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Ten MigrationWatch achievements

Here is a list of ten key points which Migrationwatch has contributed to the debate on immigration and asylum: Many were initially denied by the government but we have subsequently been proved correct.

1. Impact on population growth Migrationwatch were first to point out that the Government had failed to include the children of immigrants when they claimed that immigration accounted for only just over half of expected population growth. After a reference to the Statistics Commission, we obliged the Government to admit that 83% of projected population growth is a result of immigration. In other words immigration will add nearly 6 million, or 6 times the population of Birmingham, to the population of the UK in the next 30 years.

2. Impact on housing We were also first to point out that, over the next twenty years, one new household in three would be the result of immigration. In other words we would need to build roughly 1.5 million homes, purely for immigrants, in the next two decades. Official figures, issued in February 2006, now confirm this - although the impact of immigration is deliberately obscured.

3. The £2.5bn "contribution" to the budget in 1999/2000 We have examined the government calculation and a subsequent revision by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). We have found that the outcome turns entirely on how you attribute the cost of about 3/4 million children who belong to "mixed" households - where one parent was born in Britain and the other overseas. The government and IPPR place the whole cost on the native population to get their result. If you take the more logical course of splitting this cost 50/50, the result is that immigrants cost the budget £100 - £200 million in 1999/2000.

4. Immigration from Eastern Europe A Home Office sponsored paper in April 2003 claimed that the maximum net migration from the new Eastern European members of the EU would be 5,000 - 13,000 a year. Migrationwatch pointed out in a report in August 2003 that this calculation was "divorced from reality ...and almost worthless". We said that even 40,000 would be a cautious estimate. Two and a half years after their accession, over 500,000 East Europeans had registered for work in Britain. Self employed and short term workers are not covered by this Register. We do not know how many others have not registered, nor how many have since left but it is quite clear that the Government estimate was hopelessly wrong.

5. Illegal immigrants Having denied for years that it was possible to make an estimate, the Government eventually admitted in June 2005 that there could be up to 1/2 million illegal

immigrants in Britain. Migrationwatch pointed out that the estimate was four years out of date and that 3/4 million would be a more accurate figure. The Government have not denied this.

6. The pensions argument For years, the Home Office claimed that the immigration was needed to help pay our pensions. We have shown that any such effect is only temporary and has the disadvantage of adding very significantly to our population. The Turner Commission on Pensions agreed. They dismissed this argument in their interim report and did not even bother to mention it in their final report in December 2005. The Home Office have now dropped it.

7. "White Flight" Migrationwatch were the first to point to the flow of people from inner-city areas in London, the West Midlands and North of England. We were also able to demonstrate a correlation between the outflow and the ethnicity of the Boroughs which people were leaving.

8. Failed asylum seekers Migrationwatch was first to calculate that the number of failed asylum seekers still in Britain was over 1/4 million. The Government denied it until a National Audit Office report in July 2005 confirmed that the potential pool of failed asylum seekers was between 155,000 and 283,500 as at the end of May 2004. In July 2006, the government admitted that they had some 450,000 files unresolved. Even these numbers do not include dependants (for whom 20% should be added). Some files will be duplicates and some claimants will have left (or died). It is nevertheless clear that the Migrationwatch estimate was a cautious one. We were also the first to point out that only one in four failed asylum seekers is actually removed.

9. The economic arguments The government claim that immigrants add £4 billion to production is very misleading as it does not take account of their addition to the population. Allowing for this brings the benefit to the host population down to 0.01% of GDP - or about 4 pence a week for the host community each year. Their other claim is that immigration contributes 10-15% of "trend growth" (trend growth is 2.5% a year so this claim amounts to 0.25-0.375% of GDP). Allowing for the extra population, this works out at an annual benefit of about 12 pence per head a week.

We have also demonstrated that the government's other economic arguments for immigration rely on distorted statistics. Their claim that migrants make up 8% of the working population but contribute 10% of GDP is misleading. In fact they comprise 10% of the working age population; the 8% are those who are actually working so their 10% contribution to production is the same as their proportion of the working age population. The independent watchdog, the Statistics Commission has confirmed our point. The government have since revised their claim to say that immigrants comprise 10.5% of the adult population and produce 11% of GDP. Although that is now broadly correct it takes no account of dependent children; when they are included the result is that migrants contribute slightly less to GDP than their population share. Of course, not all contributions are capable of measurement (nor are disbenefits such as greater congestion) but, where measurement is possible, the impact is broadly neutral. We just become a more crowded island.

10. HIV, TB etc In a report dated 18 June 2003, Migrationwatch drew attention to the implications of current immigration policy for the spread of HIV / Aids, Hepatitis B and TB. In July 2004 we called for HIV screening of visitors. In December we pointed out that 90% of newly diagnosed heterosexual infection were thought to have been acquired overseas, mostly in Africa. The Government took no action on HIV but have now introduced, and subsequently extended, a pilot scheme of TB screening for applicants from high incidence countries.

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