

## The migration issue is not going away

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You would have thought ministers would have learned that they need to take considerable care when talking about migration. Apparently that is not true. They now seem to be promoting the line that it is fair to be concerned about migration so long as you don't riot.

Why don't they instead suggest it's not fair to be concerned about migration? In fact, it's wholly inappropriate?

After all, well over 90% of all migrants to the UK come via official routes and are legally welcomed.

The vast majority of those applying for refugee status also get it, because the claim is justified.

The small boat traffic is declining.

And migrants can't claim housing or benefits, at least when they arrive. The track record is that they instead contribute significantly to our economy, to our tax revenues and public services.

The story of migration is positive, and beneficial to all in the UK.

So why aren't ministers out there telling it as it really is?

Why aren't they, in the process, reassuring millions of people that they are welcome and safe here? There is no sign that they are doing that right now.

Could the answer be obvious? Is it that Labour is just as keen as the Tories for there to be a narrative that migrants are to blame for what is wrong with the country, and that the government is not? Is Labour just as keen as the Tories to have this believed by people? Do they also want to pass the buck?

The rhetoric of Labour in office is too new to be sure about this, as yet. But the portents

are not good. Labour is not making clear its belief in migration as a positive contributor to UK society as clearly as I think it should. It is already playing too strongly to unfounded prejudices. I am worried by them. I am also worried for those people who might be victimised as a result. This issue is not going away.