

► 6. Balanced Migration

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How a system of Balanced Migration would work

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The following aspects of the current immigration and asylum systems would not fundamentally change in terms of approach, although there is a strong case for tightening up existing laws and regulations:

a) Free movement of people in the European Union

This is required under EU law. However, the Government should certainly press for fully effective transition arrangements for any new member states and urge renegotiation of the social security arrangements that provide benefits at British levels for dependants still in their countries of origin.

b) The acceptance of genuine asylum seekers

This country has a proud record of welcoming genuine refugees which should certainly continue. Asylum seekers are now only 3% of net foreign immigration. The Government should, of course, be much more efficient in removing those who fail to gain asylum or other forms of protection; this is a continuing problem.

c) The admission of foreign students

This is valuable from all points of view, provided they are genuine students. From an immigration perspective, those leaving should broadly counter-balance those arriving (provided there is no switching into a migration category which leads to settlement) so that there is no long-term impact on our population.

d) Genuine marriages with partners overseas

It is important that the Immigration Rules should be strengthened to prevent marriage being used as a means of avoiding immigration controls.

We have no power to control immigration from the European Union so our focus is on economic migrants from outside the EU who wish to stay on and settle in this country. This also reflects the greatest source of immigrants to the UK over the years. (As mentioned on page 12, there was a net movement of 2.3 million people to the UK between 1991 and 2006; only 8% were from the new East European members of the EU and there was a net out flow to the EU 15).

In future we can expect the main immigration pressure from countries in the developing world where populations are rising rapidly.

For economic migrants from outside the EU who wish to stay on and settle in the UK, the process would work as follows:

- **The present Points Based System would continue**, so as to avoid yet more administrative disruption and the consequent burdens on employers.
- However, **those granted permission to work in Britain would be allowed to stay for up to four years only**. Thereafter they would be expected to return to their own countries (or move on elsewhere) and make good use of the experience they had gained in Britain.
- **If they wished to stay on and settle they would be able to apply through a further points system**. The main criterion for permanent settlement would be skills, as reflected in the applicant's salary (which is the best measure of economic value). There would also be provision for exceptional intellectual, scientific or artistic merit.
- If the applicant had sufficient points, then he or she would be assessed for entry. However, **there would also be a new annual cap of economic migrants granted settlement**. This would be set by the Government in the light of developments in net immigration (ie. immigration minus emigration). For example, using the most recent set of figures, the cap on non-EU migrants could be set at, say, 20,000 a year (including dependants). The level of points required would be adjusted to achieve this level of acceptances. If the quota was already full the applicant would have to leave the UK. Other elements (such as marriages, and dependant children) would bring the total up to about the level of emigration.

In very rough outline, with a system of Balanced Migration, the numbers of people who would have, or be granted the right to settle permanently might be as shown opposite:

Spouses and fiancé(e)s (Currently 62,000)	50,000
Other dependants (Currently 10,000)	10,000
Settlement quota for those who came under Tiers 1 and 2 with a work permit (non-EU citizens) (No current quota)	20,000
Net migration from EU 15 (The recent average is 19,000)	20,000
Net migration from new EU members (<i>forecast for early years</i>)	30,000
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	130,000
Net British emigration (Latest year 2006)	125,000
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Total net immigration (Currently 190,000)	+5,000
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These numbers are for illustrative purposes only, but there is no doubt that the scheme would have a substantial impact. It would mean that between 150,000 to 170,000 people a year would no longer acquire an almost automatic right to settle here. It is not possible to give a precise figure given the inaccurate and incomplete nature of Government statistics. However, two methods of calculation are shown in Appendix E.

It is hard to say how many would, in the event, wish to settle as the composition of immigrants is changing substantially towards those from the developing world who are generally more likely to stay on.