The Effects of Recent Changes to UK Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Policy on Poverty and Inequality: A Joint Follow-Up Inquiry by the APPG on Migration and the APPG on Poverty and Inequality

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Work on this Inquiry was carried out by The RAMP Project, who provide the secretariat for the APPG on Migration, and The Equality Trust, who provide the secretariat for the APPG on Poverty.

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Executive Summary

This joint follow-up inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Migration and Poverty and Inequality builds on our 2024 report examining the effects of immigration policy on poverty in the UK. Since that report, the policy landscape has changed substantially, with a new Government pursuing some of the most significant changes to the immigration and asylum system in recent decades as well as setting out commitments on child poverty, homelessness and social cohesion. This inquiry was launched to specifically examine the impact these new immigration policies are having, and are likely to have, on poverty and inequality, and to assess whether our previous recommendations remain fit for purpose.This report is concerned solely with the implications of the proposed reforms for poverty, inequality and the welfare of those most affected. The findings and recommendations should be read in that context.

Evidence suggests that, even though most adult migrants in the UK are not living in poverty, rates of poverty are generally higher for migrants than for the UK-born population. Moreover, some migrants are much more likely to face deep poverty and deprivation. Our 2024 inquiry found that migration experiences and immigration policies have a significant effect on risks and rates of poverty for some groups, and the evidence received by this follow-up inquiry indicates that the proposed reforms would, in several important respects, intensify these effects rather than address them. We received 41 submissions of written evidence from charities, legal practitioners, researchers, local authorities and service providers, and heard powerful oral testimony, including from people with direct lived experience of the changes under consideration. We are grateful to all those who took the time to share their expertise and experiences.

The evidence considered by this inquiry suggests that the Government's proposed reforms would increase the risk of poverty for some, including by:

- Extending the standard route to settlement from five to ten years, and tying continued progress towards settlement to earnings, English language proficiency and other contribution requirements that not all migrants are equally able to meet;
- Extending No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) conditions across longer settlement pathways, and in some cases beyond the point of settlement itself. The evidence suggests that linking settlement prospects to the use of public funds risks deterring families from accessing support to which they are legally entitled, with some already declining assistance for fear of being penalised through longer routes to settlement;
- Reducing refugee protection from five years to thirty months under a new "Core Protection" model, increasing uncertainty and replicating barriers to employment and housing already experienced by other groups on temporary status;
- Replacing the statutory duty to accommodate destitute asylum seekers with a discretionary power, and replacing existing Section 4 support with a more restrictive scheme, increasing the risk of homelessness and destitution. Particular concern was raised about proposals to withdraw accommodation and financial support from families with dependant children whose asylum claims have been refused, potentially leaving children destitute as part of immigration enforcement and raising significant concerns about child welfare;
- Raising the English language requirement for settlement without a corresponding increase in funded provision, risking the transformation of a measure designed to increase integration into a barrier to it; and

- Continuing to impose high and rising direct costs on families and individuals seeking to remain in the UK legally, including immigration and nationality fees that have increased considerably since our last report. These rising costs disproportionately affect larger families and lower-income households, widening existing inequalities between different groups of migrants.

The inquiry found little evidence that the key drivers of poverty among migrant households identified in the APPGs' 2024 report have been addressed. The Government should therefore consider the following measures to ensure that the proposed reforms do not deepen poverty and inequality.

- Removing the retrospective application of proposed earned settlement reforms to individuals already on an existing route to settlement;
- Reconsidering the proposed extension of the standard route to settlement, in line with our 2024 recommendation that no route to settlement should exceed five years;
- Publishing the full evidence base underpinning the Government's projected £10 billion in fiscal savings, so that this estimate can be properly scrutinised before further reforms are pursued;
- Reducing immigration and nationality fees, including the Immigration Health Surcharge, for lower-income households already resident in the UK, with fees reduced to cost price for children and young people on a path to settlement and citizenship;
- Ensuring that NRPF conditions are strictly time-limited, and that nobody on a path to settlement is subject to these conditions for more than five years, or at any point after settlement has been granted;
- Removing child-focused benefits, including Child Benefit and the Healthy Start scheme, from the definition of 'public funds' for the purposes of NRPF restrictions,
- Ensuring that the refugee move-on period reflects the time genuinely available in practice, including by ensuring all relevant documentation is issued at the same time as an immigration decision;
- Reaffirming, and where necessary reforming policy, so that all services for children and young people, including early years provision and post-16 Further Education, should be available regardless of immigration status;
- Simplifying and widening free access to English language provision, recognising that raising requirements without investing in the means to meet them risks harming rather than supporting integration ;and
- Publishing full impact assessments for the proposed reforms, including Child Rights Impact Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate, before the measures are implemented.

The level of engagement with this inquiry, including from those with direct lived experience of these policies, again demonstrates the value of engaging directly with those affected when developing immigration policy. This is further reflected in the Home Office's earned settlement consultation, which received over 200,000 responses, highlighting the significant public interest and concern surrounding these proposals. This report has only been able to examine a limited number of the proposed changes to the UK's immigration and asylum system, but the evidence received indicates that their cumulative impact on poverty is likely to be significant and wide-ranging. If the Government is to achieve its stated ambitions of reducing child poverty and ending homelessness, it must ensure that changes to immigration policy do not undermine progress towards these wider objectives. Immigration policy should be developed in a way that takes full account of its cross-government impacts, with the likely consequences for poverty, homelessness and integration properly assessed before reforms are implemented.

Several of the measures examined in this report remain subject to consultation or have yet to be implemented. The evidence received through this inquiry demonstrates the significant concern these proposals have generated among local authorities, civil society organisations, academics and people with lived experience. We therefore urge the Government to carefully consider the findings of this inquiry, assess the wider social and economic impacts of the proposed Home Office reforms, and amend the proposals where necessary to ensure they support, rather than undermine, the Government's broader policy objectives.

1. Background

In April 2024, the APPGs on Migration and Poverty (now Poverty and Inequality) conducted a joint inquiry on the **Effects of Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Policy on Poverty**. The inquiry received around 200 submissions of evidence from experts with lived and professional experience of poverty and the UK immigration system, including charities, researchers, legal practitioners, and individuals directly affected by immigration policy. Parliamentarians heard compelling evidence about the impacts of these policies on individuals, families and communities.

The inquiry found that while the majority of adult migrants in the UK are not living in poverty, poverty rates were generally higher among migrants than among the UK-born population, with migrants also more likely to experience severe poverty and deprivation. The report concluded that some immigration policies appear to create destitution by design and increase the risk of poverty by limiting access to suitable housing, restricting access to employment and the social security safety net, and imposing high immigration fees and other associated costs. Some policies appear to be deliberately designed to increase the risk of poverty as a means of discouraging migration to the UK or encouraging some people to leave, despite there being little evidence that such measures act as an effective deterrent. The report made a range of recommendations aimed at improving migrant access to work, secure housing and essential services, and reducing the risk of deep poverty. They are included in the appendix to this report.

Since the publication of the 2024 report, there has been a General Election and a change of Government, with the new Government setting out explicit priorities to reduce child poverty and homelessness. The Home Office also published an **Immigration White Paper**, and then further reforms and rule changes affecting a broad range of people across all immigration pathways, including individuals on work, study and family visas, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. These changes represent a significant shift in the UK's immigration and asylum policy, with implications for access to work, public funds, housing, and routes to settlement, as well as a fundamental change in the UK's approach to settlement and refugee protection.

At the same time, the rising cost of living has increased financial pressures. A House of Commons briefing found that high inflation caused overall real household incomes to fall in 2023/24, and although incomes rose slightly in 2024/25, the combined impact of persistently high prices and slow income growth has left many households struggling to afford essentials.[1]

Given this context, both APPGs decided to undertake a short, targeted follow-up inquiry to examine the impact these new policies were having, and were likely to have, on poverty and inequality in the UK, and to update the recommendations if necessary. The inquiry focused specifically on policy changes introduced in, or following, the White Paper, including subsequent immigration and asylum proposals and reforms announced thereafter.

While some of these changes have already been implemented, others remain subject to consultation or have been delayed. The inquiry therefore considered both implemented and proposed reforms, and their potential implications for poverty and inequality.

1 **Poverty in the UK: Statistics**, House of Commons Library, Brigid Francis-Devine, 6 May 2026.

A call for evidence was launched in March, inviting submissions of new and relevant evidence on the impacts of the recent policy changes from:

- Academics and researchers
- Charities, NGOs, and community organisations
- Legal and policy professionals
- Local authorities and service providers

The call for evidence closed in May. As part of the inquiry, the APPGs also held two oral evidence sessions, enabling experts to present evidence to parliamentarians, who were able to examine the practical implications of the reforms and consider evidence-based recommendations. The second session also included contributions from individuals with lived experience, who gave testimony on the financial, social, emotional and mental health impacts the changes had or were expected to have on their lives. The evidence gathered through written submissions and oral testimony informed the findings and recommendations set out in this report.

2. Context

2.1 Migration in the UK

Migration to and from the UK has changed markedly since this Committee's 2024 inquiry, with the period since then characterised by a decline in net migration from the record levels seen in 2022 and 2023.

According to the latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics, long-term international net migration for the year ending December 2025 stood at 171,000 — nearly half the revised figure of 331,000 for the year ending December 2024. This is the lowest level of net migration recorded since the introduction of the new post-Brexit immigration system in early 2021.[2] The principal driver of this decline was a 47% fall in the number of non-EU nationals arriving for work-related reasons, while overall emigration fell only slightly over the same period. Non-EU nationals continued to account for the largest share of immigration, representing 77% of total immigration at 627,000, with British nationals making up 14% and EU nationals 9%.[3] The fall in total immigration in the latest year may be partly attributable to immigration rule changes introduced in 2024 and 2025, such as the closure of the Health and Social Care Visa route and the closure for dependants on study visas. This represents a significant shift in composition from the period examined by the 2024 inquiry, when work-related migration, particularly into the health and social care sector, accounted for a substantially larger share of overall migration.

Over the same period, overall emigration fell only slightly, meaning that the closing of the gap between immigration and emigration has been driven predominantly by reduced inflows rather than increased outflows. The Migration Observatory has noted that net migration figures for 2026 and 2027 may continue to be affected by elevated emigration among workers and students who arrived during the 2022-23 peak, while cautioning that if this occurs it is likely to be temporary.[4]

Asylum and Refugees

The number of asylum applications has remained at historically elevated levels, even as it has begun to ease from recent peaks. In 2025, there were 82,100 applications for asylum in the UK, relating to 100,600 individuals — both figures slightly lower than in 2024, but still the third-highest annual totals on record.[5] Asylum seekers, refugees, and those arriving on refugee family reunion visas together made up around 16% of total immigration to the UK in 2025; if Hong Kong British National (Overseas) arrivals are included within the broader category of humanitarian routes, this rises to approximately 17% of total immigration.[6]

The Government has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of initial asylum decisions, which fell to 49,000 applications by the end of 2025.This is a reduction of 46% from the previous year and the smallest backlog since 2020.[7] However, this has been accompanied by a substantial increase in the backlog of asylum appeals, which almost doubled in 2025 to reach a record 80,000 applications, driven by a rapidly

2 Long-term International Migration, Provisional: Year Ending December 2025, Office for National Statistics, 21 May 2026.
3 Office for National Statistics, Long-term International Migration.
4 Net Migration to the UK, Migration Observatory, University of Oxford, 27 May 2026
5 Asylum Statistics, House of Commons Library, Esme Kirk-Wade, 29 May 2026
6 House of Commons Library, Asylum Statistics.
7 House of Commons Library, Asylum Statistics.

increasing number of asylum refusals.[8] This shift from a backlog concentrated at the initial decision stage to one increasingly concentrated at the appeal stage has significant implications for the overall length of time individuals spend in the asylum system and for the adequacy of asylum support during that period, which are considered further in the report.

2.2 Poverty in the UK

The impact of the proposed immigration reforms must be considered against a broader backdrop of persistent poverty, financial insecurity and cost-of-living pressures affecting households across the UK. Evidence suggests that, while some indicators have improved since the peak of the cost of living crisis, many households continue to experience difficulty meeting essential living costs, particularly those on lower incomes.

According to the Department for Work and Pensions, 10.9 million people (16%) were living in relative low income before housing costs and 13.4 million (20%) after housing costs in 2024/25. Among children, 3.0 million (21%) were in relative low income before housing costs and 4.0 million (27%) after housing costs. This represents an increase from 10.2 million people (15%) before housing costs and 12.9 million (19%) after housing costs in 2023/24.[9]

Beneath the overall poverty figures, evidence points to a growing concentration of severe hardship. In 2023/24, 6.8 million people were living in very deep poverty, measured as households with an income of less than 40% of the UK median — the highest number ever recorded, representing approximately one in ten of the entire UK population and the highest rate since 2018/19. Almost half of all people in poverty were living in very deep poverty, itself a record proportion.[10]

These figures sit within a broader context of sustained cost-of-living pressures. The annual rate of inflation peaked at 11.1% in October 2022 reaching a 41-year high before gradually easing, and while inflation has since fallen, the cumulative effect of several years of rising prices means households face a substantially higher cost of living than in 2021.[11] As of April 2026, 79% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living compared with the previous month, with 92% of those affected attributing this to rising food prices and 80% to rising fuel costs.[12] Low-income households have been disproportionately affected throughout this period, as they spend a higher proportion of their income on food and energy — the categories that rose most sharply between 2021 and 2024.

Although there were modest real income increases across the distribution in 2024/25, income growth for the lowest-income households remained below the median, with the bottom 10% seeing a real increase of only 1.7% compared to 4.6% at the median, illustrating the extent to which recovery from the cost of living crisis has been uneven and has left the most vulnerable households furthest behind.[13]

8 The UK's Asylum Backlog, Migration Observatory, University of Oxford, 22 April 2026

9 Households Below Average Income: An Analysis of the UK Income Distribution: FYE 1995 to FYE 2025, Department for Work and Pensions, 26 March 2026.

10 UK Poverty 2026: The Essential Guide to Understanding Poverty in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 27 January 2026.,

11 High Cost of Living: Impact on Households, House of Commons Library, Brigid Francis-Devine, 15 May 2026.

12 House of Commons Library, High Cost of Living: Impact on Households.

13 House of Commons Library, High Cost of Living: Impact on Households.

2.3 Migrant Poverty in the UK

In our 2024 report, we noted that there are significant limitations to the data available on migration and poverty in the UK. The Home Office does not currently publish figures on the number of individuals and households affected by NRPF restrictions, despite campaigners and researchers having raised concerns about these data gaps for at least a decade. National surveys do not routinely collect data on individuals' immigration status or immigration histories. For example, the Family Resources Survey (FRS), which is used to provide poverty estimates, does include data on country of origin, but not indicators of immigration or NRPF status. While the government has now committed to including such questions in the 2026/27 survey, the lack of an immigrant boost sample could still limit the usefulness of the FRS in providing more granular analysis in this area of research. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal quantitative data and relevant indicators included in many cohort studies, makes it difficult to track how asylum and immigration policies, routes, and experiences affect economic well-being and other outcomes of different demographic groups over time.

There are also significant data gaps in the way local authorities and devolved nations collect data on households affected by NRPF who are in need of support and trying to access their services. The NRPF Network's annual report for 2024/25 revealed that of the 91 local authorities that submitted data through the NRPF Connect database, there were 3,917 new referrals for families during that year, and 1,311 new families were taken on for support.[14] However, not all local authorities collect this type of data, and importantly, few capture data on how many households approach local authorities for support but are refused or turned away. While some evidence exists, providing important insights into the scale and nature of hardship experienced by NRPF-affected families, the full extent of unmet need at a national level remains unknown making it difficult for policymakers to assess the scale of hardship experienced or the effectiveness of existing support arrangements. The absence of robust and consistent data also limits the ability of policymakers to assess the impact of immigration, asylum and refugee policies on affected groups, making it more difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of reforms and identify unintended consequences.

What data does exist paints a deeply concerning picture. In 2023/24, approximately 3.1 million people born outside of the UK were living in poverty. This is roughly one in three of the foreign-born population, and approximately twice the poverty rate of the UK-born population.[15] In 2023/24, 1 in 2 children in migrant families (50%) were living in poverty, compared with around 1 in 4 children in other families (24%)[16]. Children in migrant families are more than twice as likely as those in non-migrant families to experience deep poverty (37% compared with 16%) and very deep poverty (26% compared with 10%).[17] Particularly striking is the finding that child poverty rates are twice as high among working migrant families compared with other working families, underlining that employment alone does not provide protection from poverty for migrant households even more than is true for the wider population.[18]

One group that continues to face very deep poverty and material deprivation are children in asylum-seeking families who are receiving asylum support from the Home Office and whose parents are generally not permitted to work or access public funds. Evidence submitted to the inquiry highlighted that in 2023, when the weekly subsistence payment for asylum support recipients was £47.39 per person, a family of four would have received £189.56 a week or a fifth (21%) of the median income for that family size after housing costs

14 NRPF Connect Data Report 2024–25, NRPF Network, 20 October 2025.
15 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2026: The Essential Guide to Understanding Poverty in the UK.
16 Poverty Rates for Migrant Families, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 27 January 2026.
17 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Poverty Rates for Migrant Families.
18 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Poverty Rates for Migrant Families.

are taken into account.[19] This family would have been £357.19 below the relative poverty line.[20] Although families receiving asylum accommodation do not need to pay for utilities and council tax, it still places children well below the poverty line. Furthermore, research with children and parents receiving this support highlights how the poverty and material deprivation they experience manifests in different domains of children's lives, including within the home, in educational settings and within the local community. At the end of 2024, there were over 24,000 children receiving Home Office-administered Asylum Support with their families.[21]

The persistence and widening of these disparities over more than a decade, together with the barriers to welfare support, labour market progression and housing security highlighted throughout this inquiry, suggest that poverty among migrant families cannot be understood solely as a consequence of individual circumstances or wider economic conditions. Rather, the evidence indicates that structural features of the immigration system and related policy frameworks play a significant role in shaping economic outcomes for many migrant households.

2.4 The Child Poverty Strategy

In December 2025, the Government published its welcome Child Poverty Strategy, **Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty**, setting out an ambition to lift 550,000 children out of relative low income after housing costs by 2028/29.[22] The strategy states that the Government is "committed to ensuring that vulnerable children receive the support that they require, regardless of their immigration status."[23] It highlights existing measures that extend eligibility for certain schemes to families with NRPF, including free school meals and free 15 hours of childcare entitlements for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and all 3 and 4-year-olds. It also notes that the Home Office has committed to continuing to consider the needs of children with NRPF when reviewing eligibility for existing and future support schemes. The Strategy also outlines plans to issue updated guidance to local authorities on their duties towards vulnerable migrant families, including clarification of support available under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.[24] [25] In addition, the Government is seeking to improve the evidence base on NRPF by working with the Department for Work and Pensions to include questions on NRPF status in the Family Resources Survey from 2026/27, with the aim of better understanding the living conditions and experiences of affected families.[26]

While the overall strategy has been welcomed, a number of organisations have expressed disappointment that it offers no concrete changes to the NRPF rules as had been called for. The strategy did not acknowledge the poverty faced by children in families receiving Asylum Support, whose parents are restricted from employment, or put in place any measures to address this form of deep poverty. The strategy also made no changes to the structural and systemic inequalities that children face when they are affected by NRPF restrictions, for example, by limiting the effects of NRPF on families with children or providing additional pathways to support for childcare provision or the Healthy Start Scheme.

19 **Learning Is an Essential Need**, Child Poverty Action Group, Dr Ilona Pinter, 13 October 2025.

20 Child Poverty Action Group, **Learning Is an Essential Need**

21 **What Do Home Office Reforms Mean for Refugee Children Growing Up in Poverty?**, London School of Economics and Political Science, Dr Ilona Pinter, 4 June 2026.

22 **Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty**, Cabinet Office, 5 December 2025.

23 Cabinet Office, **Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty**.

24 Cabinet Office, **Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty**.

25 Section 17 requires local authorities to support children in need, including those in NRPF families where necessary, regardless of immigration status.

26 Cabinet Office, **Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty**.

2.5 Homelessness Strategy

The Government's **National Plan to End Homelessness** identifies refugees and migrants as groups at heightened risk of homelessness and recognises the need for targeted interventions to prevent homelessness before it occurs. The strategy notes that people leaving the asylum system are the second-largest group of people sleeping rough after leaving a public institution and acknowledges that newly recognised refugees may face particular barriers to securing housing and employment, including limited support networks and difficulties integrating into local communities.[27]

Overall, the strategy frames refugee and migrant homelessness as a prevention issue requiring earlier intervention, stronger coordination between services, improved integration support, and tailored responses for people whose immigration status affects their access to housing and welfare assistance.[28]

The strategy commits to improving early intervention for refugees at risk of homelessness through better information sharing between the Home Office, accommodation providers and local authorities, alongside measures to support integration through housing and employment advice. It also recognises the specific challenges faced by homeless migrants, particularly those with restricted access to public funds, and includes funding for specialist support, immigration advice, legal aid, and pilot schemes to assist councils working with homeless migrant populations.[29]

2.6 Social Cohesion Action Plan

In March 2026, the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government published ***Protecting What Matters: Towards a More Confident, Cohesive, and Resilient United Kingdom*** — the Government's Social Cohesion Action Plan. The strategy acknowledges that the pace of recent migration has placed pressure on services, housing, and community bonds, and notes that the distribution of asylum seekers has been uneven, with ten local authorities hosting 22% of asylum seekers in March 2024, disproportionately affecting poorer neighbourhoods.[30] It frames integration as being grounded in shared values, setting out clear expectations for those living in the UK including learning and using English, respecting shared values, participating in work and civic life, and obeying the law. To deliver these aims, the strategy commits to developing a cross-government integration strategy with local government and the voluntary and community sector; reviewing English language provision; introducing the Earned Settlement system; refreshing the Life in the UK test; and supporting greater labour market participation among underrepresented groups. It also commits to ending the use of asylum hotels, strengthening Community Sponsorship schemes, continuing efforts to reduce irregular migration, and working with the devolved administrations where integration policy intersects with devolved responsibilities.[31]

27 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, **A National Plan to End Homelessness**.

28 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, **A National Plan to End Homelessness**.

29 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, **A National Plan to End Homelessness**.

30 **Protecting What Matters: Towards a More Confident, Cohesive and Resilient United Kingdom**, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 9 March 2026

31 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, **Protecting What Matters: Towards a More Confident, Cohesive and Resilient United Kingdom**

3. Changes in Immigration, Refugee and Asylum Policy in the UK

3.1 White Paper

In May 2025, the Government published its immigration White Paper, **Restoring Control Over the Immigration System**,[32] setting out a programme of reforms across the UK's immigration and asylum system. The proposals represented one of the most significant changes to immigration policy in recent decades, with implications for migrants across work, study, family, refugee and settlement routes. The White Paper sought to reduce reliance on overseas recruitment, strengthen compliance and enforcement measures, reform family and private life routes, and place greater emphasis on integration and English language acquisition.

Key proposals included raising the skills and salary thresholds for work visas, ending overseas recruitment through the Adult Social Care visa route, shortening the Graduate visa period, strengthening sponsorship requirements for educational institutions, and expanding enforcement powers to address irregular migration and visa non-compliance. The White Paper also proposed significant reforms to settlement and citizenship, including extending the standard qualifying period for settlement from five to ten years, introducing an earned settlement model linked to economic and social contribution, and increasing English language requirements across a wider range of immigration routes.

The White Paper further outlined reforms to family migration, refugee sponsorship and resettlement schemes, worker protections, and the Government's response to the Windrush scandal. While some measures were implemented through subsequent changes to the Immigration Rules, others remained subject to consultation or further policy development at the time of this inquiry.

3.2 Asylum Policy Statement

In November 2025 the Government published an Asylum Policy Statement, **Restoring Order and Control, A Statement on the Government's Asylum and Returns Policy**, which proposed significant reforms to the UK's refugee protection system through the introduction of a new 'Core Protection' model. Under this approach, refugee protection would move away from the current framework, which provides a route to long-term settlement, towards a more temporary form of protection in accordance with the UK's 'international obligations but which does not exceed them'.[33]

Refugees granted protection would receive an initial period of leave to remain of 30 months, rather than the current five years, and would be required to demonstrate an ongoing need for protection each time their status is renewed. Where protection is no longer considered necessary, individuals could become liable for removal from the UK. The proposals would also substantially extend the route to settlement, with refugees on the Core Protection pathway no longer eligible for indefinite leave to remain after five years, but instead required to wait up to 20 years before becoming eligible for settlement.

Alongside these changes, the Government proposed the creation of a new in-country Protection Work and Study route. Refugees who secured qualifying employment or entered higher-level study would be able

32 **Restoring Control over the Immigration System**, Home Office, 12 May 2025.

33 **Restoring Order and Control: A Statement on the Government's Asylum and Returns Policy**, Home Office, 17 November 2025.

to switch from Core Protection onto this route, enabling them to access an accelerated pathway towards settlement under the proposed earned settlement framework. The government has not yet been able to provide details of the qualifying conditions for entry to this route. The reforms would also introduce significant changes to family reunion rights. Under the proposed system, refugees granted Core Protection would no longer have an automatic right to sponsor family members to join them in the UK. Instead, family reunion rights would generally be available only to those who had successfully transitioned onto a work or study route, with sponsorship subject to conditions similar to those applying to other migrants and British citizens.

The Government has also proposed to replace the existing immigration appeals system with a new Independent Appeals Body designed to provide a faster and more integrated appeals process. The new body would appoint its own independent adjudicators, hear appeals on immigration and asylum decisions, and retain a right of onward appeal to the Upper Tribunal on points of law.

3.3 Asylum Support

The Government also announced significant changes to the asylum support system, aimed at restricting access to support and increasing the conditions attached to receiving it. Central to these reforms is the proposal to revoke the current legal duty to provide support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute and replace it with a discretionary power.

The Government has begun implementing elements of these reforms through secondary legislation. **The Asylum Seekers (Reception Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2026**, replaces the statutory duty to provide support to destitute asylum seekers with a discretionary power.[34] In addition, **the Immigration and Asylum (Provision of Accommodation to Failed Asylum-Seekers) (Amendment) Regulations 2026** allows asylum support and accommodation to be withdrawn from individuals found to be working illegally.[35]

Further reforms to the asylum support system were consulted on as part of the **Family Returns consultation**, which ran from March to May 2026.[36] Under the current system, destitute asylum seekers whose claims have been refused can continue to receive support in certain circumstances, particularly where children are involved, and individuals who become appeal rights exhausted may be eligible for section 4 support.[37] The proposals would abolish Section 4 support and replace it with a more restrictive Section 95A scheme.

Section 95A is a proposed replacement for existing Section 4 support for refused asylum seekers. It would only be available to people who are appeal rights exhausted, are destitute, and can demonstrate a genuine barrier to leaving the UK. Applications would have to be made within a strict time limit, after which eligibility would be lost. Unlike the current system, there would be no right of appeal against decisions to refuse or withdraw support, and support could be withdrawn where an individual is found to be working illegally or failing to comply with Home Office requirements.[38]

People who become appeal rights exhausted would have a short grace period within which to apply for Section 95A support — 90 days for families and 21 days for single people. After this grace period, they

34 **Asylum Seekers (Reception Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2026**, Home Office, 5 March 2026.

35 **Immigration and Asylum (Provision of Accommodation to Failed Asylum-Seekers) (Amendment) Regulations 2026**, Home Office, 5 March 2026.

36 **Family Returns: Reforming Asylum Support and Enforcing Family Returns**, Home Office, 5 March 2026.

37 Section 4 support provides accommodation and financial assistance to destitute people whose asylum claims have been finally refused, provided they meet specified eligibility criteria under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

38 **Family Returns: Reforming Asylum Support and Enforcing Family Returns**, Home Office, 5 March 2026.

would lose eligibility for support and would be expected to leave the UK. Section 95A support would only be available to those who are destitute and can demonstrate a genuine obstacle to leaving the UK.[39] The proposals would also remove the existing right to appeal against decisions refusing or withdrawing support, leaving judicial review as the only avenue of challenge, a route that is effectively inaccessible to destitute individuals without legal representation.

The Family Returns consultation also proposed significant changes to local authority support for families and young people with insecure immigration status. Under the current system, local authorities have duties under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to support children in need and their families where failure to do so would result in a breach of their human rights, including where families are at risk of destitution because of their immigration status. The consultation proposed restricting local authority duties further, so that support under Section 17 would no longer be available to families with no lawful immigration status who are not actively pursuing an immigration application or appeal, or cooperating with removal. Under the proposals, support would generally be restricted to families with an ongoing immigration application or appeal, or those taking reasonable steps to leave the UK and complying with Home Office requirements following a refusal decision, removing the existing safety net for destitute families who do not meet these criteria.[40]

The consultation also proposed changes to support for care leavers with unresolved immigration status. Under the current framework, local authorities have ongoing responsibilities to support care leavers and prevent them from becoming destitute after they reach the age of 18. The proposals would mean young people whose immigration or asylum claims have been refused and who have become appeal rights exhausted would lose their care leaver support entitlements and be transferred into the adult asylum support system.[41] These changes would represent a significant reduction in local authority responsibilities towards certain migrant families and young people, with greater reliance placed on immigration status as a determinant of access to support.

In addition, the Government extended the refugee move-on period from 28 days to 42 days in March 2026. The move-on period is the timeframe in which newly recognised refugees must secure housing, apply for benefits, and obtain essential documentation before leaving Home Office accommodation. It was set at 28 days for nearly two decades, briefly extended to 56 days during a pilot between winter 2024 and summer 2025, and was updated to 42 days.[42]

3.4 ‘A Fairer Pathway to Settlement’ and the Earned Settlement Model

On 20 November 2025, the Home Secretary made a further statement to the House of Commons setting out additional details of the proposed “earned settlement” model, one of the central reforms outlined in the Immigration White Paper.[43] The statement was accompanied by a **public consultation**, which ran from 20 November 2025 to 12 February 2026.[44] At the time of writing, the Government has not yet published its response to the consultation, which they say received over 200,000 submissions.[45]

39 Home Office, **Family Returns: Reforming Asylum Support and Enforcing Family Returns**.

40 Home Office, **Family Returns: Reforming Asylum Support and Enforcing Family Returns**.

41 **Family Returns Consultation: Local Authority Briefing**, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, 30 April 2026.

42 **Evaluation of the Initiatives to Enhance the Move On Process**, Home Office, 10 June 2026.

43 **Migration: Settlement Pathway**, House of Commons Hansard, Vol. 775, 20 November 2025.

44 **A Fairer Pathway to Settlement: Statement and Accompanying Consultation on Earned Settlement**, Home Office, 20 November 2025.

45 Immigration: Clergy (**Written Parliamentary Question UIN 6482**), House of Commons, 8 June 2026.

As Ministers have emphasised, the proposals would introduce some of the most significant changes to the settlement (Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)) framework in decades, fundamentally altering the basis on which migrants become eligible for permanent residence in the UK.

The central proposal is to extend the standard qualifying period for settlement from five years to ten years for most migrants. The Government also consulted on a 15-year route to settlement for workers in roles below RQF Level 6 — a category that includes most Health and Care Worker visa holders but also affects a wide range of other medium-skilled occupations including chefs, welders, and various administrative roles.[46] As recent changes have significantly restricted new overseas recruitment into many of these occupations, this proposal is expected to affect people already living in the UK. In practice, it could mean that many migrants face a 15-year route to settlement rather than 10 years. At least 325,000 visas have been granted to workers in these occupations since 2021 (excluding dependants)[47], although the Home Office has not published an estimate of how many individuals would ultimately be affected.[48]

All applicants would also be required to satisfy a set of mandatory suitability, integration and contribution requirements. These include meeting existing suitability criteria, such as having no serious criminal convictions or outstanding debts to the Government, NHS, or tax authorities; demonstrating a higher level of English language proficiency at B2 level, compared with the current B1 requirement for settlement; as now, passing the Life in the UK Test; and meeting a minimum earnings threshold of £12,570 per year for a period of between three and five years (subject to consultation).[49]

The ten-year qualifying period could be shortened for migrants who demonstrate particular forms of economic or social contribution. The proposals suggest that individuals earning at least £125,140 per year for three consecutive years could qualify for settlement after three years, while those earning at least £50,270 for three years could qualify after five years. Applicants working in specified public service professions, such as healthcare and teaching, could also receive a five-year reduction, while individuals undertaking recognised community or voluntary work could reduce their qualifying period by between three and five years. Additional reductions would be available for applicants who demonstrate advanced English language proficiency at C1 level.[50]

The proposals also introduce a system of penalties that could significantly extend the time required to obtain settlement. Migrants who have claimed public funds could see their qualifying period increased by between five and ten years, depending on the duration of the claim. Individuals who entered the UK irregularly, overstayed their visa, or entered on a visit visa and subsequently remained in the UK could face extensions of up to twenty years, resulting in a potential thirty-year route to settlement.[51]

Alongside these changes, the Government proposed abolishing the existing ten-year-long residence route to settlement, under which individuals can currently qualify for ILR after ten years of lawful residence regardless

46 **Earned Settlement: Examining the Government's Proposed Reforms**, Home Affairs Committee, House of Commons, HC 1409, 13 March 2026.

47 **Changes to Settlement: What Do They Mean?**, Migration Observatory, University of Oxford, 10 February 2026.

48 **Earned Settlement: Examining the Government's Proposed Reforms**, Home Affairs Committee, House of Commons, HC 1409, 13 March 2026.

49 **A Fairer Pathway to Settlement: Statement and Accompanying Consultation on Earned Settlement**, Home Office, 20 November 2025.

50 **A Fairer Pathway to Settlement: Statement and Accompanying Consultation on Earned Settlement**, Home Office, 20 November 2025.

51 **A Fairer Pathway to Settlement: Statement and Accompanying Consultation on Earned Settlement**, Home Office, 20 November 2025.

of visa category. This could mean that time spent on temporary and non-settlement routes, such as student visas, would no longer count towards settlement eligibility. The proposals also have significant implications for family migration. Adult dependants of main applicants may be required to qualify for settlement in their own right by meeting contribution and integration requirements independently, potentially creating different settlement timelines within the same family. The Government further indicated that the requirements for British citizenship would be reformed to align with the new earned settlement framework, linking access to citizenship more closely to measures of economic contribution and integration. They introduced the '**good character requirement**' guidance in February 2025 which restricts citizenship for individuals who arrived in the UK irregularly.[52]

The Government has proposed that the new system should apply not only to future migrants but potentially to anyone who has not yet secured settlement when the reforms take effect. The possibility of transitional arrangements was under consultation. Taken together, these proposals would represent a fundamental shift from a time-based settlement system towards one in which access to permanent status is increasingly determined by measures of economic contribution, integration, and compliance with immigration rules.

Following substantial correspondence regarding the proposed reforms, the APPG on Migration convened a roundtable discussion in January 2026 to better understand their potential implications. Representatives from businesses, trade unions, charities, legal experts and individuals with lived experience participated in the discussion, during which a range of concerns about the proposals were raised.

52 **Good Character: Caseworker Guidance**, Home Office, 30an; April 2026.

4. The Findings: How Do Recent Changes to Immigration, Refugee and Asylum Migration Policy Affect Poverty?

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry identified five principal ways in which immigration policy can affect poverty: employment and wages; access to social security and welfare support; access to public services; access to housing; and communities and integration. This inquiry adopts the same framework to enable comparison with the findings of the 2024 report and to assess whether the concerns identified previously have been addressed, persisted, or intensified.

Across the evidence received, several proposed reforms were consistently identified as having the greatest potential impact on poverty and inequality among migrants and refugees. Foremost among these was the proposal to extend the standard route to settlement from five to ten years. However, witnesses highlighted that many migrants would in practice face routes of 15 years or more, with workers in occupations below RQF Level 6 expected to complete a 15-year route and refugees on the Core Protection route a 20-year route, before any additional extensions linked to benefit claims or immigration history. Contributors also raised significant concerns about the proposed earned settlement model, which would link access to settlement to factors such as earnings, English language proficiency and volunteering, as well as proposals to extend no recourse to public funds (NRPF) conditions across longer settlement pathways and, in some cases, beyond the point of settlement itself.

Respondents also raised significant concerns about the proposed reduction in refugee leave to remain from five years to 30 months under the new Core Protection model. A further theme running throughout the evidence was the perceived gap between the Government's stated objectives—including promoting integration, reducing child poverty, preventing homelessness and delivering fiscal savings—and the likely practical effects of the proposed measures. Respondents consistently argued that these measures had the potential to increase financial insecurity and deepen existing inequalities while also potentially increasing costs in the long run.

4.1 Employment and Wages

The evidence suggests that recent changes to immigration rules risk compounding existing barriers to employment and deepening economic vulnerability among migrant and refugee populations across the UK. Many respondents expressed concerns that a move towards temporary protection for refugees, longer routes to settlement, and an earned settlement model could make it more difficult for migrants and refugees to access secure employment. Several submissions suggested that the measures would increase vulnerability to exploitation, place downward pressure on earnings and working conditions and create confusion for employers and workers alike.

Evidence submitted to the inquiry suggests that the Government's proposed move towards a temporary "Core Protection" model may create barriers to employment similar to those experienced under other temporary protection schemes. Evidence submitted by the British Red Cross, drawing from the experience of Ukrainian refugees, whose temporary visa arrangements offer a comparable model for the new Core Protection model, demonstrates that temporary protection status has harmed displaced Ukrainians' ability to find work.[53]

53 Planning for Tomorrow: Lessons Learned from the UK's Response to Displacement from Ukraine, British Red Cross, July 2024.

Employers are often reluctant to recruit individuals with limited leave to remain because of concerns about the duration of their status and the risk of future right-to-work issues. The submission noted that temporary visas were cited as a reason many displaced Ukrainians had been rejected from jobs, while 19% of those surveyed reported experiencing employment difficulties because they had less than 12 months remaining on their visa.[54] Other respondents stated that employers are often reluctant to employ those who only have limited leave to remain and reported cases of resettled families being refused employment because employers were uncertain about the duration of their immigration status or feared that they may lose the right to work in the future. Several submissions also argued that employers' concerns about potential penalties for non-compliance with right-to-work requirements can discourage recruitment of individuals with temporary or insecure immigration status, even where they have a lawful right to work.

This effect is likely to be replicated for all refugees under the new proposals, particularly given pre-existing structural barriers such as difficulties accessing appropriate English language classes and the non-recognition of foreign qualifications by UK employers. Temporary protection status risks compounding these existing disadvantages, heightening refugees' exposure to poverty rather than supporting their economic integration.

For sponsored workers, the proposal to extend the settlement period to ten years — with immigration status tied to a single employer throughout — dramatically increases employer dependency and creates the structural conditions for exploitation. The Work Rights Centre found that 65% of migrant workers on comparable routes disclosed an employment rights breach in the preceding twelve months, while 39% of those did not raise a complaint, citing social pressure, mistrust of authorities, and fear of employer retaliation.[55] The consequences of dismissal are severe: workers have only sixty days to find a new sponsor or face removal from the country. The Public Accounts Committee has documented widespread evidence of debt bondage, excessive working hours, and exploitative conditions on the Skilled Worker route[56], and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration found that the Home Office had only one compliance officer for every 1,600 licensed sponsors in the health and care sector, and that in two out of eight compliance visits, migrants were found to be working illegally — evidence of systemic failures in the sponsor licensing framework that was meant to protect workers from exploitation.[57] As the 2024 APPG inquiry identified, visa restrictions on job mobility are a direct driver of poverty and exploitation, and proposals to extend settlement timelines will only prolong the period during which workers remain exposed to these conditions.

Beyond exploitation, structural and administrative failures routinely prevent those with a legal right to work from accessing employment at all. Failures and long delays in processing visa and asylum applications, in issuing identity documents and eVisas, and in providing National Insurance numbers can create significant practical barriers. Employer confusion over eVisa share codes — which are frequently not updated when applicants make in-time applications and are placed on Section 3C leave — means that individuals who are legally entitled to work are unable to demonstrate that entitlement to employers.[58] The Employer Checking Service, which is intended to help employers verify an individual's right to work, was identified by some

54 British Red Cross, ***Planning for Tomorrow: Lessons Learned from the UK's Response to Displacement from Ukraine***.

55 **The Forgotten Third: Migrant Workers' Views on Improving Conditions in England's Adult Social Care Sector**, Work Rights Centre, 12 November 2024.

56 **Immigration: Skilled Worker Visas**, Public Accounts Committee, House of Commons, 4 July 2025, para. 21.

57 **An Inspection of the Immigration System as It Relates to the Social Care Sector (August 2023 to November 2023)**, Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, 26 March 2024.

58 Section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971 automatically extends a person's existing leave when they make a valid in-time application to extend or vary it, meaning they remain lawfully in the UK with the same rights, including the right to work, while their application is pending.

respondents as a source of practical difficulties.[59] The cumulative effect is that increasing the number of applications required under the new proposals will substantially increase the number of people who could experience delays or difficulties in demonstrating their right to work.

The Helen Bamber Foundation and Freedom from Torture have raised further concerns about the impact of contributions-based and earnings-conditional settlement on the most vulnerable. Many survivors of torture and trafficking experience profound pressure to demonstrate economic productivity as a means of justifying their right to remain, yet are frequently unable to sustain employment due to the severe mental and physical impact of prolonged trauma. Making settlement conditional on continued economic contributions risks pushing this population towards the only work available to them — precarious, exploitative, and often unsafe — while providing nothing to ensure they receive the healthcare or education necessary to eventually enter the labour market sustainably. The revocation of asylum support for those deemed able to support themselves compounds this risk significantly, threatening to push individuals who are genuinely unable to work at that point in their lives towards homelessness and loss of access to vital support.

Finally, linking settlement more closely to earnings and economic contribution risks entrenching existing inequalities by disproportionately penalising those least able to meet an earnings threshold through no fault of their own. Women, unpaid carers, disabled people, and survivors of trauma are all significantly more likely to be in part-time or lower-paid employment, or temporarily unable to work altogether, yet the proposed framework makes no provision for these circumstances. Unpaid carers, despite being economically vital since they enable other household members to undertake paid work, reducing demand on local authority services, and sustaining family wellbeing, receive no recognition under the points-based system. In addition, families with children overall are at a disproportionately higher risk of being on a low income, given that children cannot earn and parents need to take time out to care for children.

This inequality is further compounded by the accelerated settlement routes proposed for high earners. An individual earning £125,140 or more could qualify for settlement after just three years, while a care worker providing essential support to elderly or disabled people, or a healthcare assistant working night shifts in an NHS ward, would face a ten-year pathway, even though their contribution to the health, wellbeing, and functioning of communities is no less real or significant. The evidence received by this inquiry consistently questioned the assumption that a person's salary is an adequate measure of their value to society. A settlement framework built on this assumption risks privileging higher incomes over the social and economic value of essential but lower-paid work and compounds disadvantage. Those with the least financial resilience are required to demonstrate the most sustained economic contribution over the longest period, under restrictive conditions while those with the greatest financial resources are rewarded with earlier settlement.

Evidence submitted by the Runnymede Trust highlighted that these proposals will fall hardest on low-income migrants of colour, for whom structural inequalities, gender pay gaps, and racial pay gaps already constrain earning potential. Many migrant women are overrepresented in care, cleaning, domestic work and other roles categorised as "low-skilled", meaning they are set to be penalised, despite performing essential work.

More broadly, the majority of people on extended routes to settlement work in lower-paid but critical sectors including social care, health support, hospitality, and cleaning services. These sectors already face acute workforce shortages, and making settlement harder to achieve risks deterring future recruitment, increasing staff turnover, and destabilising the essential local services upon which communities across the country depend. The proposed concession for public service roles is currently too narrowly defined to offset these impacts in any meaningful way.

59 Central England Law Centre, Written Evidence to the APPGs on Migration and on Poverty and Inequality Inquiry into the Impact of Recent Immigration and Asylum Rule Changes on Poverty, May 2026.

The proposal to allow migrants to reduce the ten-year settlement period through extensive volunteering was also identified as potentially creating unequal outcomes. Evidence from the Centre for Care suggested that, while intended to recognise community contribution, the measure may be more accessible to those with greater financial security and available time. Respondents noted that many migrants face competing pressures, including the need to maintain paid employment, meet living costs, support family members, or manage caring responsibilities and health conditions. As a result, the opportunity to undertake sustained unpaid volunteering may not be equally available across the migrant population. Several submissions therefore highlighted that the proposals may disproportionately benefit those who are already in comparatively more secure financial circumstances.

4.2 Access to Social Security and Welfare Support

Our 2024 inquiry found that existing immigration policies were contributing to poverty among migrant households and creating additional pressures on local authorities and public services. It concluded that, in several respects, the system amounted to "destitution by design", with restrictions on access to welfare and longer routes to settlement increasing the risk of poverty as a means of pursuing wider immigration policy objectives. Evidence submitted to this follow-up inquiry suggested that a number of the proposed reforms could exacerbate these existing pressures. Respondents highlighted in particular the potential impact of extending NRPF conditions across longer settlement pathways, applying longer routes to settlement for some individuals who have accessed public funds, and maintaining NRPF conditions after a person has obtained settlement. Evidence submitted to the inquiry suggested that these measures could prolong periods of financial hardship, deepen existing experiences of poverty, and extend restrictions on access to welfare support to a wider group of migrants. Taken together, the evidence indicates that many of the concerns identified in our 2024 inquiry remain unresolved and could be intensified by the proposed reforms.

The inquiry heard that the proposal to penalise benefit use with extended settlement timelines is already influencing behaviour, including decisions about accessing financial support and public services, despite a number of the measures not yet having been formally implemented. At the oral evidence sessions, Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ) presented research conducted with its clients and lived experience group, which found that almost 90% of parents would forgo financial support if accessing it risked extending their route to settlement. Of those, more than half said their children would consequently lose access to basic essentials such as food, heating, housing and clothing.[60]

Participants in the RMJ research described the uncertainty created by the proposed changes:

> *"I'm told I can do this (accept benefits), but then afterwards, I'm being told that I can't do it, that I should not I should not have done it. If I was told this in the beginning, then maybe I would not have claimed the benefits. But then again, so many families are just like mine. If they didn't make use of benefits, then our children, our families, would be destitute."*

Another participant highlighted the impact on children:

> *"My child is being made to live in uncertainty for 20 years because our family needed help to survive. This policy is harming their education, mental health, and confidence. Children should not be punished for poverty or for decisions they did not make."*

60 Government-Imposed Poverty: Perspectives of Parents on the 10-Year Route to Proposed ILR Changes, Refugee and Migrant Justice, 2025

RMJ emphasised that these findings reflected decisions families were already making in anticipation of proposed policy changes. This was corroborated by submissions from across the advice and legal sector with Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit reporting that some families, including parents of British children, were declining support to which they were entitled because of concerns about the potential impact on their future immigration status. Central England Law Centre highlighted cases of individuals choosing not to apply for crisis payments, free school meals or homelessness assistance, while Citizens Advice Scotland reported that some families were reluctant to seek support or submit change-of-conditions applications despite experiencing significant hardship. Crisis also reported encountering individuals who were concerned that accessing benefits could affect their route to settlement, potentially limiting one of the principal mechanisms available to prevent homelessness and destitution. In addition, researchers reported that concerns about immigration consequences, including the potential impact on settlement, were influencing decisions to avoid engagement with local authority services. Respondents argued that this could result in some vulnerable children and families not accessing support intended to safeguard their welfare and that some of the most vulnerable children in the country are being denied support because their parents face an impossible choice between their children's welfare and their family's immigration security.

Child Poverty

> *"As a mother, I am concerned children in migrant families might have to grow up in a family without stability for years and years. No matter who they are, immigrants and children deserve security and support. Not being able to access basic support, the kind of help a family needs, might also have lasting effects on children's health, education and prospects"* - Rosie V, written evidence submitted by Changing Realities.

The APPGs received consistent evidence that the proposed reforms could have significant implications for child poverty and may present challenges to the Government's wider child poverty objectives.

Analysis commissioned by the NRPF partnership and carried out by Landman Economics and the IPPR estimates that withdrawing the proposed reforms could lift around 90,000 children out of poverty by 2029, including children expected to be born during that period.[61] Conversely, if the proposed extension of the route to settlement from five to ten years is implemented, it is estimated that around half of all children with parents on work routes, approximately 130,000 children, could be living in poverty by 2029.[62] Separate analysis by IPPR also found that more than 300,000 children currently living in the UK could face extended periods of immigration insecurity under the proposed changes, with potential implications for future access to higher education, student finance and employment opportunities.[63] Several organisations argued that the proposals undermine efforts to "ensure that vulnerable migrant children can access the support they need, regardless of immigration status."[64] Evidence submitted to the inquiry highlighted that children in families subject to NRPF conditions are excluded from a range of mainstream support because of their parents' immigration status. Barnado's noted that NRPF restrictions mean that parents can't access newborn and early years entitlements such as Child Benefit, Universal Credit, the childcare element of Universal Credit, Tax Free Childcare, the extended 30 hours childcare offer, or the Healthy Start Scheme in England.

61 **Home Office Settlement Proposals Threaten to Keep 90,000 Children in Poverty**, Praxis, 19 March 2026.

62 Praxis, **Home Office Settlement Proposals Threaten to Keep 90,000 Children in Poverty.**

63 **Far from Settled: The Government's 'Earned Settlement' Consultation**, Institute for Public Policy Research, 9 February 2026.

64 Cabinet Office, ***Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty***.

Furthermore, several respondents drew attention to IPPR figures showing that almost 40%, or 1.75 million, of all children living in poverty were in families where both parents were born abroad, including families where parents have already obtained Indefinite Leave to Remain or British citizenship,[65] indicating that the heightened poverty risk associated with a migration background persists well beyond the point of settlement. The consequences of child poverty do not end in childhood; they have lasting effects on the life chances and economic prospects of those who experience them. Evidence from the Resolution Foundation submitted to the inquiry shows that children who grow up in poverty are significantly more likely to experience poverty as adults.[66] While education is often seen as a route out of disadvantage, access remains unequal, and the effects of childhood poverty persist even among graduates. By age 28, men who were eligible for free school meals as children earn around 40% less than their peers, while women from disadvantaged backgrounds earn around 60% less.[67] For children in migrant families, who are already more than twice as likely to experience deep poverty as those in non-migrant families,[68] these findings suggest that poverty resulting from immigration policy may have lasting consequences for future educational outcomes, earnings and life opportunities.

The Women's Budget Group has underlined that children's poverty is shaped by the economic position of their primary carers, who are disproportionately women, and that immigration rules which exclude families from the safety net are not peripheral issues but core drivers of child poverty[69] — a link that is particularly acute for migrant women experiencing domestic abuse and gender-based violence, who are among those most directly endangered by the proposed changes to NRPF conditions and settlement routes. Multiple submissions identified women experiencing domestic abuse and gender-based violence as a group that could be particularly affected by proposals to NRPF conditions and apply longer settlement routes to those who access benefits. Evidence from Southall Black Sisters highlighted that the majority of victim-survivors of violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and gender-based violence, whom they support, depend on access to public funds at the point of escape from an abusive relationship. "Without that access, women face a stark and dangerous choice: remain with a perpetrator, or face homelessness, survival sex work, exploitative employment, and continued exposure to violence."[70] In addition, a submission from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) highlighted evidence from Scottish Government strategies linking insecure immigration status to increased vulnerability. Equally Safe, Scotland's strategy to prevent violence against women and girls, identifies insecure immigration status as a barrier to escaping abuse, while Scotland's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy identifies destitution resulting from insecure immigration status as a significant risk factor for trafficking and exploitation.

The effects of restrictive welfare policies extend beyond the individuals directly affected and have implications for local government and voluntary sector organisations. In 2024-25, 91 councils in England, Scotland and Wales supported 5,724 adults with care needs, families, and care leavers with NRPF at a collective cost of £94 million.[71] The proposed reforms would substantially increase both the number of households requiring

65 **Making the Child Poverty Strategy Work for Migrant Families**, Institute for Public Policy Research, 25 November 2025.

66 Resolution Foundation (2026), ***The Long Shadow: How poverty shapes people's lives in adulthood***.

67 Resolution Foundation (2026), ***The Long Shadow: How poverty shapes people's lives in adulthood***.

68 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ***Poverty Rates for Migrant Families***.

69 **Written Evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry into the Child Poverty Strategy**, Women's Budget Group, submission CPS0051.

70 Southall Black Sisters' Submission to the APPGs on Migration and on Poverty and Inequality Inquiry into the Impact of Recent Immigration and Asylum Rule Changes on Poverty, Southall Black Sisters, May 2026.

71 **Local Authority Support for Households with No Recourse to Public Funds 2024–25**, NRPF Network, 20 October 2025.

that support and the duration for which they require it. The evidence received by the APPGs indicates that the proposed reforms are likely to increase both the volume and complexity of cases involving people with NRPF, at a time when local authorities are already under significant financial pressures. Requests for support from migrants with NRPF are already increasing, raising concerns about councils' capacity to meet additional demand should the proposed changes be implemented. Furthermore, evidence from Crisis warned that malpractice by some councils including refusing to support families legally entitled to assistance is already being observed in the homelessness and migrant sectors, and that the proposed reforms could lead to an increase in such behaviour as demand on local authorities grows.[72]

4.3 The Fiscal Case for Proposed Changes

Part of the case the Government has made in support of these reforms is the potential savings to the public purse, particularly given that unusually high levels of inward migration from 2021 to 2024 mean that more migrants will receive ILR over the next few years and could potentially be eligible for benefits at that point. The Home Office projected savings of £10 billion in the lifetime welfare costs of the 350,000 lower-paid workers and their dependants expected to qualify for settlement.[73] However, evidence heard by the APPG during its oral evidence session called into question both the basis of this estimate and the extent to which it provides a meaningful assessment of the fiscal consequences of the proposed reforms.

During the APPG's oral evidence session, Professor Jonathan Portes from King's College London and Marley Morris from IPPR argued that the £10 billion estimate relates to the lifetime net fiscal costs associated with particular cohorts of migrants and their dependants, rather than the specific effects of extending settlement pathways or restricting access to benefits. They suggested that such savings would only be realised if the policies led to large numbers of care workers and dependants leaving the U.K. before they reached the qualifying period for settlement instead of altering the conditions under which they stay here. The headline figure that care workers and their dependants represent a £10 billion fiscal cost is derived from the MAC's lifetime estimates of fiscal impact. However, lifetime fiscal profiles are strongly age-dependant: individuals typically make positive net contributions during their working years and negative ones later in life, largely due to pensions, healthcare, and social care costs. Proposals to delay settlement affect only access to working-age benefits over a limited period and do not affect the main drivers of long-term fiscal costs. Furthermore, Portes highlighted that the MAC data shows that both care workers and their adult dependants are net contributors on an annual basis for roughly the first two decades after arrival, with annual net contributions typically in the range of £1,500 to £5,000 per person even after accounting for benefit eligibility following settlement. Furthermore, their cumulative contribution remains positive for considerably longer, only turning negative after around 40 years.

The oral evidence also suggested that extending routes to settlement is unlikely to improve the public finances over the period that matters most for fiscal policy. Using MAC data alongside Home Office estimates of the number of people affected, care workers and their dependants are estimated to make a combined net fiscal contribution of around £450 million per year[74] during the period affected by the proposed reforms. This indicates that they make a positive contribution to the public finances while on their route to settlement.

72 Crisis Submission to the APPGs on Migration and on Poverty Inquiry into the Impact of Recent Immigration and Asylum Rule Changes on Poverty, Crisis, May 2026.

73 **Home Secretary's Speech on Immigration**, Home Office, 5 March 2026.

74 Both the MAC and the Home Office assume that not all migrants progress to settlement, because some leave the country; however, they make different assumptions about this. As a result, this and other estimates in this note should be viewed as approximate, although the broad conclusions will not change.

As a result, policies that reduce their presence in the UK would therefore worsen rather than improve the short-term fiscal position and reduce, rather than increase, fiscal headroom over the period that matters for the Chancellor's fiscal rules, which currently operate to 2029-30.

Witnesses also argued that the direct fiscal savings from delaying settlement are likely to be limited. The principal effect would be to postpone access to benefits, yet Migration Advisory Committee data indicate that benefit expenditure represents only a small proportion of overall fiscal flows and is substantially outweighed by tax contributions. For example, around ten years after arrival, annual benefit spending on an adult dependant is estimated at approximately £465[75] per person per year, compared to total public spending of £6,329 and tax contributions of £8,451. On this basis, delaying settlement is estimated to save around £2,000 per care worker and £4,000 per dependant over the additional ten-year period. Using Home Office estimates of the size of the affected cohort, this equates to aggregate savings of approximately £600 million over ten years, or around £60 million per year. Witnesses argued that these savings are modest both in comparison with the cohort's overall tax contributions and with the Government's headline £10 billion estimate, which reflects lifetime fiscal impacts rather than the effects of delaying settlement.

Evidence from the session further noted that the fiscal effects of the reforms are uncertain and depend on behavioural responses that are difficult to predict. In particular, concerns were raised that the proposals could discourage some skilled migrants from coming to, or remaining in, the UK, potentially reducing tax revenues and wider economic contributions. In particular, respondents argued that requiring all applicants to qualify for settlement independently on the basis of their own earnings could make the UK less attractive to highly skilled workers. This would particularly affect households where one partner undertakes primary caring responsibilities rather than paid employment, meaning that dependants of high-earning workers could face significantly longer and more uncertain routes to settlement despite the household making a substantial overall fiscal contribution. Respondents suggested that this could discourage some highly skilled workers from choosing the UK, particularly where their partners would face a different and less certain pathway to settlement.

Evidence also suggested that extending settlement timelines may keep some workers in lower-paid employment for longer periods, while any savings from restricting access to public funds could be partially offset by reduced tax receipts, visa fee income, and increased costs elsewhere in the system. Respondents highlighted the example of social care workers, whose visas are tied to sponsoring employers until they obtain settlement. Delaying access to settlement could reduce opportunities for these workers to move into higher-paid roles, limiting both their earnings and their future contribution to public finances through higher tax receipts.

At a roundtable hosted by the APPG on Migration on the impact of the White Paper reforms on skilled migration, business leaders highlighted the additional costs the proposals would impose on employers and raised concerns about their potential impact on the UK's attractiveness as a destination for skilled workers. Participants described a disconnect between the immigration and tax systems, noting that businesses already make substantial contributions through taxation while facing rising immigration-related costs and increasing uncertainty about the long-term status of their workforce. Businesses highlighted the financial implications of the proposed ten-year route to settlement. Evidence from Vialto estimated that sponsoring a Skilled Worker for ten years, including visa application and renewal fees, the Immigration Health Surcharge and the Indefinite Leave to Remain fee, all of which are commonly treated as taxable benefits, could cost a medium-to-large employer between £36,987 and £45,811 per employee, with significantly higher

75 The MAC figures do not include benefits directly attributable to the children of migrants, so this will be an underestimate

costs where dependants are also sponsored.[76] It was also noted at the roundtable that the proposed ten-year route to settlement compares less favourably with competitor countries. For example, Ireland and Germany offer shorter routes to settlement, making them more attractive destinations for internationally mobile skilled workers, particularly those at an early stage of their careers, deciding where to establish their long-term futures. If the proposed reforms deter skilled workers and their employers from choosing the United Kingdom, the resulting loss of tax revenue, visa fee income, and wider economic contribution could substantially exceed any direct savings achieved through restricted welfare access, undermining the fiscal case for the reforms.

In addition, respondents noted that the retrospective application of the proposed changes could itself carry economic risks. Changing the conditions of settlement for people who have already come to the UK under the existing rules could reduce confidence in the stability and predictability of the immigration system. If prospective skilled migrants cannot be confident that the conditions under which they enter the UK will remain in place, the UK's attractiveness as a destination for internationally mobile talent may be reduced, with potential implications for future recruitment, investment and economic growth.

Respondents additionally noted that the Government's analysis does not appear to account fully for indirect or displaced costs, including increased pressures on local authorities, homelessness services and voluntary sector organisations, or the longer-term social and economic impacts associated with poverty, poor health outcomes and reduced educational attainment which are extensive, robust and well-documented. Specifically, the Royal College of Nursing pointed to the Home Affairs Select Committee's recommendation from its report on Routes to Settlement that any additional costs to local authorities of supporting families subject to NRPF should be included in the Government's assessment of the fiscal impact of its proposals.[77]

4.4 Housing

Migrant families are disproportionately concentrated in the private rented sector, which is generally less secure and more expensive relative to income than owner occupation, increasing their risk of financial hardship. Nearly half (47%) of children in migrant families live in privately rented accommodation, compared with 17% of children in non-migrant families, and they are much less likely to live in owner-occupied housing.[78] A House of Commons briefing found that 34% of people in the private rented sector were in relative low income after housing costs in 2024/25, illustrating the strong link between private renting and poverty.[79] This reliance on the private rented sector is a result of NRPF conditions excluding most migrants from accessing social housing, leaving private renting as the only realistic option for many households, regardless of their income or housing need.

The introduction of temporary protection status for refugees and proposals to extend the period of conditional immigration status more broadly have significant consequences for housing security. The British Red Cross drew the APPGs' attention to the experience of displaced Ukrainians as a directly comparable model, noting that temporary visa status has made it consistently difficult for this population to find sustainable housing. Its report *Finding a Safe Home* documented precarious housing among displaced Ukrainians, driven by short-term hosting commitments, cost-of-living pressures, difficulties accessing the private rented sector,

76 **Written Evidence to the Work and Pensions and Education Committees Inquiry into the Child Poverty Strategy**, Institute for Public Policy Research, submission CPS0052, March 2026.

77 **Earned Settlement: Examining the Government's Proposed Reforms**, Home Affairs Committee, House of Commons, 13 March 2026

78 **Poverty Rates for Migrant Families**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 27 January 2026.

79 **Poverty in the UK: Statistics**, House of Commons Library, Brigid Francis-Devine, 6 May 2026.

and landlords' reduced willingness to rent to those on short-term visas.[80] The British Red Cross's 2025 homelessness forecasting found that Ukrainians are 2.5 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population, with approximately 2,100 households expected to face statutory homelessness and 2,900 core homelessness between April 2026 and March 2027.[81] They warned that replicating temporary status arrangements for all refugees risks replicating these outcomes at a significantly greater scale.

Crisis provided evidence of the structural mechanisms through which temporary status translates into housing insecurity in the private rented sector. People with insecure or temporary status, and particularly those subject to NRPF who cannot access social housing, are primarily dependent on private renting, yet landlords are increasingly reluctant to let to those whose right to rent is subject to renewal or may lapse. This dynamic is likely to intensify as the Renters Rights Act comes into force, making evictions harder and rolling tenancies the norm: landlords facing greater difficulty removing tenants who lose the right to rent will have stronger incentives to decline them at the outset. Crisis also highlighted that, even under current rules, landlords are more likely to discriminate against racially minoritised groups (including those with British passports) out of concern about regulatory compliance with the Right to Rent introduced by the Immigration Act 2014 and strengthened by the Immigration Act 2016,[82] meaning that the housing consequences of immigration status interact with and compound existing racial discrimination in the private rented market. Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit corroborated this, reporting that clients consistently find it harder to rent when checks completed by landlords show only limited leave to remain, making them vulnerable to exploitative practices in their homes. The Skilled Workers Justice Alliance noted that for those on Skilled Worker visa routes, the housing challenge is not best understood as immediate homelessness, but as prolonged housing pressure: reduced savings capacity, delayed long-term planning, and weakened household resilience during an extended period of conditional status.

We heard evidence that the housing consequences of the proposed reforms extend beyond visible rough sleeping to a broader and harder-to-quantify increase in hidden homelessness and associated safeguarding risks. Wandsworth and Richmond Councils warned that financial precarity will force more people into overcrowded, informal, or unsafe housing arrangements, increasing risks of abuse and exploitation. They further warned that more families may require Section 17 support or adult social care interventions as a result of housing instability and loss of income, adding further demand to children's services and social care teams already under significant strain.

The inquiry received consistent evidence that the original refugee move-on period remains insufficient to prevent homelessness among newly recognised refugees, and that the proposed reforms would do little to address these concerns. The move-on period was previously set at 28 days, extended to 42 days following a 56-day pilot.

London Councils submitted that migrants represent approximately half of all those sleeping rough in London, and that the capital already faces an acute homelessness crisis. A London Councils survey conducted in January 2024 recorded 311 refugees sleeping rough following eviction from Home Office accommodation — a 234% increase since September 2023 — with over 90% holding positive asylum decisions.[83] These

80 **Finding a Safe Home: What Can We Learn About Solutions to Refugee Accommodation from the Ukraine Response?**, British Red Cross, July 2024.

81 **Still at Risk: Homelessness Among Displaced Ukrainians in the UK**, British Red Cross, February 2025.

82 **Right to Rent: Private Landlords' Duty to Carry Out Immigration Status Checks**, House of Commons Library, Alexander Bellis and David Foster, 27 August 2019.

83 **Hundreds of Refugees Sleeping Rough in London Amid 'Dramatic Spike' in Homelessness**, London Councils, 13 March 2024.

are individuals who have been formally recognised as refugees by the UK Government but are nonetheless sleeping on the streets.

In its submission, NACCOM highlighted that although the move-on period is stated as 42 days, it is in practice calculated from the date of the immigration decision rather than from the date a person receives their discontinuation notice (the document telling them when they need to leave their accommodation) which typically arrives around two weeks later. As most local authorities will only begin homelessness assessments on receipt of this discontinuation notice, refugees effectively have around 28 days to secure accommodation and support before becoming at risk of homelessness, rather than the 42 days the policy states. HIAS and JCORE also noted that regardless of the length of the move-on period, 100% of the young people it supports register as homeless and apply for Universal Credit on transition, because not even the piloted 56 days is sufficient time to find employment, save one month's rent, and pay a deposit. These issues are reflected in the Home Office's own evaluation of the 56-day move-on period, which notes that "delays in receiving discontinuation and NTQ (Notices to Quit) letters limited the full benefit of the extension, as participants reported that some refugees could not fully utilise the 56-day period."[84] In addition, the evaluation also noted that while all participants in the evaluation agreed that the move-on period should be extended, some Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations recommended longer periods for some groups, particularly single adult men who face greater difficulties securing accommodation.[85]

We also received evidence raising concerns about proposals to replace the statutory duty to accommodate destitute asylum seekers with a discretionary power and to replace the existing section 4 support framework with the more restrictive section 95A arrangements. Respondents argued that these changes could increase the risk of homelessness and destitution among people seeking asylum. Crisis highlighted concerns that eligibility for accommodation could become contingent on factors such as income, conduct and compliance, potentially excluding some individuals from support despite lacking the means to secure housing independently. The organisation also raised concerns about the interaction between accommodation decisions and behavioural assessments, noting that many asylum seekers have experienced significant trauma and may face barriers to accessing appropriate mental health support. Similar concerns were raised by Bolton Council, which warned that reductions, delays or withdrawals of accommodation and financial support could result in individuals leaving asylum accommodation without suitable alternative arrangements in place.

4.5 Access to Public Services

Our previous inquiry found that, despite being legally entitled to certain services, many migrants experience practical barriers to accessing them, often because of difficulties evidencing their immigration status. The APPGs therefore recommended that legal entitlements to public services should be matched by genuine access in practice. The evidence submitted to our 2026 inquiry suggests that repeated reviews of refugee protection status and extended settlement timelines risk widening rather than narrowing this gap between entitlement and access.

Under the proposed reforms, migrants would be required to renew their status every 2.5 years, while refugees would be required to demonstrate an ongoing need for protection every 18 months rather than receiving a stable five-year grant. Each review represents a further occasion on which an individual's status, and therefore their entitlement to services, must be re-evidenced to landlords, employers, schools, and

84 Home Office, **Evaluation of the Initiatives to Enhance the Move On Process**.

85 Home Office, **Evaluation of the Initiatives to Enhance the Move On Process**.

healthcare providers. The evidence mentioned in this inquiry indicates that this kind of repeated requirement to prove status already causes significant practical difficulty even under current arrangements, with eVisa errors, delays in updating share codes, and confusion among service providers routinely preventing individuals who are legally entitled to a service from being able to demonstrate that entitlement. Extending the standard route to settlement from five to ten years compounds this problem further, as it substantially increases the total number of renewal points at which these failures can occur over the course of a single person's journey to settlement. The cumulative effect is that a person may hold a clear legal right to access a service in principle, while being unable in practice to prove that right at the point of need — a gap between entitlement and access that this inquiry's evidence suggests is likely to widen as the frequency of status reviews increases.

Our previous inquiry found that fear of being charged, incurring debt or having personal data shared with immigration enforcement deterred some migrants from accessing public services. The evidence received by this inquiry suggests that the proposed reforms could intensify these concerns by increasing the number of status reviews and renewal points, raising the risk of individuals falling out of status and making them less likely to access services for fear of coming to the attention of immigration enforcement. Central England Law Centre raised concerns about the proposals to include NHS debt as a barrier to settlement, warning that this could deter people from seeking healthcare and potentially lead to poorer health outcomes and higher long-term costs for the NHS.

Asylum seekers and many resettled refugees have little or no control over where they are placed, and are frequently moved between accommodations at short notice and without meaningful consultation. This instability makes it significantly harder for families to access the services to which they are entitled on a consistent basis: children face repeated disruption to their schooling, losing relationships with teachers and peers at critical stages of their education, while adults are unable to build the continuity of care with a GP, hospital, or mental health provider that effective treatment, particularly for those managing the long-term effects of trauma, depends upon.

4.6 Communities and Integration

The evidence received by this inquiry on the theme of communities and integration suggests that the proposed reforms risk not only failing to support integration but actively undermining it. The Government's own Social Cohesion Action Plan commits to "removing barriers to participation to support community cohesion and integration"[86] — yet the evidence received by this inquiry suggests that the proposed reforms would, in practice, create and entrench precisely the barriers that commitment seeks to remove. Across submissions, we heard that secure immigration status is a prerequisite, not a reward, for successful integration, and that policies which extend uncertainty, increase financial precarity, and raise requirements without providing the means to meet them are more likely to produce isolation, exclusion, and community fragmentation than the cohesion the Government states as its aim.

A central theme across the evidence received was that integration cannot be meaningfully pursued from a position of profound insecurity. Submissions emphasised that ILR is the foundation of security and stability for people wishing to build their lives in the UK, and a precondition for well-integrated, strong communities. The Centre for Care warned that the new proposals create a group of people who are on temporary status in the long term and existing in a state of impermanence that is fundamentally incompatible with the conditions

86 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, **Protecting What Matters: Towards a More Confident, Cohesive and Resilient United Kingdom**

necessary for integration to take root. Crisis observed that longer waits for settlement create insecurity and instability that make it harder for migrants to establish themselves, find secure and well-paid employment, and progress in work or study, and that the incentive to learn English, find work, study, and contribute to British society is diminished when people believe they may only be in the country temporarily.

The British Red Cross drew particular attention to the impact of 30-month core protection reviews on refugees' mental health and capacity to integrate. Repeated reviews of asylum cases risk retraumatising refugees, damaging their mental health, and hindering their ability to make the long-term plans on which integration depends. They also noted this could be most acutely felt by children, whose sense of stability and belonging is especially sensitive to the insecurity of their family's immigration situation. This is supported by evidence from the Changing Realities participatory research project, which documented consistent themes of fear and uncertainty among migrant and asylum-seeking families, with children growing up without equal access to social activities, sports, and community life, and being treated differently from their peers purely based on immigration status despite living in the same communities.

> *"When my children were in primary school, they were asked to pay about £250 for a 3- day residential. As an asylum seeker, I could not afford it. This tore us as a family apart, and they felt excluded as their classmates excitedly went. This reinforces a sense of separation and impacted their sense of belonging far beyond the three days of holiday. Financial barriers show how school activities are not accessible for people living below the poverty line."*

The No Recourse North East Partnership submitted research showing that secure residence status is a recognised prerequisite for social integration, and that the financial consequences of NRPF compound this directly: low-income families subject to NRPF were around twice as likely as other low-income families to go without essential travel, with cascading consequences including inability to attend medical appointments or job interviews, and children being unable to maintain the everyday social interactions through which friendships, trust, and a sense of shared belonging are built.

COSLA noted that lower incomes for migrant households similarly reduce their ability to attend community events, groups, and activities, leading to greater levels of isolation and exclusion and warned that several of the proposed changes, including the increased use of NRPF conditions and the 30-month core protection model, act as direct barriers to the integration work in which Scottish local authorities have invested significantly through developing frameworks such as the New Scots Strategy.

While submissions broadly acknowledged the value of English language proficiency as an important component of integration, they noted that the proposed requirements are being introduced without the investment in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision needed to make them achievable. The inquiry heard that raising requirements without commensurate investment in provision risks transforming what is presented as an integration measure into an exclusion mechanism.

Bolton Council identified the core risk as a growing gap between expectation and access. ESOL services are already under severe strain, with long waiting lists, limited higher-level courses, and inconsistent funding. Achieving B2 level requires sustained, high-quality provision over an extended period — not short-term courses — yet further education colleges face shortages of qualified ESOL tutors and limited capacity to expand at the level required. The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in early engagement and informal learning, but is not equipped to deliver accredited B2 provision, creating a risk that learners can begin their ESOL journey but cannot progress beyond it. In addition, the Central England Law Centre argued that raising the language requirement to B2 risks discriminating against applicants who may have been prevented from accessing literacy in their own language — for whom the barrier is not motivation or commitment but structural exclusion from education throughout their lives.This concern is reinforced by research from the

Centre for Care at the University of Sheffield which found that current ESOL provision is inadequate for many refugees to achieve even a basic A1 or A2 level of English, let alone the B2 level now required for settlement. This is in part because ESOL classes assume full literacy in any language, yet older refugees in particular may never have had access to formal education even in their first language and require foundational literacy support that the current system does not offer. One research participant from the Centre for Care, Barika, aged in her fifties, described the experience of attending ESOL classes without basic literacy skills:

> *"As an old person, you feel shame and you wonder: if only I had gone to school early [in life], these young students would not be laughing at me. You can find in class someone who does not know even how to write their name and you get a teacher who is impatient and talks very fast."*

The Helen Bamber Foundation and Miri et al. both highlighted the particular impact of the B2 requirement on older refugees, those who lost access to education due to displacement or conflict, and those who already face barriers to language learning such as caring responsibilities, limited childcare, travel costs, and digital exclusion. Without publicly funded language support at the required level, the B2 threshold risks functioning as a poverty and exclusion barrier rather than an integration measure, disproportionately disadvantaging lower-income refugees and restricting access to higher education, skilled employment, and long-term integration. Furthermore, Citizens Advice Scotland drew attention to the cumulative financial burden already faced by those seeking settlement, including the £3,226 ILR fee, visa renewals every two and a half years, and the Immigration Health Surcharge.[87] They warned that adding the cost of advanced language tuition to this burden risks pushing lower-income households into poverty and making settlement practically unachievable regardless of commitment or length of residence.

4.7 Direct Immigration and Nationality Costs

> *"With such financial worries, the cost of living, even now going into winter and worrying about paying for heating, the financial aspect of my immigration status is also a real worry. I hear constant news reports about the increase to immigration fees and I know that I can't afford them."* GMIAU service user, written evidence.

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry identified immigration fees and repeated applications as important contributors to financial hardship among migrant households. Evidence submitted to this inquiry suggests that recent fee increases and the proposed extension of settlement pathways could further intensify these pressures.

The financial burden of immigration fees on migrant households has increased considerably since 2024, and the evidence submitted to this inquiry indicates that further proposed changes would compound this burden significantly for lower-income households. The Immigration Health Surcharge increased by 66% between 2020 and 2024, rising to £1,035 per year in February 2024.[88] For a sponsored skilled worker applying for a three-year visa, this increased the surcharge from £1,872 to £3,105, while for a family of four it rose from £6,564 to £10,866. These costs must be paid upfront in addition to visa application fees. The ILR fee, which stood at £2,885 following the October 2023 increases, rose to £3,029 in April 2025 and increased again to £3,226 per applicant from 8 April 2026.[89] As a result, a family of four now faces ILR application fees of almost £13,000 (£12,904) before accounting for additional costs such as the Life in the UK Test, English language tests, document translation and legal advice. Such costs are likely to be unaffordable for many lower-income households without recourse to savings or credit.

87 **Home Office Immigration and Nationality Fees: 8 April 2026**, Home Office, 18 March 2026.

88 **UK Immigration Fees, House of Commons Library**, CJ McKinney and Esme Kirk-Wade, 13 February 2026.

89 Home Office, **Home Office Immigration and Nationality Fees: 8 April 2026**

Evidence submitted to the APPG highlighted how longer routes to settlement, combined with repeated visa renewals and rising immigration costs, can trap migrants in a cycle of poverty. Under the proposed reforms, migrants would be subject to NRPF for extended periods and required to pay recurring visa application fees every two and a half years. Each renewal represents a further point at which fees must be found, meaning that the more times a person is required to renew their status over an extended settlement pathway, the more they must pay in total and increasing the likelihood that they will fall into debt to meet these costs, or fall out of status altogether if they are unable to do so. According to the Migration Observatory, a parent and child on the ten-year route to settlement face cumulative immigration costs of more than £40,000, including repeated visa application fees, Immigration Health Surcharge payments, and settlement and citizenship fees.[90] For lower-income workers and larger families, these cumulative costs can be particularly burdensome, leaving them more vulnerable to everyday financial shocks such as illness, loss of income, changes in employment, family breakdown, and rent increases. The need to repeatedly save substantial sums for immigration applications can prevent households from building financial resilience, while those who borrow to meet these costs risk accumulating debt with each renewal cycle. This could entrench poverty and financial insecurity during precisely the period in which migrants are expected to demonstrate economic contribution, self-sufficiency and integration into British society.

A participant in RMJ's research described the practical impact that repeatedly saving for immigration fees can have on family life:

> *"Parents are going to work all the time to make the money to pay the Home Office. So, you're having absent parents. When they come back home, they're exhausted. Where is the time to sit and do homework with your child? Where is the time to check on your child's welfare? Where is the time to invite your friends around, or your children's friends? Where is the time to plan activities with your children at the weekend, because you're probably taking up shifts and on public holidays, because it's double pay or time and a half. So, you see, the parents are burning the candle at both ends, and the children suffer."*

The inquiry also received consistent evidence raising concerns about the retrospective application of the proposed settlement reforms. Respondents argued that many migrants came to the UK with a legitimate expectation, based on the rules in place at the time, that they would be eligible for settlement after five years. On that basis, they made significant personal and financial commitments, including relocating their families, leaving employment, and incurring substantial migration-related costs. Migrants at Work highlighted the significant upfront costs that some workers incur before arriving in the UK, including visa fees, relocation costs and, in some cases, unlawful recruitment charges. In one case, a worker and his wife paid £20,000 for a Certificate of Sponsorship, financed by selling a family home and borrowing from a moneylender. These workers came to the UK having made enormous personal and financial sacrifices, based on a clear set of rules about the path to settlement. To retrospectively extend that path, after the debt has been incurred, the house sold, and the family uprooted, would change the expectations on which many people planned their lives and invested in their future in the UK.

The evidence submitted to this inquiry suggests that the impacts of a prolonged route to settlement are already well understood. Research by IPPR, Praxis and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit on the existing ten-year route found that more than half of those on this pathway struggle to afford essential living costs, while nearly half have incurred debt to pay immigration fees.

90 **Q&A: Immigration Fees in the UK, Migration Observatory**, University of Oxford, 5 June 2026.

Research by IPPR, Praxis and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit on the existing ten-year route found that 62% of those surveyed struggled to afford utility bills and 57% struggled to afford food, while 41% said they had to borrow money. A further 46% said that the costs associated with applying for leave to remain meant that they had decided not to renew their leave to remain or that of someone else in their household.[91] Making a ten-year route the norm would extend these pressures to a much larger population. A longer pathway to settlement also increases the period during which migrants remain subject to immigration restrictions, including NRPF conditions, leaving households more exposed to financial shocks, rising living costs, and periods of reduced income without access to the support available to others in similar circumstances. Taken together, the evidence received by the inquiry indicates that extending settlement routes is likely to increase both the financial and administrative burdens associated with the immigration system, compounding rather than resolving the poverty risks identified in the 2024 inquiry.

91 A Punishing Process: Experiences of People on the 10-Year Route to Settlement, Institute for Public Policy Research, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and Praxis, March 2023.

5. Recommendations

Our 2024 inquiry set out a substantial body of recommendations concerning the relationship between immigration policy, poverty and destitution. Those recommendations were informed by a number of overarching principles, including the importance of reducing poverty and destitution, supporting integration and participation, and ensuring that the impacts of policy are fully understood across government and public services. The APPGs consider these principles to remain relevant, and the evidence received by this follow-up inquiry suggests that many of those recommendations remain relevant and, in some cases, have become more urgent in light of the Government's proposed reforms.

The recommendations that follow therefore both reaffirm key findings from the 2024 report and set out additional measures in response to the specific changes proposed. A list of our original key recommendations is included in the appendix. As several of the proposed changes remain subject to consultation and have generated significant public and stakeholder debate, we hope that the Home Office will give careful consideration to the recommendations set out in this report as it develops its response to the consultation and finalises its proposals

1. Immigration routes

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry recommended that no route to settlement should exceed five years and that existing longer routes should be shortened and simplified in order to reduce the costs, complexity and administrative barriers associated with the immigration system. The proposed reforms would move in the opposite direction by making a route to settlement of ten years or more the default for most migrants.

The APPGs therefore reaffirm our 2024 recommendation that routes to settlement should be simplified and shortened, and urge the Government to reconsider the proposed extension of settlement timelines in light of the evidence received. In particular, we recommend that any changes should not be applied retrospectively to people who are already living in the UK on a route to settlement and who have made life decisions on the basis of the existing rules.

2. Fees and costs

Our 2024 report recommended reducing immigration-related fees for lower-income households, particularly children and young people on routes to settlement and citizenship, simplifying and expanding access to fee waivers, and reviewing the Immigration Health Surcharge.

These recommendations remain highly relevant. While the White Paper commits to considering measures to reduce financial barriers to citizenship for young adults who have grown up in the UK, which is welcome, no further proposals have been published.

Given that longer settlement pathways, repeated visa renewals and rising immigration costs are likely to increase financial hardship, we also reaffirm our recommendation to simplify and expand access to fee waivers, shorten routes to settlement, and reduce recent increases in the Immigration Health Surcharge and wider immigration fees.

3. Social security and welfare support

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry recommended that immigration policy should not contribute to long-term poverty or destitution, and that restrictions on access to support should be strictly time-limited for those on a route to settlement.

Evidence submitted to this inquiry suggests that the proposed reforms risk moving in the opposite direction, with concerns that extending NRPF conditions and penalising the use of public funds could deepen hardship and deter families from accessing support to which they are entitled. The APPGs therefore reaffirm our 2024 recommendations on social security and welfare support, and recommend that NRPF conditions should not apply for more than five years or continue beyond settlement.

Our previous report highlighted the need for the government to take account of the costs that immigration and social security policies place on local government. The Home Office should publish the full evidence base underpinning its projected fiscal savings of £10 billion so that it can be properly scrutinised and understood. Without this transparency, there is a risk that families are penalised and costs are pushed onto local authorities without any assurance that the savings to the Treasury will, in practice, be realised.

In addition, we recommend that the Home Office should publish comprehensive data on the number of people, including children, currently subject to NRPF conditions. Given the Government's commitment to reducing child poverty, it is important that the scale and impact of NRPF on children and families can be properly assessed and monitored.

4. Housing

In our 2024 report, we recommended accessible homelessness prevention measures, improved support for people with NRPF, a 56-day refugee move-on period, and longer-term housing planning. These recommendations remain relevant, as the proposed move towards temporary refugee protection and the replacement of the duty to accommodate destitute asylum seekers with a discretionary power risk increasing housing insecurity.

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry recommended extending the move-on period to 56 days; the Government has set it at 42 days. In practice, this is often further reduced, as the period is calculated from the immigration decision rather than the discontinuation notice, which typically arrives two weeks later. The APPGs recommend that the move-on period only begin once all relevant documents, including the discontinuation notice, have been issued, so that the stated period reflects the time genuinely available in practice. The Government should monitor and publish an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 42-day move-on period, including its impact on homelessness, destitution and refugees' ability to secure suitable accommodation and access essential services.

5. Public services

The APPGs reaffirm our 2024 recommendation that legal entitlements to public services must be matched by genuine access in practice. Evidence submitted to this inquiry suggests that longer settlement routes could widen the gap between entitlement and access by increasing the number of occasions on which individuals must evidence their status and by discouraging some people from accessing support to which they are entitled.

We also reaffirm our recommendation that services for children and young people, including early years

provision and post-16 further education, should be available regardless of immigration status, particularly given the likelihood that the proposed reforms will leave many children in prolonged periods of immigration insecurity.

6. Communities and Integration

Our 2024 report recommended simplifying access to ESOL provision and making it free at the point of delivery for all UK residents, regardless of immigration status. Evidence received by this inquiry suggests that raising English language requirements without a corresponding expansion in ESOL provision risks creating additional barriers to integration, reinforcing the need to improve and widen access to free English language support.

7. Conclusion

The APPGs' 2024 inquiry concluded that immigration policy could not be considered in isolation from wider efforts to reduce poverty, prevent homelessness, support integration, and improve public services. It found that restrictions within the immigration system were contributing to poverty and destitution among some migrant households, while shifting costs and pressures onto local authorities, charities and other public services. The evidence received by this follow-up inquiry suggests that many of those concerns remain unresolved and that, in several important respects, current proposals move in the opposite direction to the approach recommended in 2024.

The evidence submitted by local authorities, charities, researchers, healthcare professionals, legal practitioners and people with lived experience was strikingly consistent in the concerns it raised. Many submissions described the human consequences of prolonged insecurity, poverty and exclusion from support. The evidence highlighted the difficult choices faced by families, refugees, survivors of abuse, and others navigating financial hardship while seeking to build stable lives in the UK.

Beyond these human impacts, the inquiry also identified significant practical concerns. Across multiple policy areas, respondents argued that the proposed reforms risk undermining the objectives of other areas of Government policy. Evidence suggested that longer settlement pathways and extended NRPF conditions could make it more difficult to achieve the Government's ambitions on child poverty reduction. Similarly, concerns were raised that proposals affecting refugee support, asylum accommodation and access to housing could conflict with wider efforts to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. Furthermore, the proposed reforms contradict the Government's Social Cohesion Action Plan by extending settlement routes, increasing financial insecurity, raising language requirements without corresponding investment, and creating barriers to integration that the Plan seeks to remove. The inquiry also heard evidence that increased financial insecurity may place additional pressure on local authorities, health services, schools, homelessness services and the voluntary sector.

The concerns identified by this inquiry have also been reflected in reports by both the House of Lords Home Affairs and Justice Committee and the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, demonstrating a broad measure of cross-party concern across both Houses about the potential impacts of the proposed reforms. In particular, both committees raised concerns that extending routes to settlement would increase poverty, especially child poverty, by prolonging exposure to high immigration costs and delaying access to settled status. The Lords Committee found that the changes being proposed "will have a significant impact on children, likely delaying settlement for many, with associated negative outcomes such as poverty,

poor health, and reduced access to opportunities,"[92] while the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee concluded that the proposed changes "will very likely increase child poverty, and the harms resulting from child poverty,".[93] Both committees also highlighted the risk that families unable to afford renewal fees could fall out of legal status altogether, a concern this inquiry has documented in detail. Both committees also echoed concerns raised by this inquiry about the wider implications of the proposals. They questioned whether the reforms would achieve their intended fiscal objectives, warning that they could deter highly skilled workers and fail to account for wider economic impacts. They also concluded that longer routes to settlement and repeated status reviews would undermine integration by reducing migrants' security and ability to make long-term decisions about work, housing and family life, while highlighting the need for stronger English language provision. In addition, the Lords Committee expressed concern about the retrospective application of the reforms, concluding that changing the rules for people who had planned their lives around the existing settlement framework would be unfair.

The recommendations made by both committees further reinforce the case set out in this report. The House of Lords Home Affairs and Justice Committee recommended against extending the baseline qualifying period for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) to ten, fifteen or twenty years, instead proposing that the Government retain the current five-year route to settlement while separating ILR from access to public funds. The APPGs agree that the five-year baseline for settlement should be retained. However, we maintain our original recommendation that NRPF conditions should be strictly time-limited, with no one on a route to settlement subject to NRPF for more than five years or at any point after settlement has been granted.

The Lords Committee also recommended that any changes to ILR rules should not apply retrospectively to those already on a qualifying route, and called for a national strategy to increase ESOL provision so that supply meets demand — both recommendations that this inquiry has made independently and on the basis of consistent evidence. The Commons Home Affairs Select Committee similarly recommended that the Government conduct and publish an assessment of the impact on child poverty of its planned changes to settlement routes before finalising and implementing them, a step this inquiry strongly recommends and called on the Home Office to review barriers to citizenship registration for children and young adults, including reducing fees to the administrative cost of processing applications.The consistency between the findings of this inquiry and those of two separate parliamentary committees, reached independently across both Houses, demonstrates a broad measure of parliamentary concern about the proposed reforms.

The inquiry also heard substantial evidence questioning whether the proposed reforms are likely to achieve their stated objectives. Witnesses noted uncertainty regarding the fiscal assumptions underpinning projected savings from the reforms and highlighted the potential for costs to be displaced elsewhere within the public sector. The inquiry received limited evidence that extending settlement routes or restricting access to support would act as a significant deterrent to migration, particularly given recent reductions in work visa numbers and the absence of clear evidence that welfare entitlements are a significant factor in decisions relating to irregular migration.

As in 2024, the APPGs remain concerned that policies which increase poverty, destitution, homelessness or insecurity may ultimately generate wider social and economic costs while making it more difficult for people to integrate, contribute and participate fully in society. The evidence received by this inquiry suggests that immigration policy cannot be divorced from broader objectives relating to poverty reduction, public service

92 **Settlement, Citizenship and Integration**, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, House of Lords, HL Paper 13, 23 June 2026

93 **Earned Settlement: Examining the Government's Proposed Reforms**, Home Affairs Committee, House of Commons, HC 1409, 13 March 2026.

delivery, economic participation, community cohesion and social inclusion.

The recommendations contained in this report are therefore intended not only to address the direct impacts of the proposed reforms on migrants and refugees, but also to support the Government's wider objectives across a range of policy areas. The APPGs believe that immigration policy is most effective when it operates in a way that promotes stability, supports integration, and is aligned with broader efforts to reduce poverty, prevent homelessness and strengthen communities. We hope that the Government will carefully consider the evidence presented in this inquiry and the recommendations we set out.

Appendix

Recommendations from the APPG on Migration and APPG on Poverty Joint Inquiry Report, The Effects of UK Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Policy on Poverty, April 2024"

The following recommendations were made by the APPGs in their 2024 joint inquiry report. They are reproduced here in full as the basis against which the findings and recommendations of this 2026 follow-up inquiry should be read. The recommendations set out in the 2024 report are considerably more detailed and wide-ranging than the headline summaries reproduced here. For reasons of space, only the principal recommendation under each theme has been included in this appendix. The recommendations set out in this report reflect those most directly relevant to the policy changes examined in this inquiry and the concerns raised in the evidence received.The full recommendations are set out in the original report, which is available to download from the APPG on Migration and APPG on Poverty and Inequality websites.

Immigration routes

- People migrating to the UK should have clear and relatively short routes to permanent settlement and citizenship, should be able to expect prompt and correct decisions on their applications, and should be able to easily prove their immigration status.
- Routes to settlement and citizenship should be shortened, and the number of points in the process which require additional applications and fees should be reviewed.
- No legal route to settlement in the UK should take more than 5 years. In particular, the current '10-year route' should be reduced to 5 years.

Fees and costs

- Reducing the burden of fees and costs for some immigration routes and groups would directly reduce poverty in the short term, and increase the ability of migrants to integrate and thrive in the medium-long term.
- Immigration and nationality fees should be reviewed with the aim of reducing costs for lower income households who are already resident in the UK in particular (i.e. with a focus on in-country applications). This review should include consideration of the costs which are imposed on local government and civil society by the current system of fees (e.g. costs of support for people stuck on the 10-year route as a result of prohibitive ILR fees, for which there is no fee waiver).
- Given the higher costs faced by families, and the higher rates of poverty among families with children, a priority change should be to reduce fees to cost price for children and young people who are on a path to settlement and British citizenship.
- Eligibility for fee waivers should be widened to include applications for indefinite leave to remain and citizenship.
- Fee waivers should be automatically extended to those who have had NRPF conditions lifted on the grounds of destitution and those in receipt of support from local authorities.
- The health surcharge has risen very rapidly in real terms since its introduction, and a re-examination of its impact would therefore be timely. This should inform a review of how the health surcharge is

set and applied, including possible wider use of existing exemptions for those on lower incomes. Regardless of changes to routes to settlement (see above), nobody should be required to pay the health surcharge for more than five years.

Employment

- Access to good work with fair pay, is essential for lifting people out of poverty and for enabling migrants to establish themselves in their new home. Immigration policy should move away from restrictions on rights to work, and government should take steps to ensure that all workers can secure their employment rights, including the minimum wage.
- Employees may also struggle to secure their rights (including to fair pay) if visa conditions restrict their ability to move employers. Immigration routes for work should be reviewed to ensure that it is as easy as possible for visa holders to change employers. This should include the provision of better information about the register of sponsoring employers so that visa holders can easily identify alternative employment in particular sectors or regions.
- Labour market rights need to be enforced, and migrants face particular barriers to securing their rights through enforcement action. In particular, there need to be clear firewalls between labour market enforcement and immigration enforcement. Government should also consider how enforcement action can be taken against exploitative agencies and employers who overcharge migrant workers for visa fees and other costs.

Social security and welfare support

- Immigration rules should not consign people to long-term poverty, or to destitution. Social security and welfare support systems should aim to 'design out' destitution, and ensure that restricted entitlements are strictly time-limited for those on a path to settlement in the UK. In considering social security policy and entitlements, national government must take account of the costs which are incurred by local government.
- Receiving refugee status should not push people into destitution. The 'move-on' period should be extended from 28 to 56 days, not least to allow for the built-in 35-day wait period for Universal Credit.
- Regardless of any changes to immigration routes (see above), nobody on a path to settlement and citizenship should be subject to NRPF conditions for more than five years.
- Destitution and deep poverty could also be reduced by removing benefits that are designed to support children (including Child Benefit and the Healthy Start scheme) from the definition of 'public funds' for the purposes of NRPF restrictions, as recommended by the Work and Pensions Select Committee.
- Similarly, discretionary and emergency welfare support should be removed from the definition of 'public funds' to allow local authorities to more easily support those who face extreme poverty.
- NRPF policies are also placing heavy burdens on local government, and impacting their ability to support both people subject to NRPF conditions and other vulnerable groups. Central government should provide full funding to cover the costs incurred by local authorities who provide support to NRPF households under homelessness and social care duties, and the Home Office should prioritise case resolution (including fee waivers) for vulnerable people receiving long-term support

from local authorities.

Public services

- Entitlements to public services do not guarantee access in practice, and those living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to exclusion from public services. Access to consistent and reliable proof of immigration status is essential, and destitution can present immediate barriers to accessing services.
- Data sharing between public services (in particular the NHS) and the Home Office should be reviewed, with the objective of reducing barriers to people accessing the services to which they are entitled.
- Given both the higher rates of poverty among families with children, and the long-term impacts of poverty on children, there is a strong case for ensuring that all services for children and young people, including early years provision and post-16 Further Education, are available regardless of immigration status.

Housing

- Immigration policy clearly places some groups of people at increased risk of homelessness, and unable to access support to prevent this. As with destitution, policy should seek to prevent homelessness in the UK, regardless of immigration status.
- This should include a new approach to procuring asylum accommodation, based on partnerships with local and regional governments, with a focus on integration support that enables newly-recognised refugees to quickly and smoothly access employment and integrate into communities.
- The 'move-on period' for newly-recognised refugees should also be extended to 56 days, in line with normal timescales for sourcing accommodation. All resettlement and humanitarian schemes need to include a medium-long term plan for housing, based on a dialogue with local authorities.

Communities and integration

- Local government, civil society and local communities have a crucial role to play in ensuring that all those who move to the UK are able to integrate, thrive and contribute. At the moment they are all too often 'picking up the pieces' when it comes to migration and poverty, but examples of innovation and good practice (including community sponsorship of refugees) show that communities can be part of the solution.
- National government should work in partnership with devolved, regional and local government to develop a comprehensive refugee integration and support strategy.This should include a review of support provided by local authorities across the various recent resettlement schemes, with a focus on learning and consolidation.
- Entitlements, funding and access to ESOL provision should be simplified. Given the essential role of English language skills, there is a strong argument for making this provision free at the point of delivery for all UK residents, regardless of immigration status.

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