

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 5:15 pm

The UK needs a migration policy that serves the needs of the country, everyone in it, and people who want to come here. Is that too much to ask for? Or would our politicians prefer to dig-whistle instead?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GojJ6h-L3zU?si=EWqISFdSF7yPblsD>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=uuq2w-18ace5e-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&font=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

We need a realistic migration policy in the UK, and we are a very long way from having it. What is more, what Labour has just announced is undoubtedly going to make things worse.

Let's stand back a bit and think about migration in a rational, sensible, sane, organised, economic and social fashion, because that is not what our politicians seem willing to do.

First of all, let's just look at the data that exists on migration, which is being used by so many of those politicians to fuel their own hype, to promote their own cause, and to create distress in society, wholly unnecessarily.

We are seeing more migration into the UK at present. This is an undoubted fact.

A tiny proportion of the whole number of people arriving in the UK, maybe 5% or so, arrive on those small boats, which the television channels seem so keen to put on our screens at present. In practice, they are a tiny part of the migration issue.

The reason why we have so much more migration at present is because, quite reasonably, the UK government put in place two schemes that allow large numbers of people to arrive in the UK, and have 📍 done so since 2020.

One is the scheme with regard to Ukrainians who are seeking to come here because this is a safe country, and their own is not.

And the other is the scheme put in place for the people from Hong Kong who need to leave that country because of the threat they live under from the Chinese Republic, which is destroying democracy, and freedom, and human rights in Hong Kong.

Those two issues, Ukraine and Hong Kong, have fueled the vast majority of the increase in migration into the UK. Well, that fact plus the enormous success of UK universities in selling their courses to overseas students.

These are the reasons why we have more migration in the UK. Small boats hardly come into it, and yet they are being used promote fear about the creation of inequality and distress in this country when in practice that is very hard to evidence in most places in the UK as a whole, and in very many parts of the country, frankly we need more migrants, as Scotland openly acknowledges.

So we are living in a world where there is distorted data, and what is more, that data is almost certainly unreliable. We might know about the number of people coming into the UK. We are not nearly so good about knowing about the number of people who leave the UK, including people who are leaving to the EU and UK people - that is UK passport holders - leaving to live elsewhere, and of course those who came in as migrants and who leave, but who don't necessarily need to declare the fact.

So, the data that we are looking at is bad. And until we actually have some honesty about this data and we break the figures down to show why we had such a large change in 2020, which wasn't all down to the consequences of Brexit, although some of it was, then we can't have an informed debate on this issue in the UK. We need to have that data because we need to take the heat out of this issue, even though that is not what our politicians want, because they love that heat, because they think they can compete on this issue which does not require them to actually think very much, because it's all about visceral hatred.

Then we need to talk about the consequences of a failure to have sufficient people coming into the UK. We have some real problems in the UK, and we need to consider how to address those as part of a migration policy.

Take, for example, the problems that we have in social care. We have a social care crisis in the UK.

We have an NHS crisis as a consequence of having a social care crisis, because the NHS is not able to discharge people sufficiently quickly from hospitals these days precisely because there isn't the social care available for the people to be looked after when they no longer need hospital care, but cannot as yet be released back to their homes because they, for example, just cannot look after themselves, or get to the toilet without assistance. And that is what social care helps them with.

But, right now, we have too few social care facilities in the UK, and we have too few people available to work in social care homes. There are 131,000 vacancies in social care at the time that we're making this video. That is some indication of the shortage of available skills that exists in this sector, but despite that, there are low wages. That is because this is traditionally female labour, and traditional female labour has always been underpriced in the UK, and that remains the case, discriminatory as it is, and the government is doing nothing to correct that.

There is also massive underfunding of social care. Very large numbers of people who are in social care are at least partly funded by local authorities in the UK, and although the government is saying that it will not now let social care facilities hire people from overseas, it is doing nothing to increase the wages in the sector by providing additional funding to ensure that those higher wages that people who are normally resident in the UK want, can be paid to provide the services that people need.

In other words, the government is not joining up its thinking.

It's punishing social care.

It's going to punish the people who need social care.

It's going to make the reform of the NHS very much harder.

It's going to make waiting lists longer, and all of that because it won't provide money for people working in social care, and nor will it train them in this country.

And this problem is only going to get worse. The demographics of this country guarantee that the amount of social care that we will need is going to rise.

At present, there is a dependency ratio, that is, the ratio of people over the age of 65 to the number of people aged between 16 and 65, of around 30. That means there are 30 people of retirement age for every 100 people who are of working age, but that figure is going to rise. It's predicted to rise to at least 35 by 2045. And it could go higher still.

The point is there is, in this case, a disaster in the making in social care, because if we remove the source of labour for social care, we not only make it harder to secure it, but

we also basically bankrupt local authorities.

We guarantee that people will be left without care.

We will create longer backlogs inside the NHS.

We will therefore deny people the healthcare they need.

Everything goes wrong if we don't have a joined-up policy for migration. And migration is the thing that has kept this equation going to date. How the government now thinks the equation will work without inward migration, I don't know. They're living in cloud-cuckoo land, because they think it will.

And there's another area where they're also living in cloud-cuckoo land, and that's with regard to universities. Universities have, in response to government targets and incentives, massively expanded their offering of postgraduate courses, in particular, to attract overseas students to the UK.

That programme has been enormously successful.

It has subsidised the cost of UK students going to university, because, on average, there is a loss of £2,500 per year per undergraduate student in a UK university if they are paying UK based tuition fees, but that is made up for by the fees paid by overseas students who pay over the odds for their courses and have been willing to do so. But, the government wishes to cut the number of overseas students coming to the UK by attaching significantly more onerous conditions to their visas, and as a consequence, the number of those students is collapsing.

It is literally tumbling right now as we record. I suspect that there will be many fewer overseas students starting courses in September and October, this coming year, 2025, than there were even last year, and massively fewer than in 2023.

The whole of the university sector is at risk as a consequence, because some universities are utterly dependent upon this income to survive and have geared their whole finances around it. As a consequence, we are going to see some universities fail. That is now beyond any doubt at all. Unless the government changes its strategy, universities will go bust.

The consequences for those who work for them will be enormous.

The consequence for the students who are at them will be enormous because they may not be able to finish their courses. There is, at present, no plan in place to ensure that they will be able to get transferred to other universities.

And the consequences for the towns and cities that host these universities is catastrophic.

Round, then, this is a disastrous policy led by government purely to tackle the hype around student migration figures, which is wholly unnecessary because as a matter of fact, the vast majority of students do go back to their home countries once they've finished their courses, and if they stay, it's only to add value to our economy whilst they're being trained.

And it's not just those two sectors that are suffering, of course. Others are as well. We have a shortage of skilled labour in this country, but a great deal of the labour that we are short of is not graduate labour. We are short of builders. We are short of all forms of artisan worker. Traditionally, the demand for these skills has been met by migrants.

It was the Irish who built so many of our houses in the post-war boom.

It was Irish navvies who built our railways, and even our canals before that.

It has always been the migrant who's done that sort of heavy lifting labour, but which is highly skilled, and which we are not training people to do in the UK at present. We have far too few skilled places available to train the number of people that we need to do these jobs.

We have the same problem in the health service. It is not everybody who is a graduate in the health service but, nonetheless, who can undertake useful and valuable jobs within it.

And yet what we hear the government saying is that unless somebody has at least a graduate level skill, they won't get a visa to come into the UK.

It is like we are trying to shoot ourselves in the foot with regard to creating a skill shortage, which is going to undermine every aspect of the government's plan for growth, as well as to improve public services, and they're doing it nonetheless. The focus on graduates within the migration policy that the government is promoting is far too narrow.

As a consequence, we are looking as though we are heading for what I might describe as a coordinated failure.

It's not coordinated in the sense that the government is planning it. It's happening because the government is failing to coordinate its planning around all those areas where failure might happen.

And that is with regard to data, with regard to care, with regard to education, with regard to skills shortages, with regard to infrastructure and with regard to health. Every one of these essential services is at risk because we are planning to reduce the number of migrants into the UK, and make the UK into what Theresa May described as a hostile environment for migrants already here, which is one of the most toxic, noxious and disgusting phrases ever created by a politician. But that's what we're going to get

unless the government rethinks its migration policy.

We are heading for economic meltdown because the government is joining the migrant bandwagon.

We require, as a consequence, a coordinated policy for migration. But it's more than that. It's a coordinated policy for those sectors which have relied upon migrants to ensure that they function.

We need more money for care in the UK, because if we don't have more money for care in the UK, there will be no substitution of UK-based workers for migrant based workers. It's as simple and straightforward as that.

We need the training for people to work in this sector and the others that I've mentioned. All those artisanal skills: brick laying, building, carpentry, electricians, plumbing, and all those other things that have always been done by migrant workers.

We need to properly fund our universities so that they cannot fail, and we need to exclude students from migrant figures because they are only here temporarily, and whilst they are here, they massively boost the export sales of this country by bringing foreign currency into it, which is exactly the same as selling goods and services to their countries themselves.

And of course, we need a proper plan for the NHS.

But as it is, none of those things are in place at the moment. The missing link that somehow makes all those systems work is migrant workers. Those workers literally keep our economy going. We could do without them, but only if we put in place a long-term plan to replace them, and we don't put in place short-term measures to repel them from our shores, which is what the government is doing.

If we want to substitute UK workers in these sectors for migrant workers, then we have to plan for it, and the transition will take 10 or more years, in all likelihood, but it could be done. But it can't be done without funding. And it can't be done without planning. And it can't be done without politicians who will talk sense about the reality of what our migrant labour issues are in this country.

Unless they do that, we are in deep trouble. Without an integrated plan for migration, this country is going to be, well, frankly, left high and dry without the labour force it needs, and if that's what Labour wants - and the paradox is in its name - then I am astonished.