Immigration and Demographic Security

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Introduction

This document confronts a core challenge in UK immigration policy: demographic security.[1] How can the British people retain control of their democratic institutions amid mass migration? The document proposes that this can only be achieved by controlling access to citizenship to those assimilated into our culture.

What is the Problem?

Population expands as a result of increased rates of natality, decreased mortality and through net immigration. In recent years, many newcomers have arrived and continue to arrive in large numbers. Many come from cultures that have a significantly higher birth rate than the indigenous population, partly a result of a patriarchal culture that promotes the role of women as wives and mothers rather than taking an active role in the economy – quite the opposite of our traditional marriage pattern.[2] Moreover, the indigenous population, have lower life expectancy and higher mortality rate than all other ethnic groups.[3]

Citizenship is often the default outcome for foreign nationals on workplace visas and their dependents.[4] Indefinite Leave to Remain, a settlement status that is a precursor to citizenship, can be applied for after five years residence in most cases. Children

[1] See the backgrounder Demographic Security

[2] The European Marriage Pattern, that became a trend in Western Europe since the end of the fifteenth century, is characterised by late marriage, high rates of celibacy, and the establishment of neolocal households after marriage. This was a major factor that kept average family sizes lower than comparable countries elsewhere. This pattern continues and is reaffirmed by increased access to education and modern contraception for women, economic uncertainty, and changing gender roles. In 2024, the fertility rate among UK-born women was 1.50, compared to 1.98 for non-UK born women in the same year. Current projections suggest that by 2070, the British people will become a minority in their own country.

[3] According to the most recent ONS analysis in 2014 and 2019 respectively.

[4] It is worth bearing mind that the majority of migrants coming to the UK are for family reasons, not to work.

born in the UK whose father or mother is a citizen, automatically become citizens. If we extrapolate the current statistics we have, newcomers who obtain citizenship and their descendants will become the majority in the next fifty years[5] and, as we are a democratic country, will have a significant impact on our politics long before that. Indeed, they already do.[6]

Economists and cultural researchers, notably Paola Giuliano, explicitly describe cultural norms as "sticky." Her work on "Sticky Traditions"[7] notes that many norms continue to shape behaviour long after the original conditions that made them useful have changed, and that deep values (religion, family, certain moral attitudes) are especially resistant to change across generations. Research on immigrants likewise shows that many attitudes and practices of the origin culture remain visible in the second, third, and even fourth generations, though the degree of stickiness varies by trait and context. In practice, the descendants of immigrants who are granted citizenship are likely to retain many aspects of their parent's culture.

The political and economic order that produced current prosperity and security depends on high generalised trust and on broad agreement about individualism, secular public authority, equal individual rights, and limited government. Introducing large numbers of people whose cultural formation emphasises different priorities, such as stronger group or religious claims, greater acceptance of hierarchy, or lower tolerance for open criticism, changes the median voter, the content of public debate, and the level of social trust that

[5] Goodwin, Matt "Demographic Change and the Future of the United Kingdom: 2022-2122." (University of Buckingham / Centre for Heterodox Social Science, May 2025) The figures are backed up by Coleman, David 'Projections of the Ethnic Minority Populations of the United Kingdom 2006–2056' *Population and Development Review*, Sep 2010.

[6] The rise of Pro-Palestinian politics in domestic discourse is an illustration of that.

[7] Giuliano, Paola Sticky Traditions: Origin, Persistence, and Evolution of Cultural Norms, Working Paper 35125 (NBER: 2026)

underpins voluntary compliance and effective institutions. Level of social trust is a key indicator in many economic, social and political metrics. The result is not automatic collapse, but a gradual shift in the nature of the political system that has supported the economy and the willingness to defend the nation-state. The speed of the change and the cultural distance involved determine how large the effect is.

The core issue is that the political and economic systems that have produced high trust, high productivity, secure property rights, and effective national defence rest on a relatively narrow set of cultural norms. Those norms are not automatic features of formal institutions; they are produced and sustained by the people who live under them. Large, rapid inflows of people from societies with substantially different norms can shift the median preferences and the level of social trust that make those institutions work.

Robert Putnam's well-known findings[8] and subsequent meta-analysis, show that ethnic diversity is associated, in the short-to-medium term, with lower generalised trust and less civic engagement, even toward members of one's own group. Trust is not a soft social preference; it is a robust predictor of economic performance. Higher-trust societies, such as the UK,[9] show higher total-factor productivity, lower transaction costs, better enforcement of contracts, and higher willingness to comply voluntarily with rules. When trust falls, the informal foundations that make formal institutions effective weaken. Markets and welfare states both become more costly to run and more prone to clientelism or enforcement failures.

Support for the abstract idea of "democracy" or free elections is often high among immigrants from very different regimes. The

[8] Puttnam, Robert D. 'E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 30 – No. 2, 2007

[9] The UK places seventh at 46% in the 2022 World Values Survey assessment far above some peer nations, such as Italy (27%) and France (26%), as well as being ahead of the US (37%).

relevant differences are usually narrower and more consequential: attitudes toward gender equality in practice, the proper role of religion in public law, free speech especially speech that criticises religion or minority practices, individual versus group rights, and the legitimacy of redistribution or identity-based claims.

Immigrants from high gender-inequality or high-religiosity origin countries frequently retain more traditional views on these issues for a generation or more; secularisation and convergence on liberal social norms are slower among some groups, notably many Muslim populations in Europe, than among others. Over time, these preferences enter the electorate and shift the political equilibrium—toward more expansive welfare commitments, stronger group accommodations, or greater limits on speech and inquiry. That changes the character of the political system even if formal democratic procedures remain in place.

Small numbers of immigrants who are positively selected for skills and who face strong incentives to assimilate rarely transform the host culture. Large numbers arriving quickly from culturally distant societies, especially under low-skill or family-reunification systems, raise the probability that parallel norms persist and that political coalitions form around ethnic or religious interests rather than around shared civic principles. Historical high-immigration episodes, such as the earlier European waves into the United States, occurred under different selection regimes and stronger assimilation pressures; the contemporary mix of origins and policy settings is not identical.

This can be illustrated by considering Islam, though the problem exists across many non-native cultures. Orthodox and classical Islamic political theology is structurally at odds with the core principles of Western liberal democracy; widespread attitudes in many Muslim-majority societies reinforce that tension, and outcomes on the ground largely confirm it. Liberal democracy is not merely “elections.” It rests on popular sovereignty, the supremacy of man-made law subject to revision, equal individual rights (including for women, religious minorities, and

those who leave a faith), freedom of expression that includes criticism of religion, and a public sphere in which no single religious law is privileged as divine and unchallengeable.

In short, traditional and orthodox Islam supplies a comprehensive legal-political system that prioritises divine law, communal religious identity, and specific inequalities over the individual autonomy, equal citizenship, and revisable human law that define Western liberal democracy. Compatibility is possible for individuals or communities that effectively privatise or substantially reform the political dimensions of the faith, but that has not been the dominant trajectory in places where Muslims form majorities. The tension is real, documented in both texts and data, and not resolved by pointing to abstract support for "democracy" without specifying its liberal content.

Pew Research did a series of large-scale surveys of Muslims in dozens of countries, notably the 2012–2013 "World's Muslims" project.[10] This shows the practical force of these ideas. Majorities in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East–North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa favoured making Sharia the official law of the land (Afghanistan 99%, Pakistan 84%, Egypt 74%, Indonesia 72%, Malaysia 86%). Among those supporting Sharia, large shares in places such as Egypt (86%), Jordan (82%), Afghanistan (79%), and Pakistan (76%) favoured the death penalty for apostasy. Support for stoning adulterers and amputation for theft was also high in many of the same countries. Muslims around the world overwhelmingly agree that in order for a person to be moral, he or she must believe in God.

Many respondents simultaneously expressed support for "democracy" and free speech in the abstract, while wanting laws to follow the Quran and religious leaders to have political influence. This often means electoral processes operating within an Islamic framework rather than liberal democracy with full individual rights and secular lawmaking. Freedom House ratings

[10] Pew Research Centre "The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society" April 30, 2013 https://www.pewresearch.org/?p=72971

consistently show almost no Muslim-majority country as "Free."[11] Many of these countries are the origin of considerable numbers of migrants in the twenty-first century.

This is not intended as a critique of Islam *per se*, but of the consequences of accommodating people from cultures that are not compatible with Western Liberalism. Similar problems exist in other faith groups. Certain theocratic or sacralised political movements outside Islam, historical or modern, have sought to make a particular religious or ideological code supreme over human law. These are not unique to any single tradition.

Historically, Christianity and Judaism produced similar tensions for centuries. Medieval and early modern Christian societies enforced heresy and blasphemy laws, restricted religious exit, subordinated women in law and leadership, and treated non-Christians as outsiders with limited rights. The same was true in various Jewish legal traditions regarding apostasy and gender roles. These were not fringe views; they were mainstream institutional positions for long periods. Large parts of Christian Europe and later the Americas underwent the Reformation, Enlightenment critique, secularisation of law, and internal reform that privatised religion and subordinated it to liberal rights.

Sacralised political movements show similar problems. Totalitarian political systems have produced parallel or worse incompatibilities. Marxist-Leninism and its variants explicitly rejected liberal rights, free speech, religious freedom, and

[11] Freedom House Report: Countries and Territories URL: https://freedomhouse.org/country/scores Senegal is the exception. The report notes that "Senegal is one of Africa's most stable electoral democracies and has undergone peaceful transfers of power between rival parties since 2000. However, politically motivated prosecutions of opposition leaders and changes to the electoral laws have posed obstacles to the competitiveness of the opposition in recent years. The country is known for its relatively independent media, though restrictive laws and intimidation continue to constrain press freedom. Other ongoing challenges include corruption in government, weak rule of law, and inadequate protections for the rights of women and LGBT+ people."

individual equality in favour of party/state sovereignty and class-based hierarchy; the historical record is one of dictatorships, purges, and suppression. Fascist and other authoritarian nationalisms did the same.

Both religious and political systems can produce illiberal outcomes. The distinctive difficulty with comprehensive religious law is that it attacks the secular premise of the liberal state itself—the claim that no sacred text or clerical interpretation stands above ordinary politics—rather than merely contesting particular rights within a shared secular framework. That is why the problem tends to be more persistent for groups whose core doctrine treats secular governance as illegitimate.

The problem is exacerbated through the creation of parallel cultural enclaves and the spread of sectarian politics. Rather than disperse, migrant groups tend to join enclaves with their compatriots where they can express their identity, whether through artefacts such as language, food, music, and dress, or by customs like religion, marriage practices, and the celebration of festivals. Such enclaves are a natural consequence of the desire to be among "people like themselves". They seek to create districts in which they can practice their way of life separate from the dominant culture of the state; in some respects, a "home away from home". Indeed, considerable effort is made to be distinctive rather than melding with domestic norms. As a consequence, they tend to be insular. This is reflected in political behaviour. They tend to support political parties, either individually or on the advice of their community or religious leaders, that favour their group even to the detriment of the community as a whole; in other words, engaging in sectarian politics, which responds to their interests.

Sectarian politics undermines Western liberal democracy by replacing its core operational principles; individual rights, neutral institutions, and deliberative compromise, with group-based tribal loyalty that treats politics as zero-sum conquest rather than shared governance. It organises people into

ascriptive[12] identity blocs, such as racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or ideological "sects", whose primary loyalty is to the bloc's advancement, not the common good. Politics becomes about capturing the state to deliver patronage, symbolic victories, or revenge for "my people." Sectarianism destroys the trust and compromise that democracy requires and so stops producing broad legitimacy.

Concentrations of support within the constituency leads to the election of local councillors and MPs that represent the migrant community in these areas on local, national and international issues often to the detriment of minorities within their community. Representatives tend to support policies that benefit their migrant group, such as using public funds to promote their interests, campaigning for religious and cultural exemptions in law, seeking immigration policies that favour their group, seeking investment in group specific projects, and so on.

Sometimes, they promote policies that benefit their state of origin, where the relatives of their constituents may still reside, such as using public funds to pay for international aid, foreign infrastructure development and easements in trade policy. In some cases, they even become advocates for that states' foreign policy by seeking support for them in disputes, and sanctions against their foreign enemies. Placing the tribe above the national interest is the essence of sectarian politics. This leaves many people wondering why they seek to be part of a national community in which they have so little interest. The simple answer is that they don't.

Why is this important?

At the local level, sectarianism disenfranchises the outgroup. In a democracy, representatives are intended to represent everyone in their constituency, not just those that voted for them. To only represent the ingroup undermines social cohesion. This is equally true whether the representative promotes particular

[12] Ascriptive refers to something that is related to ascription, which is the act of attributing a quality or characteristic to someone or something.

cultural groups, political party members, religious adherents or any other bloc or sect.[13] Democracy becomes a tyranny of the majority.

In our secular state, national interest, based on deliberative compromise, needs to rise above political, religious or cultural allegiance, so that all people are represented rather than factions. Democracy can be particularly fragile in this area. Democracy should promote the public good and factions can mitigate against that. Locke,[14] Mill,[15] de Tocqueville and the US Founding Fathers recognised this issue. Madison warned about the "mischiefs of faction" in The Federalist [16] and Washington and Hamilton also warn against factions, especially where a faction becomes a majority.[17] If our governance changes to one that creates factions and does not seek consensus, many of the basic norms of our society will break down. Our political institutions would become partisan, polarised, and incapable of democratic intent. People would lose trust in social and political institutions and broader society.

Some argue this is already happening. The patterns are visible and accelerating across the West right now. Data from 2025–2026 shows rising affective polarisation[18], institutional strain, and group-based mobilisation that fits the sectarian logic. In the US, affective polarisation remains near historic highs. Partisans rate the opposing party extremely negatively, with record lows in self-identified moderates and widespread pessimism about bridging divides. In the UK and Europe, sectarian dynamics

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[13] Similar effects can be seen with identitarian politics.

[14] Locke, John Two Treatises of Government Book 2: Of Civil Government Ch XIX (Of the Dissolution of Government), Sect. 230

[15] Mill, John Stuart *Considerations of Representative Government* particularly Chapter VI ("Of the Infirmities and Dangers to which Representative Government is Liable")

[16] Madison, James, 'The Federalist No 10 The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection [1787]' in *Federalist Papers: Primary Documents in American History* (Library of Congress)

[17] Washington, George *Farewell Address* 1796.

[18] Affective polarisation means dislike and distrust of the out-group, not just policy disagreement.

appear along ethnic/religious lines in addition to ideology. Discussions of "two-tier policing," bloc voting in certain communities, and imported conflicts playing out domestically (e.g., protests tied to overseas events) highlight group loyalty trumping shared citizenship. Warnings about descent into Lebanon-style confessional politics or the imminence of civil war are common in commentary.

V-Dem's 2026 Democracy Report[19] notes liberal democracies at a low (down to 31 from a 2009 peak), with erosion of checks, civil liberties, and rule of law even in established systems. Polarisation scores show societies dividing into hostile camps where differences poison social ties. Elite-driven identity strategies and media amplification reinforce this. While some countries show resilience, the operating system is under stress: elections feel existential, institutions face capture accusations from all sides, and compromise is rarer. Governments increasingly seems to represent factions, no longer "of the people, by the people, for the people."[20] They no longer represent the *demos* as a whole. This affects levels of trust and social capital.

High trust and high social capital are essential to the functioning of many aspects of our society. Consider, for instance, the comparison of wealth across different countries and cultures. Generally, wealth generation aligns most strongly with:

- institutional quality based on secure property rights, low corruption, and impartial rule of law,
- openness to trade and capital, and relatively high economic freedom,
- human capital such as average years of schooling, cognitive skills, and

[19] Nord, Marina, Altman, David Fernandes, Tiago Good God, Ana and Lindberg, Staffan I. Democracy Report 2026: Unraveling The Democratic Era? University of Gothenburg: V-Dem Institute 2026.
[20] Lincoln, Abraham, *Gettysburg Address [1863]*

- political stability and low risk of expropriation or civil conflict.[21]

The underlying data supports a robust link between relatively open, rule-of-law economic institutions and higher relative wealth.[22] Through adoption of these ideas, we have created the kind of society that is attractive to migrants. We have a wealthy, stable, low corruption, highly educated society that respects human rights and the rule of law. Having a high trust society depends on deliberative compromise.

Many migrants come to our country to seek a "better life". However, they also bring their culture with them. If that is allowed to undermine trust and destabilise our institutions, our shared culture, which is the basis of our wealth, is potentially weakened. The "better life" they seek is damaged.

The benefits of a high trust society not only apply to wealth-creation, but to many other aspects of everyday life. Take crime as an example. An essential part of our high-trust society is that people generally obey the laws, so crime levels are low, enforcement can be minimal, making it cheap to administer, enhancing our sense of liberty. European official statistics repeatedly show elevated crime rates for immigrants and their descendants from certain origin countries, even after age and sex adjustment. Similar patterns appear in Sweden, where foreign-born and second-generation migrants are overrepresented in lethal violence, rape, and robbery. In the UK, according to the 2021 census, Albanians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, Somalis, Nigerians and Pakistanis are over-represented in imprisonment rates compared to the population as a whole. Overall, the imprisonment rate of foreign nationals was 27 per cent higher

[21] Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development," *American Economic Review* 2001, and "Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth," *Handbook of Economic Growth* 2005 / NBER w10481.

[22] North, Douglass, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990)

than for British citizens.[23] These gaps shrink only partially with socioeconomic controls and often persist into the second generation, consistent with partial transmission of origin-country norms around honour, violence, gender, and authority.[24]

High trust societies tend to have better population health. Cross-country studies found that trust levels were among the strongest predictors of lower death rates, largely through greater voluntary compliance with public-health measures rather than enforcement alone.[25] Higher social capital and trust also show better educational performance on multiple measures, such as test scores and dropout rates. Trust supports norms of reciprocity that aid schooling and skill formation.[26]

High-trust societies show greater voluntary compliance with laws, taxes, and policies; people are more willing to forgo short-term self-interest for collective benefits. This facilitates the provision of public goods such as recycling, neighbourhood

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[23] Hymas, Charles; Butcher, Ben "Revealed: First migrant crime table". *The Telegraph*. 4 October 2024

[24] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000)
Messner, Baumer & Rosenfeld 'Dimensions of Social Capital and Rates of Criminal Homicide' *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 69, No. 6 (Dec 2004), pp. 882-903.
Rosenfeld, Messner & Baumer 'Social Capital and Homicide' *Social Forces* Vol 80, Issue 1, Sep 2001, pp. 283–310
Lederman, Loayza & Menéndez, "Violent Crime: Does Social Capital Matter?" *Economic Development and Cultural Change* Vol. 50, No. 3 (Apr 2002), pp. 509-539
Pew Research Center 'Where Trust is High, Crime and Corruption are Low' (Apr 2008)

[25] Besley, Timothy & Dray, Sacha 'Trust and state effectiveness: the political economy of compliance' *The Economic Journal* 134(662), 2024 pp. 2225- 2251

[26] Robert D. Putnam 'Community-Based Social Capital and Educational Performance' (in *Making Good Citizens*, 2001) and related analyses in *Bowling Alone*
Helliwell & Putnam, "Education and Social Capital," *NBER Working Paper 7121* 1999
Coleman, J. S. 'Social capital in the creation of human capital' *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94(1) 1988

cooperation, infrastructure, and reduces freeriding.[27] Trust is also robustly linked to higher life satisfaction and happiness, even after controlling for income. Trust correlates with higher quality of government, lower corruption, and more effective judicial and regulatory performance. It is also associated with higher rates of volunteering, civic participation, and willingness to serve in roles such as jury duty.[28]

Moreover, causality runs in both directions—good institutions and prosperity can build trust, while trust improves institutional performance[29]—but the associations are consistent and economically meaningful. High interpersonal trust coexists with strong welfare states, low corruption, good health outcomes, and effective governance. Through this the cost of providing services such as policing, the judiciary, health care, education, and government are minimised.

It is true that high-trust societies can absorb moderate numbers without collapse, and some groups converge over generations. Economic contributions and innovation from certain immigrants are real. The empirical pattern, however, is that the combination of low origin-country trust, high conflict exposure, and value distance predicts measurable costs to social capital and public order that go beyond income or education differences. Institutions and selection matter more than abstract "diversity."

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[27] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (2000) and *Making Democracy Work* (1993)
Uslaner, Eric M. *The Moral Foundations of Trust* 2002 and other works

[28] Knack, Stephen & Keefer, Philip 'Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation' *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 112, No. 4 (Nov 1997), pp. 1251-1288
Knack, Stephen 'Social Capital and the Quality of Government: Evidence from the United States' *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 2000
Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: 1993)
La Porta, Rafael et al. 'Trust in Large Organizations' *NBER Working Paper 5864* 1997

[29] Messner, Baumer & Rosenfeld Ibid. Social trust has a significant negative direct effect on homicide rates after controls; the relationship is reciprocal, i.e., homicide also reduces trust.

Cultures whose core political theology or social norms treat secular, revisable human law as subordinate to a divine or particularist code (and which sustain low generalised trust, strong in-group/out-group distinctions, and status hierarchies incompatible with equal citizenship) tend, when present in large numbers and politically active, to reduce the stock of social trust that liberal societies rely on. Lower trust in turn raises the costs of cooperation, weakens voluntary compliance with rules, degrades the provision of public goods, and correlates with worse outcomes in health, education, governance quality, and civic life—the domains already covered. Official crime statistics and attitude surveys from Europe show that these effects are not merely theoretical; they appear in measurable form for certain origin groups even after basic demographic controls, and they often persist into the second generation.

Loss of trust also has macroeconomic effects. It leads to reduction in investment in new and existing businesses. Research and development is underfunded, retooling is deferred and businesses become less competitive resulting in market losses and, ultimately, failure. Growth stagnates and the standard of living declines. Loss of trust does not just affect migrant communities; it affects us all.

Historical and comparative experience indicates that the workable accommodation is assimilation to the core of Western liberal culture: acceptance of popular or, at least, secular constitutional sovereignty, freedom of religion including the right to exit, equal individual rights regardless of sex or creed, and free speech that includes criticism of sacred doctrines. Groups that have successfully integrated in large numbers in the West, such as certain European, East Asian, and secularised Christian or Jewish populations, did so by converging on those norms rather than maintaining parallel legal or moral orders. Parallel societies, formal multiculturalism that treats deep value conflicts as permanent and legitimate, or political empowerment of unreformed orthodoxies have correlated with persistent trust

deficits, higher rates of certain crimes, and pressure on secular institutions.

This is not an argument that every individual from a low-trust or high-distance culture is incapable of assimilation, nor that selection, education, and time are irrelevant. It is an argument that group-level averages in doctrine and norms matter at scale, that social trust is a depletable resource with wide downstream effects, and that liberal democracy has no stable equilibrium in which a large, politically active minority rejects its secular and egalitarian foundations. Assimilation to those foundations has been the observed path of successful incorporation; the alternatives have higher measured costs.

We cannot afford to import the culture of countries that the migrants are leaving or fleeing along with their people because the norms and values they bring with them will reduce levels of trust in society and undermine many of the things we take for granted. In particular, we must avoid the situation where migrants are able to become citizens and can participate in our democratic institutions, even as a large minority let alone as a majority, without fully adopting the norms and values that lead to a high-trust society. To do otherwise, may turn urban areas of our country into third world slums or favela, largely occupied by people with low skills, little or no employment and on low-income, with poor health and education outcomes, living with poverty and endemic crime.

How is this Resolved?

To resist loss of control of our political institutions, we must ensure that those admitted to citizenship are fully assimilated into our political culture and place the interests of the nation above those of the tribe; that they do not behave like sectarians. Assimilation is an essential tool in resisting sectarianism because it reinforces liberal democracy by emphasising shared governance over tribal politics.

I am deliberately using the term “assimilation” rather than ”integration”. The latter is generally framed as a two-way or

multi-directional process of mutual adaptation: migrants participate in the host society's institutions and civic life while retaining significant elements of their heritage culture, and the host society changes to accommodate those differences. When it comes to our political system, I would argue that we must not be required to accommodate changes that undermine our society. Instead, when it comes to expression of political culture, migrants must assimilate; they must adopt the dominant host culture, such as language, norms, values, and practices, often to the point of diminishing or losing some part of their original identity. [30] This is essential to our demographic security.

This approach is reflected in research carried out by Eric Kaufmann:

> Many populist right voters do not believe one must be a member of the ethnic majority to be a citizen. Yet they consider the majority ethnie to be an important aspect of the national tradition and seek to limit immigration to protect it. Such voters, I would argue, tend to favour immigrant assimilation, not expulsion. There is thus an important distinction to be drawn between a closed ethnic nationalism on the one hand, which seeks to halt or reverse migration; and ethno-traditional nationalism on the other, which is about slowing the pace of change.[31]

Even so, failure to deal with issues associated with demographic security, whether slowly or quickly, is potentially existential to our society. What we need to ensure is that migrants are fully assimilated into our culture prior to obtaining citizenship.[32]

Toward a New Policy

Few of the major political parties in the UK address the issue of demographic security directly.[33] While some on the far-left are indifferent to the problem, favouring more open borders and

[30] For some, this process is multi-generational; a migrant cannot become a citizen, only their descendants.

[31] Kaufmann, Eric 'Ethno-traditional nationalism and the challenge of immigration' *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 25, Issue 2 (25 2019), 435-448

[32] Testing that claim is difficult.

[33] See the backgrounder Current Party Policies

increased migration, most parties across the political spectrum recognise, or claim to recognise, that there are issues that result from migration and counter with policies that seek to manage it and the consequences it has. This is mostly achieved by manipulation of the visa system and by border control.

Some political parties on the right have proposed withdrawal from the ECtHR, which they believe to be a hindrance to our border control policy. I should say at the outset that, in principle, I tend to be in favour of withdrawal for many of the same reasons that I favoured leaving the EU. As a democrat, I tend to prefer solutions that promote democratic accountability and, in the UK, that means in Parliament. I think that supranational organisations, along with other extra-governmental bodies, should be, at most, advisory rather than have the ability to compel or coerce the people of a democratic nation state through its law courts. I favour the approach to human rights adopted by the United Nations where enforcement is weak, political, and heavily constrained by state sovereignty.

Withdrawal from ECtHR does not mean that we would abandon human rights – most of what is in the convention is derived from pre-existing law. The convention was drafted based on the legal traditions of its founding members, including the UK. It was created in the aftermath of World War II to protect human rights and prevent atrocities. If we withdraw from ECtHR, we will need to consider which articles of the convention need to be adopted into UK law under a new Human Rights Act. I suspect much of it would remain unchanged. I am in favour of withdrawal from a sovereignty perspective, not a need to deregulate human rights.

Despite being in favour, I am also pragmatic. I recognise that withdrawal may be time-consuming. Many of our parliamentarians argue that withdrawal will have consequences to our treaty commitments[34] and there will be considerable resistance to such a policy. It could easily become bogged down

[34] See the backgrounder Withdrawal from the ECtHR

in the machinations of Parliament. Moreover, I don't believe in "magic pills". Simply withdrawing may help but will not solve all our problems.

In the end, given the urgency of the situation, I am more interested in achieving results than in how they are achieved. National interest comes before petty political squabbles, and I am not much interested in purity spirals. You can do more than one thing at a time. You can implement simple controls, while the preparatory steps for more radical measures are put in place. The latter becomes a clear indication of the direction of movement which acts as a disincentive in its own right. If the simple controls do not achieve the required outcomes, then you are in a place where more sweeping changes can be applied.

My favoured strategy is to adopt a three-pronged approach by creating an ECtHR-resistant UK immigration policy that controls immigration levels and access to citizenship, create legal changes that promote civic uniformity, whilst simultaneously seeking to repatriate our sovereignty through withdrawal. This document focuses on the first and part of the second. However, if I am right that this is existential, then it may be that more radical measures including withdrawal, are both justified and necessary.

The Policy Framework

So, I started this journey with a simple question: what measures, that seem ECtHR-resistant, are already used by other European states to control migration and to consider whether those measures could be rewritten to benefit the United Kingdom. This approach is an easier target than withdrawal because it only relies on changing domestic legislation rather than engaging with supranational organisations and international treaties.

In considering other member states, I focused on France, Germany, Italy and Denmark rather than consider all forty-six members of the Council of Europe as models. We have much in common with them. We are all parliamentary democracies with multi-party systems, and we are all members of NATO and the European Political Community. France, Germany, Italy and the

United Kingdom, are considered the major European powers, each individually represented as full members of the G7 and the G20. They have been called the "Big Four" of Europe. I included Denmark because it has been the most successful at handling these issues. Their policies have been used under both left and right leaning governments and so has achieved some degree of consensus.[35]

Many of the suggested policies in this document seek to control the award of citizenship by restricting the outcomes of different kinds of visa, placing additional requirements on indefinite settlement status and controlling the number of migrants who are allowed to enter through legal routes.

The package of measures I have proposed is in two parts – immigration and civic uniformity.

The section on immigration bills deals with who may enter, who may stay, and who may sponsor others. These measures do not seek to stop migration, but to make the offer of citizenship in our society only available to the best candidates.[36] Generally, we would expect them to be people who arrive lawfully, support themselves from the start, and can meet a permanent standard without a special rule being written for them. They come on a visa that was issued because a specific gap needed filling, or because a spouse already settled here. They can keep a household without benefits. They work at a level that pays National Insurance and covers their own family. They learn the language to the standard a workplace and a court require, and they can pass a test on the rules they will live under, including

[35] See the backgrounder State of Play in Europe

[36] Under the rules proposed, someone with a work visa can bring a spouse, but neither can apply for ILR or citizenship because the visa excludes it. In addition, a child born in the United Kingdom is a citizen at birth only if, at the moment of birth, at least one parent is a British citizen or is settled — that is, has indefinite leave to remain, or the equivalent. A spouse visa is limited leave. So is a work visa, and so is a protection grant. The child of two people in that position is not born a citizen. They must register under the ten-year rule and, we could choose to close that as well, without breaking articles of the ECHR.

that those rules do not bend for a religious reason. They do not need a chain of adult relatives to make the move viable. They treat settlement as something earned after a decade, not as the point of the visa. They assimilate to our political culture.

We need to recognise that the process of assimilation must be an active one. That means that both the individual and the state must engage in the process throughout the settlement period. It should not be assumed that assimilation is a natural process that is effortless; that it happens by osmosis. We need to help those seeking citizenship to understand our culture, what they can expect of the state and their fellow citizens and what, in turn, we expect from them. Part of assimilation is the use of English language and so they may need additional training in that, so they can speak clear, comprehensible English and understand it in their turn. Obviously, this training will require considerable commitment from the newcomer and would be paid for by them. Only those that complete this course can achieve settlement status.

In a well-ordered polity, those who seek the protection of the laws and the cooperation of their fellow citizens should treat the legitimate interests of the political community as their primary political obligation. This does not require agreement on every policy, nor does it deny that human beings everywhere possess equal moral worth. It does require that, when the claims of co-nationals and the claims of outsiders or co-religionists come into direct conflict, the former take precedence in the decisions of the state. Religion may be freely practised and may shape personal conscience, but it does not entitle any group to treat the interests of its co-religionists as superior to the interests of the people as a whole. Citizens may disagree sharply about trade, migration, welfare, or foreign policy; such disagreements are internal to the political community. What is not internal is the claim that the welfare or political projects of another people, or of a transnational religious body, should systematically override the security, cohesion, and self-determination of this one.

Those who become citizens should show a lasting commitment to this country. Loyalty of that kind supports trust and mutual honesty among citizens. It means remaining attached to the political community in good times and in bad, and standing with it when its borders or the bonds that hold it together are under threat. They should not seek to overthrow or undermine our political institutions.

Some people affirm loyalty when it is costless and abandon it when it is costly. This cannot be solved by any wording. No statement, test or ceremony can guarantee future conduct under pressure. The most that can be done is to make the expectation clear in advance, so that those who receive citizenship understand what the political community takes itself to be granting and what it hopes to receive in return. For some, the affirmation is mendacious. They never intended the best interests of our nation. Our security forces should continue to seek to protect us by identifying, detaining and deporting those who seek us harm.

Separately, all people arriving at our shores, whether legal or illegal, short or long term, seeking asylum or not, must engage in an induction process to provide an overview of what we perceive as acceptable behaviour in our country and what is not. In a perfect world, we would seek to stop those arriving illegally from moving freely in our society either by processing their claims offshore or by detaining them until their claim is heard. In practice, the main legal obstacle is Article 5 of the ECHR (right to liberty and security). Detention of illegal migrants is not banned outright, but it is tightly constrained. Such detention must satisfy several conditions that the European Court of Human Rights and the UK courts have developed. [37] People can be detained within limits, but open-ended detention for its own sake, or detention where there is no realistic prospect of removal is not allowed. The policy framework has some measures relating to managing illegal migrants, asylum seekers and so on. In many cases, the

[37] These are the principles that appear in the UK domestic case of Hardial Singh and in the Strasbourg case law including J.N. v United Kingdom.

measures tighten up the law in order to eradicate common abuses.

A small part of this framework considers changes we can make to help officers engaged in immigration enforcement. Monitoring immigration is an essential part of understanding and controlling it, and the results of monitoring, as far as possible, should be publicly available, so that decisions can be made in a transparent manner overcoming the information vacuum that leads to disinformation and promotes better governance. Other measures may help officers on the ground. We need to consult them to leverage their knowledge and experience of the difficulties involved. We need to consider how legislation can help and what technology has to offer in this area, such as maintaining databases, recording and using DNA, tracking and controlling migrants, how we securely move people and how and where we hold people in custody.

The Civic Uniformity bills deal with rules that should apply to everyone, precluding special conditions that apply to any one community. The rule of law requires that the law should be the same for everyone. The legal system and the regulations that govern its enforcement should not be used as tools for social justice. Hence, the proposals seek to remove religious and other exemptions from law and regulations. In addition, a new bill will ban first cousin marriage. It seeks uniformity by making an existing social norm in our society a legal requirement. This has the beneficial effect of avoiding genetic problems associated with children produced from those unions.

One part of this proposal, probably its most controversial policy, is the Designated Areas Bill. This bill seeks to identify areas where more than 40 per cent of residents lack indefinite leave, or received it in the last five years, that are failing in various objective measures, such as criminal behaviour, employment and so on. These areas become designated areas where parents are required to send their children on additional training courses that helps them with language skills and learning about the native culture. Non-attendance results in loss of certain benefits.

If, over a period, those objective measures continue to fail, local authorities are required to reduce the migrant concentration to 40% over a period of five years by social housing policy measures. This bill is similar to that enacted in Denmark, but replacing the most controversial parts related to ethnicity and nationality with tests of immigration status. The measure is intended to counter the increasing influence of sectarian politics. One consequence of this approach is to spread cultural diversity across the country in order to reduce the impact of immigration on our political system, which is easily destabilised by concentrations of particular populations.

In some respects, mixing immigration and civic uniformity can become a disincentivisation measure where the candidate cleaves to values and behaviour that are incompatible with our norms. Disincentivisation is a policy by which some existing migrants who reject our culture and values, can be persuaded that their interests are best served by finding a place to live that is more compatible with their beliefs rather than creating exemptions. It is generally the case that a carrot is to be preferred over a stick. If a requirement to assimilate means that people who want to practice culture-specific behaviour must move to other places that accept those behaviours, then that is their choice. Expressing values and norms that are incompatible with ours is not. Voluntary returns or remigration are much easier to process than enforced ones and do not suffer from appeals to domestic and European courts.

In reality, this approach may also appeal to some ethnic minorities. As Kaufmann suggests:

> While majority ethnicity is growing in importance and is a major factor behind populist right voting in the West, conservative-minded ethnic minorities may also be attached to the ethnic majority as a tradition of the nation to which they are attached.

Many people who have emigrated to the UK, did so because they were attracted to our culture and values, not to those of other migrants.

All these policy changes have to be done in a way that is consistent with our national interest. Sudden overnight change could cause chaos in different areas and so we must accommodate it through the implementation of transition periods.

In line with our desire to treat everyone equally, the same rules are applied irrespective of whether the candidate is from the EU, or from non-EU countries, including those in the Commonwealth. Domestic legislation already treats nationality as relevant to some immigration controls (visa requirements, the EU Settlement Scheme legacy, Commonwealth-specific provisions in older statutes), but the drafts do not introduce or preserve differential treatment on that basis for the matters they cover. An EU national, a non-EU national and a Commonwealth national are subject to the same genuineness, proportionality, late-claim and exemption rules once they are within the scope of the relevant provision.

The Common Travel Area is the standing exception. British and Irish citizens may move between the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands without routine immigration control. That arrangement is preserved in domestic law, principally the Immigration Act 1971 and related provisions, and was unaffected by the end of EU free movement. Nothing in these policies alters it. Of course, if the Irish government were to enact an immigration policy that resulted in it becoming a staging post for illegal migration to the UK, then we will have to think again. Our primary commitment must be to the integrity of our borders and the safety and security of our citizens.

In line with our domestic legislation, the rules do not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics such as sex, sexual orientation, race or religion. Indeed, it is very much the opposite. It seeks to remove exemptions that apply to one community over another and, by doing so, eliminate discrimination across all communities.

The proposals suggest changes to legislation that we might consider. The policy measures have been designed to control immigration and to avoid being overturned on appeal in a UK court. Of course, this is an opinion. Only practice will prove whether that is true. It is always dangerous to "second guess" the court. If a measure is struck down by the court, then we may need to adapt it accordingly. But, before we could adopt any of them, they would have to be considered in detail, including by lawyers familiar with the drafting of legislation and considered by politicians "in the round", and impact assessments need to be performed, and a transparent public debate needs to take place. Politics is about choices and their consequences. Obviously, any resultant legislation would need to be formally drafted by Parliamentary Counsel considering existing legislation.

In the course of this investigation, I have considered a lot of opinions by different people and bodies to build these proposals. Consequently, I have provided some backgrounders to the policies. These cover issues such as demographic security, withdrawal from the ECtHR, the impact of state multiculturalism and transition arrangements in different labour sectors. They are not essential reading but form part of the thinking that led to these proposals.

These proposals are not all that is required nor are they perfect. No policy proposals ever are. If nothing else, they must adapt to changing circumstances. However, they may provide some input to a discussion about these issues. Democracy demands consensus through open and pluralistic debate. I believe these policies represent a starting point toward a set of laws and regulations that act in the best interest of the British people.

Backgrounders

Demographic Security

A society can retain control of its democratic institutions under large-scale migration only if it treats membership rules—who enters, on what terms, and when they join the electorate—as a core sovereign choice rather than an unmanaged byproduct of other policies. Control over entry is widely treated as central to state sovereignty.

John Fonte of the Hudson Institute framed the political question as 'who decides migration policy?' Is it supranational institutions, migrants arriving without consent, or the existing demos of the nation-state.[38] That choice is possible in principle because border control, naturalisation criteria, and the franchise are powers that states already exercise. It becomes difficult in practice once large cohorts have been admitted, naturalised, and enfranchised, and once courts or international instruments constrain reversal.

The underlying issue is the boundary problem of democracy: the people who authorise the government must also decide who counts as part of that people. Gregory Conti argued that a government which sets immigration and naturalisation rules without direct-democratic recourse is selecting its future electorate, reversing the normal direction of authorisation.[39] In the Hudson Institute article, John Fonte wrote that the UN Global Compact for Migration, though labelled non-binding, is a mechanism that can limit nation-states' control over immigration and integration and promote multicultural obligations.[40] Demographer David Coleman described low native fertility plus

[38] Fonte, John "Democratic Self-Government or Mass Migration?" *Hudson Institute / The European Conservative*, 15 April 2019.
[39] Gregory Conti, "Immigration as a Constitutional Issue," *Compact*, 21 October 2024.
[40] Fonte, John Ibid.

high immigration as a possible "third demographic transition,"[41] in which the ancestry of some national populations is rapidly and permanently altered, with projections that continued inflows could put the original population in a minority position. He added that democratic approval might have been thought necessary for so large and permanent a change.

The phrase "demographic security" is used in academic and policy writing for protection of a state's development from demographic threats. Several countries have written the concept into population policy, sometimes in ways that raise human-rights concerns.

Belarus' Law on Demographic Security 2002 told the state to treat population trends as a security matter. It seeks to protect the country's social and economic development from demographic threats, so that Belarus develops according to its "national demographic interests." It defines those threats to be depopulation, population ageing, unregulated migration and degradation of the family. It requires government to monitor key indicators including the net reproduction rate, total fertility, working-age mortality (especially male), life expectancy, the ageing coefficient, rural–urban migration, the number of illegal migrants, and marriage and divorce rates. The government must calculate these yearly and set "maximum allowable" levels.

Similarly, Israeli strategic literature treats a solid Jewish majority as a condition of remaining both Jewish and democratic. INSS estimates at the end of 2023 put Israel's population at about 9.84 million, of whom 7.21 million were Jews (73.2%) and 2.08 million were Arabs (21.1%). Israeli law does not specify a specific minimum percentage of Jews, but INSS writing puts it as an obligation to keep "an absolute Jewish majority."[42] This is why the Oslo Accords, that aimed to create a separate governing body

[41] Coleman, David "Immigration and Ethnic Change in Low-Fertility Countries: A Third Demographic Transition," *Population and Development Review* 32, no. 3 (September 2006): 401–446.

[42] Even Shmuel. 2020. "Demographic Issues in Israel—In the Mirror of National Security and Intelligence." *Methodological Intelligence Journal* 5: 178-164

for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, are often justified in demographic terms. Adding millions of non-citizen Palestinians as voters would end the Jewish majority.

Selection and Volume Controls

Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom use a merit-based or points system that select a large share of immigrants by skills rather than family ties. However, they all allow chain migration which negates that principle. Chain migration, sometimes called "family reunification", enables immigrants who gain legal status to sponsor family members for permanent residency, who can later sponsor more relatives, so admissions grow through kinship rather than through a fresh skills or asylum decision.

The Somali diaspora shows how chain migration works. Large-scale departure began in the early 1990s, after the Somali state collapsed and civil war began. Those early movements were mainly refugee flights, not family sponsorship. Once communities formed in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, later arrivals often followed relatives and friends. Family reunion then helped those communities keep language, marriage patterns, and religious practice, and it produced Somali neighbourhoods in several major cities. Similar enclave patterns have appeared in other diasporas, including Armenian ones.

A related use of the same family rules is marriage migration. A citizen or permanent resident sponsors a spouse from India or elsewhere. Some of these marriages are arranged by families; some are commercial introductions, often loosely called "mail-order" marriages. The legal route is still a spouse visa, not a separate bride-import scheme. Motives vary. Some women and men choose it as a route to a richer country. Others, particularly women from places with few jobs and weak legal protection, are pressured by family. Abuse is documented, including violence by the sponsoring spouse, and consent is often hard to verify from the outside.

Sponsorship can also extend to parents and grandparents. Where the host country gives newcomers access to pensions or

healthcare before they have paid in, later-life reunion raises the dependent population without a matching rise in workers. In essence, the cost is borne by the existing taxpayers. The same effect can be seen with a new migrant bringing in a fully-fledged family, including children, placing additional pressure on public services. In many cultures, wives are not expected to work for themselves. In some cases, small businesses utilise workplace sponsorship schemes to facilitate the import of family members along with low paid workers in the grey economy. The latter practice has parallels with modern-day slavery.

In the United States, the Heritage Foundation recommended establishing a merit-based system, as well as ending chain migration, and ending universal birthplace citizenship.[43] The ASSIMILATION Act introduced by Rep. Andy Ogles would replace core provisions of the 1965 Hart-Celler Act and the 1990 Immigration Act, end chain migration and the diversity lottery,[44] modify birthright citizenship, impose a 10-year citizenship requirement, and require English and civics proficiency. Its sponsors claim that the Act will cut net immigration by about 85%.

Switzerland's SVP/UDC initiative "Pas de Suisse à 10 millions" seeks to write into the Constitution a cap of 10 million permanent residents before 2050. If the population exceeds 9.5 million before 2050, the Federal Council and Parliament would have to tighten asylum and family reunion; if 10 million is exceeded, authorities would be required to seek derogations from treaties such as the EU free-movement agreement. [45]

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[43] "Immigration" in *Citizen's Guide to Fight for America* (Heritage Foundation, Aug 2020)

[44] The Diversity Visa Lottery (often just "the diversity lottery") is a U.S. program that gives about 50,000 green cards a year by random draw to people from countries that have sent relatively few immigrants to the United States in the previous five years. The official aim is to diversify the legal-immigration stream, which is otherwise dominated by family sponsorship and, to a lesser extent, employment. Critics call it arbitrary and a security risk.

[45] Editorial, "Suisse : pour limiter l'immigration, le parti de droite UDC veut plafonner la population à 10 millions d'habitants," *Le Figaro*, 8 April 2024.

As stated above, Israel's Law of Return (1950) in addition to restrictions on other inflows is an explicit demographic-balancing policy. INSS analysis states that Israel's definition as a Jewish and democratic state "obliges it to maintain a demographic balance with an absolute Jewish majority."[46]

The Hoover Institution essay[47] on demographic change, quoted above, argued that where the foreign-born share is already historically high, a temporary slowdown may be needed so the society can absorb newcomers, and cited David Frum's warning that if liberals do not enforce limits, restrictionists will.[48]

The ECtHR and the UK Human Rights Act 1998

In Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights specifies basic human rights expected of countries which are members of the Council of Europe, backed by a court, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).[49] The convention is a "living instrument"[50] meaning that it is left to the court to interpret its content in light of present-day conditions and evolving societal standards, without a requirement for ratification by domestic democratic assemblies. This lack of democratic accountability is one of a number of reasons that have led to calls in the UK for withdrawal from the convention. It is believed that the court is stopping member states from controlling their borders and settlement rights.

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[46] Kobi Michael and Ori Wertman, "Introduction – The Demography-Security Nexus." From "Demography and National Security." INSS Strategic Assessment 27, no. 2 (June 2024)

[47] Goldstone, Jack A. & Diamond, Larry 'How Will Demographic Transformations Affect Democracy in the Coming Decades?' (The Hoover Institution, 2019)

[48] Frum, David "How Much Immigration Is Too Much?" *Atlantic* April 2019

[49] The ECHR and its court came into being in 1953 because countries in post-War Europe wanted a version of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, but with a court to enforce compliance in member organisations, those in the Council of Europe 1949. It was seen as a mechanism to avoid the rise of fascism.

[50] European Court of Human Rights Tyrer v. the United Kingdom, 25 April 1978, paragraph 31

Some articles in the convention, such as article 2 (right to life) or article 3 (the ban on torture and inhuman or degrading treatment) have no state derogation. This means that member states cannot choose to ignore the judgements of the court. Other articles, such as article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) are considered a "qualified right" and can be ignored on the basis of national security, public safety, the economic wellbeing of the country, prevention of crime, health, morals, or the rights of others. Some articles delegate to national laws, which may be better placed to legislate, such as article 12 (right to marry).

In France, ECtHR judgements are not automatically binding, but are considered authoritative interpretations of the European Convention on Human Rights, which France has ratified. French courts apply them as persuasive authority in relevant cases. In Germany, the rulings of the court are incorporated into domestic law as an ordinary statute, meaning that German courts must consider ECtHR judgements when interpreting fundamental rights. However, the German constitution prevails in cases of conflict, allowing courts to prioritise national law over those of the ECtHR in certain situations.

In the UK, the Human Rights Act 1998 requires domestic courts to "take into account" the ECtHR judgements, which they do, even when the articles used as a basis for those judgements can be derogated. Most human rights judgements in favour of the migrants are given in UK courts not in the ECtHR. These judgements are usually on the basis of ECtHR precedents under article 3 (freedom from torture) and article 8 (right to respect private and family life).

So, for instance, a migrant subject to deportation might claim in a UK court that they have come out as gay or converted to Christianity and, therefore, are at risk of torture if returned to their state of origin. The UK court is required, by the Human Rights Act, to consider relevant precedent in the ECtHR, irrespective of whether it can be derogated or not. Since article 3 cannot be derogated, the UK court refuses the state permission to deport. However, in another case, a migrant convicted of serial

rape might claim that they should not be deported, because they have family in this country. Although Article 8 is a qualified right, the HRA requires consideration of ECtHR relevant judgements and so the option to derogate on the basis of, say, prevention of crime, is often not taken. The HRA allows individuals to contest deportations or seek residence based on their family ties without oversight by domestic political institutions. This has led to calls for the HRA to be repealed or amended.

The Draft Copenhagen Declaration, agreed by ministers of the Council of Europe suggests a different approach. The resulting text includes a provision number 41 that:

> Encourages States Parties to discuss the general development of areas of the Court's case law of particular interest to them and, if appropriate, adopt texts expressing their general views. Such discussions, as well as possible texts adopted, may be useful for the Court as means of better understanding the views and positions of States Parties. Such discussions should respect the independence of the Court.[51]

It may be that the HRA could be amended so that the court must give priority to the safety and rights of the public as a whole, and must not treat an offender's Article 8 claim as outweighing a serious conviction unless a statute expressly says so.

Citizenship, Birth Rules, and the Franchise

The principle of *jus soli* means that citizenship is awarded according to place of birth. A child becomes a citizen because they were born on the state's territory, not because of their parents' nationality. The opposite principle is *jus sanguinis* ("right of blood") where citizenship follows the parents. In unconditional forms of *jus soli*, birth on the territory is enough, even if both parents are tourists, temporary visa holders, or unlawfully present. In conditional *jus soli*, the soil counts only if extra tests are met—usually that a parent is a citizen, a

[51] Draft Copenhagen Declaration, Feb 2018 https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/dokumenter/nyheder/draft_copenhagen_declaration_05.02.18.pdf

permanent resident, or has lived there legally for a set number of years.

Roughly thirty countries still grant citizenship on the basis of unconditional *jus soli*, mostly in the Americas. No European country does this. The particular conditions applied in Europe varies from state to state. Germany has had a conditional rule since 2000; since 2024 a child born in Germany to foreign parents acquires citizenship if at least one parent has legally resided for five years and holds permanent residence. Portugal raised its parental legal-residence threshold from a much shorter period to five years in a reform enacted in 2026. France further restricted *jus soli* in Mayotte in 2025, requiring both parents to be legally residing in France at the child's birth. Ireland ended it by constitutional amendment effective from 2005. For those born after this date, citizenship is not automatic and depends on the citizenship or residency status of the parents at the time of the child's birth.

The United Kingdom abolished automatic *jus soli* through the British Nationality Act 1981, in force from 1983. This is the primary legislation associated with citizenship. In general, children born in the UK to a British parent are automatically British. A child born abroad may need to meet further qualifications or even apply to be British. To acquire UK citizenship, foreign nationals typically follow specific residency and status requirements. The process can vary based on personal circumstances, such as marital status and immigration history. In general, applicants must have legally resided in the UK for at least five years or, if married to a UK citizen, three years. Applicants must hold Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) or settled status for at least 12 months before applying for citizenship. If married to a British citizen, applicants can apply for citizenship immediately after obtaining ILR. To be eligible for citizenship, the applicant must be over 18 years old, provide proof of residency, demonstrate good character by having no serious criminal record, pass the "Life in the UK" test and an English language test and pay the appropriate fee for administration. Children born before ILR or citizenship is granted, have to apply

separately. Those born after, may automatically be British, provided they are born in the UK.

The right to vote in UK elections depends upon the election. For a UK general election, you must be a British citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland[52] or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen. Commonwealth citizens must be over 18, resident at a qualifying UK address and, in theory, hold an ILR.[53] In general, reciprocal rights are not granted. Increasing numbers of people in the UK believe the rules should limit national elections to British citizens. There are similar calls for limiting granting of citizenship itself. In recent years, the number of people granted citizenship has increased from around 100000 in 2021 to over 250000 in 2025. So far in 2026, there have been 315000 applications, and the number is expected to massively increase as the "Boris-Wave" migrants achieve the residency qualification.

In the United States, Executive Order 14160 (2025) directed agencies to deny automatic citizenship to children born to parents who were neither citizens nor lawful permanent residents. Federal courts blocked the order; on 30 June 2026 the Supreme Court struck it down 6–3 in Trump v. Barbara, holding that children of parents unlawfully or temporarily present are citizens at birth under the Fourteenth Amendment. Separate bills continue to target birth tourism. The American Citizenship Integrity Act sponsored by Rep. Nancy Mace would create criminal penalties for birth-tourism schemes and bar entry for the purpose of obtaining citizenship for a child.

The ASSIMILATION Act referenced above is an example of lengthening the probation before the franchise and includes a 10-

[52] According to ONS, about 1.2% of the electorate in England and Wales are Irish citizens. This represents about 560000 people. UK citizens do not have the right to vote in Irish general and presidential elections.

[53] Checks undertaken reported by the Pimlico Journal article ("How many How many Commonwealth citizens are voting in British elections?" Mar 2026) suggest that Electoral Registration Officers often fail to check immigrant status. The article estimates that about 2.5m Commonwealth citizens could register to vote, though not many actually do.

year naturalisation requirement and English/civics tests.[54] The Remigration Act, also sponsored by Ogles, would revoke naturalised citizenship for aggravated felonies, government-benefits fraud, certain serious federal crimes, or material support for a foreign terrorist organisation within ten years of naturalisation, and would create a DHS review of certain 2021–2025 asylum, refugee, and adjustment grants.[55]

Gregory Conti argues in Compact[56] that major immigration changes should be treated as constitutional politics using referenda, supermajorities, or a bipartisan commission bound by national polling, rather than ordinary partisan legislation.[57]

Integration Requirements and Enforcement

Denmark is the most cited high-income case of a democracy that tightened both entry and settlement while a centre-left party held power.[58] Criteria for refugee status were tightened, family reunion limited, and newcomers required to show attachment to the country. The 2018 "ghetto laws" targeted estates where more than half of residents were immigrants from non-Western countries or their descendants and social indicators on unemployment, education, income, and crime crossed thresholds. Children aged one and above in designated estates must attend daycare 25 hours a week to learn the Danish language and customs and parents must attend a compulsory guidance programme. Refusal can result in withdrawal of child benefit. More than 1,000 households have been moved under the programme. The number of areas listed as parallel societies fell from 29 in 2018 to five on the 2025 list. Denmark's Ministry of Immigration and Integration reported 839 asylum-ground

[54] Sunil Dhawan, "No chain migration, no diversity lottery, no US birthright citizenship: ASSIMILATION Act introduced," *Financial Express*, 15 May 2026.
[55] Rep. Andy Ogles, "Rep. Andy Ogles Introduces the Remigration Act," (Olges House Blog, 25 June 2026)
[56] Gregory Conti, Ibid.
[57] Gregory Conti, Ibid.
[58] Gordon Rayner, "Denmark immigration chief: How I smashed the orthodoxy to become the envy of Europe," The Telegraph, 17 November 2025.

residence permits in the first 11 months of 2025, against 10,849 at the 2015 peak.[59]

After the Social Democrats took office in 2019, they kept and extended the tightening; the foreign-born share rose from 10.5% to 12.6%, compared with almost 20% in Germany. [60] Former prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen has said the package reduced crime, improved integration relative to Sweden, and helped hold off the hard right. Critics argue the housing rules are discriminatory and that research favours positive incentives over hard-line approaches.

Douglas Murray argued that in no Western country was there a democratic mandate for the scale of recent population change, that a 2020 U.S. platform of admitting on the order of 10 million people outside the law would have lost, and that a welfare state cannot be combined with open borders.[61] Éric Zemmour's 2022 programme in France proposed a remigration ministry and the departure of about a million foreigners in five years, plus an end to family reunion, a restricted asylum right, and a challenge to birthright nationality.[62] The term "remigration" has also been used by identitarian writers such as Martin Sellner; U.S. officials have defined it more narrowly as return of illegal aliens. Those expansive programmes face EU free-movement rules, citizenship protections, and the need for origin-country cooperation.

Counter-arguments and Limits

The opposing policy line treats aging as the binding constraint and favours regulated immigration plus assimilation to a creedal identity. Goldstone & Diamond [63] argued that Western

[59] "How the Danish migration model works," *Brussels Signal*, 19 August 2026.
[60] Jason DeParle, "How Denmark's Social Democrats Are Succeeding with Stricter Immigration Policies," *The New York Times Magazine*, 24 February 2025.
[61] Murray, Douglas "How the West Lost Its Will to Reverse Mass Migration," *The Free Press*, 24 September 2026. He refers to his book *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam* (Bloomsbury, 2017)
[62] "Presidentielle Zemmour veut creer un Ministere de la Remigration " *Le Point*, 21 March 2022
[63] Goldstone & Diamond, Ibid.

democracies should promote national identities built on liberal-democratic norms and deliberately assimilate newcomers to them, while still insisting on a shared language. They also argued that a more open but well-regulated immigration regime can ease fiscal pressure from aging, while poor border governance feeds illiberal backlash.

Joel Kotkin notes that mass immigration is often proposed as the answer to "demographic winter," but that Europe's record foreign-born population of over 64 million has not uniformly revived sluggish economies, and that high-immigration countries such as the UK, Canada, Germany, and France have also seen stagnant growth and identity conflict.[64]

A CEPR Europe 2050 paper[65] argues that stabilising Europe's dependency ratio by migration alone would require inflows several times larger than anything now contemplated, because each new cohort ages into the dependent population it was recruited to support. Put another way, the migrants we bring in as care workers for the elderly, are the same migrants who will age and need care in their own right, requiring further migrants.

Reversal after naturalisation is legally constrained in liberal democracies. Prevention, such as volume and selection controls, conditional citizenship, and consistent enforcement, is more feasible than large-scale denaturalisation. Denmark after 2015, Israel's explicit balancing, and Japan's historically low immigration are the usual illustrations that the tools exist; whether electorates keep authorising their use is a separate political question.

Current Party Policies

At the time of writing in Autumn 2026, no major UK party[66] uses the phrase "demographic security." It does not appear in Labour,

[64] Kotkin, Joel "The Politics of Depopulation" (Kotkin Blog site, 23 September 2026)
[65] Blanchard et al. "Europe 2050: Geometries of peace, power, and prosperity" (CEPR, 2026)
[66] Those polling above 5%.

Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Reform UK, or Green Party manifestos or white papers. What they do publish is immigration, settlement, and (in two cases) birth-rate policies. Those are the nearest statements. Of course, policy development is fluid so things may change.[67]

Labour (in government)

The May 2025 white paper "Restoring Control over the Immigration System" is the main text. It says net migration must come down, raises the skilled-worker bar back to graduate level, and doubles the standard wait for settlement from five years to ten, with settlement and citizenship to be earned by contribution.

In November 2025, the Home Secretary set the bars: a clean criminal record, English at A-level, sustained National Insurance contributions, and no debt.[68] Time can fall to three years for very high earners, or rise to 15–20 for people who have claimed benefits, and up to 30 for illegal arrival. The frame is control, skills, and contribution, not the composition of the electorate.

Recent changes, such as reducing the time to five years for all cases, have sought to recapture political ground lost to the Greens and to appeal to Labour's left-wing backbenchers by softening these measures.

Conservatives

In opposition, the Conservatives have matched the ten-year settlement wait and proposed a further five years before citizenship. Their leader, Kemi Badenoch, has said an ageing society should be met by more births, not immigration, which she called a policy that makes the country poorer. That is the closest a major-party leader has come to the demographic

[67] It should be said that I am not much interested in blame or scoring cheap party-political points.

[68] National Insurance was the measurable version of "has paid in." Debt was the measurable version of "does not owe the state." They sit in the same place as the work and no-benefits conditions in the settlement notes.

argument, and it is still not a numbered population or citizenship rule.

Reform UK

This is a harder line, and still not labelled demographic security. It would abolish indefinite leave to remain, including for many people who already hold it, and replace it with a renewable five-year visa tied to salary and English. Welfare would be for British citizens only. Citizenship would take about seven years and require renouncing other citizenships. It has also paired lower immigration with pronatalism: scrapped the two-child benefit cap for working parents, and proposed a larger married-couple tax allowance, explicitly as an alternative to immigration as the fix for a shrinking native-born population.

Liberal Democrats and Greens

Neither has proposed a longer path to settlement. Both stress rights, integration, and the economic case for migration. The Greens would reverse some recent restrictions on dependants of students and care workers.

Restore Britain

Restore Britain was formed by Rupert Lowe and registered as a party in March 2026. It puts "Reverse Mass Immigration" first among its objectives as part of a strategy to protect demographic security. Its immigration page says that by 2030, native British births will be under half of all births, and that by 2070, native Britons will be an absolute minority, and that the policy is to avert that. The measures are to:

- deport all illegal migrants,
- deport legally resident foreign nationals who cannot speak English, live in social housing, claim benefits, refuse to work, fail to integrate, commit crime, or "actively hate our way of life",
- end benefits for foreign nationals;
- make citizenship much harder to obtain;

- undo the "Boris Wave."[69]

Lowe has said that if that means millions leave, millions leave, and that inward immigration should be in the thousands.

Restore Britain has committed to withdrawing from the 1951 Refugee Convention and ECtHR.

SDP

This is the post-1990 Social Democratic Party until recently led by William Clouston, not the 1981 Gang of Four that merged with the Liberal Party.

The SDP updated its immigration policy in February 2026. It would end mass immigration, cut net migration to about 50,000 a year, and run a "generation-long mass immigration pauses" for integration. A "Red List" would stop immigration, except in exceptional cases, from countries whose migrants are judged disproportionately criminal, welfare-dependent, or economically inactive.

It would leave the 1951 Refugee Convention and the ECtHR, deport illegal arrivals or hold them on Ascension Island, and keep existing indefinite leave to remain, but tie benefits to past contribution. Future settlement would take 10 years, with a clean record, standard English, and a net positive fiscal contribution. Citizenship would require a further five years. It also offers tax breaks for British citizens abroad to return. The stated aim is a united welfare state and social cohesion, not a percentage of the population.

Generally, the nationalist parties, who stand in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, seek independence from the UK. They tend to be on the left of politics, and want local devolved control of immigration and favour relaxing border controls and increased state funding for migrants.

[69] The "Boris Wave" is the term used to describe the large numbers of migrants who settled in the UK after Boris Johnson, former Prime Minister, implemented post- Brexit migration rules.

In Scotland, the SNP wants an immigration policy that is "tailored for Scotland", bringing in migrants to satisfy need in various sectors, an asylum system that allows people to work and lifting No Recourse to Public Funds restrictions. Similarly, Alba's policy seeks increased immigration. They propose joining EFTA and accept EU free movement to Scotland with trade agreements similar to the Windsor framework.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru wants increased migration, a Wales specific visa and greater dispersal of migrants and other integration policies. It is unclear whether the UK could recognise a Wales visa.

In Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin has similar policies to the SNP and Plaid. They seek increased immigration based on "economic needs and community capacity", proposing a new Immigration Management Agency. The ultimate aim is to leave the UK and form a union with the rest of Ireland. Presumably, at this time, immigration would be in the control of the Irish government.

Presumably, independence of any of these countries would impact on travel between the UK and the newly independent territory. It is unclear why the UK would allow free movement of migrants using the independent state as a way to access England? If a unified Ireland, an independent Scotland, or a devolved Wales chose to open its external borders to large numbers of unvetted migrants, who then used them as a stepping stone to the UK, the UK would have to suspend free movement, including CTA, and impose border controls. Separation has consequences.

Withdrawal from the ECtHR

The Conservative Party, Reform UK, Restore Britain and the SDP have proposed withdrawal from the ECtHR and the repeal of the Human Rights Act 1998, which currently requires domestic courts to "take into account"[70] European Court decisions. They propose enacting domestic human rights legislation under

[70] Human Rights Act 1998 Section 2 Interpretation of Convention Rights

democratic control. Withdrawal might give the UK more control over immigration and deportation policies, while restoring parliamentary sovereignty by reducing the ability of supranational institutions to direct domestic judicial outcomes. The point here is not about whether we believe those bodies operate in our interest or not, but about whether their actions are accountable.

However, withdrawal from the ECtHR would require withdrawing from the *Council of Europe*. The Convention is a requirement of the seat. Article 58(3) of the European Convention on Human Rights says that a state that ceases to be a member of the Council ceases to be a party to the Convention. The withdrawal period is six months to allow existing cases to complete.

Withdrawal from the Council would include withdrawal from the Council's other machinery. Membership is the price of a vote in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, and of a role in the Venice Commission,[71] election observation, the anti-torture committee, and the Council's work on AI, sport and the response to Russia. Those are soft-power seats. Membership buys a place in the bodies that write and watch the standards and a vote on them. They are not a claim on a large pot of money, and they are not a veto over anyone else's spending.

Some Council treaties can be kept by a non-member; the Convention cannot. It would make the UK the only democracy to have withdrawn. Greece left under the colonels and came back; Russia was expelled in 2022. That is the company the departure would be read against, which is a diplomatic cost rather than a legal one. That, in itself, is not a reason to remain if the ECtHR is not fit for purpose. If the threat is existential then the response may have to be commensurate.

[71] An advisory body of constitutional legal experts created to provide constitutional advice to the emerging Eastern European democracies in 1990.

The effects of withdrawal from the ECtHR on existing treaties and agreements is disputed. Many argue that it would require renegotiation of those agreements. However, a review by Lord Wolfson[72] for the Conservative Party, suggests that the requirement for renegotiation may be overstated. It may be that people who reject withdrawal are putting up strawman arguments to favour their case.

For instance, *The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement* may commit the UK to incorporating the Convention into Northern Ireland law, with direct access to the courts and remedies for breach. If true, then withdrawal would break that commitment, and the treaty would have to be renegotiated. This would need Irish agreement, and the renegotiated deal would need to be endorsed by referendums on both sides of the border. Similarly, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have Convention rights written into their *devolution statutes*, so those would have to be rewritten too.

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement may treat respect for the Convention as a condition of its law-enforcement part. The EU has said that denunciation would be grounds to terminate that part. This would affect surrender of suspects, access to DNA, fingerprint and vehicle data, and the removal of UK desks at Europol and Eurojust. The UK–France returns arrangement also assumes the UK remains a party. Trade in goods is a separate title and would not automatically fall, but the *Windsor Framework* may also be tied into the same settlement.

The effects of withdrawal from the ECtHR on these agreements is disputed in the review by Lord Wolfson. Wolfson was asked to consider the ECtHR's role in a range of tests in areas such as borders, veterans, social housing, the justice system and infrastructure development. The conclusion was that the ECtHR places significant constraints in some of these areas. Wolfson claims that none of these agreements explicitly cite the

[72] Lord Wolfson KC is a British politician, barrister and life peer who has been Shadow Attorney General since November 2024 and is a member of the Welsh Conservatives. He is a former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice.

convention, but rather the general principle of maintenance of human rights. Wolfson was asked to consider what options are available. The review contains various different approaches to the ECtHR and its court from withdrawal to the enactment of various pieces of domestic legislation such as parallel law along with changes to the HRA.

Different countries respond to counter judgements in the ECtHR in different ways. In France, ECtHR judgements are not automatically binding, but are considered authoritative interpretations of the European Convention on Human Rights, which France has ratified. French courts apply them as persuasive authority in relevant cases. In Germany, the ECtHR is incorporated into domestic law as an ordinary statute, meaning that German courts must consider ECtHR judgements when interpreting fundamental rights. However, the German constitution prevails in cases of conflict, allowing courts to prioritise national law over the ECtHR in certain situations.

One important location of consideration is the way that nation states incorporate ECtHR judgements into domestic legislation. In the UK, this is by statute – the Human Rights Act 1998. Currently, the act says that UK courts must "take into account" the judgements of the ECtHR. The HRA could be amended so that, where the convention allows, the court must give priority to the safety and rights of the public as a whole. So, for instance, Article 8 is a qualified right, meaning that member states can override the judgement on one of a list of grounds. So, for instance, the UK courts might be required by UK law to treat an offender's Article 8 claim as outweighed by a serious conviction unless a statute expressly says so.

None of this is to say that ECtHR withdrawal is impossible, but rather that it may have unforeseen consequences. Some might argue that membership of a convention backed by a supranational court that can compel domestic justice, gives the court arbitrary and unaccountable power that can override the democratic wishes of the nation state even considering separation of powers. For many people who value national

sovereignty above all, that may be too much of a price to pay. They would argue that there is a good reason that the UN failed to put in place a court to adjudicate issues over the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; that courts whose decisions are not overseen by sovereign democratic bodies is, itself, unacceptable.

It is worth noting that withdrawal from the ECtHR does not disentangle the UK from other international treaties related to immigration, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention. These are separate issues. The UK could withdraw from the convention and protocol but deliberately keep equivalent protections in domestic law. In such circumstances, the immediate legal effect on an individual asylum claim could be very small. The benefit would be to repatriate sovereignty. Parliament could decide the rules openly, amend them through ordinary legislation, and be held politically accountable by voters, rather than treating treaty commitments as an external constraint.

The trade-off is that this accountability would be less durable. A future government with a parliamentary majority could change those protections more readily, and the UK would lose the Convention's international oversight and treaty-based accountability. So, the core choice is not simply "protection versus sovereignty"; it is whether to preserve refugee protections as domestic law while making them more directly revisable by elected governments. Of course, such revisions could offer more protection rather than less. That could make stronger protections easier to enact when there is political support—and easier to alter later. Whether that is a benefit or a risk depends on how one weighs democratic flexibility against the stability and international oversight a treaty provides.

State Multiculturalism and Integration

Multiculturalism is not a legal duty in Britain. This is a common misconception. What is embedded is a ban on racial and religious discrimination, which is a different rule. No statute tells public bodies to preserve separate cultures and fund them as

such. Canada did that in the Multiculturalism Act 1988. Britain did not. Keir Starmer's statement that "Britain is, and always will be, a multicultural, diverse country"[73] is not backed by law which seems remiss for a former barrister and director of public prosecutions.

The nearest doctrine runs the other way. In 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron said state multiculturalism had failed, meaning the practice of dealing with people through separate communities rather than as citizens. Asked in Parliament in 2016 whether government policy was to promote multiculturalism, he answered that Britain was a successful multi-ethnic democracy, and that separate development was what policy should challenge. Since 2014, schools have been required to promote "fundamental British values": democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Tolerance here is a civic minimum, not a duty to accommodate every practice.

A Danish-style package involving language, work, and a longer wait before settlement, does not collide with a multiculturalism statute, because there isn't one. It collides, if at all, with the Equality Act where a rule is discriminatory in effect and cannot be justified, and with the Convention rights already discussed. Those are the legal edges. Official multiculturalism is a policy that governments have dropped, not a law that has to be repealed.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of race, religion or belief. That protects individuals. It does not require the state to maintain parallel ways of life. However, the Equality Act also adds a public-sector duty on authorities to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity. This equality of opportunity measure may itself treat group identity as a basis of policy and discriminate against individuals. So, for instance, in a situation

[73] 'Starmer vows to uphold diversity amid rising fears over racism, immigration' Eastern Eye, Jul 28, 2025

where a position is being advertised, the public body may choose, when selecting a candidate, to promote an individual on the basis of having a protected characteristic rather than by merit alone. In other words, it may discriminate against an individual, the best candidate, in favour of a group identity.

Fortunately, the public-sector equality duty is an Act of Parliament, not a treaty obligation. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is the duty. Parliament can repeal it, narrow it, or, where relevant, exempt immigration, nationality and deportation from it in the same way it already carves pieces out of the Act. One action might be to add a merit clause for discrimination in candidate selection: where there is a difference in job-related ability, however small, the stronger candidate is appointed, and a departure has to be justified by a reason a court can test.

However, this leads into a more general, if tangential issue. Mass immigration has led to the growth of multiple competing cultures within our society, often in ways that are incompatible with each other. This has created pressures on our institutions to accommodate differences; to treat people of different cultures in different ways in order to avoid community tensions. So, for instance, the police may be given guidelines to enforce the law in different ways to achieve equity of outcome. Sometimes these accommodations have, in themselves, promoted discrimination in society and fly in the face of the rule of law.

The rule of law and judicial impartiality is foundational to liberal society, and their erosion by unaccountable institutions are an internal threat to it. In a recent discussion,[74] writer and broadcaster, Andrew Doyle cites several examples that centre on bodies that issue guidance or exercise discretion in ways that diverge from statute and from court rulings: the College of Policing continuing to support the recording of non-crime hate incidents after High Court criticism and repeated Home Secretary directions; the CPS pursuing public-order charges in

[74] Andrew Doyle "The Fall of the West" Andrew Gold-Heretics 19 Oct 2026 URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzS781r34mk

ways later held to invent a de-facto blasphemy offence; Sentencing Council guidelines that introduce ethnicity or faith as factors in custody decisions; and similar patterns at the NPCC and in some judicial reasoning. These are presented as instances where operational practice or soft law overrides the ordinary meaning of legislation and the requirement of equal treatment before the law.

That is distinct from the Public Sector Equality Duty. The PSED requires public authorities to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. It has been criticised for encouraging differential treatment or for being interpreted as a mandate to equalise outcomes. The problems Doyle highlights are more about fidelity to existing criminal and public-order law, about the status of non-statutory guidance, and about whether decision-makers (police, prosecutors, sentencers) may treat protected characteristics or subjective offence as relevant when the statute does not. Both sets of issues can undermine impartiality, but they operate through different mechanisms.

In the case of bodies, practical responses that stay inside ordinary legislative competence include:

- Abolishing or tightly constraining the College of Policing's power to issue operational guidance that is not expressly authorised by statute, and requiring any guidance on recording or investigation to be laid before Parliament.
- Amending the Criminal Justice Act or the Public Order Act so that non-crime hate incidents may not be recorded or used for vetting unless they meet a statutory threshold of evidence and intent, and so that "offence" or "hurt" is not itself a ground for police action.
- Requiring the CPS to publish the legal basis for any charge that turns on the content of speech, and making unexplained departure from that basis a ground for judicial review or for referral to the Attorney General.

- Placing the Sentencing Council under a statutory duty to treat the same offence in the same way regardless of the offender's protected characteristics, unless Parliament has expressly provided otherwise, and making its guidelines subject to affirmative resolution.
- For the judiciary, existing mechanisms (the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office, the power of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice to remove for misconduct) can be used more readily where a judge's reasoning is held to substitute policy for the statutory text; a broader statutory restatement that sentencing and interpretation must follow the ordinary meaning of the law, subject only to express parliamentary qualification, would make that standard clearer.

None of these requires inventing a new protected characteristic or reopening the Equality Act's discrimination provisions. They restate that guidance is not law, that equal treatment means the same rule applied to the same facts, and that bodies without direct democratic accountability cannot create offences or sentencing factors by circular. The same approach can be extended to other arm's-length bodies that issue operational instructions. If the relevant bodies cannot or will not obey the sovereign body of the nation, then they must be abolished and a more responsive, accountable body put in their place.

The issue of non-accountable bodies influencing the law can be illustrated through the National Police Chiefs' Council or NPCC. The NPCC is a collaboration of chief officers and forces, not a statutory body with its own legal personality. It operates under a section 22A Police Act 1996 agreement, is hosted by the Metropolitan Police Service, and is funded mainly by contributions from the participating forces (with some Home Office grant for its strategic hub). It is not directly answerable to a minister in the way a government department is, nor is it a quango with a statutory charter. Its guidance has no independent legal force; it binds only to the extent that individual chief constables choose to follow it or that it is incorporated into force policy.

That structure creates an accountability gap because the guidance is issued by a collective of operational leaders rather than by statute or by a minister, it can diverge from the ordinary meaning of the criminal law without a clear route for Parliament or the courts to correct it in advance. When that guidance treats protected characteristics, subjective offence, or "community impact" as relevant to charging or recording decisions in ways the statute does not, the practical effect is differential enforcement even though the underlying offence remains the same.

Three ordinary-law responses are available without creating a new enforcement body.

First, guidance issued by the NPCC (or any similar non-statutory police coordination body) can be made subject to the same rule already proposed for the College of Policing: it has no effect unless it is confined to the implementation of powers expressly conferred by statute, and any guidance that purports to create recording duties, charging factors or operational priorities not found in primary legislation must be laid before Parliament and approved by affirmative resolution before it can be followed. A short clause to that effect can sit in a free-speech or policing bill.

Second, the Home Secretary already possesses powers of direction over chief constables in limited circumstances and can issue statutory codes under the Police Act. Those powers can be used, or restated, to require that no force adopt NPCC guidance that has not met the parliamentary filter above. Because funding flows through the forces, a direction that non-compliant guidance may not be implemented also reaches the practical source of the NPCC's influence.

Third, individual decisions that rely on such guidance remain challengeable by judicial review on the ordinary grounds of illegality, irrationality or procedural impropriety. Making the status of the guidance explicit in statute simply removes the argument that "national coordination" supplies an independent legal basis.

None of these steps abolishes the NPCC or prevents chief officers from coordinating on genuine operational matters (mutual aid, counter-terrorism protocols, technical standards). They confine its output to the implementation of law that Parliament has already enacted, and they restore a clear line from statute to practice.

The same technique works for any other arm's-length police body that issues non-statutory guidance. In general, we would prefer to work with the bodies in place, but if they are unable or unwilling to protect the rule of law, one of the most basic features of our society and the liberties it provides, then they must be abolished.

State of Play in Europe

Many of the measures in this document reflect current practice in Denmark, Italy, France and Germany, all of whom are members of the Council of Europe and the ECtHR. Denmark is the model that has actually cut the numbers while staying inside the Convention. France, Germany and Italy have copied pieces of Danish practice.

Denmark made protection temporary: one or two years, renewable, with no path to settlement unless the person has fluent Danish, years of full-time work, and no recent benefits. Settlement otherwise takes about eight years, plus an "active citizenship" test. Spouse visas require both parties to be 24, aimed at marriages arranged for teenagers where one side was still young enough to be pressed into it, a stronger attachment to Denmark than to any other country,[75] and a sponsor who can support the household. Asylum grants fell from about 10,800 at the 2015 peak to under a thousand in the first eleven months of 2025.

[75] Denmark had a rule requiring renouncement of non-Danish citizenship which it dropped in 2025. The other rules applied were more effective and renouncement became a hindrance. Hence, this proposal does not adopt it.

In France, a 2024 law lengthened the wait and the language demand before settlement, made it easier to strip status from offenders, and restricted some benefits.

In the same year, Germany lengthened pre-deportation detention and widened the grounds for a hopeless repeat asylum claim. In 2025, it scrapped the three-year fast track to a passport. It did not reverse the cut from eight years to five, or the acceptance of dual nationality.

Italy's Albania sites were meant to process claims offshore. Italian courts have repeatedly blocked transfers, so that piece is a warning, not a template. The newer EU "return hub" plan, which Germany, Denmark and others signed up to in September 2026, is the same idea in milder form: a centre abroad for people whose claims have already failed.

The Danish parallel-society rules are under legal attack in the EU court, but not in the Convention. In these rules, areas over 50 per cent non-Western, with high unemployment or crime, face compulsory daycare in Danish, doubled sentences, and a duty to cut social housing. An adviser to the EU court has called the ethnic criterion direct discrimination. Britain is outside the EU, so the EU court fight over Denmark's housing law does not bind it. The Convention still does. Britain might adopt such measures but to modify them so as not to be in contravention of its own Equality Act.[76] In general, I have avoided or modified measures in use in Denmark that I think are potentially controversial.

The UK Labour Market

Migrants in the UK labour market are slightly more concentrated at both the high-skill and low-skill ends than the UK-born, with the majority still in middle-skilled jobs. The picture varies sharply by region of birth.

[76] Or make modifications to the Equality Act to disapply the relevant sections of the law.

In 2025, the overall occupational distribution of migrant workers was close to that of the UK-born. Migrants were a little more likely to be in both high-skilled and low-skilled roles. A majority of both groups were in middle-skilled occupations (associate professionals, administrative jobs, sales assistants, and some care work). Almost 60 per cent of workers born in North America and Oceania were in high-skilled jobs; the most common high-skilled roles across the migrant population were IT specialists, teachers and managers. By contrast, only a little over 20 per cent of workers born in the newer EU accession countries (EU8 and EU2) were in high-skilled jobs. Those workers were the most likely to be in low-skilled occupations such as cleaners, waiters and packers.

Sector concentrations follow the same split. Migrants are over-represented in administrative and support services (including commercial cleaning), hospitality, and health and care. Care workers and health professional jobs (doctors and nurses) had the highest share of non-EU-born workers. Low-skilled factory and construction roles had the largest share of EU-born workers. In December 2025, migrants accounted for 19 per cent of UK employees (about 5.9 million). A quarter of the jobs held by non-EU adult migrants were in health and care. In London, 63 per cent of hospitality roles were held by non-UK employees.

Employment rates also differ by reason for migration. Migrants who arrived for work have the strongest outcomes. Refugees and asylum-related migrants have lower employment rates and higher unemployment, linked to poorer health, smaller networks, and restrictions on working while a claim is pending. Migrant men are more likely to be employed than UK-born men; migrant women are slightly less likely, particularly among those from South Asian, Middle Eastern, North African and Central Asian backgrounds, where caring responsibilities are a larger factor.

Those without formal work sit outside these figures. They include people on asylum support (who are generally barred from work for the first period), overstayers, and dependants who

have not entered the labour market. The Migration Observatory notes that the post-2021 growth in non-EU employment has been driven especially by health and care recruitment,[77] while much of the earlier EU presence in low-skilled roles remains from free-movement arrivals who stayed. The net result is a migrant workforce that includes both the high-value professionals the settlement rules are written to retain and a large low-paid group in care, cleaning, hospitality and elementary roles whose presence the transition measures are intended to reduce.

For these reasons, I want to consider key roles in our healthcare and social system where migrants have a significant role.

Doctors

Around 21 per cent of NHS staff in England reported a non-British nationality in June 2025 (about 325,000 out of 1.5 million). The share is higher among doctors (36 per cent) and nurses (30 per cent). In London it reaches 32 per cent. These figures have risen over the past decade, driven by deliberate international recruitment to fill vacancies that domestic supply did not cover. The General Medical Council reports that about 42 per cent of licensed doctors qualified abroad. That is a stock built by active overseas hiring, not by a rule that prefers a migrant applicant over a British one for the same post.

However, the real issue is that becoming a doctor in the UK requires a period of medical training followed by application for a training place. Many students complete the medical training but their applications for entry-level core and speciality training rose from about 16,500 to almost 85,000 over the decade to 2025. Available posts increased by only about 11 per cent. In 2025 there were 33,870 unique applicants for 9,479 posts in round one in England, and 8,481 applicants for 3,354 posts in round two. Not every applicant is appointable, and not every offer is taken up, so

[77] The Migration Observatory 'Work visas and migrant workers in the UK' Oct 2026

the gap is not exactly the number left without a place. It is still a competition ratio of roughly 3–4 to 1 before the 2026 changes.

The Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026, which came into force in March, prioritises UK (and certain other) graduates and doctors with significant NHS experience. In the first recruitment round under the Act, priority candidates filled 98 per cent of speciality training posts. Non-priority applicants (mostly overseas-trained doctors) fell from 28 per cent of accepted places in 2025 to 1.8 per cent in 2026. Competition ratios for prioritised candidates roughly halved. One hundred per cent of GP training places went to priority candidates.

UK graduates are therefore competing on favourable terms with the large overseas applicant pool for the limited posts. However, the absolute shortage of speciality training places relative to the number of doctors who finish foundation remains. The government has agreed to create up to an additional 4,500 speciality training places over the next three years, but that does not close the gap created by a decade in which applications grew far faster than posts. The precise number of UK-trained doctors still unable to enter speciality training in any given year is not published as a single figure; the scale of the mismatch is visible in the applicant-to-post ratios above.

The prioritisation measures have not produced unfilled speciality training places. They have reallocated the existing places to the priority group. UK graduates and doctors with significant NHS experience were already numerous enough to fill the available posts. The problem the Act addressed was the five-fold rise in total applications, driven largely by overseas-trained doctors, which had pushed competition ratios far higher. Restricting the effective pool to the priority group restored lower ratios without leaving places empty. The underlying shortage of training posts relative to the number of doctors completing foundation continues, but it is a shortage of places, not a shortage of priority applicants willing to take them.

That changes the flow. Each year the great majority of new speciality training places, and therefore the future consultant and GP workforce coming through the formal training route, will be taken by UK-trained doctors. The large surplus of overseas applications no longer translates into a large share of the posts.

It does not clear the existing stock. Foreign-trained doctors already in training, already in non-training service posts, or already on the specialist or GP registers remain. Their numbers decline only through retirement, emigration, or other ordinary turnover. The Act also does not stop an overseas-trained doctor who already has the right to work from applying for a non-training post, or from qualifying for priority later if they accumulate significant NHS experience. What it does stop is the previous pattern in which overseas-trained doctors took a substantial and growing share of the limited speciality training places.

Recruiting trained doctors and nurses from countries that already have shortages reduces the domestic supply in those countries. The World Health Organization maintains a “red list” of states from which active recruitment is discouraged because of workforce shortages. Nuffield Trust analysis has shown substantial NHS growth from these countries: by late 2024 roughly one in eleven NHS doctors in England held nationality from a red-list state, and red-list-trained nurses accounted for a large share of the post-2020 increase in the nursing register. Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe have been major sources. The number of Zimbabwean nurses in the UK has been reported as more than one in ten of those still practising in Zimbabwe. The UK government endorses the WHO code and has said it does not actively recruit from the list, yet the numbers have continued to rise through individual applications and other routes. The depletion effect is real; the ethical objection is the standard one attached to large-scale recruitment from systems that cannot easily replace the staff.

Language and communication difficulties are also documented for international medical graduates. Doctors must meet an

English-language threshold (typically IELTS or equivalent), yet studies and exam data show persistent gaps in everyday clinical communication: colloquial language, regional accents, informal register, and styles of showing empathy or building rapport that differ from UK expectations. Failure rates on the clinical skills assessment component of the MRCGP have historically been far higher for international medical graduates than for UK graduates. Communication issues appear in fitness-to-practise referrals and in qualitative accounts of both doctors and patients. Formal test passage does not eliminate the problem in real consultations.

Nurses

There are similar problems in nursing, but the bottleneck is different. UK nursing graduates are finding it hard to get entry-level posts, not because a training place is rationed by competition ratios, but because funded Band 5 vacancies have fallen and many of those that remain ask for prior experience.

The Royal College of Nursing reported in August 2026 that nursing graduates were being blocked from at least a third of entry-level NHS jobs. An audit of Band 5 vacancies advertised in July found that 33 per cent required experience that new graduates do not have. Only 26 per cent of the jobs advertised in England were full-time, permanent and open to applicants without professional experience. In some regions the figure was 13 per cent. An FOI request showed advertised Band 5 nursing and midwifery roles in London fell by 68 per cent between 2019–20 and 2024–25. Students and recent graduates describe submitting dozens of applications, relocating, or taking non-nursing work while holding a PIN. NHS vacancy statistics still show around 21,600 registered nursing vacancies in England (a 5 per cent rate), but the funded entry-level posts available to new registrants are fewer than the number qualifying.

International recruitment has been large. About 24 per cent of nurses, midwives and nursing associates on the Nursing and Midwifery Council register trained overseas. New overseas joiners have fallen sharply: from roughly 20,700 in the year to

March 2025 to about 11,000 in the year to March 2026, a drop of nearly half. The slowdown coincides with tighter visa rules, higher English requirements and constrained NHS budgets. When domestic graduates are queuing for the remaining posts, trusts have less reason to sponsor from abroad.

There is no equivalent of the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act for nursing. Qualification leads to registration; the constraint is the number of funded Band 5 posts and the way those posts are advertised. The result looks similar from the graduate's side—qualified people unable to start—but the mechanism is a shortage of entry-level jobs rather than a formal competition for a fixed number of training places. The underlying reliance on overseas staff to fill the wider vacancy total remains, even as new international recruitment slows.

It is unlikely in the short term that we would have a large shortfall in trained nurses if considerable numbers of migrants were no longer available. Qualified UK nursing graduates already exceed the number of funded entry-level posts they can access, so removing a large share of new migrant recruitment would not immediately leave a large number of unfilled training places or an absolute shortage of people who have completed a UK nursing degree. The constraint is the number of Band 5 posts that trusts are willing and able to fund and advertise as open to new registrants. Vacancy totals remain (around 21,600 in England), but many of those posts are either not funded at entry level, require prior experience, or are not being filled because of budget limits.

The same pattern of depletion of nurses in source countries and issues with language holds for nurses as well as doctors. Overseas-trained nurses and midwives make up about 24 per cent of the Nursing and Midwifery Council register. They must meet NMC English standards (IELTS, OET, or evidence of an English-medium programme). Reviews of their experience note difficulties with the same everyday language and cultural-communication issues, and some concern that the objective structured clinical examination and language requirements

applied to them are stricter in practice than the communication assessments applied to UK-trained nurses during placement. International recruitment of nurses has slowed sharply in the most recent year, but the stock remains large and the red-list contribution has been significant.

In both professions the UK has imported trained staff faster than domestic training and retention have supplied them, with measurable effects on source-country workforces and with documented frictions in language and clinical communication after arrival. The prioritisation measures for medical training places address the competition for UK posts; they do not reverse the earlier depletion or remove the communication issues among those already here.

Care Workers

The key challenge in the area of care work is the need to change perception of care from a low-value, low-paid role to a vocational role with the same social reputation as nursing, so people feel that it offers a satisfying, long-term career for them. So, we need a formal training regime and opportunities for career structure and progression. To change perceptions, we also need realistic pay levels and decent working conditions. Without that employees are unlikely to join and will not stay. However, this creates a funding issue.

Informal working conditions, such as zero-hours contracts can be useful for people who need to decide on a day-by-day basis whether they can work, such as those returning from childcare, injury or long-term illness.

Cleaning

Many similar issues arise in other areas, such as cleaning, though the detail is different. The cleaning, hygiene and related elementary occupations employ well over a million people across the UK. Industry bodies note persistent vacancies and a long-standing reluctance among UK nationals to treat the work as a first-choice career. Migration Observatory analysis shows migrants are over-represented in administrative and support

services (which include commercial cleaning), hospitality, and health and care.[78] Workers from newer EU accession countries have been especially concentrated in low-skilled roles such as cleaners, waiters and packers. After Brexit and the pandemic, the EU share fell in some of these sectors, but non-EU employment rose, so the overall reliance on non-UK labour did not disappear. Recent payroll data show the growth in non-EU employment has been concentrated in health and social work, administrative and support services, accommodation and food, and retail.

The economic structure is similar to care. Pay is close to the wage floor, hours can be unsocial or fragmented, and there is little formal training or route into higher-paid work inside the sector. In-work benefits have subsidised the low wage for both migrant and domestic workers. Domestic recruitment is weak because the job is hard and the pay does not compensate, exactly as in care. The difference is that cleaning and hospitality have never had a dedicated high-volume sponsored route on the scale of the Health and Care Worker visa; much of the migrant workforce arrived on other visas, as dependants, or (before Brexit) under free movement, and then moved into the jobs.

A transition of the kind written for care would therefore look different in detail but rest on the same logic. New sponsorship for elementary cleaning or hospitality roles can be barred, as the workplace bill already does for below-graduate and shortage-list roles. Existing workers on limited leave can be given a final extension period during which in-work benefits are unavailable, so the employer must pay a self-supporting wage or lose the worker. A temporary, tapering grant can be offered for hiring habitually resident returners or people who have been out of work, conditional on a published training plan, predictable hours and a higher pay rate for the grant period. The same funding problem appears; contract prices or customer charges have been set on the assumption of low labour costs, so raising the effective

[78] The Migration Observatory 'Work visas and migrant workers in the UK' Oct 2026

wage reduces hours or raises prices unless the purchaser accepts the change.

The pool of potential domestic recruits is the same one discussed for care—NEETs who are close to the labour market, and people returning after childcare, sickness or injury—but the work is often even less attractive, and the health barriers that keep many inactive remain. The mechanism can be copied; the scale of replacement will be limited by the same factors that limit it in care.

Changing the Incentives

The policy scheme outlined in this document reduces the subsidised migrant inflow and raises the wage at which domestic workers will take the jobs. It does not guarantee that the existing unemployed and inactive will fill the posts that migrants currently hold.

Unemployment is about 1.8 million. The NEET total is just under a million, of whom a large share are inactive because of long-term sickness rather than actively seeking work. Adult social care in England alone has roughly 520,000 non-British staff. Cleaning, hospitality and related elementary roles add further hundreds of thousands. Even if every unemployed person and every NEET who is close to the labour market moved into these sectors, the arithmetic only works if they are willing and able to do the specific jobs, in the specific places, at the hours required. Many are not. Health conditions, caring responsibilities, location, and the nature of the work itself limit the effective supply.

The measures described in this document change the incentives. The benefit bar and the end of easy sponsorship make the migrant route more expensive or unavailable, so employers must offer a higher unsubsidised wage or accept fewer staff. The tapering grant gives a temporary reason to hire a habitually resident returner or someone who has been out of work. That will draw in some of the unemployed and some of the inactive who are near the margin. It will not draw in the quarter of a million young people whose inactivity is driven by

neurodevelopmental or mental-health conditions and who have never had a job, nor will it automatically match people in one region to vacancies in another.

What the scheme does ensure is that any remaining shortfall is no longer filled by a taxpayer-subsidised wage and an open sponsorship route. Vacancies that cannot be filled at the new wage either disappear, are automated, or are met by a smaller number of higher-paid domestic workers. Output in those sectors will contract where customers or commissioners will not pay the higher price. That is the market adjustment. It covers the shortfall only to the extent that enough domestic workers want the jobs once the subsidy is removed. Where they do not, the shortfall remains as fewer posts rather than as posts held by migrants on benefits. The scheme is built to produce that outcome, not to guarantee a one-for-one domestic replacement.

A tightly limited temporary visa can cover a residual shortfall without reopening a path to settlement or a benefit subsidy.

The workplace bill distinguishes temporary routes from those that lead to indefinite leave. A short-term visa for designated low-paid occupations—care, cleaning, hospitality, elementary retail—can be added on the same terms. Duration capped at one or two years, no extensions beyond a single limited renewal, no dependants, no access to in-work benefits or public funds, and time on the visa does not count toward the settlement clock in section 4. The employer pays a wage that covers the worker without recourse to benefits, or the certificate is not issued. A numerical cap, set annually and subject to the affirmative procedure, keeps the volume inside the overall work-visa ceiling.

That fills posts that domestic recruitment, even with the tapering grant, does not fill, while preserving the core rules. The worker leaves when the visa ends. There is no chain, no inherited settlement for a child brought as a dependant, and no double subsidy. The same domestic-grant conditions continue to apply for any post the employer chooses to fill with a habitually

resident hire; the temporary visa is the residual option, not the default.

Managing the Transition

A sharp reduction in migrant labour in retail, hospitality and similar low-paid roles would leave a shortfall that the measures described here only partly fill. The same reduction would ease pressure on housing, school places and some other services, but the relief would be gradual and uneven.

On the jobs, the domestic supply is not a ready reserve of 1.8 million unemployed people waiting to take elementary work. A large share of the inactive, especially among younger adults, cite long-term sickness. Many others have caring responsibilities, live in the wrong places, or will not take the hours and conditions even at a higher wage. Ending the in-work benefit subsidy raises the wage employers must offer and will draw in some returners and some of those closest to the labour market. A tapering grant tied to predictable hours, and a short training element can accelerate that for a subset of posts. A capped temporary visa—one or two years, no dependants, no benefits, no settlement credit—can cover the residual that still cannot be filled. None of these guarantees that every current post survives. Some output contracts, some tasks are automated or dropped, and prices rise. That is the adjustment. The package can be written to make the temporary visa explicit for listed elementary occupations outside care, with the same annual cap and the same publication of numbers hired domestically versus on the temporary route. It does not create a new permanent low-wage settler stream.

There are also side effects on other areas such as housing, schools and other services through lower population growth. Net migration has been the main driver of recent population increase. Fewer new arrivals mean slower growth in the number of households seeking private rented or social housing, and slower growth in the number of children entering state schools. In areas that have seen rapid recent inflows the pressure on places, on GP lists and on local authority homelessness budgets eases first. The existing stock of non-British residents remains, so the relief is on

the flow, not an immediate fall in demand. Capital budgets for new school places or affordable housing can be smaller, or the same money can reduce overcrowding, but only after the lower inflow has persisted for several years. Revenue pressures (class sizes, waiting lists) improve more slowly because they depend on the stock. Areas with little recent migration see little change.

The two sides are linked. The low-paid roles are part of the service economy that supports the larger population. Reducing the migrant share of those roles while also reducing overall inflows lowers both the labour supply in those sectors and the demand for the housing and school places the workers and their families would have used. The scheme does not require a separate housing or education bill to capture that effect; it follows from lower net migration. What it does require, if the aim is to avoid a disorderly contraction in retail and hospitality employment, is the explicit temporary-visa residual and the acceptance that some posts will not be replaced one-for-one by domestic workers. The housing and school relief is real but lagged; the labour-market adjustment is immediate and incomplete.

Birth Rate, AI and Elite Overproduction

As we transition to a society based on lower levels of migration, we need to consider how we will compensate for the loss of part of the workforce in the medium and long term.

In Oct 2026, the overall unemployment rate was 1.8 million, about 4.9% of the population. 981,000 young people aged 16–24 were NEET in the UK in April to June 2026. Of those, about 393,000 were actively looking for work. Many of the rest were inactive. The largest group (249,000 in early 2026) were inactive because of neurodevelopmental conditions (95,000), mental health conditions (74000), or other long-term sickness (73,000), and most have never had a paid job. Similar levels of inactivity exist among the 24-35 group for similar reasons though not categorised as NEET. These groups would be a target for new positions created as would older people returning to work after childcare, sickness or injury.

Increased wages and better conditions, are not, on their own, effective in bringing these groups into the labour market. For those who are inactive, especially as a result of mental health problems, we need programmes of placement and support. That means a reduced caseload or shorter shifts for the first six to twelve months, a named mentor, and an explicit right to paid time off for treatment appointments, with a ring-fenced fast-track route to treatment. It ends if the person has not reached a minimum hour threshold, so it does not become an open-ended wage top-up for someone who cannot do the job.

In the longer term, we need to consider the birth rate and the achievement of replacement levels of population. The total fertility rate in England and Wales was 1.39 children per woman in 2025, down from 1.42 the year before. That is well below the replacement level of about 2.1. Live births fell 1.6 per cent to 585,396. The rate is lowest in inner London and university cities.

Policies that reduce the direct cost and time cost of children have the clearest evidence of raising fertility, though the effects are modest relative to the long-run decline.

Childcare expansions show the most consistent lasting impact. Studies find that each percentage-point increase in coverage for preschool-age children is associated with a small rise in completed fertility, strongest for second and higher-order births. Paid parental leave also raises fertility; larger expansions in Central Europe have produced substantial and persistent effects, with higher-earning couples benefiting more. Cash transfers and birth grants tend to bring births forward or raise them temporarily rather than increase completed family size. Subsidised assisted reproduction has some effect for women over 35. Housing costs and career penalties appear in surveys as major reasons people delay or forgo children, but the experimental evidence on housing subsidies or tax changes is thinner.

A practical package consistent with that evidence would therefore prioritise:

- a large expansion of subsidised or free childcare places for under-fives, with a focus on availability rather than only price;
- a longer period of paid parental leave, shared but with a non-transferable portion for each parent, at a replacement rate high enough to be usable;
- targeted support for assisted conception for women in their mid-to-late thirties;
- measures that lower the housing cost of an extra bedroom at the ages when people form families (for example, priority or discounted access to family-sized social or intermediate housing, or stamp-duty relief on moves that add a bedroom).

These sit alongside, not instead of, the labour-market rules discussed earlier. Higher wages in low-paid sectors and the end of easy benefit top-ups change household incomes, but they do not directly address the childcare and leave constraints that the fertility literature identifies. None of the measures reverses the broader shift toward later and smaller families; the best-evidenced ones slow or partially offset it. The scale of spending required for a noticeable movement in the total fertility rate is large, and the demographic return appears over decades rather than years.

In addition to birth rate, we also need to consider what kind of society we are trying to create. In the future, how many people will we need in the labour force and will we have sufficient numbers for the roles available.

The growth of AI and automation could have a significant impact. In sectors where output is not tied to face-to-face customer service or to physical care, automation and AI reduce the number of workers required for a given level of production. That weakens one traditional argument for a large working-age population.

Manufacturing, logistics, back-office administration, routine professional services, data processing and much of software

production already show this. AI extends it into tasks that were previously hard to codify: drafting, analysis, coding assistance, quality control, scheduling. The labour required per unit of output falls. Fewer people can sustain the same, or a larger, volume of non-customer-facing goods and services. In those domains the economic case for high fertility or high immigration to fill jobs is weaker than it was when most work was manual or clerical.

The limit is the boundary of what remains non-automatable. Customer-facing roles, hands-on care, skilled trades that involve unstructured physical environments, and jobs that require on-the-spot judgement in novel situations still need people. Those are precisely the sectors (care, hospitality, elementary retail, parts of construction and maintenance) where the earlier discussion located the migrant-labour reliance and the domestic-supply constraints. Automation does not remove the need for workers there; it may even raise the relative cost of those workers if the rest of the economy becomes more productive.

Population size still matters for other reasons that automation does not cancel: the tax base that funds pensions and healthcare for the retired, the demand for housing and services, and the absolute number of people available for the residual non-automatable roles. A smaller cohort of working-age adults can support a given level of automated output, but it still has to support a larger retired population and still has to staff the jobs that cannot be automated. The shift therefore changes the composition of labour demand more than it eliminates the demographic constraint. It makes a low-fertility, lower-migration path more feasible in the automated sectors and leaves the pressure concentrated in the sectors that still require human presence.

The same changes that reduce the need for labour in automatable sectors increase the chance of elite overproduction: more people holding higher-education credentials and expecting professional or managerial roles than there are such roles available.

University participation in the UK is already high. Automation and AI compress demand for many of the graduate jobs that used to absorb that output, such as routine analysis, junior professional work, parts of administration and coding. The number of genuinely scarce, high-status positions (senior specialist medical posts, leading technical roles, high-autonomy professional practice) does not expand at the same rate. The result is a larger group of credentialed people competing for a slower-growing set of elite or near-elite jobs.

This is already visible in the medical training data. Applications for speciality places rose far faster than posts; the prioritisation Act reallocated the places to UK graduates but did not create enough places for everyone who qualifies. In nursing, new UK graduates are blocked from a large share of entry-level Band 5 posts by experience requirements and funding limits. In other graduate fields the pattern is similar: more applicants per desirable vacancy, longer periods in precarious or unrelated work, and downward pressure on the status and pay of roles that were once reliably middle-class.

Elite overproduction in this sense is not a surplus of the highly able; it is a surplus of people whose credentials and expectations were shaped by an earlier labour market. When the automatable middle is hollowed out, those expectations are disappointed. The political and social effects that theorists associate with the pattern, such as status competition, blocked mobility, and higher conflict over the remaining positions, follow more readily when the disappointment is widespread. The immigration and training measures discussed earlier change who fills the remaining posts; they do not enlarge the number of elite posts enough to absorb the continuing output of the higher-education system. That mismatch is what produces the overproduction.

The Policy Framework

As already stated, in the formulation of a possible UK plan, I will assume that the UK remains a signatory to the European convention, with a modified form of the HRA, but will adjust the immigration rules to avoid falling foul of ECtHR rulings and better control mass immigration and support demographic security.

This framework consists of a plan that takes the working parts and leaves the legally fragile ones. It would have a number of separate bills, that form a package covering Asylum, Settlement and Citizenship, Workplace and Student Visas, Migrant Removal and so on.

These measures are designed to avoid contrary judgements in the ECtHR. The policies explicitly recognise that article 2 (right to life), article 3 (the ban on torture and inhuman or degrading treatment), article 4(1) (the ban on slavery and servitude) and article 7 (no punishment without law) are not qualified rights and have no state derogation, though they may be challenged over evidential issues. However, others like Article 8, states that the member state may interfere if the interference is lawful and necessary in a democratic society for a listed aim. The aims given include national security, public safety, the economic wellbeing of the country, prevention of crime, health, morals, or the rights of others. Immigration control is routinely accepted as serving economic wellbeing and public order.

In some cases, these policies contribute to an environment that favours assimilation over patchworks of cultural ghettos. Some people refer to this as a "hostile environment" but, in reality, it is simply giving a legal basis to kerbing cultural norms that are incompatible with the culture of the host population in order to promote the public good through a more cohesive society.

The descriptions in this section are explanatory notes. The rules are contained in the drafts.

The Policy Proposals

The bills already cover the main levers that matter for the aims set out.

On the immigration side, the core controls can be summarised as:

- permanent bars on both citizenship and indefinite leave for illegal arrivals;
- lengthened, contribution-based settlement with an active assimilation requirement on every route, including work;
- sharp limits on dependants and chain migration;
- temporary treatment of most work and student routes, with change-of-employment restrictions and sponsor-proportionality tests;
- asylum support confined to capped, controlled accommodation with no mainstream benefits;
- one-appeal, time-limited removal process, serious-offence weighting against Article 8, and residual status where an absolute right blocks removal;
- HRA section 2 weighting that treats the resident citizen body as the overriding consideration on qualified rights.

On the civic-uniformity side the main instruments are:

- repeal or restriction of religious and cultural exemptions (kirpan, non-stun slaughter, and the ministerial power to create new ones);
- prohibition of cousin marriage;
- designated-area and parallel-regime measures;
- the merit duty and the extension of that duty to regulations and guidance.

In addition, a number of additional measures could be considered:

- dual-nationality renunciation on naturalisation;
- a statutory statement of the explanatory loyalty expectation;

- explicit transitional rules for existing care-sector and other low-paid sponsored workers beyond the grants already drafted;
- real-time publication of the immigration statistics.

None of those is essential to the logic of the package. The package as it stands already forces legal arrival, contribution, assimilation, and civic uniformity, and it removes the principal routes by which those requirements can be bypassed. If a any of these is considered important, it can be added; nothing essential is absent.

Immigration

These proposals relate to immigration both legal and illegal. They do not form a complete regime, but are intended to show how some degree of control of immigration can be enforced under the ECHR with a modified HRA.

Human Rights Act 1998 (Amendment) Bill

A key part of this proposal is to change section 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 to alter how ECtHR case law enters domestic decisions. It is written to require UK courts, when balancing qualified rights, to give particular weight to the interests of the resident citizen body.

Section 2 of the HRA currently obliges a court or tribunal determining a question that has arisen in connection with a Convention right to "take into account" any judgment, decision, declaration or advisory opinion of the European Court of Human Rights, so far as it is relevant. The obligation is to take the material into account; it is not a duty to follow it. In practice the case law has heavy weight, especially on Article 8 in deportation and removal cases.

The revised section 2 keeps the duty to take Strasbourg material into account but adds an explicit priority rule for qualified rights. When the qualified right is relied on by a person who is not a British citizen, and the countervailing interest is the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, national security, public

safety, the economic well-being of the country, the prevention of disorder or crime, or health or morals, the court must treat the protection of the resident citizen body as the overriding consideration unless the interference would be disproportionate on the particular facts even after that weighting. This is actually a more accurate expression of the content of the convention. Absolute rights, in particular Article 3, remain untouched, because they admit no balancing.

The draft sits in a short Human Rights Act (Amendment) Bill. It replaces or supplements section 2, defines "resident citizen body" by reference to British citizens and persons with indefinite leave who are not subject to deportation, and list the qualified articles to which the priority applies. It would not require denunciation of the Convention. It would change the domestic instruction to courts about how to weigh the material they must still consider.

That is narrower than a full repeal and more precise than a general "public interest" gloss. It targets the balancing exercise that currently resolves many undesirable outcomes, while leaving the absolute prohibitions in place.

Absolute rights are untouched, so prior Article 3 rulings continue to operate as they do now. The change is confined to the balancing exercise on qualified rights. A court can still find an interference disproportionate on the particular facts, but it must start from the statutory weighting rather than from an unweighted application of the Strasbourg authorities. Existing domestic precedents that applied the old approach would be revisited in light of the new subsection; they would not automatically bind once the Act is in force.

Changes could be made to other UK law to assist in these policies. So, the Immigration Regulations and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act could say the same thing in plainer words. Declarations of incompatibility would still be available. Ministers could ignore them, as they legally may now.

None of this needs Strasbourg's permission. British courts are where most of these cases are being lost.

Settlement and Citizenship Bill

Governments have manipulated the period required to achieve indefinite leave to remain, which is a form of settlement that is a precursor to application to citizenship. In this document, we recognise that the progression to citizenship gives the migrants the right to take part in UK politics, i.e., the single most important right that can be conferred. Given its importance, it is reasonable that the periods of time involved for the award of ILR and citizenship should be significant. Moreover, the conditions imposed for either status should be a significant bar to all but the most suitable candidates.

This proposal suggests that ten years is a suitable time to wait for indefinite leave to remain. Candidates could apply for citizenship a further two years after that, so twelve years in all. Britain's present gap is usually twelve months. Two years is long enough to show settlement was not a stepping stone, and short enough that people who have already qualified are not left indefinitely short of a passport.[79]

The wait has to be continuous and qualifying. Claiming benefits, dropping out of full-time work for more than a short gap, failing the English or Civics test,[80] outstanding NHS, tax, litigation or

[79] We could adopt Labour's approach announced in November 2025, having different periods depending on what the migrant is offering. People bringing high value skills might be three years, those who have depended on benefits 15-20 years and illegal migrants 30 years. By controlling citizenship, we control our political institutions. The downside is that it is more complicated than a single, fixed period. In reality, we have implemented these requirements by making the settlement and citizen status conditional.

[80] The "Life in the UK" test would be abandoned in favour of a test asking questions about our laws and culture, such as the basis of criminal law, the equality of men and women before the court, the rule of law means that everyone is equal before the law, that a religious reason is not a defence, the duty to give evidence with the face visible, and the fact that settlement can be revoked for a serious offence and so on. These are all things covered by the assimilation course.

other government debt or a criminal conviction restarts the clock. Time already served does not count. The same applies to the two years after indefinite leave. A serious offence in that period should also allow indefinite leave itself to be revoked. These would be conditions, not as factors to be weighed.

Applicants must complete a prescribed programme of assimilation to a satisfactory standard. The programme covers instruction in the criminal law and in lawful versus unlawful conduct; the rights and duties of residents and citizens and what may be expected of the state and of other residents; English language training to at least B2; and any further coaching in civic knowledge, employment norms or social expectations needed for independent functioning. Completion is shown by attendance and assessed modules. Failure pauses the qualifying clock until the module is passed. The cost falls on the applicant or the employer; public funds are not available. The content is set by affirmative regulations. Completion is tested at the time of application as stated above.

An application for citizenship must be accompanied by a fee set to recover the cost of processing it. The fee is due whether the answer is yes or no, including a refusal under the illegal-arrival bar, and it is not refunded because the bar applied. An application without the fee is invalid and need not be considered. That stops a barred applicant putting a free case into the system in order to obtain a refusal letter, and it matches the present rule that the charge is for the application, not for a grant.

The bill also eliminates chain migration where someone who has settled sponsors relatives, who may later sponsor further relatives. The first arrival is often a refugee, a worker or a student. The chain is what follows.

To illustrate, Somali departure in the early 1990s was a refugee flight after the state collapsed. Family reunion came later, and

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We don’t care very much if the candidate can name a long running TV show or a particular footballer. We care very much that they obey the law.

helped communities keep language and marriage patterns. That is a different mechanism from marriage migration on a spouse visa, and different again from parents joining adult children and drawing on pensions and healthcare they have not paid into. Under present British rules, a settled person can sponsor a spouse and children, and in some cases parents; a citizen can also sponsor adult siblings and adult children. Each new settler becomes a new sponsor.

The Settlement and Citizenship Bill breaks the chain at the second link. Adult siblings and adult children cannot use this route. Parents come only if wholly dependent and supported without benefits. The spouse route stays, but both parties must be 24, the sponsor must already be settled, self-supporting, and not recently on benefits. The age of 24 or over is aimed at marriages arranged for teenagers where one side was still young enough to be pressed into it. The couple can marry at the usual age. They cannot use that marriage to get a visa until both are 24. A student, a new refugee, or someone on a work visa cannot start a chain. Children may be required to undergo age and parentage tests.

There are also clauses applying to dependent children brought to the UK under a work visa or protection grant. Leave as a dependant ends at 18. Years spent on a parent's visa do not count toward the ten-year settlement clock. That stops a parent's work visa or protection grant from handing the brought child a head start. The sentence in the bill that refers to the 1981 Nationality Act simply means this bill does not rewrite nationality law for children born in the UK.

Private life under Article 8 covers the ties formed by growing up here: school, language, friends, the absence of any adult connection to the other country. Courts and tribunals already treat lengthy childhood residence as significant. A person who arrived at five and is refused at eighteen will usually be able to show that removal would interfere with a private life established entirely in the United Kingdom. The state then has to show that the interference is proportionate. Illegal arrival of the parent, or

the fact that the child never met the contribution tests, is part of that balance, but it is not automatically decisive. The removal bill's presumption is aimed at serious criminal sentences, not at a refused visa application by a former child dependant.

The drafts do not close this. They stop the child inheriting a path to settlement. They do not create a rule that Article 8 is displaced for someone whose only ties are here. Doing that would require either a statutory weighting that childhood residence after an unlawful or temporary entry counts for less, or acceptance that some of these cases will end in grants of leave outside the rules, or in removal being blocked. Denmark's temporary-protection model faces the same residue: the child who has in fact grown up there.

So, the practical sequence is refusal, liability to removal, then an Article 8 claim that is often the strongest the former child dependant will ever have. The package makes the visa refusal more likely. It does not make the removal automatic.

Citizenship Illegal Arrival Bill

This bill represents an unambiguous statement that illegal arrivals, whether refugees or not, cannot be granted ILR or citizenship as a public statement about border control. Legal status provides us with a means to control our demographic security as regards immigration because we decide who can enter.

It seems reasonable to exclude asylum seekers and illegal immigrants. Asylum seekers who are granted asylum (aka refugees) are expected to return to their country of origin as soon as the reasons for their asylum are resolved. Neither they, nor those whose asylum claim is rejected are expressing any commitment to the best interests of our nation. Equally, illegal immigrants that do not claim asylum have proved that they are prepared to break our laws on entry breaking the "clean record" requirement.

The statement is a bar on indefinite leave and naturalisation, not a bar on protection. An illegal migrant can be given time-limited leave, so he is not sent back to a risk. He cannot be given unlimited leave or a passport. That is the distinction the public sentence needs, and it is lawful for the reason in the last note: citizenship is not a Convention right.

The clause is a must, not a discretion. An application for citizenship is refused if, on or after commencement, he entered or arrived without leave or in breach of a deportation order. Refugee status, humanitarian protection and indefinite leave do not lift it. A grant in breach is void. Guidance and section 3 of the Human Rights Act cannot be used to read the bar down. Children who did not organise the journey are the only carve-out, because a bar on a child for an adult's crossing is the case that fails in court and blurs the statement.

Article 31 of the Refugee Convention limits penalties for the arrival where the migrant came from danger and claimed promptly. Withholding a passport is not the penalty that article was written for, and the bill says in terms that nothing in it authorises an Article 3 removal. What it does not do is pretend the arrival was lawful. Arrivals before commencement are untouched, so the statement is about the border from the day it is passed, not a revocation of citizenship already held.

Asylum Support and Accommodation Bill

Currently, asylum seekers already cannot claim universal credit or a council tenancy while the claim is open. What they get is asylum support under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999: a room, often in a hotel, HMO[81] or camp, and a small cash allowance. They can come and go.

The proposal adds additional significant controls on the rights of asylum seekers. The Asylum Support and Accommodation Bill confines support to a bed, meals and a small allowance inside

[81] A House of Multiple Occupation, or a rooming house, is a residential property occupied by more than one household which have shared 'common areas'.

designated accommodation, with no tenancy rights. If the asylum seeker leaves without permission, the support stops. Someone who arrived without leave, or whose claim is in the accelerated procedure, can be required to stay and to keep a curfew.

Unfortunately, full lockdown for every claimant, for as long as the case takes, is the part the Convention will not wear. Article 5 allows detention where removal or a decision is actually in prospect. The bill requires a tribunal review at 28 days.

This bill also specifies rules that caps the concentration of asylum seekers in accommodation. In essence, a cap of 0.5 per cent of that resident population in the local district in designated accommodation. On a district of 200,000 that is 1,000 people. The Home Secretary must not designate a site or place a person if it would put the area over the line. A placement that slips through is not unlawful for the person in the bed — he is not turned onto the street by a counting error — but he must be moved within 28 days to an area that still has room. If no area has room, no new support place opens until one becomes vacant.

That stops the practice of filling one town because it has empty hotels, and it gives a council a number it can point to. It does not cap the national total by itself. It caps concentration. A national ceiling would be a separate clause, and it would force the offshore or third-country decision earlier, which is a different argument.

Workplace Sponsorship (Limitation) Bill

Currently, a skilled-worker visa brings a household from year one, as dependants, not after settlement. That is the larger chain. The Workplace Sponsorship (Limitation) Bill does not abolish work visas. It stops a job offer becoming a household settlement.

A visa below graduate level, a temporary shortage-list visa, a seasonal visa or a graduate visa of less than three years, brings no spouse and no children. On a graduate-level visa of at least three years, dependants are allowed only if the worker's salary

alone covers the household and he has not drawn benefits in the last three years. There is no numerical cap on children in the draft. A larger family fails the money test first. A hard stop at a spouse and two children would be a new rule, not one Denmark uses.

Settlement is no longer the default end of a work visa: eight years' residence, five of them in full-time skilled work, English at B2 level, civics qualification, no recent benefits, completion of assimilation course and a clean record. Someone who does not meet those requirements, leaves when the visa ends, and cannot switch onto a family or private-life route to remain.

An annual yearly cap, set by regulations and voted on, limits the front door. Applications already in the system are untouched; extensions for ineligible dependants are not.

In some cases, we need a mechanism to allow us to transition to the new regime in order to avoid widespread chaos. One of the intentions of this plan is to try to replace large numbers of migrants on low pay topped up by the state with in-work benefits to non-migrants paid the appropriate wage for the task. Benefits should be used to meet a specific need (family, housing, etc) not to assist employers in underpaying employees. In general, we need to stop relying on low paid migrants to do essential jobs. In low-skill sectors such as hospitality and retail, employers experiencing a loss of employees would need to adjust wages to ensure that positions are filled. This will cause a temporary inflationary hit as we adjust to the new regime. There will be hard cases, but they make bad law.

The care sector is a particularly difficult case because the subsidy is already built in. In England, in 2025/26, people with a non-British nationality filled about 32.5 per cent of adult social care posts. That is roughly 520,000 people out of a filled workforce of about 1.6 million. However, changes to the regulations means that number is declining. A transition has to keep the beds staffed while the route closes, and it has to do so without creating a new permanent class of low-wage settlers.

Current rules already point in that direction. From July 2025 the care codes were closed to new overseas applicants; only in-country switches remain until July 2028. Dependants are heavily restricted. The going rate is still relatively low (£33,400 for care worker codes), and many of those workers also claim in-work benefits. Settlement remains available after five years for people already on the route. That is the cohort that needs managing out.

A workable transition has three parts.

First, freeze the stock. No new care sponsorship certificates after a set date, and no extensions beyond a final limited period (for example, two years) for anyone already here. Existing workers can finish their current contracts and leave, or switch to a higher-skilled route if they qualify. Time already spent does not count toward the ten-year settlement clock in the settlement bill. That prevents the present five-year pathway from turning the current workforce into permanent residents.

Second, remove the benefit subsidy for the remaining period. A sponsored care worker, and any dependant still permitted, is barred from in-work benefits for the duration of the visa. The employer must pay a wage that covers the household without public funds, or the sponsorship is invalid. This is the same logic as the "no public funds in the previous three years" test for settlement, applied earlier. It raises the real cost to the care provider and removes the double taxpayer subsidy. Providers who cannot meet it will have a stronger incentive to recruit domestically.

Third, create a domestic replacement track that is time-limited and conditional. Local authorities and care providers can claim a temporary wage subsidy or training grant only for UK-resident NEETs (or recent school leavers) hired into care roles, and only if the post is not filled by a sponsored migrant. The subsidy phases out over three years. The worker must meet basic English and suitability checks. This is not a new immigration route; it is a labour-market measure funded from the higher visa fees or the Immigration Skills Charge on the remaining sponsored posts. It

gives employers a reason to hire the domestic worker the policy wants, rather than simply cutting hours when the migrant route shrinks.

The combination does the transition without a sudden vacancy crisis. Existing workers leave on a known timetable. New arrivals stop. The wage floor rises because benefits are unavailable. Domestic recruitment is subsidised only while the gap is being filled, and the subsidy ends. Anyone who wants to stay longer must meet the contribution tests in the settlement bill on their own merits, on a non-care route.

This transitional arrangement keeps the rest of the package intact and gives the care sector a dated exit rather than an open-ended exception.

The bill has a general power for The Secretary of State to designate further occupations as restricted low-paid roles. Once designated, the care-sector controls apply: no new certificates after the transition period, one extension of no more than two years, no in-work benefits or public funds, and time that does not count toward settlement. Grants for domestic hires are available on terms that can differ by sector, still tapering and limited to three years. Annual publication of designations, certificates, grants and domestic hires is required. Regulations are affirmative. The care rules already described above remain specific.

The new bill provides controls to overcome some common abuses of the sponsorship system. In many cases, people who run small corner shops, supermarkets, barbers, nail shops, vape shops, car washes, massage parlours and so on, are sponsoring many more migrants than would be sensible for their business size and all at graduate levels. This pattern has been documented. BBC Verify found more than 1,500 grocery and convenience stores, around 100 barber shops, and dozens of car washes and vape shops still on the skilled-worker sponsor register, some added after the rules were tightened. A separate investigation identified more than 200 firms fined a total of £9.3

million for illegal working that remained able to sponsor. Home Office guidance already requires genuine jobs and allows revocation for non-compliance, but the thresholds for automatic action are narrow (for example, two maximum-level fines) and many licences stay active. The new bill makes a second illegal-working penalty within three years a mandatory revocation ground, alongside the existing proportionality and genuineness tests.

The workplace bill adds a proportionality rule that does not depend on case-by-case suspicion. A sponsor may not assign a certificate of sponsorship unless:

- the role is genuine and matches the occupation code claimed (no graduate-level code for work that is predominantly retail, personal service, or elementary);
- the number of sponsored workers does not exceed a ratio to the sponsor's UK-based payroll headcount and recent turnover (for example, no more than one sponsored worker per three existing employees, or a turnover floor per sponsored post, set in regulations);
- the sponsor has held a licence for at least twelve months and has filed accounts or tax returns covering that period;
- the sponsor has not received a civil penalty for illegal working in the previous three years.

Breach of any of those conditions is a mandatory ground for suspension and, if not remedied, revocation. The Secretary of State must publish quarterly the number of certificates assigned by sector and by sponsor size band, so the pattern is visible.

That does not replace inspection. Compliance officers still need to visit premises, check whether the sponsored workers are doing the claimed work, and act on intelligence about corner shops or barbers assigning multiple graduate-level certificates. The legal change makes the decision mechanical rather than discretionary: once the ratio or the genuineness test fails, the licence goes. It also raises the cost of the abuse, because a small

sponsor cannot scale certificates without first scaling real UK payroll and turnover.

The bill also prevents a person who holds leave granted on the basis of a certificate of sponsorship taking up employment with a different sponsor, or taking up employment in a different occupation code, unless the Secretary of State grants a variation of leave and the new employment independently satisfies every condition of this Act that would apply to a fresh grant of leave.

The bill makes the restriction self-executing. If the worker takes a job with a different sponsor or in a different occupation code without a variation that meets every condition in the Act, the existing leave simply stops being valid for that employment. No separate cancellation decision is required. It also stops the worker banking time. Any period spent in the non-compliant job does not count toward the residence or work periods needed for settlement or any other benefit under the Act. The clock does not run while the rule is being broken. It also extends the same rule to restricted low-paid roles once they have been designated by the Secretary of State. A worker admitted for a designated cleaning, hospitality or similar role is under the identical restriction on changing sponsor or occupation code. The control is not limited to the graduate-level routes.

Student Route (Limitation and Overstay) Bill

The dependant door on student visas is already mostly shut. Since January 2024 only postgraduate research students may bring a partner or children. Dependant visas fell from 143,000 in 2023 to about 20,000 in 2025. Those who still come can follow the student onto the Graduate route and then onto a skilled-worker visa.

Overstaying is real, but it is not “millions” of students. Exit checks stopped producing a usable series in 2020. In the four years before that, about 63,000 non-EU visa-holders a year were not recorded as having left, against a recorded compliance rate of about 96 per cent. The Home Office says it does not know the stock. A revised Pew estimate put the whole unauthorised

population at 700,000 to 900,000 in 2017. Lawyers' guesses for current overstayers run from 200,000 to 400,000. An inspection in 2025 found no senior owner and no policy aimed at overstaying as such.

The Student Route (Limitation and Overstay) Bill ends the remaining dependant right except for a funded doctorate of at least three years where the money covers the household. The Graduate route closes. At the end of the course the student leaves or switches onto a skilled-worker visa. Student Sponsor Licence Holders must report no-shows within ten days, and will lose its sponsor licence if more than 5 per cent of its students overstay, claim asylum after the course, or are not recorded as having left within 30 days. Overstaying is an offence, with a re-entry ban, and no in-country application to regularise it.

Migrant Removal Bill

The Migrant Removal Bill is a bill to limit appeals against removal, to require detention where removal is in prospect, and to weight serious offending against the right to family life. The bill also considers other issues associated with expulsion.

This bill does not concern itself with admission. Article 8 does not give a right to bring in adult relatives. The Court has said repeatedly that a state need not respect a family's choice of country. Denmark's 24-year rule has survived inside the Convention. What the Court struck down, in M.A. v. Denmark, was a rigid three-year wait before a person with temporary protection could reunite with a spouse, with no individual look at whether return was realistic.

The cases that constrain policy are mostly about expulsion, not admission. Since 1980 the European Court has given a final judgment in 29 UK cases about deportation or extradition. It allowed removal in 16 and blocked it in 13. From April 2016 to June 2021 the Home Office deported 26,091 foreign national offenders. About 645 successfully challenged removal on Article 8 in the First-tier Tribunal, roughly 2.5 per cent of the number removed. The friction is earlier: thousands are still here years

after release, appeals take time, and some countries will not take people back.

The opening sections of the bill deal with appeals, detention and serious offences. The bill limits the number of appeals to one with time limits, imposes detention on the subject and specifies that serious crimes create a presumption that article 8 cannot be used to avoid deportation. That presumption can only be displaced through article 3 or a dependent child, though late claims weigh against the subject.

Article 3 is the hard stop. It is absolute. If return really would expose someone to serious ill-treatment, then the circumstances do not outweigh it. An example of the use of Article 3 is the Iraqi Mohammed Yaseen, who joined Al Qaeda when he was just 16 years old, and became a member of an ISIS terrorist cell known for beheading Briton Ken Bigley. He later joined an ISIS unit which engaged in mass executions. He escaped punishment by fleeing to Germany, where he was convicted of being a terrorist and sentenced to four years and three months. He was expelled from Germany, and arrived illegally on a small boat in the UK, applied for asylum giving a false name and "dishonest" account on arrival. His asylum claim was denied, and he was sentenced to 6 months for illegal entry, being held in a bail hostel. The authorities intend to deport him. However, he may gain Article 3 protection because, if he is returned to Iraq, the authorities would probably prosecute him and, if convicted, punish him, possibly with a life sentence or death penalty for his crimes in Iraq. He remains in the UK.

Article 2 where the risk is death is almost as strict as article 3. Article 4's ban on slavery, and Article 7's ban on retrospective punishment, are also non-qualified rights. A late, unevidenced claim of risk is a credibility question, not an automatic bar. A declaration is cheap and refutation is hard, and courts lean against the error that cannot be undone. That is a choice about evidence.

A third country is usable only if a court will say that removal there, will not lead to Article 3 ill-treatment. Sending someone to a state that will do what Britain has forsworn is a laundering of the prohibition. Holding him, sending him somewhere a court will sign off, or dropping the absolute bar, are the three options. Rewriting section 2 of the Human Rights Act so that British courts prefer the public does not bind Strasbourg, and does not authorise a removal the Convention forbids.

The bill has a section "Absolute Convention Rights Claim", which is specifically concerned with appeals to convention rights that are non-qualified. It requires that claims under those rights be supported by evidence that can be tested. A late claim based on sexual orientation or religious conversion has reduced weight unless the claimant shows good reason for the delay. The Secretary of State may require an objective assessment, including a knowledge test where the claim is of conversion. The Secretary of State must maintain arrangements with one or more third countries that have given written assurances, accepted by a UK court, [82] that a person sent there will not face treatment contrary to the article claimed. Removal to such a country discharges the UK's obligation so long as the assurances hold. Direct return to the country of origin remains available if that would not itself breach the article.

The section on "Residual Status" creates a new category of status. In the event that the state is seeking to deport an individual but removal is barred solely because it would breach an absolute Convention right, the Secretary of State may grant the person a Residual Status. This is similar to the German legal status of "expelled" (*Ausweisung*) meaning an administrative decision that ends a person's right to stay and imposes a re-entry ban. In Residual Status, the person is under a continuing duty to take all

[82] A judgment of the High Court, on a case stated or a judicial review brought before the first transfer, that the host country's detention and asylum procedure meet the standards the Human Rights Act still requires. This removes Article 3 risk and provides a real chance to make a protection claim, and no onward removal to a place of risk.

reasonable steps to leave, including cooperation with any third-country arrangement. There is no right to work, no right to social housing and no entitlement to mainstream benefits. Support is limited to what is necessary to avoid a breach of the absolute right while removal remains impossible. Reporting, residence and electronic-monitoring conditions may be imposed. The status ends on removal, voluntary departure, or when the absolute-rights bar ceases. Breach of the duty to leave or of a condition is a ground for detention while removal remains realistic.

The section "Sham relationships and illegal working" allows refusal where it is more likely than not that a marriage or civil partnership was entered to circumvent control. A second illegal-working penalty within three years is mandatory grounds for sponsor-licence revocation. The Secretary of State may raise penalty levels by regulations and require real-time payroll matching to sponsored workers.

The section "Enforcement powers" also enacts changes to the enforcement process. The changes that most help officers are those that turn judgment calls into automatic triggers and that give them usable data.

Real-time or near-real-time matching of HMRC payroll returns to the sponsor-management system lets an officer see, without a visit, whether the number of sponsored workers exceeds the declared UK headcount or whether salaries have dropped below the threshold. A mismatch can suspend the licence automatically; the officer then only confirms the facts.

Mandatory publication of certificates by sector and sponsor-size band, already required, lets compliance teams target the outliers (small retail or personal-service sponsors with high certificate volumes) instead of random sampling.

A second civil penalty as an automatic revocation ground removes the need for a separate discretionary decision. The officer records the penalty; the licence ends.

For Article 3 and other absolute-rights claims, a standard objective-assessment protocol (knowledge test for conversion claims, timeline of when the characteristic was first raised) gives the decision-maker a documented basis that is harder to overturn on appeal. Officers do not have to invent the test each time.

Detention and one-appeal rules already in the removal bill reduce the number of cases that remain in the community while challenges run. Officers spend less time on absconders and more on those still in the system.

None of this replaces visits where intelligence suggests the sponsored workers are not doing the claimed job. It does mean that payroll anomalies, repeat penalties, and late untestable claims produce a clear legal consequence without a fresh exercise of discretion in every file. That is the practical help the rules can give the officers who have to apply them.

Consequently, the bill states that The Secretary of State must set up near-real-time matching of HMRC payroll data to sponsored-worker records. A mismatch that shows a breach of sponsor duties suspends the licence at once, pending investigation. An immigration officer may enter a licensed sponsor's premises, on notice or under warrant, to check that sponsored workers are doing the duties stated on their certificates. Quarterly publication is required of compliance visits, suspensions, revocations and civil penalties, broken down by sector. Where a person is detained under the detention power, an officer may require surrender of travel documents and of electronic devices reasonably believed to hold evidence relevant to removal. Failure to comply is itself a ground for continued detention while removal remains realistic.

Tony Smith CBE, former Director General of the UK Border Force, suggested that a full biometric entry/exit system would help in matching entrants and leavers including systematic capture of a facial image and, potentially, other biometrics from every arrival and departure, matching the two, and retaining the data long enough to produce reliable figures on who is in the

country. Smith has said that a digital facial image would need to be captured from everyone (UK passports, Irish passports, ETAs, visas and permanent residents), and that the resulting matched records would give far more accurate figures on net presence. Capturing and retaining the facial images of British citizens for that purpose, imposing a corresponding obligation on carriers, setting a clear retention period, and creating the matching infrastructure all sit outside the powers currently used for contactless e-gates. Data-protection and common-law constraints would also need to be addressed expressly. This is outside the scope of the bill.

The section on "readmission" requires the Secretary of State to seek readmission arrangements with those states where a subject is being deported. Where the state won't take back individuals, visas will not be issued to their citizens.

Immigration Statistics Bill

Border Force officers and caseworkers are civil servants. The Civil Service Code requires them not to favour a particular interest, and their powers are powers of control. The Human Rights Act and the equality duty give a cautious official a reason to grant or delay. Inspections show stretched enforcement, no estimate of overstayers, and, in one 2025 sample, 37 of 47 asylum grants with insufficient evidence. Windrush sits on the other side: lawful residents refused because the department was harsh and careless. Both can be true.

Legal immigration is published every quarter, much of it by nationality and route. The illegal stock is not. The Immigration Statistics Bill would require a quarterly report of visas, settlement, asylum, detected illegal entry, returns, and visas that expired with no exit recorded, and would name a senior civil servant responsible for the match. If a figure cannot be produced, the report must say why. A designated civil servant is responsible for the information and, in the event that the information is not available, indicate how the short fall will be remedied.

Civic Uniformity

Bills in this chapter are associated with civic uniformity; making the law the same for everyone, in line with Joseph Ratz's five key principles of the Rule of Law.[83] Laws must be applied evenly in order to be equal and non-arbitrary. This means that exemptions should not be put in place to accommodate one section of society. In doing so, these bills seek to create a more cohesive society.[84]

This section also has:

a) a bill that hardens the cultural norm rejecting cousin marriage into law in order to reduce the burden of cost associated with disease and disability arising from the emergence of recessive genes.
b) A bill that seeks to disperse ghettoes that have large numbers of people with short-term visas that fail to meet standards in employment, education, income, and criminal behaviour. Failure to meet these standards results in loss of benefits, enforced assimilation and manipulation of social housing rules.

By seeking to achieve specific objectives, these bills address issues associated with civic uniformity.

Religious and Cultural Exemptions Restriction Bill

Multiculturalism is not a legal duty. No statute tells public bodies to preserve separate cultures. The Equality Act 2010 bans discrimination against individuals.

The principle for religious exemptions is one sentence. The law is general. A religious reason is not a defence to it, and no minister, council or court may create one. An exemption has to be in an Act, and justified by a fact a court can test. Belief and worship

[83] Raz, Joseph "The Rule of Law and its Virtue" The Law Quarterly Review Vol. 93 1977: pp. 195–211.
[84] This is an area that may be extended from time to time, while seeking to avoid it becoming a repository of bugbears and petty annoyances.

stay lawful. What goes is the privilege of breaking a rule that binds everyone else.

Section 139(5)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 is the religious-reasons defence to carrying a blade. Schedule 3 of the 2015 slaughter regulations is the exception for slaughter without full non-reversible stunning. Denmark, Sweden and Slovenia require stunning, and that has been held compatible with Article 9. Local face-covering orders in Nottingham and Loughborough exempt religious and cultural coverings. The bill repeals the knife and slaughter exceptions, forbids a religious exemption in a face-covering order, and stops a minister recreating one by statutory instrument.

A general ban on covering the face in public was drafted and then removed. In a system of cameras and automated recognition, a duty to show the face is a power given to the state, and needs its own argument. The bill now says in terms that it creates no such ban. Schools are different. The French law of 2004 bans conspicuous religious symbols on pupils in state schools. The bill does the same: headscarf, turban, kippah, large cross. A discreet item is left alone. A faith school may still mark its own founding religion. The French law of 2010, banning face covering in public, is the clause that was taken out.

The Equality Act Amendment Bill

In the public-sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act, equality of opportunity has been read as a reason to discriminate against groups perceived as “behind”. Yet in society, we find that different groups are behind in some measures and are ahead in others and that relative positions may be in constant flux. For instance, despite claims of “white privilege”, white boys underachieve in school outcomes. To use the law as a tool for “social justice” is not only based on perceptions of injustice that may not exist in reality, it feeds sectarian division by promoting the politics of the tribe which seeks to deliver patronage, symbolic victories, or revenge for "my people." Fostering good relations has no victim and no measure. In general, merit has to be the only reasonable basis for

discrimination between individuals. However, within the law, a merit rule has to be written as a duty, not as the absence of another duty.

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Bill is drafted to create a duty of merit for appointments, promotions, contracts, grants and other benefits: the public authority must select the candidate who best meets objective criteria stated in advance. It may not depart from merit to advance equality of outcome or to meet a protected-characteristic target unless primary legislation expressly allows it. The exceptions listed in Section 9 of the Act are treated as elevating the merit of the candidate as a consequence of the occupational requirement for that role. Section 149 of the Equality Act is amended so that the public sector equality duty operates only so far as is consistent with the duty of merit, and a new section 149A makes the duty of merit explicit.

This principle is extended to regulations, guidance, codes of practice and policies: a public authority must not treat a protected characteristic as a relevant factor in those instruments unless primary legislation expressly so provides.

Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Bill

First-cousin marriage is currently legal. The Marriage Act 1949 bans parent, child, sibling, uncle and aunt, and stops at the cousin. Under Roman Civil Law, marriage was prohibited within four degrees of consanguinity (i.e., cousins). This ban was extended to the 7th degree in the ninth century under Catholic Canon law and then back to four in 1215. Protestant churches have generally allowed cousin marriage. Norway banned cousin marriage in 2024. Sweden has legislated a ban from 2026.

The ban is not arbitrary. Children of first cousins have about a 4 to 6 per cent chance of a recessive disorder, against about 2 to 3 per cent generally. Where cousins marry cousins across generations the rate climbs. This has not been a problem in the UK until recently because cousin marriage is a social taboo and is, consequently, rare. In societies where cousin marriage is

norm, this causes a major cost to health systems. This is not so much a case of removing an exemption but rather removing an anomaly without regard to origin.

The draft adds first cousins to the prohibited degrees, refuses recognition of a later foreign marriage if either party was domiciled here, and does not treat that marriage as a basis for a visa. Existing marriages stay valid.

Designated Areas Bill

The Designated Areas Bill designates an area for a year if more than 40 per cent of residents lack indefinite leave, or received it in the last five years, and at least two of four tests are failed: unemployment, low qualifications, low income, and crime. In essence, this is a law to disperse ghettos and the problems associated with them. It targets sectarian politics, directly. Unlike Denmark, which provides the model for this bill, citizenship, parental birthplace, nationality and religion are barred as criteria. In a designated area a child from one to five must do 25 hours a week of early education in English. A parent who refuses without a medical excuse loses child benefit. After five consecutive years, family social housing must be cut to 40 per cent. Nobody is evicted for status alone. Crime in the area is an aggravating factor, not a doubled sentence.

The Drafts

This is a series of working drafts for legislation. The drafts are working texts, not bills ready for the Table Office. They are the basis for public debate. Even if accepted, they would still need Parliamentary Counsel.

Immigration

These proposals relate to immigration both legal and illegal. They do not form a complete regime, but are intended to show how some degree of control of immigration can be enforced under the ECHR.

Human Rights Act 1998 (Amendment) Bill

A Bill to amend section 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the weight to be given to the interests of the resident citizen body when qualified Convention rights are relied upon by persons who are not British citizens.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Amendment of section 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998

(1) Section 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (interpretation of Convention rights) is amended as follows.

(2) After subsection (1) insert—

"(1A) When a court or tribunal is determining a question that has arisen in connection with a qualified Convention right relied upon by a person who is not a British citizen, and the countervailing interest falls within one or more of the legitimate aims set out in the relevant Article, the court or tribunal must treat the protection of the rights and interests of the resident citizen body as the overriding consideration.

(1B) Subsection (1A) does not apply to an absolute Convention right.

(1C) In this section—

'qualified Convention right' means a right under Article 8, 9, 10 or 11 of the Convention, or a right under Article 1 of the First Protocol, that is subject to limitation for a legitimate aim;

'resident citizen body' means British citizens and persons who hold indefinite leave to remain and are not liable to deportation;

'legitimate aim' means a purpose specified in the relevant Article as a ground on which the right may be limited, including the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, national security, public safety, the economic well-being of the country, the prevention of disorder or crime, health or morals."

2 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Human Rights Act 1998 (Amendment) Act 2026.

Settlement and Citizenship Bill

A Bill to lengthen the qualifying period for indefinite leave and citizenship, to require contribution and integration, and to limit family sponsorship.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Indefinite leave

(1) Indefinite leave to remain may be granted only if the applicant has completed ten years of continuous qualifying residence.

(2) Residence is qualifying only while the applicant—

(a) is in full-time skilled work, or has earnings above the National Insurance threshold,

(b) has made National Insurance contributions in that period,

(c) has not claimed public funds in the previous three years,

(d) has no outstanding NHS, tax, litigation or other government debt,

(e) speaks English to at least B2 and has passed a civics test in English, and

(f) has a clean criminal record.

(3) A break in subsection (2) restarts the ten years. Time already served does not count.

(4) Time spent on a protection grant, or after an arrival without leave, does not count.

(5) A grant of protection is not itself indefinite leave.

1A Active assimilation

(1) During the qualifying period under section 1 the applicant must complete, to a satisfactory standard, a programme of assimilation training prescribed by regulations.

(2) The programme must include—

(a) instruction in the criminal law and in what conduct is lawful or unlawful,

(b) instruction in the rights and duties of residents and citizens, and in what may be expected of the state and of fellow residents,

(c) English language training sufficient to reach at least level B2, and

(d) such further coaching in civic knowledge, employment norms or social expectations as the Secretary of State considers necessary for the applicant to function independently.

(3) Completion is evidenced by attendance records and by assessed modules. Failure to complete a module, or to reach the required standard, pauses the qualifying period until the module is completed.

(4) The cost of the programme is met by the applicant or by the employer. Public funds are not available for it.

(5) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

2 Citizenship

(1) Citizenship may be applied for only after two years of indefinite leave, still meeting section 1(2).

(2) A break in that period means refusal, and the two years restart.

(3) A serious offence in that period is a ground for revoking the indefinite leave.

(4) Nothing in this section limits the Citizenship (Illegal Arrival) Act 2026.

3 Family

(1) A person may sponsor a spouse or partner only if both parties are 24 or over, the sponsor has indefinite leave, is self-supporting, and has not claimed public funds in the previous three years.

(2) There is no route for an adult sibling or an adult child.

(3) A parent may be sponsored only if wholly dependent on the sponsor and the support test is met.

(4) A person with limited leave, including a protection grant, may not sponsor.

4 Dependent children

(1) Leave granted to a person as a dependent child expires on his 18th birthday, or on the expiry of the parent's leave, whichever is sooner.

(2) From that date he may remain only if he is granted leave in his own right on a route open to adults.

(3) Time spent as a dependent child does not count towards the ten years in section 1.

(4) This section does not affect registration as a British citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981 by a child born in the United Kingdom.

5 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day three months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Settlement and Citizenship Act 2026.

Citizenship Illegal Arrival Bill

A Bill to provide that a person who arrived in the United Kingdom without leave may not be granted British citizenship.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Bar

(1) The Secretary of State must refuse an application for British citizenship by a person who, on or after the day this Act comes into force, entered or arrived in the United Kingdom without leave, or in breach of a deportation order.

(2) Subsection (1) applies whether or not the person has been granted refugee status, humanitarian protection, or indefinite leave to remain.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to a person who was a child at the time of the arrival and who did not organise it.

(4) A grant made in breach of subsection (1) is void.

2 Bar on indefinite leave

(1) The Secretary of State must refuse an application for indefinite leave to remain by a person who, on or after the day this Act comes into force, entered or arrived in the United Kingdom without leave, or in breach of a deportation order.

(2) Subsection (1) applies whether or not the person has been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to a person who was a child at the time of the arrival and who did not organise it.

(4) A grant made in breach of subsection (1) is void.

(5) Nothing in this section requires the grant of indefinite leave, or prevents the grant of limited leave, where removal is prevented by an absolute right under the European Convention on Human Rights.

3 No discretion

Sections 1 and 2 apply notwithstanding the British Nationality Act 1981, the Immigration Act 1971, any guidance on good character, and section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998. They do not authorise removal to a place where the person faces a real risk of treatment contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

4 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Citizenship (Illegal Arrival) Act 2026.

Asylum Support and Accommodation Bill

A Bill to confine asylum support to controlled accommodation, to exclude asylum seekers from mainstream benefits and social housing, and for connected purposes.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 No mainstream support

(1) A person with an outstanding asylum or protection claim, and a dependant of such a person, is not entitled to universal credit, housing benefit, child benefit, disability benefits, or a local-authority social tenancy.

(2) Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 is amended so that support under it may be provided only under section 2 of this Act.

(3) A person who becomes a refugee, and meets the settlement tests in other legislation, may then apply for mainstream support on the same terms as anyone else.

2 Controlled accommodation

(1) Support consists of a bed, meals, and a small weekly cash allowance set by regulations, and is provided only in accommodation designated by the Secretary of State.

(2) Designated accommodation is not a social tenancy. A resident gains no security of tenure.

(3) A person who leaves designated accommodation without permission ceases to be entitled to support.

(4) The Secretary of State may require a resident to remain in the accommodation, and to observe a curfew, while the claim is decided, if the claim is suitable for the accelerated procedure or the person arrived without leave.

(5) Detention beyond 28 days must be reviewed by the First-tier Tribunal. It may continue only where removal or a decision is realistically in prospect.

3 Local cap

(1) "Local authority" means a district council, a London borough, the City of London, a metropolitan district, a unitary authority, a county in which there is no district council, and the equivalent authority in Scotland and Wales.

(2) The number of persons in designated accommodation in a local authority's area must not exceed 0.5 per cent of that authority's resident population, as last estimated by the Office for National Statistics.

(3) The Secretary of State must not designate accommodation, or place a person, if the placement would breach subsection (2).

(4) A placement in breach is not unlawful accommodation for the person, but the Secretary of State must move him within 28 days to an area that has capacity.

(5) If no area has capacity, no further support places may be opened until a place falls vacant.

4 Work

A person in designated accommodation may not work, unless the claim has been undetermined for more than six months for reasons not attributable to the claimant.

5 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Asylum Support and Accommodation Act 2026.

Workplace Sponsorship (Limitation) Bill

A Bill to limit dependants on work visas, to require a household support test, to prevent settlement arising from temporary work routes, and for connected purposes.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that admission for work does not of itself confer a right to bring family members or a path to permanent settlement.

2 No dependants on ineligible routes

(1) A person granted entry clearance or leave to enter or remain for the purpose of work may not be accompanied by, or later joined by, a dependant, unless section 3 applies.

(2) A visa is ineligible for dependants if—

(a) the role is below graduate level (RQF 6),

(b) the role is on a temporary shortage list, or

(c) the visa is a seasonal, graduate, or intra-company route of less than three years.

(3) "Dependant" means a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner, and a child under 18.

(4) A child born in the United Kingdom to a person with limited leave for work does not by that birth acquire a right to remain, or British citizenship, beyond the leave of the parent.

3 Household support test

(1) A dependant may be granted leave only if—

(a) the sponsor holds a graduate-level skilled-worker visa of at least three years,

(b) the sponsor's salary, alone, meets a threshold set by the Secretary of State at or above the median full-time earnings for that role, and is sufficient to maintain the household without recourse to public funds, and

(c) the sponsor has not claimed public funds in the previous three years.

(2) The Secretary of State must raise the threshold annually by at least the change in median earnings.

(3) Each dependant is a condition of the sponsor's leave. If the salary ceases to cover the household, the dependant's leave ends with the sponsor.

4 No settlement from work leave alone

(1) Time spent on a work visa does not count towards settlement unless the person—

(a) has completed eight years of continuous lawful residence,

(b) has been in full-time skilled work for at least five of those years,

(c) speaks English to at least B2,

(d) has not claimed public funds in the three years before the application, and

(e) has a clean criminal record.

(f) has completed, to a satisfactory standard, the programme of assimilation training required by section 1A of the Settlement and Citizenship Act 2026.

(2) A person who does not meet subsection (1) must leave when the visa ends, and may not switch onto a family or private-life route in order to remain.

(3) A dependant may apply for settlement only in their own right under subsection (1), or as the minor child of a person granted settlement under this section.

5 Care sector transition

(1) In this section "care role" means a role in a care worker or senior care worker occupation code, or any role designated by the Secretary of State as a care role for the purpose of this section.

(2) No certificate of sponsorship for a care role may be issued after the day six months after this Act comes into force.

(3) Leave already granted for a care role may be extended once, for a period not exceeding two years, and may not be extended further.

(4) A person with leave for a care role, and any dependant of that person, is not entitled to any in-work benefit or public funds for the duration of that leave.

(5) Time spent on leave for a care role does not count towards the period in section 4.

(6) The Secretary of State may make grants to a care provider for the employment and training of a person who—

(a) is habitually resident in the United Kingdom,

(b) was not in employment, education or training for at least six months before the employment begins, and

(c) is employed in a care role that is not filled by a person requiring sponsorship.

(7) A grant under subsection (6) may be paid for no more than three years in respect of any post, and must reduce each year.

(8) The Secretary of State must publish, each year, the number of care-role certificates issued, the number of grants paid, and the number of domestic hires supported.

6 Restricted low-paid roles

(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations designate an occupation as a restricted low-paid role for the purpose of this section.

(2) Sections 5(2) to 5(5) apply to a restricted low-paid role as they apply to a care role.

(3) The Secretary of State may make grants, on terms that may differ by sector, for the employment and training of a person in a restricted low-paid role who meets the conditions in section 5(6).

(4) A grant under subsection (3) may be paid for no more than three years in respect of any post and must reduce each year.

(5) The Secretary of State must publish, each year, the occupations designated, the number of certificates issued for those occupations, the number of grants paid, and the number of domestic hires supported.

(6) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

7 Sponsor proportionality and genuineness

(1) A sponsor may not assign a certificate of sponsorship unless—

(a) the role is genuine and the duties correspond to the occupation code claimed,

(b) the number of workers sponsored by that sponsor does not exceed the ratio to the sponsor's existing UK payroll headcount set by regulations,

(c) the sponsor's recent turnover meets the minimum per sponsored post set by regulations,

(d) the sponsor has held a sponsor licence for at least twelve months and has filed accounts or tax returns covering that period, and

(e) the sponsor has not received a civil penalty for illegal working in the previous three years.

(2) A role is not genuine for the purpose of subsection (1)(a) if the majority of the duties are those of a retail, personal-service, or elementary occupation while the certificate claims a higher-skilled code.

(3) Breach of subsection (1) is a ground for immediate suspension of the sponsor licence. If the breach is not remedied within 28 days the Secretary of State must revoke the licence.

(4) A second civil penalty for illegal working within three years is a ground for mandatory revocation of the sponsor licence.

(5) The Secretary of State must publish, each quarter, the number of certificates assigned, broken down by sector and by sponsor size band.

(6) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

8 Restriction on change of employment

(1) A person who holds leave granted on the basis of a certificate of sponsorship may not—

(a) take up employment with a different sponsor, or

(b) take up employment in a different occupation code, unless the Secretary of State grants a variation of leave and the new employment independently satisfies every condition of this Act that would apply to a fresh grant of leave.

(2) Leave granted under this Act ceases to be valid for employment that does not comply with subsection (1).

(3) Time spent in employment that does not comply with subsection (1) does not count towards any period required by this Act.

(4) This section applies to a restricted low-paid role designated under section 6.

9 Cap

(1) The Secretary of State must, before the start of each year, set by regulations a maximum number of work visas to be granted in that year.

(2) The regulations are subject to the affirmative procedure.

(3) No visa may be granted once the maximum is reached.

10 Existing applications

This Act applies to an application made on or after the day it comes into force. Leave already granted continues until it expires and may not be extended for a dependant who would be ineligible under section 2.

11 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Workplace Sponsorship (Limitation) Act 2026.

Student Route (Limitation and Overstay) Bill

A Bill to restrict dependants on student visas, to end the Graduate route, to make sponsoring institutions liable for non-compliance, and to enforce departure at the end of leave.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 No dependants

(1) A person granted entry clearance or leave as a student may not be accompanied by, or later joined by, a dependant.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply where—

(a) the course is a funded doctorate of at least three years,

(b) the sponsor's funds cover the household without recourse to public funds, and

(c) the sponsor has not claimed public funds in the previous three years.

(3) "Dependant" means a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner, and a child under 18.

(4) Birth in the United Kingdom confers no right to remain, and no citizenship, beyond the parent's student leave.

2 Graduate route abolished

(1) The Graduate route is closed to new applications from the day this Act comes into force.

(2) A person who completes a course must, before their student leave expires, either—

(a) leave the United Kingdom, or

(b) be granted a skilled-worker visa under the Workplace Sponsorship (Limitation) Act 2026.

(3) A person may not switch from student leave, or from leave as a former student, onto a family, private-life, or asylum route in order to remain, unless a protection claim was made before the course ended and is later granted.

3 Sponsor liability

(1) A sponsoring institution must report to the Secretary of State, within ten days, a student who does not enrol, ceases to attend, or fails to complete.

(2) If, in a year, more than 5 per cent of an institution's sponsored students overstay, claim asylum after the course has ended, or are not recorded as having left within 30 days of expiry, the Secretary of State must suspend its sponsor licence.

(3) A licence suspended under subsection (2) may be restored only after two clean years.

4 Exit and overstay

(1) The Secretary of State must match entry and exit records for every student visa.

(2) A person who remains after their leave expires—

(a) commits an offence of overstaying,

(b) is subject to a re-entry ban of one year if the overstay is under 90 days, two years if under six months, and ten years thereafter, and

(c) may not regularise their stay by a later application made from inside the United Kingdom.

(3) An employer who takes on a person he knows, or ought to know, has overstayed student leave commits an offence.

5 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Student Route (Limitation and Overstay) Act 2026.

Migrant Removal Bill

A Bill to limit appeals against removal, to require detention where removal is in prospect, and to weight serious offending against the right to family life.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 One appeal

(1) A decision to remove a person may be appealed once, to the First-tier Tribunal, and only on the ground that removal would breach the Human Rights Act 1998 or the Refugee Convention.

(2) The Tribunal must decide the appeal within twelve weeks, unless it certifies that justice cannot be done in that time.

(3) Further appeal is on a point of law only, and does not by itself suspend removal unless the court so orders.

2 Detention

(1) Where removal is realistically in prospect, the Secretary of State must detain the person unless detention would breach Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

(2) Detention beyond 28 days must be reviewed by the First-tier Tribunal.

(3) Detention may continue only while a decision or removal remains realistic.

3 Serious offending

(1) A sentence for murder, rape, a sexual offence against a child, or an offence of violence attracting a sentence of twelve months or more creates a presumption that removal is proportionate under Article 8.

(2) The presumption is displaced only by clear evidence of a real risk of treatment contrary to Article 3, or by a dependent child who would otherwise be left without care and for whom no other care is available.

(3) A late claim of risk that could have been made earlier weighs against the claimant.

4 Absolute Convention rights claims

(1) A claim that removal would breach an absolute Convention right must be supported by evidence that is capable of being tested.

(2) Where the claim rests on a protected characteristic or belief (including sexual orientation or religious conversion) that was not raised at the first reasonable opportunity, the decision-maker must treat the delay as reducing the weight of the claim unless the claimant shows good reason for the delay.

(3) The Secretary of State may require the claimant to undertake an objective assessment relevant to the claim (including, where the claim is of religious conversion, a test of knowledge of the relevant teachings and practice).

(4) In this section “absolute Convention right” means a right under Article 2, 3, 4 or 7 of the Convention, or any other right that admits of no limitation or derogation.

(5) The Secretary of State must maintain arrangements with one or more third countries that have given written assurances, accepted by a UK court, that a person removed there will not be subjected to treatment contrary to an absolute Convention right.

(6) Where such an arrangement is in force, removal to that third country discharges the United Kingdom’s obligation under the relevant absolute Convention right in respect of the person, provided the assurances remain effective.

(7) The existence of an arrangement under subsection (5) does not prevent removal to the country of origin if that removal would not itself breach an absolute Convention right.

5 Residual Status where removal is barred

(1) Where removal is barred solely because it would breach an absolute Convention right, the Secretary of State may grant the person a residual status.

(2) A person with residual status—

(a) is under a continuing duty to take all reasonable steps to leave the United Kingdom, including cooperation with any third-country arrangement under section 4,

(b) has no right to work, no right to social housing, and no entitlement to mainstream benefits,

(c) may receive only such support as is necessary to avoid a breach of an absolute Convention right while removal remains impossible, and

(d) may be made subject to reporting, residence and electronic-monitoring conditions.

(3) Residual status ends on removal, on voluntary departure, or when the absolute-rights bar ceases.

(4) Breach of the duty in subsection (2)(a) or of a condition in subsection (2)(d) is a ground for detention under section 2 while removal remains realistic.

6 Sham relationships and illegal working

(1) An application for entry clearance, permission to enter or permission to stay may be refused where it is more likely than not that the applicant is or has been party to a marriage or civil partnership entered for the purpose of circumventing immigration control.

(2) A second civil penalty for illegal working within three years is a ground for mandatory revocation of any sponsor licence held by the employer.

(3) The Secretary of State may by regulations raise the level of civil penalties for illegal working and require real-time matching of payroll data to sponsored workers.

(4) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

7 Enforcement powers

(1) The Secretary of State must establish a system for the near-real-time matching of HMRC payroll data to records of sponsored workers.

(2) A mismatch that indicates a breach of sponsor duties is a ground for immediate suspension of the sponsor licence pending investigation.

(3) An immigration officer may enter premises occupied by a licensed sponsor, on notice or under warrant, to verify that sponsored workers are performing the duties stated in their certificates of sponsorship.

(4) The Secretary of State must publish, each quarter, the number of compliance visits, licence suspensions, licence revocations, and civil penalties imposed, broken down by sector.

(5) Where a person is detained under section 2, an immigration officer may require the person to surrender travel documents and electronic devices reasonably believed to contain evidence relevant to removal.

(6) Failure to comply with a requirement under subsection (5) is a ground for continued detention while removal remains realistic.

8 Readmission

(1) The Secretary of State must seek readmission arrangements with states whose nationals are to be removed.

(2) Where a state does not take back its own nationals, the Secretary of State may suspend visa issuance to nationals of that state.

9 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Migrant Removal Act 2026.

Immigration Statistics Bill

A Bill to require the publication of immigration statistics, including overstaying, and to name an official responsible for them.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Quarterly report

(1) The Secretary of State must, within two months of the end of each quarter, publish a report containing—

(a) visas issued and refused, by route and by nationality,

(b) grants and refusals of settlement and citizenship, by nationality,

(c) asylum claims, grants, refusals and withdrawals, by nationality,

(d) detected illegal entry, by route and nationality,

(e) returns, by nationality and by whether the return was enforced or voluntary,

(f) the number of visas expiring in the quarter for which no exit was recorded, by route and nationality.

(2) Counts below ten may be suppressed. No person may be identifiable.

2 Overstay

(1) The Secretary of State must match entry and exit records and publish the result under section 1(1)(f).

(2) A senior civil servant must be designated as responsible for the match and for the estimate of persons in the United Kingdom without leave.

(3) If a figure cannot be produced, the report must say why, and what will be done before the next quarter.

3 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Immigration Statistics Act 2026.

Civic Uniformity

Religious and Cultural Exemptions Restriction Bill

A Bill to provide that a religious or cultural reason is not a defence to a rule of general application, to repeal specified religious exemptions, and to prohibit the creation of new ones except by Act of Parliament.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Principle

(1) A rule of criminal law, animal welfare, public order or education applies to every person.

(2) A religious or cultural belief is not a defence to such a rule, and is not a ground for disapplying it.

(3) An exemption from such a rule is lawful only if it is made by Act of Parliament and rests on a fact a court can test, including work, medical necessity, or lawful authority.

(4) Nothing in this Act restricts belief, worship, or expression that does not breach a rule of general application.

2 Knives

(1) Section 139(5)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (religious reasons) is repealed.

(2) The corresponding religious defence in the Offensive Weapons Act 2019, and in any provision about school premises, is repealed.

(3) Section 139(5)(c) of the 1988 Act (national costume) is repealed.

3 Slaughter

(1) An animal must be stunned before slaughter by a method that causes irreversible loss of consciousness, and must remain unconscious until death.

(2) A stun is irreversible only if the animal cannot recover consciousness before death. A reversible electrical or gas stun, a stun that is partial, and a stun from which recovery is possible if bleeding is delayed, do not comply.

(3) The exception for slaughter in accordance with religious rites is repealed, including Schedule 3 to the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 and Article 4(4) of assimilated Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009, so far as it permits slaughter without prior irreversible stunning.

(4) The Welsh Ministers, the Scottish Ministers and the Northern Ireland Department must make equivalent provision within six months.

4 Schools

(1) A pupil at a state school may not wear a conspicuous religious symbol or garment.

(2) "Conspicuous" means readily visible as a mark of religious affiliation, including a headscarf, turban, kippah or large cross.

(3) A discreet personal item is not conspicuous.

(4) This section does not apply to a teacher's private worship outside school hours, or to a faith school in respect of its own founding religion.

5 Face coverings orders

(1) A public spaces protection order, byelaw or direction under section 60AA of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 may not exempt a person from removing a face covering on religious or cultural grounds.

(2) A school or court rule requiring the face to be visible is not unlawful because it conflicts with a religious practice.

(3) A medical inability to comply remains a defence. Belief is not.

(4) Nothing in this Act creates a general prohibition on covering the face in a place to which the public has access.

6 No new exemptions

(1) A minister, council or other public authority may not grant, or provide in a statutory instrument, an exemption from a rule of general application on religious or cultural grounds.

(2) Such an exemption may be created only by Act of Parliament.

(3) This Act applies notwithstanding the Equality Act 2010 and section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

7 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the General Application of the Law Act 2026.

Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Bill

A Bill to require public authorities to decide on the basis of merit, and to limit the effect of the public sector equality duty.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Duty of merit

(1) Where a public authority is choosing among candidates for appointment, promotion, or the award of a contract, grant, or other benefit, it must select the candidate who best meets the objective criteria relevant to the role or decision.

(2) Objective criteria are those that can be stated in advance, measured, and applied consistently to every candidate.

(3) A protected characteristic may be treated as an objective criterion under subsection (1) only where the Equality Act 2010 expressly permits it to be treated as a genuine occupational requirement for that role.

(4) A public authority may not depart from subsection (1) in order to advance equality of outcome, to reduce a disparity, or to meet a target based on a protected characteristic, unless primary legislation expressly so provides.

(5) Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 does not authorise a departure from subsection (1).

2 Regulations, guidance and policies

(1) A public authority must not, in regulations, guidance, codes of practice or policies, treat a protected characteristic as a relevant factor in a decision unless primary legislation expressly so provides.

(2) Subsection (1) does not prevent a public authority from applying a genuine occupational requirement that the Equality Act 2010 expressly permits.

2 Amendment of the public sector equality duty

(1) Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1), after "due regard to the need to" insert ", so far as is consistent with the duty of merit in section 149A,".

(3) After section 149 insert—

"149A Duty of merit

(1) A public authority must, when exercising its functions, comply with the duty of merit set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Act 2026.

(2) Nothing in section 149 requires or authorises a public authority to do anything that would breach the duty of merit."

3 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) It comes into force on the day two months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Act 2026.

Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Bill

A Bill to prohibit marriage between first cousins, to restrict recognition of such marriages contracted abroad, and for connected purposes.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Prohibited degrees

(1) The Marriage Act 1949 is amended so that a marriage between first cousins is void.

(2) "First cousins" means the children of siblings, including half-siblings.

(3) A marriage solemnised before this Act comes into force is not void by reason only of this section.

2 Marriages abroad

(1) A first-cousin marriage contracted outside the United Kingdom after this section comes into force is not recognised if either party was domiciled, or habitually resident, in the United Kingdom at the time of the marriage.

(2) Subsection (1) applies to a marriage contracted before that day only where recognition is sought for an immigration purpose after that day.

3 Immigration

A marriage which is void under section 1, or not recognised under section 2, is not a marriage for the purposes of entry clearance, leave to remain, or sponsorship.

4 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales.

(2) Sections 2 and 3 extend also to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(3) It comes into force on the day three months after it is passed.

(4) It may be cited as the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act 2026.

Designated Areas Bill

A Bill to provide for compulsory early English education and housing measures in areas of concentrated recent migration, and for connected purposes.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Designation

(1) The Secretary of State must each year designate a neighbourhood as an designated area if—

(a) more than 40 per cent of residents lack indefinite leave to remain, or were granted it within the previous five years, and

(b) at least two of the following are met—

(i) unemployment above twice the national rate,

(ii) the share of adults without a level 2 qualification above twice the national rate,

(iii) median household income below 60 per cent of the national median,

(iv) the rate of recorded crime above twice the national rate.

(2) Citizenship, parental birthplace, nationality and religion are not criteria.

(3) A designation lasts one year and may be renewed.

2 Early English

(1) A child aged between one and five who lives in a designated area must attend 25 hours a week of approved early education.

(2) That education must be conducted in English and must include the ordinary civic calendar of the United Kingdom.

(3) A parent who, without reasonable excuse, refuses a place loses child benefit for that child while the refusal continues.

(4) Reasonable excuse means illness. It does not include a preference for another language or a religious objection to the calendar.

3 Housing

(1) Where an area has been designated for five consecutive years, the local housing authority must reduce the share of family social housing in it to 40 per cent within five further years, by sale, conversion or ending of tenancies as they fall in.

(2) A new social tenancy in a designated area may not be granted to a household that does not meet the residence test in section 1(1)(a), unless the household already lives in the area and is being moved within it.

(3) No person is evicted on the ground of immigration status alone.

4 Crime

A court sentencing for an offence committed in a designated area may treat that fact as an aggravating factor. It may not impose a sentence beyond the statutory maximum.

5 Limitation

This Act applies notwithstanding the Equality Act 2010. It does not authorise a distinction on grounds of race, religion or national origins.

6 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales.

(2) It comes into force on the day three months after it is passed.

(3) It may be cited as the Designated Areas Act 2026.