Fund (see point 16 above).

**20. The Fair Deal accepts that population growth stemming from migration means that more housing is required in the UK. Beyond the general point that the UK needs a radical programme of house building in order to meet this increased housing need, we support policies that allow local authorities to allocate scarce social housing on the basis of local residency or local connection in a way that clearly prioritises long-settled people over newly arrived migrants.**

**21. The Fair Deal would involve the UK playing its part in taking in a fair share of the world’s refugees. One limited but important way to do this would be to provide more resettlement places in the UK for refugees who currently live in camps in countries which neighbour conflict zones. More generally, we believe that the UK needs a more efficient asylum determination process, and that the best way to achieve this would be to set up a body to assess asylum claims that is independent of government and has a clear mandate to decide each individual case on its merits.**

**22. A vital element of the Fair Deal on migration is that migrants should ‘play by the rules’ – and by definition irregular migrants are transgressing immigration rules, albeit in minor ways in many cases. The Fair Deal approach to irregular immigration is to rule out regularisation in all but certain isolated cases, to continue to focus on preventing illegal entry and ensuring that migrants do not violate visa conditions, and working to encourage and enact humane return.**

We believe that this ‘Fair Deal’ is a well-balanced package. In some cases it leads us to advocate some ‘softening’ or liberalisation of current migration rules; in other cases, we argue for some limited tightening. Taken together, we cannot say with any certainty whether our package, if fully implemented, would result in lower or higher migration than we have currently. However, that is not our main focus in laying out this Fair Deal. Rather, it is to address the issue of ‘fairness’ – which, our research presented in chapter 4 of this report suggests, is almost as important politically as the issue of numbers. Reducing the latter without causing damaging or perverse outcomes is extremely difficult, so concentrating on the former seems to us to be the better basis for a political strategy which is both mainstream and progressive.

# INTRODUCTION

In this paper, IPPR brings together its thinking on migration over the last few years to present what we are calling a Fair Deal on migration for the UK.

The Fair Deal endeavours to be both realistic about the world we live in and ambitious about the society we want to create. The world is increasingly interconnected, and characterised by the movement of capital, goods, services, knowledge – and people. Prosperity is spreading, but far from evenly; and while progress is being made, the world remains beset by multiple and frequent crises.

UK society remains relatively open, tolerant, dynamic and humane. The majority of Britons recognise that our future depends on being competitive in world markets and co-operative in wider international affairs. However, from the progressive point of view the UK needs to become fairer and more equal, prosperity needs to be shared more evenly, and stronger communities need to be built which bring people together around a set of shared values.

This means that migration policy needs to be designed with the real world, and the UK's place in it, in mind, but also with the aspirations of making the UK economy fairer and UK society stronger.

In our view, a key deficiency in the UK migration debate is a credible mainstream progressive voice – one that speaks in authentically progressive terms, but also speaks to mainstream concerns.

## The 'crude restrictionist' approach

The absence of a mainstream progressive voice has allowed the popular discourse to be dominated by a narrative of 'crude restrictionism' that prioritises the overall reduction of the number of migrants at any cost, and fails to take into account the economic and international realities, as well as the legal and diplomatic obligations, that the UK is faced with. While this narrative has a strong claim to speaking for majority public opinion, it has also been highly influential in forming that opinion – particularly through its mouthpieces in the tabloid press. Its dominance is such that all politicians – including progressives – are under immense pressure to adopt crude restrictionist positions, even when these positions run contrary to strong countervailing evidence, or are at odds with basic progressive principles. The rhetoric and policies that politicians consequently adopt then feed back into the popular discourse, validating initial concerns but also stoking new ones, with the result that the ratchet is tightened by yet another notch.

## Failed responses

There have been three broad progressive responses to crude restrictionism. We have some sympathy with all three, and indeed draw on them in different ways to construct a new mainstream progressive approach. However, on their own they have, in our view, failed to halt – let alone combat – the dominance of crude restrictionism.

These are, of course, simplified categories which caricature positions that are in reality much more nuanced, sophisticated and interlinked, but we deploy them nonetheless because they help to illustrate the point we are trying to get across.

## The super-rationalists

This group, variously made up of business interests, market economists and most academics working on migration, strongly believe that a cost-benefit evaluation of the evidence – which in their view largely supports a more open and liberal approach to

migration – will in the end win out over what they regard as ignorance and irrationality. It is just a matter of reiterating the case repeatedly until people ‘get it’.

### The migrants’ rights activists

This group, variously made up of migrant-supporting groups, human rights lawyers and campaigners, is motivated by a heartfelt view that the best way to counter crude restrictionism – which in their view discriminates harshly against migrants – is through a rights-based ‘fight back’. They believe either that the wider public will be won around to this way of thinking in time, or that the position of the wider public is so debased that progressive politicians have a moral duty to ignore it.

### The super-pragmatists

This group, in which many in the progressive political class can be counted, have decided that whatever their reservations, electoral considerations require that they align their position as closely as possible to public sentiment. It might seem strange to label this position as a response to crude restrictionism, given that it in large measure embraces it. However, we include it because its adherents would in most cases argue that they are at least trying to ‘hold the line’ or ‘chip away’ at crude restrictionism – for example, by talking up the benefits of high-skilled migration while taking a tough approach to irregular immigration. Our own Fair Deal on migration for the UK does include similar trade-offs, but there are crucial differences between our Fair Deal and the ‘super-pragmatist’ position – which, by its very nature, lacks real foundations in evidence and principle.

The different weaknesses of these three different approaches are summarised in this table.

	Stronger	Weaker
<b>Super-rationalist</b>	Evidence	Public consent Principle
<b>Migrant rights activist</b>	Principle	Public consent Evidence
<b>Super-pragmatist</b>	Public consent	Evidence Principle

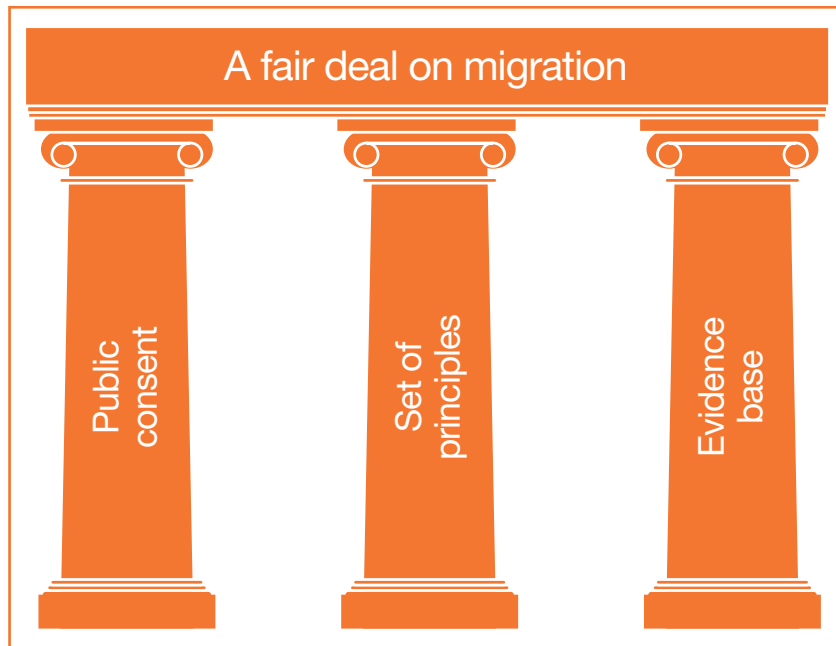
We might add that, if we were to include the position we describe as ‘crude restrictionist’ in this table, it too would be stronger on public consent and weaker on both evidence and principle.

### A new response

With the above in mind, IPPR has constructed a new mainstream progressive position as the foundation for a Fair Deal on migration in the UK, which in our view gives due weight to, and a better balance between, principle, evidence and public consent.

This endeavour can be represented in the below diagram, with three more or less equal ‘pillars’ supporting the overarching position.

**Figure B.1**  
The 'three pillars' of the Fair Deal, a mainstream progressive position on migration



The construction of this diagram is informed by three key considerations.

1. There can be no doubt that public concern, which currently leans towards crude restrictionism, is the dominant force driving migration policy and practice. Unlike two of the 'failed responses' we outlined above, we do not believe that this concern can simply be ignored or argued away – not least because democratic accountability is itself an important principle (see point 2 below). Throughout this paper, therefore, public consent is kept in mind as a key consideration. However, referring to it constantly does not mean deferring to it always; respecting public consent as an important consideration does not mean privileging it above all other considerations (as the 'super-pragmatist' position outlined above does). In constructing our new mainstream progressive position we sought to understand and at times unpack public concern, so that it informs the position to a considerable but not undue extent.
2. Any position on migration should be underpinned by firm principles. This is why, in one of this project's early outputs (Mulley and Cavanagh 2013), IPPR drew up what we called 'a principled framework' for a fair and democratic migration policy; we will set out a summary of this framework in chapter 1. This set of principles is a central pillar of IPPR's new mainstream progressive position, but is 'balanced', as it were, by reference to both public consent and the evidence base.
3. IPPR's reputation is founded on our policy ideas being 'evidence-based', so this third pillar is extremely important to us. In chapter 2 we summarise and draw conclusions about what the best available evidence is and how it should inform a mainstream progressive position. Where the empirical evidence is strongest it would be folly to ignore it, even if the policies that follow from it run counter to public concern at its most insistent, or to principles at their purest.

These three pillars together form the basis of our Fair Deal on migration to the UK. We believe that if it is clearly articulated (as we describe in chapter 4) over a sustained period, it could certainly mount a credible contest for mainstream acceptance. We are backed in

this assertion by work that has already been done by IPPR and other organisations,<sup>4</sup> and by new research into the foundations and dynamics of public opinion carried out for this project (summarised in chapter 3) which suggests that the key to winning support and allaying fears is to develop a set of policy positions that stress hard work, contribution and ‘fitting in’. Such concepts chime more strongly with the public, are perceived as more demonstrably fair to both British people and migrants, and are viewed more favourably than positions which stress the benefits of migration to the UK economy.

By asserting this position we do not pretend that we have established the basis for a settled consensus, still less ended the argument on migration – which in any case would be undesirable in a democratic society. However, we do believe that our Fair Deal could be a strong contender for majority support in the migration debate, and that if this outcome was achieved the UK would be in a better position than it is now to reap the many benefits of migration, but also to manage the undeniable downsides.

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4 In particular, the think tank British Future has also carried out extensive work on public attitudes to migration which we have drawn on.



# 1. PRINCIPLES REVISITED

In a paper entitled *Fair and Democratic Migration Policy: A principled framework for the UK* (Mulley and Cavanagh 2013), IPPR set out the basis for a progressive mainstream position, and the foundation for the arguments and recommendations in this report. The paper's 10 principles were as follows.

## **Foundations for fair and democratic migration policy**

- Establish clear democratic accountability for migration policy.
- Ensure that migration policy and its implementation are governed by the rule of law.
- Put human rights and equality at the heart of policymaking.
- Focus on delivery and competence – for its own sake, and for public confidence.

## **Objectives for migration policy**

- Measure what can be measured – policy should aim to increase net economic and fiscal benefits.
- Take account of what is less easily measured, but equally crucial – cultural and social costs and benefits.
- Remember that distribution matters – avoid policies which exacerbate inequality, and manage the impacts of migration on vulnerable groups and communities.
- Look beyond the UK – seek to increase net benefits in developing countries.

## **Realism about outcomes**

- Accept that numbers matter – the pace and pattern of migration flows are important.
- Be realistic – understand what governments can and can't control, and don't make promises that can't be kept.

As we said in the original paper, the first four of these principles are foundational, and represent a position we feel that most, if not all, politicians and policymakers should be able to support. These could be regarded as basic 'rules of engagement'.

This still leaves plenty of scope for legitimate debate among different mainstream political perspectives. The second set of principles therefore sets out what we believe should be the basic tenets of a 'progressive' migration position.

However, having set out these principles, we must not lose sight of the public's core concern: the impact of policy on migration flows. Our final two principles therefore make clear that the question of migration numbers and patterns should remain central to policy debates, but that at the same time politicians and policymakers need to be realistic about the degree to which they are able to affect migration flows (and honest with the public about that). In short, policy must be workable, as well as fair and democratic.

## 2. THE STATE OF THE EVIDENCE

In this section we briefly summarise the existing evidence, looking at migrant flows and stocks and considering the impacts of migration on the British economy, public services and community life. Our focus is on evidence from recent years,<sup>5</sup> as this is most useful for informing a political and policy position designed to meet the migration opportunities and challenges of the next decade or so.

### 2.1 Limitations of the data

We must start by saying – as all those who work in this field do – that migration data is not as reliable as researchers or policymakers would like. Its main limitations include the following.

- Poor data on migrants intending to stay for less than 12 months: someone who lives in the UK for less than a year does not count in official statistics as a ‘migrant’, despite his or her impact on local services and contribution to population ‘churn’ in the community.
- One of the main sources of data used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the International Passenger Survey (IPS), is a survey that measures intentions rather than hard facts. It tells us more about trends than about absolute levels of migration, and as such there are significant lags in the data.
- Data on net migration differs according to the source of the estimates. Long-term international migration (LTIM) estimates provide information on net migration flows, while the ONS’s Annual Population Survey provides information on the stock of migrants. The changes in the stock of migrants should reflect the level of net migration, but there are significant differences between the two estimates.
- Until 2012 there was no way of matching-up data on migrants *coming* to the UK for a particular reason (such as work or study) with data on those *leaving* the UK. In 2012 the ONS introduced a new question to its International Passenger Survey asking emigrants for the reason why they originally came to the UK. In future years, this will give some insight into the migration journey of different types of migrants, but little can be concluded at present since only one year of data is available.

The ‘e-borders’ system, first announced a decade ago, is, among other things, designed to count the number of migrants entering and leaving the country. However, it has been delayed because of legal and IT problems, and the bill so far has topped half a billion pounds.<sup>6</sup> When it is fully operational it should provide much more reliable data on migrant stocks and flows, but is not expected to be in place until 2015, and may not produce usable data until 2018 at the earliest.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.2 Summary of the numbers

Since the mid- to late-1990s the UK has experienced higher levels of immigration than at any time in its recent history. During the 1960s and 1970s, more people emigrated from the UK than arrived here,<sup>8</sup> and during both the early 1980s and the early 1990s immigration outstripped emigration at relatively low levels in the majority of years. However, since 1994 net migration has been positive every year, and it rose sharply after 1997. It peaked in 2004/05, and since then the figure has fluctuated between around 150,000 and 250,000.

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5 Unless otherwise stated, the numbers in this section come from the Office of National Statistics quarterly migration reports, available here: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/index.html>

6 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24453677>

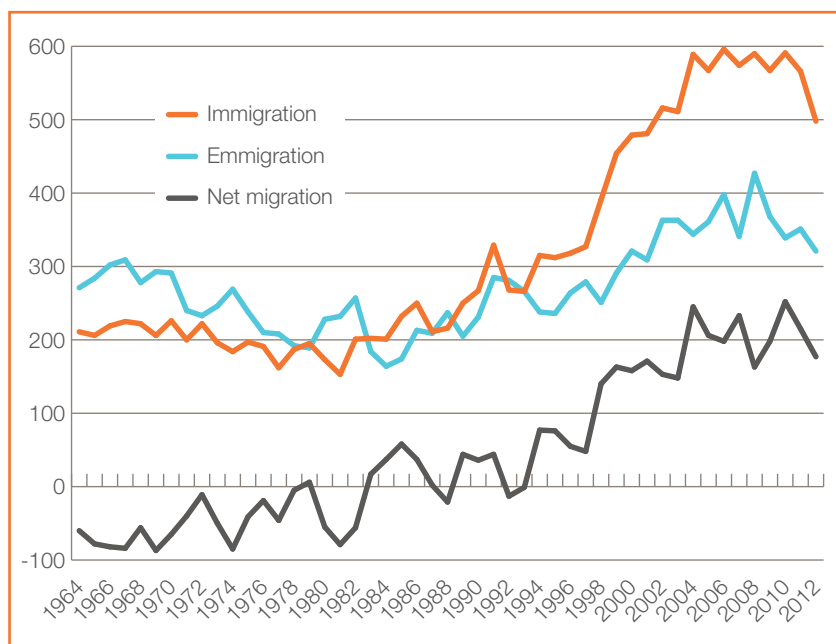
7 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/delivering-statistical-benefits-from-e-borders/index.html>

8 For a very simple but effective presentation of how migration to the UK has changed since the 1960s, see the ONS’s ‘Long-term Migration into and out of the United Kingdom, 1964-2012’. <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc123/index.html>

Averaged out LTIM data shows that between, 2002 and 2011, net migration ran at just above 200,000 a year, compared with an average of below 90,000 over the previous decade.

The latest provisional estimates indicate that net migration was 182,000 in the year to June 2013. The pattern can be seen from this chart.

**Figure 2.1**  
Long-term international  
migration, 1964–2012  
(annual)



Source: Adapted from Office for National Statistics (2013) 'Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, November 2013', Newport. [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778\\_335330.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_335330.pdf)

These official net migration estimates are based on the difference between the number of immigrants arriving and staying in the UK for at least one year, and the number of emigrants leaving the UK for at least one year. While emigration is therefore clearly an important component of overall migration patterns, here we concentrate on inflows, as they are the main focus of policy.

As well as the increase in numbers, the countries that immigrants to the UK come from have changed over the last 20 years, with countries of the 'Old Commonwealth' (such as Australia and New Zealand) and the old EU (Germany and France) being displaced to some extent by countries such as India, Pakistan, China and Poland.<sup>9</sup>

Most immigrants are relatively young people who come either to study or to work. Official estimates for 2012 showed that 86 per cent of migrants were aged between 15 and 44.

Overall immigration is made up of numerous different inflows, and we shall consider each of these in turn.

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed illustration of this trend, see the infographic 'The Changing Geography of International Migration', published by ONS, at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/migration-statistics-quarterly-report-november-2013/world-map.html>. Also instructive are the latest ONS migration statistics on LTIM countries of last residence 2008–2012, which shows the growth in Chinese immigration to the UK relative to that of other countries.

### 2.2.1 EU migrant inflows<sup>10</sup>

Until 2004, the number of EU citizens (excluding returning British nationals) coming in to the UK was broadly similar to the number of UK citizens moving to other EU countries.<sup>11</sup> This changed in 2004, when eight eastern European countries – the ‘A8’ states – joined the EU, and the UK opened its labour market to them immediately. Since then the UK has experienced positive net migration from the EU of between 60,000 and 120,000 a year (106,000 in the year ending June 2013).

- Net migration from A8 countries peaked at around 80,000 in 2007, dropped substantially after the financial crash as the emigration of A8 migrants markedly increased, and for the last couple of years it has remained steady at around 35,000 to 40,000 per annum. Poles have made up the majority of the A8 nationals coming to the UK since 2004.
- The most recent estimates from the ONS show that some 183,000 EU citizens immigrated to the UK in the year ending June 2013. A notable factor that contributed to these figures was that work-related immigration from ‘old’ European countries – the EU15 – increased by nearly a third, from 41,000 to 59,000. This perhaps reflects a growing disparity between the job opportunities available in the UK and in other countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece.
- In January 2014, labour market restrictions were lifted for Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, who had previously been subject to seven years of transitional controls which made entry to the UK difficult. Experts on the government’s Migration Advisory Committee agree that immigration is likely to rise as a result, but have not made any predictions of by how much (MAC 2012).<sup>12</sup>
- Croatia joined the EU in 2013, but the UK is unlikely to see major Croatian migration flows in the next few years, as transitional controls can remain in place until 2020.
- The bulk of EU migration is economic: when the immigration of EU8 citizens to the UK reached its peak of 112,000 in 2007, four out of every five arrived for work-related reasons.

### 2.2.2 Non-EU economic migration inflows

Most immigrants to the UK say they are coming here to work. Estimates of LTIM show that work-related immigration peaked in the years 2005–2007 at around 240,000, but declined to 173,000 in the year ending June 2012. A similar pattern is shown in figures for the quantity of National Insurance numbers assigned to foreign nationals: these peaked at nearly 800,000 in 2007, following a steady increase since 2004, but dropped below 600,000 in the most recent 12-month period (DWP 2013).

As we explored in section 2.2.1 above, a significant proportion of economic migration is from the EU, but in this sub-section we consider inflows of economic migrants from outside the EU.<sup>13</sup> This peaked in 2006, when some 250,000 work-related visas were

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<sup>10</sup> Many of the rules that apply to migration from the EU also apply to the wider European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, but for the sake of simplicity we use the term ‘EU’ throughout this section.

<sup>11</sup> For a good summary of EU migration to the UK, see <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/britains-70-million-debate/5-british-and-other-eu-migration>

<sup>12</sup> Estimates of numbers from Romania and Bulgaria vary greatly between sources. Migration Watch predicts that an average of 50,000 people per year will enter the UK from the two countries (<http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefingPaper/document/287>), whereas Migration Matters estimates 20,000 or less per year (<http://www.migrationmatterstrust.co.uk/sites/default/files/briefings/Analysis%20of%20evidence%20on%20potential%20migration%20from%20Bulgaria%20and%20Romania.pdf>).

<sup>13</sup> To avoid confusion, we use through the terms ‘EU’ and ‘non-EU’ throughout this paper, because different rules apply to these two groups. However, citizens of EEA countries (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) and Switzerland are generally treated more similarly to EU citizens in terms of visa requirements for entry to the UK.

issued to non-EU citizens, but numbers have fallen since then; by 2012 this figure had fallen to just under 142,000.

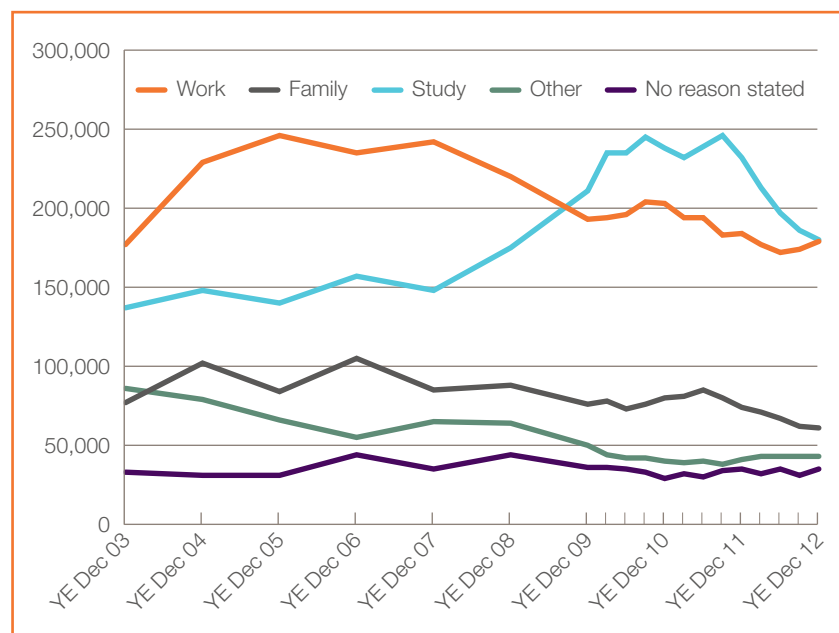
- In 2012 the highest proportions of work-related visas were issued to Indians (34 per cent), followed by Australians (10 per cent) and US citizens (9 per cent).
- The latest figures show a slight increase in the number of visas issued to migrants with a job offer in the UK, or people entering on intra-company transfers, and a decline in the number of ‘high value’ migrants (without a definite job to take up).<sup>14</sup>
- Some 40 per cent of economic migrants coming through the Tier 1 and 2 categories are estimated to remain in the UK after five years – double the proportion of students that do so, but lower than family migrants (see below).

Continuing restrictions on the issuance of work-related visas means that non-EU economic migration to the UK is likely to remain at levels well below its mid-2000s peak. However, for numbers to decline further it is likely that the structure of the UK economy would have to change quite radically.

### 2.2.3 Student migration inflows

In recent years, student immigration has come to make up the largest proportion of all migration to the UK, with most of these students coming from outside the EU. This form of immigration has increased steadily since the 1990s, when it ran at around 30,000 a year, and has risen more rapidly since 2004, when it had already reached around 110,000. As the chart below illustrates, foreign student numbers peaked at around 250,000 per year in 2011, but then declined quite sharply to 180,000 in December 2012 (and stood at 176,000 in the year ending June 2013). The chart also shows how student migration has compared with other forms of non-EU migration over the last decade.

**Figure 2.2**  
Reason given for migration by entrants to the UK, YE Dec 2003–YE Dec 2012



Source: Sachrajda and Pennington 2013 (ONS data)

14 For more detail see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-September-2013/immigration-statistics-july-to-September-2013#work-1>

- The recent decline in the number of people arriving to study has occurred in the non-university sectors.
- IPS estimates suggest that the number of foreign students coming from ‘New Commonwealth’ countries to the UK more than halved in the year ending June 2013, to 41,000 – its lowest level since 2005/06.
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) estimates that the economic benefit of international students studying in the UK is at least £13 billion per year (Sachrajda and Pennington 2013). Students are also proportionally less likely to settle permanently – a Home Office study has suggested that around a fifth of those who arrived in 2004 had leave to remain in 2009.<sup>15</sup>

The future trends in student migration are likely to be heavily dependent on who wins the policy battle on this issue. This is one area in which there is a reasonable chance that numbers will increase in future years, as the emerging political consensus indicates that some liberalisation of foreign student entry might occur.<sup>16</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Family migration inflows

The third main route of immigration to the UK is by either accompanying or joining another migrant. Family migration increased from below 30,000 a year in 1996 to a peak of a little over 70,000 in the mid-2000s, and has declined since.

- In the year ending June 2013 the IPS estimated that 35,000 non-EU nationals immigrated to the UK to accompany or join others, with the intention of staying for a year or more. This represented a decrease of 12,000 relative to the previous year, when the number was 47,000.<sup>17</sup>
- Visa data showed that 33,747 family route visas were issued in the year ending September 2013 – a 20 per cent fall on the previous year, and the lowest number since comparable records began in 2005.
- Pakistan, India and the US account for the top three places in terms of the number of family visas granted by nationality.
- Family migrants are considerably more likely to settle: 63 per cent of those who entered in 2004 were still in the UK in 2009 (Home Office 2013).

#### 2.2.5 Refugee inflows

After a spike in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of asylum applications decreased considerably in the mid-2000s and has remained fairly steady for the last decade. Taking a longer view, in 1987 fewer than 5,000 asylum applications were made (excluding dependents), but by 2002 this figure had risen to more than 84,000. However, by 2011 this number had fallen to around 20,000. As proportion of overall immigration,

15 This estimate was included in Achato L, Eaton M and Jones C (2010) *Research Report 43: The Migrant Journey*, London: the Home Office, and quoted by the Migration Observatory. The Observatory made the point that ‘this is an imperfect measure, since it is based on only a single cohort and also because some unknown proportion may have overstayed their visas and remained in Britain without legal leave to remain, but it is the best means available to estimate the rate at which particular types of migrants stay in Britain for at least five years’. <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/britains-70-million-debate/3-net-migration-and-immigration-overview-0>

16 The Coalition’s current policy of reducing net migration to the ‘tens of thousands’ by the end of this parliament is driving a reduction in foreign student numbers – though there is no cap. However, senior voices from all three parties – including Jo Johnson, head of the Number 10 Policy Unit (Pearce and Johnson 2012), the Liberal Democrat business secretary Vince Cable (Marsh 2013), and the shadow higher education spokesman Liam Byrne (Morgan 2013) – are on record as wanting changes to policy towards foreign students.

17 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2013/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2013#family-1>.

the number of asylum applicants have also fluctuated considerably – they accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the total in 2002, but just 4 per cent by 2010 (Blinder 2013).

- The latest figures show that, at 6,078, applications for asylum were 5 per cent higher in the third quarter of 2013 compared with the third quarter of 2012.
- The largest numbers of asylum applications in the third quarter of 2013 came from nationals of Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and Syria, with the number of Syrians increasing most.
- The UK receives fewer asylum-seekers per capita than many other countries. In 2011 the UK received 0.41 asylum applications per 1,000 people in its population – below the European average of 0.65 across the EU plus Norway and Switzerland.

Since 1994 the majority of asylum applications have been refused. In 2011, 67 per cent of initial decisions were refusals; however, between 2004 and 2011, 75 per cent of rejected applicants lodged appeals, which had a success rate of 22 per cent (Blinder 2013).

Given the relatively steady levels of asylum claims over the last 10 years, and with no sign of any major changes in UK policy or practice, it is likely that this inflow will remain similar throughout the coming decade, barring a major humanitarian catastrophe in Europe.

### **2.2.6 Irregular migrants**

It is, of course, very difficult to estimate both the flows and stock of irregular immigrants, and no official statistics exist.

Estimates of irregular migration in the UK vary. In 2009 the London School of Economics estimated that there were 618,000 illegal migrants in Britain, more than two-thirds of whom were in London (Gordon et al 2009).

However, other estimates suggest that the level of irregular migration in the UK may be considerably lower than this (see for example Portes 2012). Furthermore, since 2009, Home Office programmes aimed at clearing a backlog of cases have led to the ‘quiet’ regularisation of the status of many former irregular migrants. It is therefore likely that the population of irregular migrants is now lower than Gordon et al’s 2009 estimate.

### **2.2.7 Migrant stocks**

In the sections above we looked at the flows of migrants into the UK. However, just as important as the numbers coming in each year are the stocks of migrants that build up within the UK.

The extent to which the UK has been changed by migration in recent years was demonstrated by the 2011 census, which recorded that:

- the number of foreign-born residents in England and Wales had increased by nearly three million since 2001, to 7.5 million people
- the most common birthplaces outside the UK for UK residents were India, Poland and Pakistan
- more than half the rise in the population in the decade to 2011 was due to migration (ONS 2012).

Other figures show that between 1993 and 2012 the foreign-born population of the UK almost doubled, from 3.8 million to around 7.7 million, while the number of foreign citizens in the UK increased from nearly two million to 4.9 million (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2013).

Migration has changed the whole of the UK, but the greatest number of migrants – 2.8 million foreign-born people in 2012 – live in London, where white British people have become a minority (see section 2.4 below).

As well as having increased substantially, the migrant population of the UK has also been changing in composition – gradually in most cases, but strikingly when it comes to Poles. The Polish population of the UK leapt from fewer than 100,000 before 2004 to well over half a million in 2011. Less spectacular but still significant was the doubling of the Pakistani- and Bangladeshi-born populations between 1991 and 2011 (to 482,000 and 212,000 respectively), while the Irish-born population (which became the fourth largest foreign-born group in 2011, having been number one in all six previous censuses) is now lower than it was on 1951.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.2.8 Migrant dispersal across the UK

The concentration and density of migrants varies hugely from area to area. Flows of immigration to London are far higher than to anywhere else in the UK, with nearly half of the UK's migrants living in London. In 2011, 37 per cent of all foreign-born employees, and 46 per cent of self-employed foreign-born workers, lived in London (Rienzo 2012).

Nathan (2008) identified other local authorities, all of them in the South East or Midlands, that had high foreign-born populations as a share of their total population: Slough (24.0 per cent), Leicester (23.0 per cent), Luton (19.6 per cent), Oxford (19.3 per cent) and Birmingham (16.5 per cent).

By contrast, other cities and regions of the UK have much lower foreign-born populations. The region with the smallest proportion of foreign-born individuals in England is the North East, where it is only 1.7 per cent (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2013).

However, while Inner London has seen its foreign-born population increase by (only) 55 per cent since 1994, many other areas have experienced extraordinary proportionate increases: 214 per cent in Tyne and Wear, 173 per cent in South Yorkshire, 153 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 113 per cent in the East of England. When averaged across all the nations and regions of the UK, this increase was 87 per cent (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2013).

## 2.3 The impact of migration on the UK economy

This issue has been extensively researched and widely debated, but it seems clear from the research that, on balance, migration has been and will continue to be generally beneficial to the British economy.

### 2.3.1 The impact on GDP growth

Most of the research in this area seems to indicate that migrants have a modest positive impact on growth. This is mainly a consequence of the fact that migrants are more likely to be of working age than the rest of population, and therefore reduce public sector net debt as a share of GDP.

- One authoritative recent study (Kangasniemi et al 2008) quoted by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR 2013) found that migrant labour had a small positive effect (of 0.17 per cent) on the UK's economic growth over the period 1987 to 2005.

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<sup>18</sup> For an accessible guide to how UK immigration patterns have changed in the decades since 1951, see this infographic by the ONS: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/immigration-patterns-and-characteristics-of-non-uk-born-population-groups-in-england-and-wales/non-uk-born-census-populations-1951---2011---full-infographic.html>



- A similar study of all OECD countries found that greater immigration led to greater growth, through increased total employment (Ortega and Peri 2009).
- Looking forward, the OBR in its *Fiscal Sustainability Report* (OBR 2013) has showed that if migration were lower than it has been recently, or than the ONS projects it to be over the next 50 years, then growth would be reduced.

**Table 2.1**  
Average GDP per capita growth (%) in different migration scenarios, 2022/23–2062/63

	Average GDP per capita growth			
	2022/23 to 2032/33	2032/33 to 2042/43	2042/43 to 2052/53	2052/53 to 2062/63
Low net migration (140,000 per year)	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
Zero net migration	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9
High net migration (260,000 per year)	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0

Adapted from 'table A4', OBR 2013: 144

The OBR (2013) concludes that, in its analysis, 'migrants are assumed to have the same economic characteristics as natives but are more concentrated in the working-age group than the overall population'. Migration therefore has 'a positive effect on participation rates, employment and ultimately GDP and GDP per capita growth' (ibid).

A more recent study by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) (Lisenkova and Sanchez-Martinez 2013) used a model that is known to better capture and distinguish between the different economic characteristics of migrants and British-born people.<sup>19</sup> The results of this research suggested that reducing net migration to 100,000 per year (compared with 200,000 per year) would produce the following effects:

- aggregate GDP would be decreased by 11 per cent, and GDP per person by 2.7 per cent, by 2060
- total government spending as a share of GDP would increase by 1.4 percentage points by 2060, requiring an increase in the labour income tax rate of 2.2 percentage points to balance the budget in every period
- this in turn would reduce the average households' net income such that by 2060 net wages would be 3.3 per cent lower than they are currently (Lisenkova and Sanchez-Martinez 2013).

However, it should be kept in mind that migration may add to GDP simply by increasing the proportion of high earners within an economy.

### 2.3.2 Impact on productivity

On the whole, studies have found that migration will raise productivity if migrants are more skilled, on average, than local people – which they tend to be.

- Skilled migrants increase the productivity of others, by filling skills gaps, passing on skills to other workers, and by increasing incentives for other workers to invest in training (Ruhs and Anderson 2011). Migrants' skills are complementary to those

<sup>19</sup> Lisenkova and Sanchez-Martinez's analysis used a dynamic 'overlapping generations computable general equilibrium' model (OLG-CGE) developed at NIESR. NIESR claims that its model, the National Institute General Equilibrium Model of Ageing (NiAGE), is 'widely acknowledged as the best tool for the modelling of issues associated with demographic change'. The model differentiates between foreign-born and native born individuals in terms of employment and wage rates, different levels of educational qualifications, and different probabilities of receiving welfare payments from the government, in order to capture the multidimensional effects of migration on the labour market, aggregate demand and public finances.

of skilled British workers, and this ‘match’ helps to increase general production, a conclusion supported by evidence of the positive impacts that migration has on skilled workers’ wages (Lucchino et al 2012).

- Highly skilled migrants can increase productivity through their contribution to innovation, creativity and increased knowledge ‘spillovers’. This positive aspect of migration has been a particular factor in the economic success of the US (Goldin et al 2011).
- Migration can develop whole new industries. A notable example in the UK is the curry house sector. In 1996, the 10,000 curry houses in the UK had an annual turnover of £1.5 billion pounds – more than the steel, coal and shipbuilding industries put together (Gott and Johnston 2002).
- There is some evidence that migrants are relatively more likely to be innovators (Nathan 2011), and that diverse firms in the UK across a range of sectors are made more innovative and productive by migrants (Ozgen et al 2011, Parrotta et al 2011, Nathan and Lee 2011), who bring new perspectives, experiences and knowledge. The ONS has found that while only 1 per cent of the UK’s registered businesses were foreign-owned in 2011, these foreign-owned businesses contributed 28 per cent of the UK’s total approximate value-added (ONS 2013a). Furthermore, migrants can play an important role in international entrepreneurship because of their knowledge of their home markets (Honig 2010).

However, the OBR (2013) has concluded that the evidence on migrants’ contribution to higher productivity is mixed. Their higher skills relative to the local labour force could lead to a positive impact, but Labour Force Survey (LFS) data has suggested these migrants’ skills were not being deployed efficiently in the economy, and so migrants’ potential contributions to higher productivity were not being fully realised.

- Although many migrants are highly skilled, migrants also cluster at the other end of the labour market, taking unskilled or low-skilled jobs. While low-skilled migration can contribute to growth, it can also inhibit long-term productivity growth. If employers are able to rely on low-skilled migrant labour, this may lessen incentives for them to invest in capital, technology or innovation which might increase productivity in the medium-to-long term. There is some evidence of this happening in some sectors (such as food processing), and in some regions (in the North of England, for example) (Stenning et al 2006, Somerville and Sumption 2009).

### 2.3.3 Fiscal impacts

Research in this area tends to conclude that migrants make a net fiscal contribution. This is partly because they are more likely to arrive as adults (so education costs have been borne by their home countries), are of working age (so they are more likely to be paying taxes than drawing benefits), and – particularly if they are from within the EU – are more highly skilled and so higher paid than the rest of the population (see for example Dustmann and Frattini 2013, Dustmann et al 2010, Home Office 2007, Srisikandarajah et al 2005, Gott and Johnston 2002; for a useful summary see Vargas-Silva 2013).<sup>20</sup>

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20 Estimates of migrants’ fiscal contributions are sensitive to assumptions about whether the UK-born children of migrants should be counted as migrants or natives, and to the overall state of public finances. Data on migrants’ fiscal impact should therefore be treated with some caution.

- Migrants' net positive contribution persists even when factoring in pension rights. A recent study by the OECD found that migrants made a net fiscal contribution in the UK equivalent to 0.46 per cent of GDP including pensions, or 1.02 per cent excluding pensions (OECD 2013).<sup>21</sup>
- However, these contributions should not be overly exaggerated. Rowthorn (2008) has concluded that migrants' net fiscal contribution is negligible, and the same recent OECD paper found that migrants households' contribution was not significantly different from that of native-born households (OECD 2013).
- There is also a marked difference in migrants' fiscal contribution depending on where in the world they have come from. Studies have shown that EU migrants who arrived after 1999 contributed on average 34 per cent more in taxes than they received as transfers, but by contrast, recent immigrants from countries outside the EU have contributed just 2 per cent more in taxes than they received in transfers (Dustmann and Frattini 2013). Furthermore, over the longer term, non-EU migrants (such as Somali refugees) who tend to have bigger families also tend to draw more out in benefits (HL-SCEA 2008).

### 2.3.4 Distributional effects

Although, as we have seen above, migration has a generally beneficial impact on economy, what is less clear is how well these benefits are shared, as so many studies are undertaken at an aggregate level.

- A particularly well-known American paper (Borjas 1994) found that the benefits of immigration's contribution to overall economic growth were unevenly distributed, with different impacts falling on different localities, and those workers competing directly with migrants for jobs being disadvantaged through crowding-out or reduced wages.
- A UK paper concluded that it may be previous cohorts of immigrants who lose out most from new migration, because they competing with more recent immigrants for low-skilled, part-time or temporary jobs (EHRC 2009).
- Migration may also contribute to a 'low-skill equilibrium', which leaves some groups, or regions, stuck within a low-skilled, low-paid economic model.
- More widely, we know that inequality and relative incomes have an impact on some of the metrics used to measure wellbeing, such as levels of health and social problems (Rowlingson 2011). The previously resident population might therefore be negatively affected if inequality is increased by the arrival of both high- and low-paid migrants.

The negative distributional impacts of migration are of particular concern to our Fair Deal, as an approach to migration policy that is recognisably progressive must pay particular regard to the most vulnerable groups in society. At the very least, it is likely that if migration causes only a slight gain in GDP on average (which appears to be the conclusion of most studies), then it follows that some people will be gaining and others losing out, so policy should be looking to mitigate any negative effects.

### 2.3.5 Impacts on the labour market

The public often express concern about the perceived impacts of immigrants upon job availability ('migrants taking our jobs') and upon wages ('migrants driving down our wages') (Ashcroft 2013). This is probably because the public has taken note of the fact that there are now many more migrants in the UK labour force than in the past.

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21 The actual contribution is likely to be somewhere in between these two figures, given that many migrants will leave the UK without claiming a pension.

As Matthew Bourne has noted, ‘Between the first quarter of 1997 and the second quarter of 2013... the proportion of people in total UK employment born outside the UK increased from 7.3 per cent in 1997 to 14.8 per cent.’<sup>22</sup> However, research has shown little or no evidence of immigration having a negative impact on employment or wage rates on average (see for instance Manacorda et al 2006, Lucchino et al 2012).

That said, as we discussed in section 2.3.4 above, some research has indicated that immigration has some negative impacts on the employment prospects of some groups of workers, such as those with intermediate-level qualifications and recent migrants, particularly in times of recession. There is also some evidence that migration reduces wages for lower earners, and/or those in unskilled or low-skilled jobs, while slightly increasing wages for higher earners and/or those in high-skilled jobs (CEP 2012). However, these effects are very small, even for the groups that are most directly and significantly affected (see MAC 2012 for a summary of this evidence).

Relative to other factors (access to training, for example), the impact of migration on wages is insignificant (Manning 2012). For instance, in England there is a 7 per cent income gain for young men who, starting from the same educational level, complete at least NVQ level 2 via an apprenticeship compared with those who do not undertake one; this gain is doubled to 14 per cent for those who achieve NVQ level 3 (McIntosh 2004). A range of other possible policy interventions offer much more effective means of increasing the incomes of the low-paid than restricting immigration does.

## 2.4 The impact of migration on UK welfare and public services

### 2.4.1 Welfare

Despite some data issues,<sup>23</sup> we can conclude with some certainty that the impact of migration on welfare spending is fairly minimal.

LFS data demonstrates that non-UK nationals are less likely to use the benefits system<sup>24</sup> than British nationals: 42 per cent of UK nationals report claiming benefits, compared to 33 per cent of all non-UK nationals. This is particularly true of recent arrivals: migrants who arrived in the UK between 2000 and 2011 were 45 per cent less likely to receive state benefits or tax credits than British people were during this period. There is also no persuasive evidence that the UK’s welfare policies act as a ‘magnet’ for immigration (see Guilietti and Wahba 2012, De Giorgi and Pellizzari 2009, and Pederson et al 2008).

While there is no evidence that migrants as a whole put pressure on the UK welfare system, there is variation by ethnic group, demographic background and education level. Grouping migrants by continent and by gender, Drinkwater and Robinson (2011) found that migrants from the majority of regions of the world claimed less than British people. The exceptions to this, which affected the average, were Asian men, European men from outside the EU, and African men.

### 2.4.2 Public services

Like UK residents, migrants are users of public services, providers of services as employees, and also funders of services, through taxation (as outlined above). Generally, migrants do not use public services any more than the previously resident population, and some migrant

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22 <http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2013/11/work-have-immigrants-taken-our-jobs.html>

23 Most significant among these are that contributory benefits are not contingent on immigration status, and immigration status is not recorded once eligibility for other benefits is established.

24 ‘Benefits system’ is here defined as state benefits or tax credits, including state pension, allowances, child benefit and national insurance credits.

groups use them less. Evidence suggests that migrants use the NHS less than the British-born population.

- NIESR has calculated that foreign-born residents comprise 13 per cent of the population, but account for an estimated 10.8 per cent of health spending (George et al 2011). According to NIESR's estimations, annual expenditure on health care for the British-born population is £2,003 per head, whereas for migrants it is 20 per cent lower, at £1,602 per head (ibid).
- In 2013 the Department of Health published research on the cost of migrants to the NHS (Prederi 2013). According to the report, the cost of 'health tourists' (people who travel to the UK to receive treatment from the NHS) is not as high as has been reported. A figure of £2 billion is often quoted in the debate – but this refers to the total cost of treating all foreign visitors and temporary migrants (such as students and seasonal workers), many of whom pay tax. The study estimates that the cost of *deliberate* health tourism (those who travel to the UK specifically for health care) is between £60 and £80 million per year (0.06 per cent of the total NHS budget) (ibid).
- Migrants are also disproportionately light users of social care services, largely because they are on average younger than the UK-born population: 87 per cent of migrants who came in the last decade are between the ages of 15 and 44 (Migration Observatory 2013).

However, in contrast to health, the overall impact of migration on the *schools* budget is disproportionately large.

- 15 per cent of the education budget is spent on the children of migrants, whereas migrants make up only 13 per cent of the population (George et al 2011).
- The impact of migration is felt particularly strongly in primary schools, given the general shortage of places. The Department for Education predicts a shortage of 180,000 primary school places by 2015 (Cook 2012).
- However, migration may bring other, non-fiscal benefits to schools. Recent research suggests that migration has a positive effect on school and pupil performance – migrant children (including those who start school without the ability to speak English) can drive improvement in schools (George et al 2011).

Furthermore, many public services are heavily reliant upon migrant labour – particularly health services (Dustmann and Frattini 2013).

- One-third of medical practitioners were born outside the EU (MAC 2012). Recruitment from overseas has been a key strategy of the NHS, and in recent years overseas sources have contributed around 45 per cent of the new entrants registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2008, migrants comprised 19 per cent of carer and 35 per cent of nurse roles in older adult care (Cangiano et al 2009). Rightly or wrongly, low pay, poor working standards and progression, and shift work are all more accepted by migrants. The number of foreign-born care workers has been increasing at a faster rate than both immigration in general, and the size of the care workforce in general (Shutes 2012). This, combined with an ageing population, means that the role of migrants in holding together a fragile social care system is extremely significant.

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25 Bach S (2008) 'Staff Shortages and Immigration in the Health Sector' London: Migration Advisory Committee

Overall, the evidence suggests that public services have been able to ‘cope’ with, and even benefit from, high net migration. However, it is important not to underestimate the immediate and localised impacts that movements of migrants can have on public services while service providers adjust to their presence. For example, the main challenges that resulted from the influx of eastern Europeans after 2004 were probably more related to pace than scale, and to the fact that many of these migrants went to parts of the country that were unused to immigration, causing adjustment problems for local services.

## 2.5 The impact of migration on UK housing

The pace and scale of immigration has transformed communities across the UK in many ways (see section 2.6 below), but relatively high and rapid migrant inflows into certain areas has had a particularly strong impact on housing, in the context of a national housing shortage in which unmet need is estimated to amount to nearly two million households (Bramley et al 2010).

- Migration does place greater pressure on housing stock, and can exacerbate issues caused by the already unbalanced nature of the UK’s housing market. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) estimate that net migration is responsible for two-fifths of housing demand in England (CLG 2010).
- Recent estimates suggest that the UK would need to build 290,500 homes a year to keep pace with demand (Wilson 2010), and that population growth due to migration accounts for around one-third of this demand – 87,500 homes a year (Morton 2013)
- This increased demand for housing ‘feeds through’ to some extent into increased house prices and rent levels (Whitehead 2012). One 2008 study showed that if net immigration were to amount to 190,000 in each of the following 20 years (and the rate of house building were to stay constant), then house prices would grow 13 per cent higher than they would if the UK experienced zero net migration over that period (HL-SCEA 2008).

Immigration affects different parts of the housing market to different degrees. Despite concerns over its impact on social housing, for example, its effect on this sector is small.

- Controlling for demographic factors, migrants are 28 per cent less likely than British born residents to live in social housing (Dustmann et al 2010).
- An IPPR study found ‘no evidence’ that social housing allocations favour migrants over UK citizens (Rutter and Latorre 2009).
- However, it is self-evident that if access rules to social housing had been the same but immigration had been lower, more social housing would have been available for British-born people.

By comparison, the impact of new waves of migration on the private sector has been much greater.

- Analysis of the LFS shows that three-quarters of migrants who have been in the UK for five years or less live in the private rental sector (PRS) (Vargas-Silva 2011a). This appears to hold particularly true for migrants from the post-2004 ‘A8’ accession countries (Green et al 2008, Phillimore et al 2008, Perry 2012).

The impact of migration on housing is more pronounced at a local level (Whitehead 2012, Perry 2012).

- Migration is largely concentrated in London and the South East – areas that are already struggling with high housing demand (Schmuecker 2011). While migration is

responsible for two-fifths of demand for housing across the country, it is predicted to be responsible for two-thirds of demand in London until 2021 (Whitehead 2008).

- Migrants can displace others from the PRS, as they are more likely to accept poorer housing conditions (Rugg and Rhodes 2008, Perry 2012). Greater demand for private housing can keep house prices buoyant, which can reduce access to home-ownership for prospective first-time buyers (ICoCo 2007).
- Migration can also fundamentally change a housing market. Immigration drives demand for very flexible housing with short-term rental contracts (Whitehead 2012), and large units to accommodate bigger families and multiple workers (Vargas-Silva 2011b). For example, the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Thetford in Norfolk grew from 40 to over 400 in four years (Perry 2012). In some areas of high migration, tied housing (that is, housing tied to a person's work) can account for a quarter of all lettings (Rugg and Rhodes 2008). While research on this topic is scarce, it is thought that migration has led to an increase in overcrowded accommodation (Whitehead 2012). Greater demand for PRS housing lessens incentives to improve housing quality (Green et al 2008, Phillimore et al 2008), which leads to growth in sub-standard or unsafe accommodation (Chappell et al 2009).
- Research by Homeless Link (2010) has found that over half of all homelessness services (hostels, second-stage accommodation and day centres) have non-UK nationals as clients. The homelessness charity Broadway's CHAIN database shows that in 2012/13 over half of rough sleepers in London are non-UK nationals, and in some other parts of the country this figure is even higher (Swain 2013).

## 2.6 Impacts on society

The scale and diversity of recent migration to the UK has evidently changed our society, but it largely remains a matter of individual opinion as to whether the country has been strengthened or weakened as a result. The sociological evidence on the subject is mixed.

- In an influential paper, Robert D. Putnam (2007) published survey data showing that, in the short-to-medium term, immigration weakens social solidarity and diminishes social capital. Recent books which have argued that high immigration has damaged UK society (Goodhart 2013, Collier 2013) have lent heavily on this finding, and on similar studies.<sup>26</sup> One argument advanced by these commentators is that high immigration is incompatible with generous welfare states, because immigration reduces social homogeneity and therefore the willingness of people to pay taxation for public goods.
- However, a study of 21 OECD countries over 30 years showed that there was no evidence that countries with large immigrant populations were unable to maintain their welfare states, though rapid immigration did have some effect (Soroka et al 2006). A 2007 study arrived at similar conclusions (Mau 2007).<sup>27</sup>
- Researchers at Kings College (Zimdars and Tampubolon 2012) actually identified a positive relationship between diversity and trust. They also identified a positive relationship between integration and trust, and found that inclusive policies counterbalance the potentially negative effects of increasing diversity.

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26 See also Alesina et al 2001

27 Mau (2007) explored the correlation between attitudes to the welfare state and the percentage of foreigners across Europe, and found that the correlation was very weak (-0.14). The study compared both the UK and Germany. In 2002 the proportion of foreign nationals in the UK (4.9 per cent) was almost half that of Germany (8.9 per cent), and the UK had higher ethnic homogeneity than Germany – yet the study found 'no systematic variation in attitudes towards the welfare state' between the two countries. Support for income redistribution was high in both countries – 60 per cent of both populations supported the idea of income redistribution.

This suggests that there may be a negative relationship between trust and unintegrated migrants, or between trust and negative portrayals of migrants, rather than between trust and diversity per se.

The rise in temporary migration has led to higher levels of 'churn' within communities. In particular, EU migrants have been found to move around the UK more than the British-born population do (Wilcox 2010). This brings specific challenges, such as a rise in the number of households with limited knowledge of or attachment to a local area (Saggar et al 2012). However, systematic evidence of the difficulties caused by transient migrants is hard to find.

- There are documented examples of tensions caused by migrants being unaware of local customs and creating disturbances, as well by people leaving for and arriving from shifts around the clock (Phillimore et al 2008).
- Polling by the Metropolitan Migration Foundation (2012) found that people born outside of the UK speak with their neighbours far less than the average. However, they were also far more likely to say that they would like a closer relationship with their neighbours – 26 per cent compared with an average of 14 per cent.

Concerns have been expressed that that decades of immigration to the UK have led to segregation along ethnic, national and linguistic lines. The official report into the 2001 riots in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham famously concluded that people from different groups within these communities were living 'parallel lives' (Community Cohesion Panel 2004), while in 2005 Trevor Phillips, then head of the Commission for Racial Equality, warned that failures in integration policy had led to communities 'sleepwalking into segregation'.<sup>28</sup>

- Studies have shown that levels of segregation in the UK are varied between groups, and are falling for many groups (Simpson 2004).
- Furthermore, Daniel Dorling (2011) has shown that communities are more segregated by inequality, poverty wealth and opportunity than by race, ethnicity or religion.
- Across the UK as a whole, segregation is declining (RGS 2009).

The impact of immigration policy on more specific instances of segregation is not clear. 'Chain migration' has enabled some people to live in the UK with low levels of English. However, official reviews of the riots and their causes pointed to the influence of segregated schooling and housing allocation policies (Cantle 2005), and other studies of segregation in the UK have highlighted the influence of internal migration within the UK (Stillwell 2008).

There is no clear evidence of 'white flight' from any areas of the UK. The 2011 census showed that there was a 600,000 net decrease in the number of people identifying as 'white British' living in London compared with the 2001 census. However, research by Birkbeck College found that 'anti-immigration-motivated "white flight" is not taking place even among those who oppose immigration'.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, another study showed that the rate at which people are leaving London for elsewhere in the UK is declining (Portes 2013).

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28 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4270010.stm>

29 <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/case-studies/white-flight-the-emerging-story>



## 2.7 Conclusions

From the brief summary of the available evidence presented above, we can set out the following broad conclusions about migration to the UK over the last couple of decades.

- In the last 20 years the UK has experienced unprecedented levels of migration.
- At various times there have been large spikes in asylum applications, migration from the EU, and foreign student numbers.
- Economic migration and family migration have also been high by historical standards.
- There has been increasing diversity among migrant inflows, with people coming from a wider range of countries.
- Although immigration has led to increased settlement, a lot of migration has also been temporary, creating considerable ‘churn’ within some communities.
- A tightening of border procedures, visa regimes and migration policy in recent years has caused a drop in the overall number relative to its peaks.
- Migration is likely to have contributed to the UK’s economic growth and increased productivity.
- There is no evidence of migration having significant impacts on employment or wages.
- However, migration has uneven distributional impacts, and it will have impacted on some British people negatively even if migration is positive for the economy overall.
- Migrants contribute more in net terms than British people do, and also bring fiscal benefits simply by increasing the numbers of tax-payers.
- When government spending is fixed or declining in aggregate terms, additional migrants add to revenue, but not to costs (although they may place greater pressures on public services).
- Migrants are not imposing a significant burden on the welfare system, either compared to their fiscal impact or by comparison to native groups, even when controlling for other factors.
- Migrants are relatively light users of the NHS, and generally do not impose disproportionate burdens on public services – with the exception of schools. However, sudden influxes of migrants into particular areas can obviously impose strains on services in the short-to-medium term.
- High immigration has compounded the UK’s housing crisis. However, migrants are much more likely to live in the private rented sector, and are not given disproportionate access to social housing.
- Overall, to the extent that it can be measured, migration does not appear to have had major negative social impacts on the UK – certainly not to the extent that some anti-migration commentators have suggested.
- However, high immigration has certainly changed the make-up of some communities, and while some people relish the change and diversity that migration brings, others are less comfortable with it.

### 3. UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC OPINION

In this section we turn to the important issue of public consent. Broadly speaking, our framework of principles (chapter 1) and our assessment of the evidence of the impacts of high migration (chapter 2) appears to provide the grounds for a relatively open and liberal migration regime, with a limited number of policies in place to mitigate some negative impacts. However, taken at face value, public opinion would point towards a very different approach.

There is extensive polling data, and an expanding literature, on UK public attitudes towards immigration.<sup>30</sup> Much of this material shows that public concern about immigration remains high, and so it is clear that progressives must consider how best to respond to this anxiety. However, polling on immigration tends to operate in a vacuum, divorced from the legal and political constraints, and the complex international drivers of migration, that politicians and policymakers have to consider and confront.

Polling can tell us a great deal about who is worried, and why. For example, we know that concern is high among older people and those in lower socio-economic groups,<sup>31</sup> that people generally express more concern about how immigration affects the UK as a whole than they do about their local area,<sup>32</sup> and that London and Scotland exhibit less opposition to immigration than other areas.<sup>33</sup> Polling by YouGov has also demonstrated that the idea of a reduction in net migration does not necessarily alleviate the public's concern about immigration.<sup>34</sup> These findings are important, but they do not necessarily bring us any closer to having clear answers about how best to respond to public concern, and how policy can alleviate public anxiety in this area.

This section sets out a way of moving the debate forwards in order to forge a new mainstream progressive approach to migration. It is based on new qualitative research conducted by IPPR, which tested two different approaches to framing the issue of migration.

Our intention in carrying out this research was to move beyond polling that seeks to gain further insight into public views on immigration, and instead identify and draw out areas of consensus that might form the basis of a new political settlement on migration which would be beneficial to the UK, fair to both UK citizens and migrants, and capable of contesting for mainstream support. Our research set out to test whether, and how, public attitudes are affected by the way in which an issue is framed or presented. We explored two ways for progressives to approach discussions about migration policy – one framed around weighing up the costs and benefits of different migration flows (what we might call the ‘dominant progressive frame’), and one framed around the fairness of various policies

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30 Some recent examples include Migration Observatory 2011, Blinder 2012, Ashcroft 2013 and Transatlantic Trends 2013.

31 Differences in opinion between different age groups are particularly striking, with young people much less likely to cite immigration as a significant concern than older people. It is not clear whether this reflects simply age, or rather a generational shift in attitudes; in all likelihood, it is both. See Frere-Smith (2013).

32 In a survey carried out by YouGov in 2013, 55 per cent of respondents chose immigration as one of the top three issues facing the UK (rising to 68 per cent for Conservative voters, and 90 per cent for Ukip voters), but only 17 per cent cited it as top-three among the issues which affecting them and their families (rising to 24 per cent for Conservative voters and 38 per cent for Ukip voters). Source: [http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus\\_uploads/document/b1kbfzuumb/YG-Archive-Pol-Sun-results-070513.pdf](http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/b1kbfzuumb/YG-Archive-Pol-Sun-results-070513.pdf)

33 London and Scotland have been found to be the two areas generally least opposed to immigration, and the most supportive of increases in migration. However, the two areas have had massively different experiences of migration – London has by far the largest number of migrants in the country, while Scotland has among the smallest. <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/commentary/variations-enigma-regional-differences-support-reducing-immigration-uk>

34 ‘Net migration fell from 242,000 in 2011 to 153,000 in 2012. Yet this news has done nothing to stem the tide of defections to UKIP – mainly from the Tories but now, increasingly, from Labour and the Lib Dems.’ (Kellner 2013)

pursued in response to migration (an ‘alternative progressive frame’). It is important to be clear that our intention in this research was not to persuade people of unpalatable truths, but rather to find ways of moving the conversation into a space that goes beyond a crude restrictionist approach, has a more realistic starting point (namely that immigration is, and always will be, inevitable in the globalised world we live in, to a greater or lesser degree), and allows people to engage with and debate the actual impact that migration has – both on people’s communities and on their sense of identity.

The table below sets out the approaches taken within the ‘predominant restrictionist frame’, the ‘dominant progressive frame’ (most often used to rebut the restrictionist approach) and the ‘alternative progressive frame’.

**Table 3.1**  
A comparison of the predominant restrictionist, dominant progressive and alternative progressive frame approaches to immigration

		Progressive frames	
<b>Key objective</b>	<b>Predominant restrictionist frame:</b> Bring migrant numbers down.	<b>Dominant progressive frame:</b> A ‘cost–benefit’ analysis that illustrates that the positives of migration outweigh the negatives.	<b>Alternative progressive frame:</b> A focus on fairness, contribution and reciprocity in migration policy.
<b>Approach to framing the debate</b>	The predominant restrictionist frame is grounded in popular appeal, but tends to view immigration policy in a vacuum. It fails to take into account the actual constraints and trade-offs, whether legal or political, which policymakers face in this area. Its focus is on enforcement and reduction rather than realism and consideration of impacts.	The ‘cost–benefit’ frame is the typical way in which progressives have tended to make their case in the media and public debate in recent years. Arguments against migration are countered with evidence about the benefits that migration, either in general or in the cases of particular groups of migrants, bring to the UK. This approach is often, though not always, focused on the economic benefits of migration.	The ‘fairness’ frame encourages participants to consider how to make the immigration system (and indeed other policy areas such as the welfare system) fairer and more contributory. The focus is on how to tackle issues within the immigration system – like housing, welfare and public services – which respond to democratic concern. Crucially, the focus is on fairness, contribution and reciprocity, and their importance as ideals for British citizens and migrants alike.

### Methodology

As part of our research for this report we conducted four focus groups, and commissioned an online survey from Ipsos MORI. It is important to acknowledge a number of limitations and constraints of this work. First, the numbers of participants was by no means extensive. Second, the two framings contained a different set of variables: the ‘cost–benefit groups’ discussed particular flows of migrants, such as highly skilled migrants, students and European migrants, whereas the ‘fairness groups’ discussed ‘behind the border’ issues, such as housing, welfare and public services. Despite these limitations, we believe that the findings of this research provide valuable data on which to base progressive approaches to migration, as well as a useful starting point for further research.

#### *The focus groups*

Two focus groups were held in Gravesend and two in Manchester. In each location, one of the focus groups was conducted using the cost–benefit frame (exploring skilled migration, family migration, student migration and European migration – topics that were chosen because they allowed the discussion to focus on flows,

control and overall numbers) and the other was carried out using the fairness frame (discussing public services, housing, work and welfare – topics chosen because they moved the conversation onto fairness within the immigration system, and away from the discussion of control and flows).

10–12 respondents attended each session. A mix of genders, ethnicities, ages and social classes were recruited to attend each group. At the recruitment stage, potential respondents completed a short questionnaire, and were then invited to attend if they expressed concern about immigration in the UK (people with more extreme pro- or anti-migration views were screened out at this stage).

#### *The survey*

IPPR also commissioned a survey from Ipsos MORI, completed by 648 members of an online community. The respondents were split into two groups, each of which filled out one of two surveys. Respondents were asked to provide explanations for their answers, providing valuable qualitative as well as quantitative data. The first group ('group one') were asked questions that were predominantly framed to focus on fairness (both for migrants and British people) and, using this fairness frame, explored issues such as benefits, low pay, housing and speaking English. The second group ('group two') were asked questions that were predominantly framed to focus on a cost–benefit analysis of immigration. These questions put a greater emphasis on migration flows, and focused on subjects such as international student migration, highly skilled migration, EU migration and family migration.

The respondents completed the questionnaires independently and without contacting others in the group. The two groups both represented a broad cross-section of ages, genders, ethnicities, locations and social classes. There were slightly more respondents in group 1 (334 in total) than group 2 (314), and so the analysis has been weighted to allow direct comparisons between the two groups.

### 3.1 The cost–benefit frame

This 'cost–benefit frame', which we used in two of our four focus groups, encouraged participants to weigh-up the pros of migration against the cons. This tended to lead in to discussions that were reactive (offering an alternative to the prevailing, dominant enforcement-led approach) and which focused on comparisons of different groups of migrants ('good migrants' versus 'bad migrants', for example), as well as on participants' past and present experiences in relation to these different groups.

Some people acknowledged the benefits that migrants bring to the UK, particularly with respect to skilled migrants working for the NHS. Many participants were in favour of international student migration, recognising that international students bring both economic and cultural benefits. However, the predominant focus of the conversation centred on reducing the overall numbers, and finding an alternative to migrants coming to the UK.

**'Ultimately, we should produce highly-skilled people ourselves.'**

**'We're a little island. At some point we have to say, Hang on – we're full.'**

Focus group participants, Manchester

### 3.1.1 Highly skilled migration

Participants discussed policy options for responding to highly skilled migration. In Gravesend, the participants largely agreed that highly-skilled migration should be limited, and that highly-skilled migrants should only be let in to the UK in order to fill a specific job opening. The conversation turned towards a discussion of numbers, and there was a general sense that ‘the country is overrun’.

In Manchester, by contrast, there was some agreement that we should let in anyone who brings in money and invests, as well as professionals such as doctors, nurses and engineers. One person noted that migration trends are changing, and that fewer highly-skilled Indians, for example, now desire to migrate to the UK – suggesting that migrants now need to be actively encouraged to come. Some agreed that limitations are needed, because there are already many highly-skilled people (especially young university graduates) in the UK who don’t have jobs. Some agreed that we should be more selective, and cited the example of Australia – a country that was repeatedly presented as a positive example of a state effectively managing and controlling immigration. While some people expressed concern that we had already gone past the ‘right number’, other responses were positive about migration.

**‘Let them in and let market forces dictate.’**

**‘[Immigration is a] matter of perception. I don’t believe we’re full up, and it’s never going to be as good as baby boomers had it.’**

Focus group participants, Manchester

Others were more negative, and referred to the UK being ‘full up’, referring to the problem of over-crowding, and the issues with opening ‘the gates’.

**‘We’re just letting everyone in... people who can’t do anything for the country.’**

**‘When our car park is full how are we letting everyone in?’**

**‘The census says the population in Manchester has gone up. Where are we all going to live? What are we all going to do?’**

Focus group participants, Manchester

### 3.1.2 Family migration

The discussions turned to policy options for responding to family migration. In Gravesend, participants felt that there should be a limit on numbers, and that restrictions should be put in place to limit family reunion to immediate family.

**‘Gotta stop at some point as we’re full.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

Some of the participants felt that there should be stipulations to ensure that people can’t bring over family until they have been citizens for a certain amount of time, and that rules should be more stringent.

**‘[They’re like,] “I’m now a British citizen and have 200 family members, so open the floodgates and bring them in.”’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

In Manchester, on the whole participants agreed that migrants should be allowed to bring family members into the country – ‘nothing worse than splitting family’ – so long as they were self-sufficient, and on the condition that they do not access benefits.

**‘As long as people are paying taxes and putting money into pot then we’ll be fine.’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

### **3.1.3 Student migration**

Participants then talked about policy options for responding to student migration. In Gravesend this was a generally positive discussion, with very little dissent from the view that international students are a good thing for the UK. There was some debate about whether students should be allowed to work, but the general view that emerged was that part-time work was acceptable, just as it was for other students. On the whole, participants felt that students should leave once their visa was up, but some noted that students with particular skills who wanted to stay should be allowed to do so.

In Manchester, participants were also largely in favour of international student migration, recognising that students bring benefits both cultural and economic. There was some discussion about students working during and after their courses, but the general consensus was that it makes sense to allow students to work in the UK after their studies if their skills are needed.

**‘There’s a risk of cutting off our nose to spite our face, isn’t there?’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

### **3.1.4 European migration**

Finally, focus group participants debated policy options for responding to European migration. In Gravesend there was a great deal of concern about the impact of new migration from Bulgaria and Romania. In particular, participants raised specific concerns about crime and welfare costs.<sup>35</sup> They were generally sceptical about the degree of fairness and reciprocity within Europe – British people were thought to ‘pay their way’ as expats (though there was some recognition that British expats tend not to integrate well), while other countries ‘look after their own first’ and ‘say no when they don’t like the rules’.

In Manchester, participants expressed concern about the lack of government control in this area (both in the sense of not being able to limit free movement under EU rules, and also in terms of the scarcity of data and information). The discussion differed from Gravesend in that there was very little mention of Bulgarian and Romanian migration. There was an overall sense that more people come here than go elsewhere, and that this is unfair, particularly in tough economic times when opportunities for Britons elsewhere in Europe are limited.

### **3.1.5 The online survey**

The cost–benefit frame elicited mixed responses from the respondents who took part in the online community survey, in which they were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements.

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<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that this discussion took place at the end of a week which saw a lot of high-profile discussions of this issue in the media and in Westminster.

**1. 'International students make up almost half of migration to the UK. They contribute billions to our economy each year and provide valuable income for universities and colleges, so we should welcome them – the government should try to attract more international students to the UK.'**

40 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed; 27 per cent neither agreed or disagreed or didn't have an opinion; 33 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**2. 'Highly skilled migrants from outside the EU can come to the UK if they can fill a specific job. They help the UK economy grow, and staff our public services, so we should welcome them – the government should make sure that employers can recruit the best talent from overseas.'**

46 per cent agreed or strongly agreed; 23 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't have an opinion; and 31 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**3. 'Migrants from the rest of the EU are free to come to the UK, just as British people are free to live and work in other European countries. The UK has benefited from being part of the European Union – we should accept that migration from Europe is part of the deal.'**

Only 23 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed; 21 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't have an opinion; and 56 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**4. 'Some British people enter into a relationship with someone from overseas and want them to come to the UK. Some migrants who have settled in the UK then want to bring their family too. As long as they speak English, and their families can support them, family members should be able to move to the UK.'**

39 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement; 18 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't have an opinion; and 43 per cent strongly disagreed or disagreed.

**5. 'Immigration brings benefits to the UK, but also problems. On balance, the benefits outweigh the problems – immigration has been good for the UK.'**

Over half of respondents disagreed with this statement: 56 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed; 21 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't know; 23 per cent agreed or strongly agreed. People's work status and income had a significant impact on their response to this statement. Whereas 27 per cent of people working full-time agreed, only 8 per cent of unemployed people and those seeking work agreed. Similarly, 41 per cent of people earning between £55,000 and £100,000 agreed with this statement, but only 15 per cent of people earning under £20,000 agreed.

The online respondents were then asked to elaborate on their answers. The word cloud below illustrates the key words that came out of their written responses to the above statement – the larger the word, the more times it was used by respondents. Measured in this way, the responses focus on the individuals concerned (that is, on 'people' and 'immigrants') as well as on the quantity of migrants – the word 'many' features prominently.





and housing) were seen to be fair to both British citizens and migrants. The participants expressed dissatisfaction with the current system, and many felt that unfairness was a big part of the problem. The discussion focussed less on specific groups of migrants, and more on what needs to change within the immigration system overall. The conversations tended to be proactive and reasonably optimistic, and allowed participants to articulate their vision for immigration policy in the future – perhaps because it allowed them to set aside immediate personal concerns.

**‘What you put in, you can take out.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

The prompts and general discussion frequently led the groups to discuss the question of priority and access to services. The discussion focussed less on migrants being seen as a source of problems, and instead on the systems in place, the way in which they are structured, and whether or not they were deemed to be fair.

### 3.2.1 Public services

Participants discussed policy options for responding to the impact that immigration has on public services. In Gravesend, the views were mixed, with particular disapproval reserved for migrants who were thought to be taking advantage of the British system.

**‘Clearly, people aren’t working. They’re bringing their families over and just getting a house. They’re getting priority over people who have worked all their life.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

Some of the participants felt that giving local authorities more control (particularly over funding) to cope with the disproportionate impact that would result from an influx of migrants to certain areas. Others were concerned about lack of jobs, and also raised concerns about British people on benefits. There was a strong sense, though, that this was a problem with ‘the system’ rather than with the migrants themselves.

**‘Don’t blame the migrants – blame the government for making a bad system.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

There was concern about both migrants and British people taking advantage of the benefits system. Irregular migration was raised as a concern, and was thought to be a ‘real drain on resources’. A degree of agreement formed around the principle that people should be able to access public services provided that they pay in to the system.

**‘People may believe it is like an open door, getting access to things at the expense of retired people and so on, but if they pay in then it’s fair.’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

### 3.2.2 Housing

Participants discussed policy options for responding to the impact that immigration has on housing and its availability in the UK. In Gravesend, the group were sceptical about policy options in this area. In particular, there was a sense that ‘landlords are dodgy’, which made it hard for them to see how regulation would work. Around half of respondents expressed concerns about pressures on housing, and doubts were

expressed about whether Bulgarians and Romanians would actually ‘pay in to get out’. At this point, a particular concern about abuse of the system was raised.

**‘Illegal aliens should not be entitled to anything – [they] should be banged up and deported.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

However, there was also a sense that fairness was important, and should be acknowledged in this area.

**‘Legal migrants shouldn’t be treated better than us, but they should be treated fair as us.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

In Manchester, a number of participants recognised that poor-quality housing is a problem that needs to be addressed – possibly through introducing landlord registration. There was agreement that landlords should be vetted, and housing conditions standardised. It was recognised that such moves would result in greater fairness for British people as well as migrants. It was agreed that more social housing is needed, and that new-build developments should include a social housing element.

### 3.2.3 Work

Participants discussed policy options for responding to the impact that immigration has on employment. In Gravesend there was general agreement that immigration allows employers to get away with paying less and asking for more work. It was largely agreed that local authorities should be given more powers to investigate and enforce the minimum wage (although there was some scepticism about the ability and willingness of the authorities to deliver on this), and that more opportunities for apprenticeships for British people should be created. These measures were felt to be ‘necessary but not sufficient’. The idea about apprenticeships resonated particularly strongly with the group, as was an example of a productive and reciprocal relationship. There was clear agreement that the government’s priority should be to train British people, as there was a sense that many people currently cannot access or afford training.

In Manchester, participants expressed the view that problems are largely concentrated in particular sectors (such as construction and hotels), and at the bottom of the labour market. There was general agreement that local authorities should be given greater responsibilities, but also some scepticism about their ability to enforce the national minimum wage. There was clear consensus that employers need to play fair, and some sentiment that immigration allows employers to take advantage.

**‘We need rules across the board for everyone.’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

The group acknowledged that training takes time, and that skilled migrants can fill skills gaps in the meantime. Selecting migrants who are going to contribute was seen as important, as well as a sense that restricting entry of people who are working/ contributing is ‘hitting the wrong target’. The discussion had a particular focus on fairness and parity within the system.

**‘Putting everyone on an even keel makes things fair.’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

### 3.2.4 Welfare

Participants discussed policy options for responding to the impact that immigration has on the welfare system. In Gravesend, notable concern was expressed about European migrants (Romanians and Bulgarians in particular) being attracted to the UK by benefits. There was concern about abuse of the benefits system – both by British people and by migrants.

**‘The problem is the benefits system – it’s not fair.’**

Focus group participant, Gravesend

There was collective agreement on the need for a contribution threshold with allowed no immediate access to benefits, and more generally that the UK’s benefit system should be more clearly based on contribution by everyone. Overall, there was a sense that it was a problem with the system, rather than the people themselves. Fairness was also raised as a concern here.

In Manchester, there was a strong sense of agreement around the idea that the current rules are not fair. There was also a general sense that a more contributory benefit system could help to reduce migration, as it would ‘make people think before they come here’. Overall, the consensus was that ‘We can’t carry people’, and that ‘Migrants need to earn their keep’. One participant made the following comment.

**‘You can’t blame people for taking advantage if the government allows it.’**

Focus group participant, Manchester

### 3.2.5 The online survey

A majority of respondents who took part in the online community survey which used the fairness frame supported policies that were positive about immigration, on the condition that the overall systems are made fairer and more contributory. The statements in this online community survey, and respondents’ reactions to them, are set out below.

**1. ‘Migrants from other EU countries should not be able to claim benefits in the UK until they have made a contribution by working and paying taxes. But if they work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules, they should be entitled to the same benefits as everyone else.’**

Eighty-five per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The level of agreement remained similar across income levels and between employed and unemployed people. It is interesting to note that, of the people who answered that they were ‘very dissatisfied’ with the way the government is dealing with immigration, 85 per cent still agreed with this statement.

**2. ‘Some migrants, particularly from other EU countries, are prepared to accept lower pay than British workers. If we had a better system of regulation that made sure that employers paid everyone a fair wage, then immigration would be less of a problem for the UK.’**

Sixty-three per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This varied by employment status: 84 per cent of people who were unemployed or seeking employment agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 60 per cent of people who worked full time.

**3. 'In some parts of the UK, migration can increase pressure on the housing system. These problems could be eased if local authorities made sure that local people got priority for social housing, and if we had better rules to protect everyone from bad landlords.'**

This statement was agreed or strongly agreed with by 84 per cent of respondents. The proportion who agreed or strongly agreed was slightly lower among respondents in higher income brackets: 72 per cent of households with a household income of between £55,000 and £99,000 agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, but this rate dropped to 47 per cent among those with a household income of £100,000 or more.

**4. 'It is better for everyone if migrants learn English, settle in the UK and eventually become British citizens – too much 'coming and going' makes it hard for people to integrate into society.'**

This statement met with agreement or strong agreement from 65 per cent of respondents. In this case, younger and older age groups were more likely to agree: 66 per cent of those aged between 18 and 34, 57 per cent of those aged between 35 and 54 and 75 per cent of those aged over 55 either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. People who were unemployed and seeking work were more likely to agree with this statement (with 73 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing) than those in full-time work or education (among whom 63 and 57 per cent respectively agreed or strongly agreed).

Again, respondents were asked to rank these ideas in order of how effective or ineffective they thought they would be at making the impact of immigration fairer. The first statement, about migrants from the EU, was thought likely to be the most effective, with 70 per cent of respondents choosing this as the most effective option among those presented – a striking degree of unanimity, in contrast to the cost–benefit frame.

Over half of the respondents agreed with the statement, 'Migrants themselves are not the problem; it's the British system that needs to change' – 55 per cent agreed or strongly agreed; 20 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed or didn't know; and 25 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. The respondents were then asked to elaborate on their answer. The word cloud below illustrates the key words that emerged from their responses to this question – the larger the word, the more times it was used by respondents. This illustrates clearly how the question prompted numerous responses related to the 'system' in their responses.

Finally, a majority (64 per cent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: 'If migrants work hard, pay in to the system, and uphold British values, we should welcome them to the UK'. Respondents' personal circumstances did colour how they felt about this statement to some degree: in particular, people working full-time were more likely to agree (71 per cent) than those unemployed and seeking work (45 per cent).



We believe that it is important to move the debate towards a more forward-looking and pragmatic discussion of how we respond to the reality of immigration in our globalised world. The following suggestions are key to achieving this.

- Progressives should move on from the economic arguments. People distrust immigration data, and its sources, and are unconvinced by cost–benefit-type arguments.
- Instead, the conversation needs to be grounded firmly within a discussion of fairness. Our research demonstrates that a focus on creating a fairer and more contributory system is welcomed by many people. A new, progressive narrative on migration needs to engage with the public’s overriding concern that the overall system is not fair, and that some people are not ‘playing by the rules’. Using fairness as a frame seems to chime with dearly held values, and also allows people to more readily set aside their own circumstances and fears, in order to look at the wider picture.
- A conversation based on fairness brings together the other elements of the consensus set out above: a clear focus on the national interest (which addresses the question of fairness in the sense of prioritising UK interests); an understanding of how immigration can impact on social solidarity (which leads back to the question of fairness in the sense of contribution and reciprocity); and integration (which directly addresses the question of defining a fair ‘quid pro quo’ between existing communities and new arrivals).
- The debate about making the overall system more contributory needs to take place not only in relation to migration, but also to other policy areas such as welfare and public services. Engaging with the question of how to make the whole immigration system (as well as the systems which address issues such as housing, welfare and public services) more contributory helps to respond to the concerns that the public express in this area.
- Finally, progressives need to find a new political language that speaks to values and culture – some aspects of the integration debate, for example, will never be addressed effectively through policy alone.

## 4. A NEW FAIR DEAL ON MIGRATION

In this final section we set out IPPR's Fair Deal on migration, basing it on the three pillars of public consent, our framework of principles and the evidence base which we reviewed in chapters 1 and 2.

The Fair Deal is so called because, as we saw in chapter 3, greater public consent for a mainstream progressive position can only be secured with a migration policy that is more clearly based on notions of fairness.

The Fair Deal is laid out as a series of position statements which, taken together, constitute a comprehensive manifesto on migration policy for the next decade.

### 4.1 Managing migration to make it fair for everyone

A major element of the public's concern about immigration in recent years has been the sheer scale of it. This presents a dilemma in constructing a mainstream progressive position, because there is a conflict between achieving public consent in this key area while also aligning policy with fundamental principles and best evidence, and – crucially – being realistic about outcomes.

In reality, even the 'crude restrictionist' approach, as typified by the policies associated with the current government's net migration target, struggles to drive down numbers.<sup>36</sup> This is partly because of the way the UK economy is structured, and the wider forces of globalisation. However, it is also because of 'chain effects' established by previous waves of immigration, the UK's international position in the world, and its international commitments, including its membership of the EU and the fact that it is party to the UN Refugee Convention). Moreover, there are categories of overall migration – overseas investors, high-skilled migrants and foreign students – which, if properly managed, are generally beneficial to the UK, and towards which a more practical approach towards numbers should therefore be applied. Finally, a progressive position worthy of the name would seek to maintain, if not strengthen, the UK's commitments to some other categories, such as refugees.

All of the above factors mean that in addressing public concern about the overall scale of immigration, which is real and legitimate, politicians and policymakers must be honest about what can be achieved and what can't – either because it is beyond the scope of state control, or because to do so would be damaging to UK interests.

Policies and processes put in place since the mid-2000s with the aim of reducing immigration from outside the EU – many of which IPPR supports, and would maintain under our Fair Deal – will probably bear down further on inflows over the coming years. Furthermore, assuming that there is no significant expansion of the EU in the next decade or so, migration from Europe may decline from current levels. This might mean a decrease in net migration in the medium-term – which, given public concern and other factors such as population growth and pressures on public services, could be welcome.

However, the 'push' and 'pull' factors that drive migratory flows are so multifarious and complex that even the most determined government struggles to *guarantee* lower immigration. As we have seen from the current government's approach, attempting to do so hastily and without addressing wider issues such as labour market reforms and skills gaps results in policies that are economically illogical, damaging to diplomatic relations, and harmful to families.

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36 Significantly, the most recent set of migration statistics showed that there was a net flow of 182,000 long-term migrants to the UK in the year-ending June 2013, the first annual increase for two years (ONS 2013b).

All of this leads us to conclude that it is more likely that migration will continue at the levels broadly similar to those of the last 20 years than it is that they will revert to the levels seen before then (see figure 2.1). With this in mind, how can a government take steps to answer the public's clear concern about the scale of migration?

In our view, the first thing a government should do is to differentiate more clearly between different types of migration, and articulate why different policy instruments should be used to manage these flows. Such an approach would allow the government to explain why, for example, it was pursuing a policy of maximising foreign student numbers, while at the same time reducing some forms of non-EU economic immigration.

While strategies to manage particular migrant flows might point in different directions with respect to the numbers entering the UK, they would be bound together by the single goal of making migration fairer for everyone.

As we saw in chapter 3, the basis of such an approach is summed up in the popular notion that 'If migrants work hard, pay in to the system and uphold British values, we should welcome them'. In our view, a coherent programme can flow from this simple but powerful notion, and we outline that programme below. In our view, such a programme would be much more credible than the blunt and discredited policy of pursuing a net migration target, which has the effect of driving down numbers irrespective of the cost.

Taking all the above into account, here is our first position statement.

**The Fair Deal acknowledges public anxiety over the high level of immigration of recent years, but argues that the government needs to be honest about the extent to which it can and should attempt to reduce some inflows. The current government's net migration target demonstrates the damage that is caused when policy is all crudely directed towards a single aim. We would replace it with a differentiated approach that takes a more practical approach to numbers, but would aim to control and manage migration such that migrants were more clearly seen to be working hard, paying into the system and upholding British values.**

## 4.2 Aligning migration policy with the wider aim of developing a stronger and fairer UK economy

Another key aspect of IPPR's Fair Deal is ensuring that migration policy works not only to deliver net economic benefits to the UK, but that it forms part of a wider economic strategy to develop a fairer economic model.

As we concluded in chapter 2, labour market evidence suggests that the UK economy is flexible enough to cope with the levels of immigration that we have experienced in recent years. Furthermore, the weight of evidence suggests that immigration has been generally positive for growth, and from a fiscal point of view it has contributed to, rather than been a drain on, the exchequer.

However, as we saw in chapter 3, the public have not been won over by these arguments, perhaps for the following reasons.

- They may see little or no personal gain from the net economic benefits of immigration which accrue at the national, macro level.
- Certain groups, competing directly with migrants for work or access to services, may experience clear economic losses from immigration, irrespective of the overall net economic benefits.



- Perhaps most crucially, even where people do feel that they have personally gained from immigration in an economic sense, this economic benefit may be offset by other negatives – population pressures, a rapid change in the make-up of their community, or a sense that British culture or identity is being diminished. (These issues, which are as important as economic issues, are returned to in section 4.12 below).

It is difficult to measure the distributional impacts of immigration, but there seems little doubt that some people in the UK lose out. It should concern progressives that these people tend to be clustered near the bottom of the income range.

Of course, migration policy on its own cannot achieve the wider progressive goal of advancing social justice. It is more a case of ensuring that migration policy does not act in the opposite direction by maintaining a low-skill equilibrium in some sectors of the economy, or by driving down pay and conditions. Our Fair Deal asserts that policymakers should be designing migration policy with a particular regard towards ensuring that migrant inflows do not further disadvantage already disadvantaged people in the UK.

To inform and direct migration policy in this context, it would make sense to constantly assess the impact of migration on median incomes and on employment rates among those who are already part of the UK workforce.

Maintaining a complete block on low-skilled immigration from outside the EU, and taking some measures aimed at reducing the need for low-skilled EU migration over time, should help to achieve this aim at the lower end of the labour market. At the higher end, a balance needs to be struck between preventing migrants from crowding UK citizens out of jobs they might otherwise secure – new graduates, for instance – and attracting those migrants who either directly or indirectly create additional employment opportunities for UK citizens.

Obviously, it is hard to separate out the impact that immigration has on median incomes and employment prospects from the impact of other factors. However, there is no reason why migration policy should not do some work towards achieving progressive outcomes. One role that should therefore be taken on by a beefed-up Migration Advisory Committee (more on which below) should be to provide ministers with assessments of the extent to which various migration flows are having a positive or negative effect in these areas; it would then fall to ministers to adjust policy in line with these assessments.

All of the above is not to say that the concerns of big business, particular sectors and migrants themselves should be ignored, but it is these groups that have benefitted most from migration policy over the last decade or so.

**Policymakers should look beyond the immediate demands of big business and particular vested interests, and instead design migration policy to be part of a wider effort to create a fairer and more stable economy – one that delivers sustainable growth and increased prosperity for everyone. The Fair Deal would assess migration policy against its impact on growth, productivity and the public finances, but would focus above all on the impact that migration policy has on economic inequality and the economic prospects of the poorest and most vulnerable in society – particularly through assessing the impact of migration flows on median incomes and the employment rates of existing UK citizens.**

### 4.3 Migration policy in the wider context of economic reform

Migration affects the economy in a wide range of often complex ways, but the way the economy works also affects migration. In other words, the current structure of the UK economy – open, flexible, lightly regulated – has a stronger effect on migration patterns and levels than migration has on the structure of the economy.

For example, skilled immigration benefits the UK economy, but these benefits could be maximised if migration policy were set alongside a proactive industrial strategy for the UK.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, concerns about immigration contributing to a low-skill equilibrium in some sectors or regions may be real, but would be more effectively and directly addressed through industrial strategy and changes in skills and training policy than through changes to the migration system. In particular, the potential negative impacts of migration on the incentives for employers to invest in training reinforce the case for proactive government action to reform the policies, institutions and funding that form the UK's vocational training system (see Lanning and Lawton 2012, and Dolphin and Lanning 2011).

So, if politicians and policymakers see merit in our Fair Deal on migration then they must realise that it involves measures that reach well beyond direct migration policy. As we have argued, the objective should be to make migration an effective part of the economy we want, not simply a means of serving the needs of the economy we have.

From the point of view of ensuring that migration does not add to economic unfairness or inequality, the two most important areas for policymakers to consider are the impacts of migration on low-paid workers, and migration's interaction with the welfare system.

As discussed in chapter 2, there is evidence that migration has had small negative impacts on the lowest paid workers in the UK. The national minimum wage (NMW) has acted as an important protection for this group, and has likely reduced the negative wage impacts that would otherwise have been caused by immigration. Given that immigration will and should continue, this reinforces the case for bolstering efforts to enforce the NMW, in order to both minimise immigration's potential impacts on UK-born workers, and to protect migrant workers who may be vulnerable to exploitation (which can in turn have impacts on UK-born workers if it leads to 'under-cutting').

The impact of immigration on the low-paid end of the labour market also strengthens arguments for increasing the level of the NMW, and for more proactive government support for expanding payment of the (higher) Living Wage (Lawton and Pennycook 2013).

Similar arguments apply to other aspects of job quality and security. For example, the willingness of some migrants to accept insecure or temporary contracts strengthens the case for introducing labour market regulations that would increase job security for all (recent debates about 'zero hours' contracts and the regulation of employment agencies offer cases in point). Given that the impacts of migration vary significantly across the country, there are also strong arguments for delegating more powers to local authorities to enforce (and shape) employment regulations.

The second area in which the government should respond to the economic impacts of migration is with respect to how the UK's welfare system can encourage and support the unemployed to move into work. Reforms such as the Jobs Guarantee (Dolphin et al 2011), strengthened welfare-to-work programmes (as in Cooke 2013, for example),

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<sup>37</sup> See for example Dolphin 2011.

more ambitious apprenticeship programmes (Dolphin and Lanning 2011), the overhaul of skills policy (Lanning and Lawton 2012) and increased pay and profit-sharing (Lawton and Lanning 2013) should, taken together, encourage and in some cases require UK citizens capable of working to do so, and thereby reduce the demand for some forms of migrant labour.

There are other specific measures (some of which have already proposed by the Labour party) that we would support, but which relate mainly to EU migration – and we will discuss these in section 4.10.

In summing up this sub-section, our position statement is as follows

**If the UK is to ensure a Fair Deal on economic migration, fundamental reforms will need to be made to the UK economy, such as a more proactive industrial strategy to boost growth, productivity and skills, greater focus on creating better-quality and better-paying jobs, increased policing and uprating of the national minimum wage, better protection and job security for workers, and stronger requirements placed on UK nationals who are out of work but can work to take up available jobs.**

#### 4.4 A differentiated approach to managing migration

In this section we elaborate on the ‘differentiated approach’ to managing migration that we introduced in section 4.1 above. Essentially, the concept is very simple: it would involve adopting different policies and management approaches that are distinct and specifically appropriate to the following types of inflow:

- high-value economic immigration from outside the EU
- high-skilled economic immigration from outside the EU
- low-skilled economic immigration from outside the EU
- foreign students
- family immigration from outside the EU
- EU immigration<sup>38</sup>
- refugees
- irregular immigrants.

The table below shows in a simplified way how each flow would be managed differently.

**Table 4.1**  
How different migrant inflows would be managed under the Fair Deal on migration

Inflow	Management
High-value economic immigration from outside the EU	Entry welcome (subject to fulfilling requirements)
Highly-skilled economic immigration from outside the EU	Entry controlled (subject to filling skills gaps)
Low-skilled economic immigration from outside the EU	No entry
Foreign students	Entry welcomed (subject to higher/further education access rules)
Family immigration from outside the EU	Entry controlled
EU immigration	Free movement (but with negotiated reforms)
Asylum-seekers or refugees	Entry allowed (subject to test of claim)
Irregular immigrants	No entry or removal

38 Much of the policy that applies to migration from the EU also takes in the wider European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, but for simplicity we use the term EU throughout this section.

Given that these different inflows (for more details on which see the sub-sections below) would be managed differently, it would make sense for policy to be set by different groupings of ministers (see section 4.8 below). We also believe that the way in which each flow is managed should be reported to parliament annually by a lead minister (see section 4.9).

**Our Fair Deal approach to managing migration would mean that for some types of migration – high-value and for study – policy would be generally geared towards increasing numbers and maximising the resultant benefits to the UK. For other types, entry would be encouraged where it meets the specific needs of the economy – as for highly skilled immigrants. In the case of EU migration, free movement would be respected, but re-negotiated where appropriate so that the rules reflect the needs and reality of an expanded EU. For other types of non-EU immigration, entry would either be carefully controlled (in the case of family migration) or not allowed (for low-skilled and irregular migrants).**

#### 4.5 Simplifying routes of entry

In the context of a differentiated approach to migration, in our view there is a compelling argument for simplifying the routes and rules of entry, which have become overly complex and opaque. This is a problem because of the negative signals that get sent out (sometimes unwittingly) to potential migrants who the UK would like to attract, and because it is hard for the public to understand who can come in and who can't.

The current system for entry to the UK for non EU migrants for largely economic purposes has five tiers.

- **Tier 1:** 'high-value migrants', which grants entry to entrepreneurs, investors, and a few people who enter under the 'exceptional talent' visa.
- **Tier 2:** 'skilled workers' with a job offer, including those coming in on intra-company transfers, workers in shortage occupations, some ministers of religion and sportspeople.
- **Tier 3:** low-skilled workers filling specific temporary labour shortages.
- **Tier 4:** students aged over 16 with a place at a registered UK educational establishment.
- **Tier 5:** six sub-tiers which allow about 50,000 young people to enter on 'working holidays' with various groups. Visas are awarded to young people from countries that have reciprocal arrangements with the UK.

In our view, the first way in which routes of entry should be simplified involves reducing the number of these tiers and renaming them.

We start with Tier 3. This has been completely shut since the current system was put in place in 2008, and in our view it should be removed altogether for three reasons.

- The demand for lower skilled temporary workers can be met by migrants from the EU for the foreseeable future.
- The Fair Deal on migration is predicated on future UK governments implementing policies that reduce the demand for low-skilled workers from overseas in the medium term, through policies such as a job guarantees for young people, better enforcement of the national minimum wage, and steps to encourage employers to pay the Living Wage and invest in skills and more efficient business practices (see section 4.10 below). Each of these steps would improve the quality and thus attraction of low-skilled jobs for the existing UK workforce.

- There is no political prospect of this tier being opened.

In this context, it is better to be completely clear with both would-be migrants themselves and the UK public that migrants from outside the EU with no skills or low skills have no prospect of migrating to the UK in the foreseeable future.

Moving on to Tier 4, in IPPR's recent report on student migration (Sachrajda and Pennington 2013) we recommended a number of changes to policy, and urged the government to increase the number of international students in the UK. All we add here is a development of our earlier argument: that students should not be included as a tier in a system that is designed and seen to regulate economic migration, but should rather be treated as an entirely different category, and managed separately. We therefore propose that Tier 4 is shut down, and that foreign students should enter the UK through a route which is operated separately from the system that manages economic migration.<sup>39</sup>

We also propose that Tier 5 should become a small element of a Migrant Worker programme (see below) as it involves migrants who are working, albeit for short periods.

This leaves us with Tiers 1 and 2. The distinction between these two remaining tiers is useful, and this distinction should be retained within a single route with two paths. This route should cover economic migration from outside the EU, in the light of the changes proposed above.

We propose that this route be called the Migrant Worker programme, which is a clearer and easier name to understand than the tiered system. Although some of the people entering through this programme would be investors, entrepreneurs and professionals rather than 'workers' in the traditional sense, we believe that the use of the word 'worker' sends out a clear signal that migrants coming into the UK via this programme would be making a significant economic contribution to the UK, primarily through working at a high level in this country. This programme should cover both 'high-value individuals' and 'skilled workers'. It would remain a carefully controlled route of entry, but with some reforms (see section 4.6 below) that would send out a stronger signal that the UK is 'open for business' to the 'brightest and the best' – those who can contribute not just to economic growth, but to fairer economic growth.

We would therefore be left with a single programme (with two pathways) covering all economic migration from outside the EU.

### **The Migrant Worker programme**

This programme would be managed and reported on separately from the other controlled routes of entry, in a distinct annual report (set out in section 4.8 below). Overall management would fall to a Home Office team reporting to the immigration minister and home secretary, but would be in-line with the changes suggested in section 4.9. However, stronger cross-departmental co-ordination should be brought into the management process, with the Treasury, BIS and CLG all having a say on how the programme is run, based on its likely economic, business and community impacts. Management should also be open to input from the home nations and combined authorities or, in the case of London, the mayor and the Greater London Assembly. (see section 4.9).

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39 Of course, some foreign students may wish to stay on after their studies to work in the UK, in which case they would be able to transfer on to other entry pathways if they qualified.

### Other programmes

Different teams, working to different ends, should administer the other three distinct migrant programmes.

- The Family Migrant programme
- The Foreign Student programme
- The Refugee programme

We will give more details of these programmes and other categories (EU migration, for example) but based on the above our position statement is as follows.

**The routes by which migrants can enter the UK should be made simpler and clearer, so that there is no confusion – among either migrants or British people – over who can come in and who cannot. To manage economic migration from outside the EU, we would consolidate the current entry routes into a Migrant Worker programme to maximise the benefits to the UK from attracting high-value migrants and those with the skills we need.**

### 4.6 Attracting economic migrants who will contribute to the UK economy

One of the main fallacies of the ‘crude restrictionist’ approach is its belief that if migrants are kept out of the UK, employment and wages among UK citizens will increase. The mainstream progressive position accepts that it is not enough simply to demonstrate that migration brings in net economic and fiscal benefits to the UK, as these are not necessarily fairly shared with all UK citizens. For that reason, our new Fair Deal approach gives primacy to the distributional impacts of migration, and explicitly concerns itself with ensuring that migration helps those who are economically disadvantaged in the UK. However, while the pursuit of that progressive end will sometimes involve policies designed specifically to reduce immigration, it will on other occasions involve policies that do the reverse, at least for some categories of immigration. That is why the net migration target is so perverse: it must by necessity bear down on all immigration, even on that which is demonstrably beneficial.

There are two key economic arguments for the liberalisation of migration policy which might help to achieve progressive ends.

1. To allow greater flexibility.
2. To maximise the dynamic effects of migration.

It has been argued that a modern economy requires maximum flexibility in order to both attract the skills and investment it needs, and to employ the workers it wants at competitive pay rates, and that this approach encourages entrepreneurialism, innovation and high productivity. However, we believe that, to the extent that migration should deliver this level of flexibility, EU migration will largely do the job (see section 4.10 below). The Fair Deal on migration recognises that there are strong economic and fiscal arguments for policies that take an interventionist approach, and would allow the entry of migrants with the following characteristics:

- high rates of employment and productivity
- skills that are in short supply in the UK workforce
- the capability to pay more in taxes than they take out in benefits or the use of public services
- the capability and resources to contribute to the creation of decently paid jobs (particularly beyond London and the South East)

- the resources to bring investment into the UK economy (particularly beyond London and the South East).

We outlined above our proposals for simplifying the routes of entry, particularly for economic migration from outside the EU. Below we lay out how what we call the Migrant Worker programme would work, building on the successes of the current Tiers 1 and 2 of the current system, and reforming what we regard as their weaknesses.

Tier 2 is fairly effective at enabling employers to fill specific skills gaps. In most cases, employers must demonstrate that jobs to be filled by a migrant coming to the UK via Tier 2 are of the skill level NQF level 6 (roughly degree-level) – around a third of full-time jobs in the UK is at or above this level. While this is a higher skill level than that previously required under Tier 2, given the current economic conditions and the supply of labour available from within the EU, this seems appropriate. Similarly, the resident labour market test (whereby employers must demonstrate that they have been unable to recruit within the UK or EU), along with some exemptions (including for migrants switching from student visas, and for jobs on a shortage list which identifies occupations and sectors suffering from systemic skills shortages) seems to offer a reasonable balance between flexibility for employers and safeguards for UK workers.

However, Tier 2 is by definition responsive, as it only meets the needs of employers who need to fill specific vacancies and skills gaps. The economic benefits of skilled migration come through a variety of channels, including innovation, entrepreneurship and investment, which means that the dynamic benefits from skilled migration are unlikely to be gained from a system that relies purely on manifest demand or reported demand from employers. There is therefore a good economic case for ‘supply-side’ migration routes that select migrants based on their own qualities and their potential to make a substantial contribution to the economy, rather than on the basis of a specific job that they come to fill.

In the current system this ‘supply-side’ need is meant to be filled through the Tier 1 category, but numbers coming through this route are currently capped at just 1,000 a year, and even this very small quota has not been fully taken up because the bar for what is now called the ‘exceptional talent’ route is set so high (eligibility is limited to those who are ‘world leaders or potential world-leading talent in the fields of science and the arts’). Similarly, specific routes under Tier 1 for investors and entrepreneurs are only used by tiny numbers of people each year. So it is at this level that a new ‘supply-side’ approach could reap the maximum dynamic benefits of migration.

However, these potential benefits must be balanced with the central aim of the Fair Deal, which is to manage migration in a way that is fair and that benefits everyone, including the most economically disadvantaged and excluded people in the UK. Moreover, as we outline below, the Fair Deal also takes strong account of public concern about the social and cultural impacts of immigration, which means that economic arguments cannot trump all others. This being the case, some sacrifice of the absolute maximum net economic benefit derived from migration is built into our proposals. This is because, in sum, we believe that a ‘good society’ is more important than a wealth-maximising society, particularly if that wealth is not well shared or adds to the unbalanced nature of the UK economy.

As part of the Fair Deal on migration, under a new Economic Migrant programme (with two tiers) (see section 4.4 above) we recommend the following pathways be introduced.

#### 4.6.1 The High-Value Individual pathway

This pathway would be open to people without a defined job or sponsor, but who are of demonstrably high value to the UK either because of their wealth or their talent.

- Under this pathway, the cap on the numbers of high-value individuals allowed entry would be removed, given that qualifications for entry are high, the numbers coming in are likely to be a relatively small proportion of total migration, and the benefits that these migrants bring are considerable.
- Eligibility for entry would be strictly contingent on applicants being fluent in English and demonstrating that they have sufficient funds to support themselves.
- Points would be awarded for qualifications, previous experience, income and funds to invest, with additional points available for those with exceptional skills, internationally renowned talent, those who intend to work, set up businesses or to invest in key UK institutions or infrastructure projects, or in a nation or region of the UK outside London and South East.
- Income and skill requirements would be set at a higher level than the pre-2011 Tier 1 system. Successful applicants to the High-Value Individual pathway would be expected to meet higher levels of skill, income and experience than those required for Skilled Worker pathway (see below).
- Professional and sectoral bodies covering identified shortage occupations or strategic economic sectors would have the opportunity to give an applicant additional points to support their application. Professional bodies would need to show a commitment to supporting migrants to find appropriate work. This would enable employers to act together to increase the supply of skilled labour, rather than relying on individuals entering through the Skilled Workers pathway to fill individual jobs.
- National and regional bodies (such as devolved administrations and combined local authorities) would also have the opportunity to provide high-value individuals with additional points. This would enable them to attract skilled workers to sectors that are strategically important for particular parts of the country, or which face regional skills shortages.
- To ensure that high-value individuals make a contribution commensurate with their skills, initial entry to the UK would be granted for 12 months. This would be extendable to five years, contingent on the migrant's ability to demonstrate that he or she is working at the appropriate skill and income level.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that wealthy foreigners entering because of their perceived ability to invest in the UK economy are not able to use the High-Value Individual pathway simply to gain a long-term right of residency without actually making real investments. For that reason, we welcome the fact that the MAC is considering tightening requirements in this area (MAC 2014).
- It is also essential that wealthy migrants pay their full share of taxes in the UK – the fact that many such migrants currently buy-up property in London, and thereby inflate house prices, has led IPPR to support the so-called 'mansion tax', even though this could dampen high-value migration (Cecil 2013). We also welcome the chancellor's announcement in his 2013 Autumn statement reforming the rules on capital gains tax on the sale of UK properties by foreign owners<sup>40</sup> – and, incidentally, support the idea proposed by the thinktank Civitas to impose restrictions on non-resident purchases of

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40 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25219129>



UK homes, so that they would not be permitted unless the investment genuinely adds to the housing stock (Green and Bentley 2014).

#### 4.6.2 The Skilled Worker pathway

This pathway would require migrants to have secured a job and be sponsored by a specific employer. Given this requirement, there is no reason to have a cap on the ‘general’ part of this path. It is currently capped at 20,700 per year until further notice,<sup>41</sup> but applying such a cap to an immigration route designed specifically to be responsive to the changing needs of the economy is incoherent, except when viewed in terms of reducing immigration to meet a net migration target. Thresholds for salaries and skill requirements would be maintained at broadly current levels, as would sponsorship requirements for employers and the rules governing the resident labour market test.

- Under our Fair Deal, employers would be able to recruit Skilled Worker migrants already in the UK (including those who entered the UK under the intra-company transfer [ICT] rules) as long as the normal rules governing Skilled Worker eligibility were met. Requirements for ‘cooling off’ periods – which require migrants to leave the UK<sup>42</sup> – would be removed.
- There would be no upper limit on ICTs, but they would remain a temporary migration category (that is, migrants entering under ICTs would not be able to settle in the UK). However, migrants who come to the UK under ICT rules would be able to transfer to other Skilled Worker (and High-Value Individual) pathways that do confer (and indeed might encourage) settlement rights over time, provided that the normal criteria for those routes are met (including the resident labour market test, where it applies).
- As part of the Skilled Worker pathway, the shortage occupation list would be retained,<sup>43</sup> but we would propose a change in the way it operated. Jobs could be added to this list only when employers argued, and the MAC accepted, that there were good reasons why the market could not adjust to meet sectoral or occupational shortages (through increased wages, for example). In practice this might mean restricting the shortage list to public sector jobs (where scope to increase pay is limited), jobs with long ‘lead times’ on training, or jobs in strategic occupations identified as key to a proactive industrial strategy that seeks to expand certain sectors of the UK economy.

#### 4.7 Introducing a new UK worker training requirement

While there are strong arguments for allowing UK employers to bring in skilled workers from outside the EU if those skills are not available among the existing workforce (or in the EU), a Fair Deal on migration requires a quid pro quo. Therefore, for larger UK companies employing non-EU economic migrants, we would therefore introduce the requirement that they demonstrate they are offering a commensurate number of training places for UK citizens. The object of this would be to help skill-up the domestic workforce, with the medium-to-long-term aim of reducing the UK economy’s dependency on certain types of migrant labour.

- Big businesses – that is, employers with more than 250 staff – would be required to offer at least as many apprenticeships, or graduate traineeship places, as they employ non-EU Skilled Workers (excluding intra-company transfers); alternatively they would be allowed to make an equivalent contribution to a relevant sectoral or occupational

41 <http://www.workpermit.com/news/2013-03-19/uk-immigration-minister-announces-changes-to-tier-2-visa-system>

42 <http://www.pwclegal.co.uk/pdf/immigration-statement-of-changes-march-2012.pdf>

43 See the current shortage occupation list: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/workingintheuk/shortageoccupationlistnov11.pdf>

training fund. Where companies already have relevant schemes, the places on these would be taken into account. The training places would not have to be exactly 'like for like' relative to the positions occupied by skilled migrants, but they would have to be quality places (see Dolphin and Lanning 2011). In the event that businesses did not comply with this requirement within one year, or the training places offered were not of sufficient quality, companies would not be allowed to sponsor migrants coming through the Skilled Worker pathway.

- Smaller employers (with more than 50 staff) would be given a three-year window in order to bring their training systems into line with the requirements outlined above.
- In recognition of the fact that the training requirement clearly imposes a significant burden on businesses, small firms (those that employ less than 50 staff) would be exempt from these requirements.
- Building on current practice, when jobs are added to the shortage list, or when particular occupations or sectors are making significant use of other Skilled Worker (general) routes, the MAC should be tasked with analysing the reasons for skills shortages, and BIS should work with Sector Skills Councils to set out a strategy for resolving these shortages. These strategies should be made public, and should include clear, measurable and time-bound targets for government, sectoral bodies, employers and other relevant stakeholders to meet.

The Labour party has already announced a plan along these lines<sup>44</sup> which has run into some criticism from the business lobby. In our view, this requirement is reasonable in the context of a wider drive to increase apprenticeships and job opportunities (for young people in particular) in the UK workforce. Although, as mentioned above, big employers would not be required to provide strictly 'like for like' places, there would be a strong symbolic value in such a scheme. It would demonstrate that although skilled migrants are being recruited, good employment opportunities for UK workers are also being created,<sup>45</sup> and that employers are working in long-term partnership with government to ensure that more of the skilled UK workforce will, in future, be 'home-grown'.

**To balance the minor changes (including relaxations) to the system governing economic migration from outside the EU, the Fair Deal on migration would put a requirement on big employers to increase apprenticeships and training opportunities for UK citizens, to help deliver on the wider aim of developing a fairer economy and, in the longer term, to make the UK economy less dependent on migration to cover skills shortages.**

#### 4.8 Annual migration flow reports

Having set out some of the aims of the Fair Deal on migration and the policy changes that would be required to achieve them, we turn now to how outcomes are reported. Being as open and transparent as possible about migration to both parliament and the public is vitally important in order to dispel the high level of distrust in official figures.<sup>46</sup>

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44 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24190746>

45 Under EU law the training places and apprenticeships created would have to be open to all citizens of the EU, but LFS data analysed by IPPR shows that more than 90 per cent of current apprenticeships go to British-born people. <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/09/why-labour-should-hold-its-nerve-its-apprentices-immigrants-plan>

46 Unfortunately, the paucity and inadequacy of current migration data means that this is currently difficult to deliver, so, as well as implementing the recommendations in this sub-section, we recommend that the government prioritise establishing systems for collecting and analysing official data, notably by implementing the 'e-borders' system as quickly as possible.

Therefore we recommend that for each of the eight migration flows outlined in section 4.5 a report should be delivered annually to parliament. These reports should look back on the previous year, and look forward to the next 12 months. It should include the following:

- best estimates of numbers (prospectively and retrospectively)
- an economic impact assessment
- a social impact assessment.

In our view, the best-placed organisation to prepare these reports for government is the MAC, as it has a proven track record and is widely respected and trusted. In this task, as it already does in others, the MAC should take advice and receive representations from businesses, labour-market experts, migration specialists and so on – as well as from the home nations and regions – on the migration pressures and needs in particular localities.

Importantly, the numerical estimates in the annual reports – in contrast to a set of targets – would be compiled on the basis of likely actual inflows given current circumstances and policy, rather than of politically desired but essentially arbitrary numbers. Of course, ministers might take policy steps to reduce (or increase) numbers, or to mitigate the impacts of them, based on these reports. However, the main aim of the reports themselves would be to track what is happening, to look ahead to what might happen, and to provide honest information to the public.

**As part of the Fair Deal on migration, a set of annual reports on each type of migration flow should be delivered to parliament, setting out predicted numbers and impacts for the coming year and accounting for the previous year. The purpose of the reports would be to increase openness and transparency on migratory flows to the UK, to hold the responsible ministers more directly accountable, and to make clear what is guiding policy decisions.**

#### 4.9 Reforming government management of migration

At present, responsibility for migration policy and its implementation lies predominantly with the Home Office. Other interested departments do input into policy discussions, and such has been the salience of immigration as an issue in recent years that Downing Street has often become directly involved too. There was arguably a time in the early 2000s when the ‘Treasury view’ was too dominant (see Cavanagh 2010), but since then the Home Office, with its focus on strict control of migration, has been in charge. Yet at the same time, the Home Office has had a poor record of delivery, and various institutional reforms – such as creating the UK Border Agency as an ‘arm’s-length’ agency – have been tried and abandoned.

Given the fact that some stability would be welcome, we think that the Home Office should retain responsibility for managing migration – issuing visas, controlling borders, tracking compliance and carrying out enforcement (though we do have a specific proposal on independent asylum determination – see section 4.23). However, given the differentiated approach to migration outlined above, which is guided by much more than just keeping numbers low and maintaining strict control, the active development and assessment of migration policy should involve more departments. Indeed in our view, all major policy decisions should be made with the involvement of the Treasury, BIS and CLG, as well as the Home Office.

This would help to avoid situations such as when, in 2004, the Treasury effectively decided that it was in the UK’s macroeconomic interests to open up our labour market

to the A8 accession states without imposing transitional controls, and without taking into account the impacts that this might have on local communities – an issue that CLG would have been better-placed to judge. Another example is the current obvious tension between BIS, which is seeking to increase foreign student numbers to boost growth and support the higher education sector, and the Home Office, which is only concerned with reducing numbers to meet the net migration target.

Within the context of closer cross-departmental working, we think that the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) should be strengthened, and its composition diversified to include more experts in areas other than economics.<sup>47</sup> It should also be sponsored jointly by the Home Office, Treasury, BIS and CLG, thereby signalling that it sits equidistantly between the four interested departments, and that its focus has become more holistic than it is at present.

**A Fair Deal on migration would involve taking into account the impact that migration has on the UK economy, on business and other sectors, and on local communities. It is therefore important that the Treasury, BIS and CLG take on a role equal to that of the Home Office in the active development and assessment of migration policy, guided by a strengthened MAC which reports to all four departments. The Home Office would retain its role in implementing migration policy.**

#### 4.10 Preserving free movement in the EU but protecting the UK from ‘shocks’

Our discussion of economic migration has so far been confined to economic flows from outside the EU. The reason for this is that these inflows are amenable to control and management by the UK government in a way that EU migration is not, given the UK’s membership of the EU and its principles of free movement. However, migration from the EU, which is largely economic in character, is in fact much more significant than migrant flows from elsewhere. In the year ending June 2013, the International Passenger Survey estimated that nearly three times as many EU migrants as non-EU migrants came to the UK for work-related reasons (ONS 2013b).

As discussed in chapter 2, there is no evidence of a significant causal link between the UK’s openness to EU migration and the scale of unemployment or low wages as problems – so there is no strong macroeconomic case for restricting EU migration. That said, the sudden shock to the labour market that the UK experienced after 2004, following the decision to allow A8 nationals unfettered access to our labour market while other large European countries imposed transitional controls, demonstrated that free movement within the EU needs to be more proactively handled, even from an economic point of view, let alone from social and political perspectives.

In the years immediately after 2004 the UK labour market was both flexible and buoyant enough to absorb the very large number of A8 nationals who came to the UK. However, were the same decision to be made in the current economic conditions, the outcome might be different.

A new Fair Deal on migration therefore needs to be clear on the fact that, in future, the UK should not only make full use of transitional arrangements agreed at the EU level, but take a lead in ensuring that those transitional arrangements provide maximum protection to domestic labour forces and local communities. A key instrument here should be ‘phasing’,

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/indbodies/mac/aboutthamac/>

so that any sudden shocks are avoided – not least so that the long-term benefits of free movement within the EU are protected from political backlashes.

We therefore contend that that UK should be arguing within the EU that the citizens of future accession countries should be subject to transitional controls at least as long as they are currently, and possibly longer, and that greater scope should be given for particular countries to make a case to the European Commission that the impact on their own labour markets or community cohesion would be such that extensions to those controls should be introduced.<sup>48</sup> In turn, this would require the government to make proper use of transitional control periods to prepare for the potential impacts that the free movement of new EU member states might have – something that was not properly done in advance of the lifting of restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens at the beginning of 2014.

More specifically, there are currently practices in place relating to EU economic migration that we think run contrary to the Fair Deal on migration, and which we think should be reformed in the following ways.

- It is clearly unfair, and perhaps discriminatory, for employment agencies to advertise vacancies for some employment opportunities in the UK solely to workers outside the UK. The Labour party has already indicated that it will challenge this practice,<sup>49</sup> and we would support that action. We propose that, under our Fair Deal, no exclusive advertising of UK-based jobs should be allowed to take place outside the UK. At all times, job adverts for UK-based jobs should be widely distributed both in local job centres and in other places where UK citizens might see those adverts.
- More widely, we should be concerned about low-skilled sectors and occupations that are dominated by EU migrants. IPPR argues that, as part of our Fair Deal on migration, the MAC should be charged with identifying problem areas. Where these areas were manifest, this would trigger a process whereby the government, employers and unions would be required to set out a strategy for raising wages, and improving job quality and tenure (including progression and length of contracts), thereby performing a role similar to that of the recently abolished sectoral wage boards in agriculture.<sup>50</sup>

We have more to say on EU immigration in other sections below, but for now our position statement reads as follows.

**The Fair Deal recognises that the UK benefits economically from being part of the EU, and respects its fundamental principle of the free movement of persons, which is a key element of the benefits of EU membership. However, there remains the possibility of ‘shocks’ when domestic labour markets are opened up to new accession states. With that in mind, we believe that under the Fair Deal the UK should always make full use of transitional controls, and should lead discussion within the EU on whether, for future accession states, the length of these controls could be extended in certain circumstances. We also argue that, where UK**

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48 We do not favour the proposal by the thinktank Demos that countries should be barred from the free labour market until their average per capita income reaches 75 per cent of the EU average, as one of the aims of the EU is to assist new accession states increase their GDP, and this is partly achieved through full membership. See <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/07/david-goodhart-tells-david-cameron-how-to-tackle-immigration-by-reforming-the-eu/>

49 <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/oct/20/labour-foreigner-only-immigration>

50 These wage boards were abolished by the current government in 2013. See <http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2013/10/farm-workers-lose-280m-wage-protection-agricultural-wages-board-abolition>

**workers are directly discriminated against or where EU economic migration is clearly disadvantaging or crowding-out UK workers, the UK government should take steps to ban certain practices or mitigate negative impacts.**

#### 4.11 Managing family migration

So far we have mainly focused on economic migration, but in this section we consider what the Fair Deal position should be on family migration. There are various different types of people coming in to the UK for family reasons.

Some people gain entry because they are the family member of a British citizen. Others come in because they are related to a settled migrant who has indefinite leave to remain in the UK. A third category is 'dependents', who are allowed in as the family members of individuals who are themselves migrants to the UK with temporary leave to remain. Then there are some non-EU migrants who enter the UK as family members of EU nationals.

The Fair Deal on migration recognises the importance of family life and, in the context of encouraging settlement and citizenship (see section 4.14), does not seek to separate migrants who have made a new life for themselves in the UK from their close family members. However, we are conscious that family migration routes can be used to get around other forms of immigration control, which leads to ever-growing 'chains' of migration. Vigilance is therefore required to prevent abuse, and it is reasonable that requirements are made of family migrants.

We therefore propose some changes to the requirements that are placed on family migrants and on their UK 'sponsors' coming through our Family Migrant programme.

Prior to 2012, those seeking to sponsor a non-EU partner and any dependent children to enter or remain in the UK were required to demonstrate their ability to maintain and accommodate themselves, their partner and any dependents without recourse to public funds – but the level of income required (for a couple without dependents) was the equivalent to income support payments (some £5,500 per year, excluding housing costs, in 2011).

In July 2012 new rules restricting family migration were brought in, following recommendations from the MAC.<sup>51</sup> The most contentious element of these new rules was that UK citizens or settled migrants seeking to sponsor a non-EU spouse or partner to come to the UK had to demonstrate that they had a minimum income of £18,600, with this level rising to £22,400 if they had one child and by a further £2,400 for each additional child. Individuals' income levels are calculated in various ways, but some forms of income (such as prospective earnings, savings, support from UK-based family members), which might reasonably have been counted are ruled out.

To put this income requirement in context, a person on the national minimum wage earns around £13,000 per annum, well below the level set by the new regulations. Indeed, the UK's £18,600 requirement is higher than all other major Western countries of immigration, except Norway. In most countries that can be held to be equivalent to the UK, sponsors can also use any legal source to prove that they have a basic income, which is judged to be either the level of social assistance or the national minimum wage (Huddleston 2012).

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51 <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/workingwithus/mac/family-migration-route/family-migration-route.pdf?view=Binary>

As well as making it harder to bring in spouses or partners and children, the new rules make it much more difficult to bring in elderly dependents. This is now essentially restricted to those who require long-term personal care that can only be provided here by their UK-based relative (MRN 2012).

The new rules have been met with strong responses from many quarters, as they are judged to be too harsh. A recent report by the All-Party Parliament Group on Migration also raised concerns, and made some sensible recommendations for a review of the impact of the new rules (APPGM 2013).

In our view, the current income requirement is too high and there are grounds for lowering it. Our suggestion would be that, for a settled migrant wishing to bring in a partner or spouse, the income requirement should be set at the level of the Living Wage (assuming a 37.5-hour week).<sup>52</sup>

As of 2014, this would mean new income requirements of:

- £17,160 per annum in London
- £14,918 outside London.

There should be no additional income requirement for each dependent child, as a Living Wage level of income should be sufficient to support a family.

The lower rate outside London should to some degree address the problem that the new income rules hit sponsors from lower-earning regions of the country particularly hard (Grove-White 2012).

In line with the suggestions of the APPGM report (2013), the government should also consider taking into account other forms of income and support that sponsors can draw on to prove they are able to support partners and dependents.

We support the current relatively strong requirement that partners must be able to speak English<sup>53</sup> to a reasonably high level,<sup>54</sup> which concurs with our general view that fluency in English is vital for both contribution and integration to the UK. Not least among the reasons for imposing a reasonable income requirement is that it ensures that family migration can only happen if those families are not going to be a burden on the state, and will be able to integrate into the UK – so a degree of fluency in English is also vital.

Finally, we believe that the UK should be arguing in the EU for the closure of the obvious loophole that currently allows EU citizens living in the UK to bypass the UK's family migration rules and bring in their non-EU partners and family members without any salary requirements or other conditions.<sup>55</sup>

Taking all of the above into account, our position on family migration can be summed up as follows.

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52 Although this policy idea was developed by IPPR entirely independently, we note that the thinktank Centre Forum, in its report *Migration: A liberal challenge*, makes the same recommendation. See <http://www.centreforum.org/index.php/mainpublications/583-migration-a-liberal-challenge>

53 <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2013/november/44-english-test-partners>

54 We suggest the standard of English set should a minimum of level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is in line with the current level for foreign students. <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/can-you-apply/english-language/>

55 See Migration Watch 2013

**As part of a Fair Deal on migration, it is right that both UK citizens and settled migrants should be able to demonstrate clearly that they can support any non-EU partners and dependents they wish to bring into the UK. However, in our view there should be some changes to the income requirements imposed on sponsors, to make them less onerous than they are at present. Beyond the income requirement, partners coming in to the UK should be able to speak and write English to a high level before they arrive in the country.**

#### **4.12 Recognising the social and cultural impacts of migration**

One of the strongest findings from IPPR's public engagement work set out in chapter 3 of this report is that migration is as much, if not more so, about social and cultural issues as it is about economic ones.

In our view, policy under the Blair and Brown governments focused too much on individual capabilities, responsibilities, entitlements and outcomes, and not enough on the value of shared institutions (broadly defined), deepening social bonds and strengthening shared identities both nationally and locally. On immigration specifically, Labour was too willing to trade social costs for economic benefits. Given that the economic benefits of immigration were widely (if not evenly) spread, while its social impacts were concentrated in communities that often lacked the resources to cope or respond, this was a particularly bad trade-off from a progressive point of view.

One of the most important concerns of our Fair Deal is to correct that imbalance – not least because, as we saw in chapter 3, this is the best means of securing public support for continuing immigration.

**A key element of a new Fair Deal on migration is greater recognition of the public's legitimate concern that immigration can have disruptive social and cultural impacts on communities. A stronger emphasis should be put on mitigating these impacts, with the aim of achieving a more cohesive society with stronger social bonds.**

#### **4.13 Strengthening integration into British society**

There are a number of aspects to this new approach, but an important one is the strengthening of integration policy.

Integration is a nebulous concept which has been defined in many different ways. For the purposes of this section, we define an integrated society as one in which every member of that society feels that they have a strong mutual bond with, and mutual regard for, every other member of that society – both nationally and at the local level. This does not rule out individual or group differences, but it does mean that the expression of difference should not be such that it erodes an overarching sense of togetherness, social solidarity and shared values.

IPPR set out its approach to integration in a recent paper (Cherti and McNeil 2012), and is working on an ongoing project looking at the subject in more depth, so we are not going to explore this complex subject at length here. However, a particular feature of IPPR's approach is our belief that integration is promoted most successfully not through grand, national initiatives, but through meaningful 'everyday' interactions at the community level. The proper role of government policy is therefore to find ways to support this organic process of integration – which will often be achieved through measures that do not necessarily focus on immigrant integration specifically, and which



may generally involve an ‘arms’-length’ approach that encourages communities to find their own ways to live together successfully.

There therefore needs to be a clearer national articulation of the UK’s approach to integration, with a particular focus on what is required of those coming into this country. The Fair Deal’s model of integration rejects both assimilation and separatism, allowing for all communities to maintain and celebrate their distinct identities, but also making ‘playing by the rules’ and accepting the longstanding values of the UK non-negotiable. The aim should be to increase the amount of interaction between different groups at the community level, and to strengthen a shared sense of identity at the local and national levels. Integration, of course, is a two-way street, and a diverse society should have no truck with any discrimination against new migrants, but the requirement on migrants to adapt to the UK will be stronger than the other way round.

**Integration policy should put a greater stress on togetherness, solidarity and shared values in order to build stronger local communities in which all people look out for one another more than they do now. As part of this strengthening of social bonds, the Fair Deal would put more of an onus on immigrants who are welcomed to the UK to play a full part British society, while being clear that discrimination against migrants is unacceptable and integration is always a two-way street.**

#### **4.14 Increasing immigrants’ ability (and responsibility) to speak English**

IPPR is working to further develop its notion of ‘everyday integration’, which shifts the emphasis for improving integration away from top-down initiatives and towards encouraging and supporting much more local and ‘everyday’ initiatives. This rightly reduces the scope for big national policy responses, but we do think there is an overwhelming argument for one national priority. That is, ensuring that everyone who intends to spend any significant period in the UK can speak a good level of English.

Although in some cases the size and concentration of certain migrant communities is such that it is possible to function in the UK without much English, this is not a phenomenon that any progressive should be comfortable with, because the life chances of people in this situation will remain severely limited. A progressive position must therefore involve the promotion of measures aimed at equipping people to play a full part in the life of the UK – which means giving them the language skills they need to live and work well beyond their immediate community, if they so choose. It is also important for English-speaking workers: the ability to speak a common language at work is important. English-speakers should not be penalised in the labour market because other migrant workers all share another common language but do not speak English.

To this end, we think that having a good standard of English as an entry requirement is justified (as we have outlined above), and that this should be bolstered by the widest possible provision of English classes within the UK, free to those who cannot afford to pay, with a requirement that all migrants must take up these lessons if they do not meet a defined level of proficiency in English. To help pay for this in a difficult financial climate, we think that there should be marked shift away from public services publishing translated material, and a reduction in the provision of interpreting facilities. Savings made in these areas should be diverted towards the funding of English classes.

Total spending on translation and interpreting across England was estimated to be upwards of £100 million in 2006,<sup>56</sup> with most of this going towards interpreting services in the NHS, the police and the courts. There are many reasons why it is difficult, or perhaps counterproductive or even dangerous, to reduce the provision of translation and interpretation services, including issues such as access to justice, patient and client confidentiality, and issues of public health. However, in our view, the thrust of policy, at both the national and local levels, should be to increase the ability of people in the UK to speak English, rather than on providing extensive services and materials for non-English speakers.

All public funding for migrant groups or migrant support organisations should be contingent on those groups making arrangements for members and attendees who don't speak English well to enroll in accredited English classes.

GP practices or NHS trusts which currently make high use of translation and/or interpretation services should develop links with English courses in their areas so that once their patients have received their treatment, those who would benefit from them are directed towards these courses.

The mainstream progressive position recognises that there are many perfectly valid cultural reasons why migrants should want to continue speaking their home language. However, the promotion and preservation of home language skills among migrant communities should be a private matter, and should not be supported by state funding.

From October 2013, all people applying to settle in the UK have been required to pass an intermediate-level English language test, and to pass the 'Life in the UK' test. This replaced an earlier requirement in which applicants could either take the test or take combined 'English for speakers of other languages' (ESOL) and citizenship classes. The change puts greater emphasis on successful applicants having strong English reading and writing skills. We have more to say on settlement below, but generally we support this change. There are clear benefits to migrants from taking on UK citizenship, but for good or ill the UK is an overwhelmingly monoglot country, so it makes sense that, in order to obtain citizenship, a person should be able to demonstrate a strong command of the English language.

Migrant children tend to pick up English more quickly and easily than their parents, not least because they are required to attend mainstream schools. However, early on in their schooling these children need help to pick up the new language, so it is counterproductive that in recent years the funding for English as an additional language (EAL) lessons has been cut.

Finding additional funding in the current fiscal climate is difficult, but ensuring that migrant children pick up English quickly is of such importance that we think EAL spending should be increased. There should be a quid pro quo, however – migrant parents should also take more responsibility for encouraging and supporting their children to learn English (not least because this encourages them to develop their own English where it is weak). We therefore support the idea floated by Ed Miliband to include English language learning in home-school agreements (Miliband 2012).

As we outlined above, the Fair Deal would require greater English language proficiency from migrants before they were able to take jobs in the UK. We think that this requirement should be particularly strong for all publicly-funded, public-facing jobs.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6172805.stm>

Social workers registering from outside of EU already have to demonstrate competence in English.<sup>57</sup> Given the important role of migrants in social care in particular, stronger English language proficiency should be included in the NVQ level 2 licence to practice.

It is very much to be welcomed that EU policy has changed, and that there is now a process in place to ensure that EU doctors practicing in the UK can speak English to a decent level; previously, such a requirement was seen as discriminatory. We think that the same level of English should also be required by other professions, including social workers.

**A Fair Deal would put a clear responsibility on migrants coming to live and work in the UK to speak English, as it is so vital to a person's ability to participate fully in British society. To aid this process, the government should put more funding into the provision of English language classes for adults and children. The Fair Deal on migration would work to end any situations in which people in the UK live in isolated communities where it is not necessary to speak English.**

#### 4.15 Supporting sites of integration

Of all public institutions, our schools are perhaps the most important sites for bringing people together, including bringing together migrants with people from the host community. At least, that should be the case. There are numerous complex issues surrounding education, but in the fairly narrow context of constructing a Fair Deal on migration our view is that schools should be assisted to become key sites of integration (in line with the vision of integration we outline above). In this regard, schools should be places where a mix of children (in this case, migrant and non-migrant) are educated together. Furthermore, while the content of education should reflect diversity, one of its overriding aims should be to inculcate a strong sense of togetherness, including shared national identity and shared social norms and values.

IPPR supports the idea of devolving more power to individual schools, which may present some issues in with regard to integration. However, for the purposes of our Fair Deal, we argue that education policies that allow for segregation in schooling, that cement patterns of ethnic homogeneity (particular minority ethnic homogeneity) within particular schools, and that permit systems of education that emphasise cultural difference and isolation from the British mainstream, are wrong.

We recommend the schools should not be their own admissions authorities: this should fall to an independent body such as the local authority. In administering admissions, these independent authorities should take particular care to ensure that the social and ethnic mix of a school helps to promote, rather than hinder, community cohesion.

**As part of a Fair Deal on migration, education policy should be used to ensure that schools are key sites of integration, bringing children of all backgrounds and faiths together and promoting shared British values.**

#### 4.16 Encouraging settlement and citizenship

Many forms of migration are temporary – and rightly so. However, we think that there are sound economic and social reasons why – particularly if immigration into the UK is lowered over the longer term – more of the migrants who do enter are encouraged to settle, and thereafter to become citizens.

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<sup>57</sup> <http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003382Item06-enc4-englproficiency.pdf>

A particularly strong argument for this approach is that it reduces ‘churn’, where migrants are constantly coming and going, which can be unsettling and complicated for local communities to manage.

In the UK there is a distinction between settlement (‘indefinite leave to remain’, or ‘ILR’) and full citizenship, though both are subject to certain requirements including passing the ‘Life in the UK’ test. ILR is like a residence permit, allowing a non-British person to live and work in the UK free from any immigration constraints such as work permits.

Citizenship gives the right to a passport and the full rights of a UK citizen, including all the rights of a citizen of any EU country. A non-EU citizen has to hold ILR for at least a year before they can apply for citizenship; an EU citizen only needs to fulfil the residency requirement. To become a citizen all people have to pass a test, attend a citizenship ceremony, and pay a (hefty) fee.

Another major difference between ILR and UK citizenship is that while ILR can lapse if a person stays away from the UK for longer than two years, UK citizenship is for life.

In our view, it is right to strike a balance between, on the one hand, encouraging people to become full ‘members’ of British society, and on the other placing requirements on migrants to demonstrate that they are taking up this status not just because it confers certain rights on them, or because it may be administratively convenient, but because they have a true commitment to this country, its institutions and its values. Our Fair Deal position on this area reflects that balance.

A key element of demonstrating the required commitment is making high demands of applicants for both settlement and citizenship to speak, read and write English to a high standard. We have already proposed greater investment in English classes for migrants under our Fair Deal, and in this context we think it is reasonable not just to maintain the current English language requirements, but to strengthen them as outlined above.

To encourage settlement to lead to full citizenship, we believe that all migrants – including EU citizens – who have been in the UK for a five-year period of permanent residence should be ‘auto-enrolled’ onto a ‘pathway to citizenship’.<sup>58</sup> People may apply to exempt themselves from this auto-enrolment (if their present nationality forbids dual nationality, for example, or simply because they prefer not to take up UK citizenship – in which case their rights in the UK would be more limited, including their right to remain). However, moving towards citizenship should become the default.

In fact, a relatively high number of immigrants to the UK already take up citizenship – one-third of foreign born residents are naturalised. This is a higher level than in other EU countries, and is despite the fact that the UK imposes quite stringent requirements on applicants and charges particularly high fees – now £874 for a single person,<sup>59</sup> compared with no fee in France and an average across seven other developed countries of some £225.<sup>60</sup>

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58 Some categories of migrant can apply for ILR and citizenship earlier than this.  
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/settlement/>

59 <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/britishcitizenship/nationality-fees.pdf>

60 Average of fees charged by Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the US, Norway and Sweden for ordinary naturalisation (GBP average figure above may differ due to currency fluctuation). Calculated using data from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/charts/bogdan-aug12-table1.cfm>.

We are in favour of a relatively high fee for citizenship, but in order to encourage greater take-up we would reduce it to £500. For that sum, the applicant (who would be auto-enrolled unless he or she had applied for exemption) would be registered for locally organised citizenship classes. These would be compulsory for all would-be citizens, but not overly onerous (we would suggest two two-hour sessions), and would provide a more meaningful, two-way experience of learning about the UK, and the local area, than the current tests do.<sup>61</sup> However, we would retain a test element to the citizenship classes so that attendees have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have taken in what they have discussed and learned. The classes could be run directly by the local authority or contracted out to a local voluntary body, and should be run in central locations like libraries or community centres. Existing UK citizens, including both the recently naturalised and those whose families have lived in the UK for generations, would be encouraged to volunteer as helpers in these sessions, thereby encouraging more interaction between migrants and more settled residents.

We would strengthen citizenship ceremonies, which have generally proved to be very popular. There are already provisions<sup>62</sup> for these ceremonies to be held beyond the usual venues, such as register offices or town halls, in 'special circumstances'. We would extend this practice so that ceremonies were often held in public places such as schools, other civic buildings or even shopping centres. Part of the object would be for British citizens unconnected to these new citizens to witness the ceremonies, thereby increasing a sense of togetherness.

**A key element of the Fair Deal is that migrants who work hard, make a contribution and play by the rules should be welcomed in the UK and be able to gain the benefits of being a UK citizen. We therefore want to see more migrants who meet the criteria settling here and becoming citizens. The citizenship process should be cheaper, more welcoming, more inclusive and more interactive. Migrants should be required to demonstrate that they are taking up this status not just because it confers certain rights on them, or because it may be administratively convenient, but because they have a true commitment to this country, its institutions and its values.**

#### 4.17 Supporting communities facing particular immigration pressures

Most of the measures referred to above have a national dimension, though we would argue that if they were brought in as part of a comprehensive Fair Deal on migration they would all help to reduce some of the negative impacts that immigration has at the community and the neighbourhood levels, where they are felt most keenly.

However, there does need to be a strong element within migration policy that recognises that immigration consists of different inflows into different places that have different impacts. That being the case, it is the people within particular localities – whether at the neighbourhood, district, city or even region level – that are best-placed to come up with responses that are fair to locals and incomers alike.

In many ways it is remarkable how well different parts of the UK – some of them with little or no previous experience of in-migration – have absorbed high, diverse and rapid flows

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61 The 'Life in the UK' test was recently criticised as a 'bad pub quiz' by a leading academic (Press Association 2013). Across Europe, the trend has been towards standardised written language and civics tests, and away from interviews that give government examiners wider discretion in the naturalisation decision. This has arguably made obtaining citizenship more difficult but more transparent. In our view mandatory attendance at interactive citizenship classes is the preferable option.

62 <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/applying/ceremony/>.

of people with, at most, low-level grumbling from the existing population. Nonetheless, we believe that our new programme should do more to help communities that are facing pressures caused by sudden influxes of migrants. Communities need to be equipped not just to tolerate, but to welcome new arrivals, and to benefit from the dynamism and diversity that migration can bring.

One of the issues for local communities is that they often lack clear data on how many migrants are in their area at any one time, and therefore find it difficult to appeal to central government for timely help if they are facing particular pressures because of spikes in numbers. With that in mind we suggest that when a migrant (that is, any individual who is subject to immigration rules) moves into an area then they should be required to register with the local authority. It should be compulsory but free to do so. EU migrants could not be compelled to register, but should be encouraged to do so.

In situations where particular local authorities are experiencing rapid increases in their migrant populations – as evidenced by new registrations – they should be able to seek help to deal with the immediate pressures in the form of extra funding from central government. In 2008 the then Labour government introduced the Migration Impacts Fund, which was funded by a £50 levy on the visas of non-EU migrants.<sup>63</sup> Funds could be sought by councils, police services, primary care trusts and voluntary bodies, and to demonstrate their eligibility for funding projects were required ‘to demonstrate that they are directly targeted at managing pressures on public services, to the benefit of the settled community where those pressures relate to the transitional impacts of migration’. These included the provision of ESOL services, local authority enforcement activities in relation to private rented sector landlords, campaigns to increase GP registration among migrants to avoid the unnecessary use of emergency services, and the provision of support teachers in schools. IPPR has argued that, in the context of expected increases in Romanian and Bulgarian migration, such a fund would be useful (Glennie and Pennington 2013). As part of the Fair Deal we would like to see the Migration Impacts Fund evaluated with a view to restoring it, or something similar, in the future. It could be funded from part of an increased levy on visas for non-EU migrants coming to work or study in the UK for an extended period (see section 4.20 below).

Aside from the financial considerations, another benefit of local authority registration is that it would allow local authorities to provide information to newly arrived migrants on local services, their entitlements in exchange for paying council tax, and their obligations as local citizens.

**IPPR recognises that some local authorities can experience particular pressures due to rapid inflows of migrants into their area. We therefore propose that, under the Fair Deal on migration, migrants should be required to register with their local authority on arrival, so that up-to-date information on migrant numbers in the area is available. Where numbers ‘spike’, councils and local bodies should be able to access a centrally controlled Migration Impacts Fund to help them deal with the issues that arise. Local registration would also ensure that migrants receive up-to-date and useful information on local services, their entitlements in exchange for paying council tax, and their obligations as local citizens.**

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63 The Migrants Impacts Fund was scrapped in 2010 because the new government argued that the impacts of migration are better addressed through controlling immigration levels (Wintour 2010). However, the £50 fee on visas is still being collected.

#### 4.18 Migration and fairer welfare

A Fair Deal on migration needs to be founded on the recognition that a cost–benefit argument – that in the long run and overall, migrants put in more than they take out – is not sufficient to win popular support (see chapter 3 above). Of all the iniquities that people perceive about migration, perhaps the greatest is that immigrants can access benefits when they cannot possibly have contributed towards the system in the same way as long-settled residents or their forebears, who will have been paying taxes for years, have done. The fact that migrant access to and take-up of benefits is generally relatively low, and that abuse through health or benefit ‘tourism’, is a very small problem, misses the point. The issue is the perception (and to a certain extent, reality) of undue entitlement, and, under our new progressive mainstream position we take the view that there should be clear differentiation of access and entitlement based on citizenship, length of residency and extent of contribution.

It will be noted that since lack of contribution is at the heart of the issue of fairness, the issue is clearly not confined to migrants alone. It is therefore also true that measures aimed specifically at migrants are not the main solution to the fairness problem. To counter unfair access, the UK needs to build a much stronger contributory element back into its UK welfare system for all those who may make use of it.<sup>64</sup>

In the current UK context any answer to these concerns can *only* come from changes to the UK benefit system, at least in the short term. This is because non-EU migrants’ access to benefits is already strictly limited, and is governed by EU rules about equal treatment (though the UK has tightened its interpretation of these rules in recent months,<sup>65</sup> and there are signs of cross-EU talks on the issue as well<sup>66</sup> – see the further discussion in section 4.19 below).

Therefore, before we go any further, it is necessary for us to set out the following position statement.

**A Fair Deal on Migration is predicated on reform of the UK’s welfare system to make it more of a contributory social insurance system, so that for all who make use of it – migrant and UK citizen alike – there is a clearer link between what you put in and what you can take out.**

#### 4.19 Limiting access to welfare benefits for newly arrived migrants

For most non-EU immigrants with limited leave to remain, access to most non-contributory benefits is already severely restricted under the ‘no recourse to public funds’ rule,<sup>67</sup> and for a two-year probationary period they generally cannot claim any benefits at all.

Given that such migrants can only enter the UK because they or their spouse or partner have sufficient funds of their own, and/or are undertaking relatively highly paid work, the Fair Deal regards these arrangements as just.

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64 For instance, Germany gets rounds some of the problems of unfairness caused by immediate access to benefits for migrants from other EU countries and beyond by restricting access to their equivalent of JSA for *all* claimants. To qualify, an individual must have been in employment for which contributions are compulsory for at least 12 months during the last two years. This can include periods in work in other European countries.

65 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/accelerating-action-to-stop-rogue-eu-benefit-claims>

66 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25701521>

67 <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/modernised/cross-cut/public-funds/funds.pdf?view=Binary>

The same restrictions do not apply to EU migrants, however, because of EU rules on equal treatment. Critically in the context of access to welfare benefits, citizenship of the EU provides rights of movement and residence, not just for economically active individuals, but also for students, retirees and job-seekers. The non-economically active individuals are usually required to have health insurance and sufficient resources so as not to become an ‘unreasonable burden’ on their host country, and the EU directive on the free movement of EU citizens (directive 2004/38/EC) also allows for restrictions on access to social assistance (including ‘special non-contributory benefits’). However, beyond these restrictions, an EU member state cannot under current rules restrict access to social security benefits, including non-contributory cash benefits. Regulations also require co-ordinated social security ‘family benefits’ for children living in other member states, which means that child tax-credit and child benefit must be extended to non-resident children. The principle of equal treatment essentially means that EU citizens cannot be treated differently from British citizens.

IPPR will be developing detailed policy proposals in this area as part of a project exploring the nexus between migration and the UK’s membership of the EU – so for our current purpose of setting out our Fair Deal on migration we will consider only broad principles.

IPPR strongly believes that the UK should remain within the EU, and so any measures we propose regarding access to UK benefits by EU migrants must be taken in that context. This generally means that any changes beyond those that equally affect UK citizens (see section 4.20 below) would have to be negotiated with EU partners. However, the following areas of reform (all of which are already subject to discussions or negotiations) are those that we think should be at least considered at the EU level as part of a Fair Deal on migration.

- Strengthening reciprocal arrangements with EU countries.
- Increasing qualification periods for access to benefits.
- Clarifying the application of the ‘habitual residency test’ with regard to EU citizens.<sup>68</sup>
- Reviewing the payment of benefits to people who are not living in the country (the principle of ‘exportability’)
- Clarifying the free movement principle with respect to those migrating without a definite job to go to or the ability to support themselves without accessing benefits

**The UK government should continue to restrict access to benefits to migrants for qualifying periods, on the basis that it is only fair that pay-outs from the social security system are based on contributions to that system – newly arrived migrants are not going to have made contributions in the same way as UK citizens who have lived here and paid taxes for years have. The UK is more limited in what it can do with respect to EU migrants, but the Fair Deal asserts that the UK should be actively negotiating with EU partners to restrict entitlements to EU migrants where these are manifestly unfair to local populations.**

#### **4.20 Levying an upfront contribution from migrants for use of free public services**

As we showed in chapter 2, there is evidence that migrants are generally not high users of public services, as they are disproportionately younger, fitter and more economically active than the wider population. It is also the case that they are paying taxes (both national and local) from the time they arrive, so they are making a contribution to the services they use.

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68 See the UK government’s current rules on habitual residence and right to reside: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/269058/dmgch0703.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269058/dmgch0703.pdf)



However, we believe that as part of the Fair Deal on migration there is a case for imposing an upfront levy on migrants so that from the moment of their arrival they are seen to contribute to services that they will make use of in the UK. In many ways, the most important reason for this is not financial, but symbolic. Such fees should not be set too high as to be a deterrent to the migrants we want to attract, so the actual sums levied should be modest. However, the payment of them is an important signal of greater fairness.

In IPPR's recent report on student migration (Sachrajda and Pennington 2013) we argued for a £200 levy on foreign students so that they make (and are seen to make) a contribution towards their potential use of the NHS. As part of the Fair Deal, the idea of a modest upfront 'public services levy' could be extended to apply to all non-EU migrants who plan to stay for an extended period,<sup>69</sup> and could be made payable on top of the visa application fee once a visa is granted. If this fee was set at £200, half could go into general government funds and half could be put towards a restored Migration Impacts Fund (see section 4.17 above).

The important principle here is one of demonstrable fairness, in which migrants who may be making demands on public services are seen from the outset to be making contributions for their use of those services.

**As part of the Fair Deal, a public services levy of £200 should be payable by all non-EU migrants coming to the UK for more than 12 months as an upfront contribution towards their use of public services.**

#### 4.21 Limiting migrants' access to shortage housing

The UK is facing a severe shortage of housing, and high levels of immigration in recent years have compounded this shortage. Of course, there would still have been a housing shortage if immigration had been lower, and the current shortage could have avoided, even while immigration remained high, through much higher levels of house-building. However, in constructing a new mainstream progressive position on migration, it is important to be clear that immigration that increases the population of the UK does increase the pressure on the existing housing stock. As we saw in chapter 2, CLG estimates that net migration is currently responsible for 40 per cent of new households formed (CLG 2010).

The basis for our Fair Deal on migration in this area therefore has two components:

- more housing, particularly affordable housing, needs to be built in the UK
- priority in accessing that housing should go to UK citizens.

This is not to ignore the fact that there are housing issues confronting migrants as well, and in many cases migrants in particular – the quality and security of housing for migrants, particularly in the private rented sector, is a major worry. However, in our view the issue of providing cheaper and better housing to UK citizens is a national priority, and specific issues of migrant housing should be addressed as part of an overall strategy.

As we showed in chapter 2, migrants do not get unfair access to social housing. Nevertheless, while migration has greatly increased in the last 20 years, the stock of social housing has not. This means that even though the proportion of migrants who are socially housed is relatively low, the effect is to deny social housing to some long-settled local residents who, in the absence of immigration, would have been so housed.

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69 That is, all those not counted as 'visitors'. <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/general-info/fees/#resultTableAnchor>.

How does the Fair Deal on migration propose to tackle this problem? Firstly through a national strategy aimed at building more social housing (see Cooke and Hull 2012), but also through giving greater scope for local providers of that housing to allocate it based on criteria that are meaningful for people in that area. This could mean factoring length of residency in the area, or a strong local connection to the area, into decisions. Local authorities such as Newham in London have already gone some way down this path – not excluding migrants from access to scarce housing, but putting them further back in the queue for it. The Localism Act (2011) and the regulation that emerged from it currently requires local authorities to exclude many new arrivals; it does not, however, give local authorities real flexibility to determine lettings. Further reforms, such as devolving control over housing benefit to local authorities, would also allow greater scope for prioritising local people.

**The Fair Deal accepts that the population growth that stems from migration increases the demand for housing in the UK. Beyond the general point that the UK needs a radical programme of house-building to meet increasing housing need, we support policies that allow local authorities to allocate scarce social housing on the basis of local residency or local connection in a way that clearly prioritises long-settled people over newly arrived migrants**

#### 4.22 Greater local control over other aspects of housing

It is important that social housing is allocated fairly. However, in the short-to-medium-term, social housing will remain a tenure type that is extended to a small and declining number of people. Three-quarters of newly-arrived migrants live in the private rented sector, but the sector is also housing students, young people and, increasingly, families with children.

Different local areas need different housing markets. For example, an area looking to accommodate short-term residents (perhaps because an important local industry is reliant on seasonal work) may need a large private rented sector. Local areas need to be able to shape their housing market through greater use of licensing and real enforcement powers.

There are of course issues that arise from a restrictive approach. For example, the current restrictions on migrants claiming some benefits excludes them from receiving housing support, which means that some resort to rough sleeping or dangerous housing such as so-called 'beds-in-sheds'. There is no doubt that taking a clear position on this complex matter means raising issues that should concern any progressive. Ensuring that all households live in a safe environment is important for social justice reasons, as well as for environmental health and fire safety. However, these issues should be addressed in other ways, such as greater enforcement of existing housing standards, local monitoring of private housing, and short-term support for migrants to get them into both work and a private tenancy in the UK, or else to return home.

Pressures on all types of housing are nothing like as acute in all parts of the UK as they are in London and the South East. This means that local authorities in areas of low pressure could apply less strict local resident qualifications to social housing, and regulate their private rental sectors differently, and migrants might be attracted there as a result. This could be a positive outcome, as it offers the possibility that migrants could revitalise declining areas – though it is important that such steps are not undertaken without completing careful planning beforehand. For instance, it would be important to learn from previous initiatives such as asylum dispersal. This policy, which was introduced in 1999, aimed to reduce the pressure on some communities in the South East by sending asylum-

seekers to areas of low housing demand, particularly in the North. These areas had less of a history of absorbing migrants, and so had few tailored services or local organisations to support newly arrived asylum-seekers. This led to integration challenges (though nothing like the severe problems that some predicted). The issues that asylum integration caused were further compounded by restrictions on applicants' rights to work – a factor that wouldn't apply to migrant workers. One way in which issues such as these could be alleviated is by providing affected local authorities with the ability to apply for help from central government through a reopened Migration Impacts Fund (see section 4.17 above)

**The Fair Deal also argues for the greater devolution of powers over housing to local authorities to enable them to set policies regulating and managing the private rented sector in their area in a way that is fair and appropriate to local residents and migrants.**

### 4.23 Constructing a fair asylum process

Asylum is clearly a special case of migration, and for that reason we do not here touch on some very broad principles. To fold asylum into a discussion that centres on managing migrant inflows in a way that is fairer to the UK public – even when that discussion takes due account of progressive principles – would not do the issue justice.

However, to ignore asylum completely in the context of this report would be equally wrong, as it remains a live element in the broader debate around migration, even though the period when asylum-seekers were the main focus of public concern has long passed.

It is perhaps strange, given how much heat asylum issues have generated over the years, that in our view the basis for a mainstream progressive position on asylum seems relatively easy to construct – although we immediately concede that laying out a position and implementing it in practice are rather different matters.

First, the background to our position is as follows.

- The 1951 UN Refugee Convention,<sup>70</sup> though it is showing its age in many respects, remains a towering international achievement, and any civilised country in the 21st century must stay true to its central tenets.
- The UK has a tradition – perhaps somewhat tattered of late – of providing a place of sanctuary for refugees which the British people remain proud of.
- The world remains beset by violence and oppression, and people do need to flee their own countries to seek sanctuary in another.
- In light of this – and given the UK's history, its place in the world, and its recent foreign engagements – the UK should shoulder a fair proportion of the international 'refugee burden'.
- Asylum processes and the notion of refugee protection have been put under strain by recent patterns of international migratory movement.
- This has made it difficult for receiving countries, like the UK, to separate out 'genuine refugees' from people who are abusing, or should not be using, the asylum route.
- The UK asylum system was overwhelmed in the late-1990s and early-2000s, and is still struggling to recover.

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70 <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>

- Bitter divisions were stoked during that period, and only in recent years have the various stakeholders in the process started to work together. Still, more give and take on both sides is needed.
- Nonetheless, the UK government has significantly reduced asylum flows and claims from their peak, and has maintained that reduction, albeit using somewhat blunt instruments.
- The challenge remains to construct a fair and efficient system that is capable of processing claims in a way that ensures that well-founded cases are granted refugee status, and weak or vexatious claims are rejected and claimants returned to their countries of origin when it is safe to do so.

A Fair Deal on asylum would be built on further efforts to meet the challenge outlined in the final bullet point. People who are genuinely fleeing persecution should be able to gain protection in the UK (as long as the UK is not unduly burdened relative to other countries). On the other hand, it is also only fair that if a person has had their claim for asylum turned down, and due processes have been followed, then that person should leave the UK if safe routes of return are available.

In our view, trust in the asylum process run through our Refugee programme would be increased if decisions on asylum claims were made by an independent body of experts that judges claims based on UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR-) validated criteria, that is not connected to the Home Office, and which does not operate within a culture dominated by enforcement and targets. If such a body were established, asylum-seekers and their advocates should be more willing to accept the rejection of claims and then to co-operate in the process of returning these individuals to their home countries.

We think that asylum-seekers are too frequently detained, and that detention should be restricted to failed asylum-seekers in the few days before their return. It concerns us that despite a high-level pledge by the Coalition to end the detention of children, it is still happening for administrative reasons (Home Office 2012), and we support the call for the pledge to be enshrined in primary legislation.<sup>71</sup>

The UK government should also play an influential and constructive role at both European and international levels in helping to make the European and international legal and policy frameworks that govern migration, and asylum in particular, fairer and more effective. A number of measures were put in place during the Danish presidency of the EU in 2012 that encouraged a new common approach to solidarity in the area of asylum and migration within the EU. A common framework has been established which will introduce, among other initiatives, an early-warning and crisis-management mechanism in order to strengthen the monitoring of migration flows and to provide on-site help in emergency situations. Furthermore, ministers also decided to strengthen the political governance of the Schengen agreement.<sup>72</sup>

We also believe that the UK should be building on its Gateway Protection Programme, and providing many more resettlement places through UNHCR in order to take the burden off countries that are currently hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees from conflict. (The government's belated commitment to resettle some of the most vulnerable

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71 <http://migrantforum.org.uk/no-ifs-no-buts-detention-of-children-is-wrong-and-we-should-secure-its-permanent-banning/>.

72 <http://eu2012.dk/en/NewsList/Marts/Uge-10/Home-affairs>.

Syrian refugees<sup>73</sup> is welcome, but shouldn't deflect attention from the need for the UK to increase the number of resettlement places it offers long term – currently only 750 per annum).

**A Fair Deal on migration would involve the UK in playing its part in taking a fair share of the world's refugees. One limited but important way to do this would be by providing more resettlement places in the UK for refugees who are living in camps in countries which neighbour conflict zones. More generally, we believe that the UK needs a more efficient asylum determination process, and think that the best way to achieve this would be to set up a body to assess asylum claims that is independent of government.**

#### 4.24 Irregular immigration

We do no more than touch on the vexed subject of irregular immigration in this paper, largely because we have covered the issue in exhaustive depth in other recent projects<sup>74</sup> and reports (Finch and Cherti 2011, Cherti et al 2013a, Pennington and Balam 2013, Cherti et al 2013b). It is clear that public concern about irregular immigration is particularly high – polling carried out by Ipsos MORI for the Migration Observatory found that there is widespread public agreement that illegal immigration must be reduced, even among those who do not express a preference for reducing overall immigration: 60 per cent of respondents supported reducing illegal immigration, while only 12 per cent did not (Migration Observatory 2011). In our view, that is as it should be, because if an immigration system is to have any integrity at all, immigrants should not operate outside it with impunity.

The consensus among researchers is that the majority of irregular migrants in the UK are likely to be visa over-stayers – that is, migrants who entered the UK legally but have overstayed their residence permit – rather than illegal entrants (Düvell 2009). It is also likely that there are a significant number of migrants who are legally resident in the UK but who are working, and who in doing so are in violation of the employment restrictions attached to their immigration status (Finch and Cherti 2011). Immigrants without a secure status are prone to exploitation. Vulnerable migrants who have been trafficked or exploited in the UK can enter legally but lose their status when their 'employer' or family member fails to renew their status (Cherti et al 2013a).

We contend that a progressive mainstream position has to recognise that policy should aim to reduce all forms of irregularity to as close to zero as possible. Such a position does not deny that many individuals who would be included in the categories above are vulnerable, or that they, their families and perhaps even their countries may benefit from being allowed to enter or stay in the UK, however precarious their existence here is. However, it should be stated that the progressive responsibility to such people lies mainly in the fields of international development, trade justice, conflict reduction and the promotion of good governance. To the extent that the migration system should do some of this work, it should do so through regular routes.

Irregular immigration presents a problem in the context of a political and policy programme such as the one set out in this report, which puts a premium on migrants

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73 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/28/syria-refugees-uk-agrees-up-to-500>

74 See IPPR's 'Beyond irregularity' project, on irregular immigration into Europe from Africa: <http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/7143/beyond-irregularity-towards-a-sustainable-approach-to-dealing-with-irregular-migration-from-sub-saharan-africa-to-europe?thid>

'playing by the rules'. It is true that sometimes those rules are confusing, and people may fall outside them without transgressing in any serious way. However, the system already effectively turns a blind eye to these transgressions (without acknowledging that it does so, for obvious reasons). More broadly, it is argued by many on the progressive side that a large-scale regularisation of existing irregular migrants would bring this possibly sizeable population back within the law in a way that would be fair. We have some sympathy with this position, particularly if it involves offering an 'earned' regularisation route,<sup>75</sup> but on this issue above all others that relate to migration, there needs to be an acceptance of the political reality that there is no space for such a policy (as its last mainstream supporters, the Liberal Democrats, have acknowledged). That means that only a strict approach is realistic.<sup>76</sup>

However, 'strict' does not mean 'crass'. The government can bear down on irregular migration through strong, smart measures across the migration chain without resorting to incendiary language such as creating 'a hostile environment' in the UK or using gimmicks such as the now notorious 'go home' vans. A progressive approach to the issue must acknowledge that irregular migrants are vulnerable to exploitation, and that trafficked people need protection and support. It must respond practically to the reality that many irregular migrants will not leave the UK, despite intense pressure and exclusion from the labour and housing markets, because they are unable to return home without support.

**A vital element of the Fair Deal on migration is that migrants should 'play by the rules'. By definition, irregular migrants are transgressing immigration rules, even if in many cases they do so in only minor ways. The Fair Deal approach to irregular immigration would be to rule out regularisation for all but isolated cases, and to maintain a focus on preventing illegal entry, and ensuring that migrants do not violate visa conditions and fall into irregularity. The difficulties that irregular migrants face in terms of reporting crimes should be acknowledged, and support structured accordingly. Likewise, humane and voluntary return should be encouraged and enacted.**

#### 4.25 Conclusion

The statements set out above and the policies that underpin them amount to a comprehensive position on managing migration to the UK. We believe that this 'Fair Deal' is a well-balanced package which takes into account public consent, the best evidence on the impacts of migration, and a progressive framework of principles. In some cases, this leads us to advocate some 'softening' or liberalisation of current migration rules; in other cases, we argue for some limited tightening. Ultimately we cannot be sure whether, if it was fully implemented, our package would result in lower or higher migration than the UK currently experiences – but in any case, that was not our main focus in producing the Fair Deal. Rather, it was to address the issue of 'fairness' which, our research in chapter 3 of this report suggests, is almost as important politically as the issue of numbers. Reducing the latter without causing damaging or perverse outcomes is extremely difficult, so concentrating on the former seems to us to be the better basis for a political strategy. In the end, a simple proposition that chimes with the public says it all: 'If migrants work hard, make a contribution, play by the rules and uphold British values, we should welcome them.'

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<sup>75</sup> See for example the Strangers to Citizens campaign.

<sup>76</sup> We would only add that although it cannot be stated as official policy, the Home Office does, on a case by case basis, grant status to many irregular migrants in cases where return to their home country would be difficult, when the irregular has been in the UK for many years, or when they have children in the UK. Such 'quiet amnesties' do make sense given the difficulty and expense of removal in such cases.

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