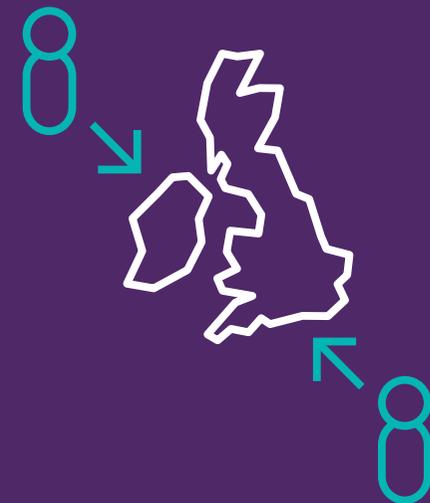


The facts & the fixes:

Immigration

The way we talk about immigration has scapegoated and sometimes dehumanised people. Decades of anti-immigration narrative has resulted in the Windrush generation. It divides working class communities and diverts attention from the real causes of inequality.



What can we do to change attitudes towards immigration?

Anti-immigration narratives have empowered racists and led to a rise in hate crimes in the UK. We need to acknowledge that the UK has been enriched by immigration and emigration for centuries. While immigrants should not be reduced to a financial value, it is undeniable that migration is an inextricable part of our past, present and future.

1 — Change the narrative. Immigration must be depoliticised and we must end the divide between the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ immigrant, between the low and high skilled and, by extension, who is and isn’t allowed to stay. We must foster a better understanding of the long history of immigration and emigration to and from the UK. Politicians need to stop using language that demonises immigrants. In schools, children should be taught UK history in a way that contextualises the multicultural makeup of the UK today.

2 — Drop immigration targets. The government's proposed £30,000 migrant salary cap on immigration is an arbitrary cut-off point and not an accurate reflection of skilled labour, or the needs of the economy. The imposition of, and subsequent failure to meet, net immigration targets has reinforced the idea that immigration is bad for the UK.

3 — Maintain freedom of movement. EU migrants work in essential industries and keep our NHS and other public services running. Freedom of movement is a reciprocal right so not only can EU migrants live and work in the UK, UK migrants can live and work in the rest of Europe.

4 — Stronger employment protections. Exploitative employers take advantage of both British and migrant workers by offering poverty pay and precarious work. We need stronger employment protections and empowered trade unions to prevent exploitation.

5 — Invest in public services. Politicians have used housing scarcity and the NHS crisis to justify cutting immigration - but these are false narratives. The UK is the fifth largest economy in the world and there is no excuse for not providing the public services required to look after our population. Immigrants contribute more to the exchequer each year in net terms and deserve good public services as much as anyone. Austerity cuts and under-investment is a political choice.

6 — Tackle false reporting on immigration. Large parts of the UK media have misinformed the public about the extent and effects of immigration for a long time. The rise in hate crimes was no coincidence after an inflammatory focus on migration during the EU referendum. We urgently need a new regulator to demand proportionate corrections and assess whether the worst articles are incitement to racial hatred.

7 — Develop projects that build community cohesion. Areas of the UK with higher levels of longstanding immigration are generally pro-immigration. Encouraging people to work together breaks down barriers and builds community cohesion. Initiatives that include investments in community spaces and build on common values or smaller initiatives that bring together new parents, help foster strong cross-cultural relationships.

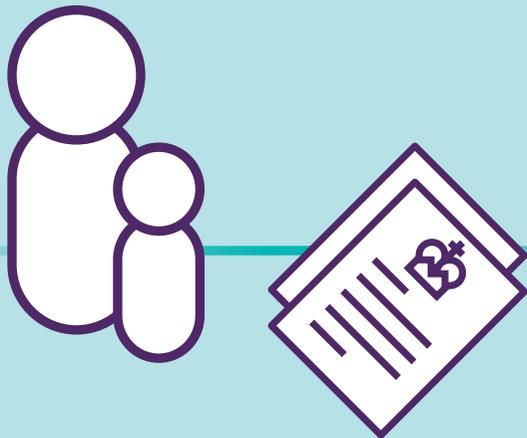
Foreign-born nationals make up 14.4% of the UK population (9.4 million people).¹ When surveyed, the British public regularly **believes that the number of immigrants is much higher than this.**



In European migrants paid around **£4.7 billion more in taxes** than they received in welfare benefits and public services (2016/17).² Only 29% of the public correctly think that this is the case.



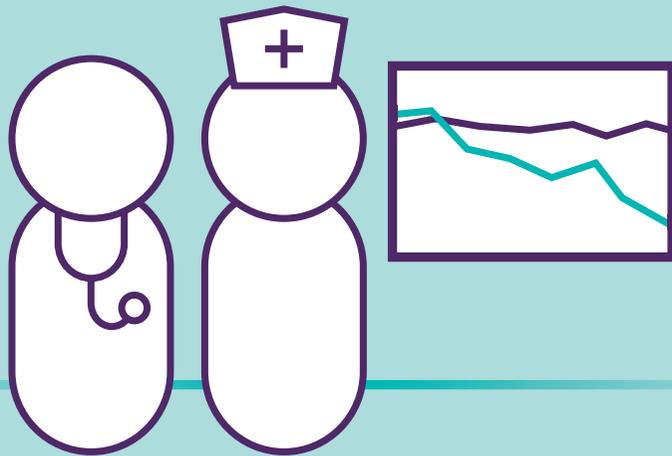
All the empirical work that has been done on the UK immigration shows very small labour market effects. In other words, immigration has next to no impact on levels of unemployment or wages.³



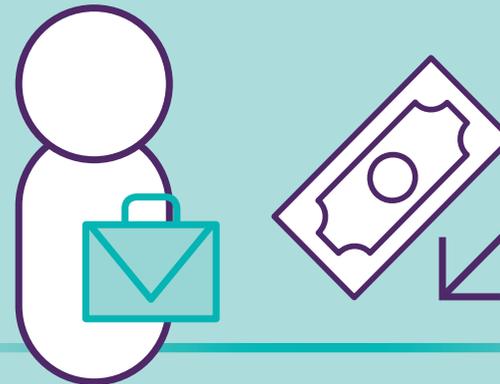
Proposed immigration salary thresholds risk exacerbating labour shortages in sectors such as social care which are heavily reliant on migrant labour and tend to have jobs that are lower paid.⁴



While levels of immigration have been largely steady since the referendum, **the number of EU migrants has been in sharp decline.** 1 in 20 employees in the NHS, for example, is an EU national while around 1 in 8 identify as non-British.



The financialisation of the economy, technological change and decreased union membership are to **blame for stagnant wages and poor job quality** while immigration has hardly any impact on under-cutting wages. Stronger labour laws would improve wages for all workers.



In 2018, **60%** of foreign-born 25 to 28 year olds were qualified to degree level or higher. The comparative figure for UK born 25 to 28 year olds was **40%**.



With the UK population getting increasingly older, **the economy will need greater numbers of migrant workers to maintain our labour supply.**⁶



Developing countries host 85% of the world's refugees. Despite being the fifth largest economy in the world, the UK **only granted asylum to 14,308 people** in the year ending June 2018.⁷



Anti-immigration commentators talk about 'culture' being the problem. Yet some people **racialise culture to 'the other'** and equate nostalgia about a great past with whiteness.⁸

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