

Illegal and legal migration

The government is currently concentrating on illegal migration with its eye catching and contentious promise by the Prime Minister to stop the boats that bring many of the illegal entrants to the UK. The Opposition parties oppose him strongly, demanding more safe routes for migrants and asylum seekers to come, and easier processes to allow people to enter more rapidly.

Most Conservatives believe the UK should provide refuge for some people fleeing violence or oppression elsewhere. This should be an offer as part of a wider offer by many richer countries to spread the responsibility and to provide geographical choice to those seeking a new home. Many of us also believe the UK has been offering too many economic migrants a home and a job here, seeking to perpetuate a model of growing the economy by recruiting plenty of lower paid labour from abroad. Instead we would prefer to see investment in machines, computing, training and higher standards to get more of the work done with fewer better paid people. We want more better paid and high quality jobs for people already living here, backed by the investment it takes to raise productivity and therefore wages.

The low pay model is not a great one for the people coming nor for the taxpayers who need to foot much of the bill for so called cheap labour. Paying people too little means state subsidy to provide them with housing, income top ups, health and education provision and a range of infrastructure and other public service provision. Last year we added 500,000 more people to our totals. To ensure they have a decent life that will take a lot of new housing, public sector facilities, roads, electricity and water capacity and a range of other capital intensive service provision. The EU some years ago suggested it took Euro 250,000 to provide for a migrant family or individual coming to the EU to provide all the facilities needed.