

Managed migration

Yesterday the government published its draft Immigration and Social Security Bill.

There were some good bits to it. The intention is to treat the rest of the world fairly and equally, with no special treatment for EU citizens. The aim is to encourage tourism and visitors. There will be no visas required for EU tourists coming here, and all tourists can stay for up to six months without the need for additional paperwork. Anyone gaining a place at a UK HE institution will be eligible for a permit. All those graduating from a UK university can stay for an additional six months to look for a job or to enjoy their time with us. These are important principles to assist our HE sector and tourist industry and show that the new global UK is outward looking and engaged with the wider world. Citizens of Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, the USA and Canada will be able to use the e-gates and faster entry system at our airports as EU people can today.

The proposals also include lifting the current quantitative controls on visas for people coming to undertake higher paid and skilled jobs in the UK currently applying to non EU citizens. The government argues that the UK is good at generating jobs and business activities and needs to be able to attract talent from all round the world to take up these opportunities. The provisional proposal is that such jobs would need to pay more than £30,000 a year to be free of controls.

The government is also suggesting a transitional system of allowing people to come in to work for up to a year at lower pay levels. They would not be eligible for benefits and would have to return home at the end of the year. The longer term aim is to stop inward migration to take low paid jobs, to seek to drive up productivity and pay and to give UK based individuals more chance of getting employment. Having access to fewer people from abroad willing to accept low pay should increase investment in machine power to do some of the tasks, and to make the remaining workforce more productive.

The Common Travel area with the Republic of Ireland is maintained, as before we joined the EEC/EU.

We read that the Chancellor and the Business Secretary are unhappy about any policy which reduces the flow of migrants from the EU into low paid employment. The Home Secretary himself seems unhappy about continuing the policy aim of reducing inward migration substantially in line with the Prime Minister's often stated wish and with the Conservative Manifesto.