



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd June 2020

See Comment,

RE: POINTS-BASED IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Government's policy of introducing a points-based immigration system; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

When people voted to leave the European Union (EU), they did so in the knowledge that the free-movement system imposed by the EU would end. The Home Secretary has been clear that she has a particular responsibility to take back control and bring an end to free-movement once and for all. To do this, the Government has introduced the *Immigration & Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill* in the House of Commons. This Bill will end free-movement and provide the Government full control of our borders for the first time in many decades.

I welcome the Government's commitment to building a fairer, single, global immigration system, which considers people based on their skills, rather than their nationality. The Home Office has now released a policy statement outlining that it will replace free-movement with the UK's very own points-based system. This new system will prioritise those with the highest skills and greatest talents, including scientists, engineers, academics and innovators, but I also understand it will be responsive to the needs there are in our economy.

I have always believed that the new system is about more than simply controlling immigration. I am glad that the Government has committed to reducing the overall levels of migration, while still ensuring we attract the best and brightest from across the world. This process is also about the creation of a high wage, high skill, high productivity economy. This ambition explains why the Government does not intend to introduce a general low-skilled or temporary work route.

I completely understand concerns regarding the impact of our withdrawal from the European Union on foreign nationals working in the NHS, and I would like to pay tribute to the tireless work that our doctors and nurses perform - not least the role of those doctors and nurses who have come from overseas to provide us all with our world-leading National Health Service.

That is why I welcome the Government's repeated and explicit commitment that all EU nationals working in the UK will be able to remain in the country with the same rights as they enjoy today.



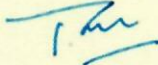
Clearly, we all recognise that EU citizens are an important part of the economic, cultural and social fabric of our country and their rights needed to be secured. A new settled status scheme under UK law is being introduced for EU citizens and their family members, covered by the *Withdrawal Agreement*. This ensures that EU nationals can continue to perform their vital roles across a whole range of sectors, but in particular within the health and social care sector.

Recent NHS workforce statistics show that, far from the referendum result encouraging EU nationals working in the NHS to leave our country, there are over 4,300 more EU nationals working in the NHS than there were in June 2016. I would also note that the proportion of our NHS workforce made up by EU nationals has risen to 5.6 percent, up from 3.1 percent in 2010.

Related to this, in recent weeks the issue of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) has been a topic of debate, and it is very welcome that work is already underway, involving the Department of Health & Social Care and the Home Office, to ensure healthcare workers from overseas are exempt from paying the IHS in light of the enormous contribution they make, as so vividly demonstrated during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Government Whip attached to the Home Office, I have been very involved with delivering this welcome change and the full details and proposed implementation of the Government's decision, to include all NHS workers as well as staff in independent and social care settings, will be announced shortly.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**