

# Brexit and Fair Movement of People

The Welsh Government has today launched its latest Brexit paper, which proposes a fair approach to future migration to the UK.

The paper, launched at GE Aviation in Nantgarw, puts the economic well-being of Wales at the heart of its approach. It sets out a position which, by linking migration to the UK more closely to employment, would both enable the UK to convince EU negotiators to agree to continued full and unfettered access to the Single Market after Brexit and ensure that Welsh employers would continue to access the skills they need.

The managed approach to migration would enable people from EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland to continue to come to the UK to work if they have a prior job offer, or to seek employment if they have a real prospect of finding a job quickly.

This approach would allow Wales and the UK to continue to benefit from inward migration, while addressing the concerns that featured prominently in the debate leading up to the Brexit referendum last June.

Today's paper also sets out the need for vigorous enforcement of legislation to address peoples' concerns over the potential for the exploitation of migrant workers to undermine wages and working conditions for all workers.

While making a forceful case for fair movement, the paper also addresses what might happen if the UK government decides to impose quantitative limits on migration from the EU. In this case, which would not be the preferred option of the Welsh Government, we would be minded to press for a specific quota for Wales.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"It is essential that, post-Brexit, the system for migration between the EU and UK is one which is right for Wales, and for all parts of the UK. Our top priority is assuring our future economic prosperity through full and unfettered access to the Single Market.

"Our proposals provide a realistic basis for the UK's negotiations with the EU, in contrast with what has been seen as "magical thinking" from the UK government.

"We recognise many people have concerns about the extent and speed of migration and we want to see more control over this. That is why we are proposing a fair system which would ensure future migration to the UK is linked to employment, with those wishing to come to the UK required to have a job, or the ability to find one quickly."

Finance and Local Government Secretary, Mark Drakeford, said:

“Our proposal, which links migration to work and tackles the ongoing exploitation of workers, is one which we believe would command wide support from people across Wales and the whole UK, and would provide a credible basis for the negotiations with the EU.

“While the Welsh Government is not responsible for immigration policy, this is a sensible and well-evidenced contribution to this important policy area and I strongly urge the UK government to give careful consideration to our proposals.

“Many people from overseas have moved to Wales and make a hugely positive contribution to Welsh society and our economy. This will not end once the UK has left the EU. We will continue to need to recruit doctors, nurses, engineers, workers for the tourism, food and agriculture sectors, academics, and others, after Brexit. We are starting to see a worrying number of EU citizens leaving the UK and the consequences of closing our borders altogether would do untold damage to Wales’ economy and public services. That does not need to happen, as this document demonstrates.”