

Memo to an incoming Prime Minister

Take control of our borders

One of the defining characteristics of an independent country is it has its own policy on who can come and live and work in its territory. Offering citizenship is a privilege. Agreeing to someone coming here to live is a big commitment by the state, as every legal migrant becomes eligible for benefits, full free NHS care, help with housing and much else. Some estimates suggest around £250,000 of capital stock is needed to support each new arrival when you take into account housing and public service provision needed.

When we were in the EU we were linked closely to the continent by a policy of freedom of movement. In other words our own borders were not under our control, as anyone admitted to any country in the EU gained an entitlement to come to the UK as a result. It encouraged a policy for some businesses of recruiting larger workforces on lower pay by bringing many lower paid people into the UK to carry out the jobs. More of us wanted the companies to aim for higher productivity allowing higher wages by putting more into automation and into training so each staff member added more value and had better machine and computer support.

Today we have introduced a policy of allocating permits to come to live and work here based on skill levels and pay levels in areas of scarcity. These may need tweaking to get the full effects from encouraging more local employees with higher productivity and pay levels. There remains important outstanding business. There are too many people traffickers plying an evil trade in small boats across the Channel to bring in illegal migrants which needs stemming. There are too many difficulties in removing foreign criminals who have come here. The new Prime Minister needs to give full support to the Home Secretary to legislate and administer a solution to these obvious areas of weakness.