

Helping migrants in the UK is a form of overseas aid

The UK has welcomed a large number of migrants in recent years. When considering our overseas aid budget, people should also put into the balance the large numbers of people from dangerous and low income countries we help by supporting them on arrival and then granting them rights to stay and to work. I have always thought the costs of housing and setting up the facilities for migrants should be properly attributed to the overseas aid budget. The international definition of official development assistance allows a country to include some money spent in the donor country helping people from a recipient country.

The EU once estimated that a migrant into the EU received the equivalent of 250,000 Euros in capital as they received a home, access to health care, education, transport and all the other public services provided free at the point of use for them or subsidised. There is no reason to suppose the UK current offer is below this indicative figure. Many migrants are housed in London and other locations where housing is dear. Whilst establishing their right to remain and to work the migrant receives board as well as lodging from the state. Once in work they receive top up benefits if their employment is at least in the first instance lower paid.

Given the number of people coming to the UK as refugees or migrants to live and work, there is a direct cash cost on the state to provide many more social homes, and additional school places and healthcare capacity.