

Keep Britain at **#FullStrength** We need a global workforce

17 July 2019

Dear Boris and Jeremy,

Collectively, we represent tens of thousands of employers representing millions of workers from every corner of the UK, across all sectors, from small employers and start-ups to large multinationals.

We are, as a coalition of business and education bodies, hugely concerned that unless positive action is taken now, the proposed future immigration system risks exacerbating the UK's already chronic skills and labour shortages and could cripple a number of businesses across sectors.

The next Prime Minister must keep the UK at **#FullStrength**. Our country needs a fair and managed immigration system that keeps it open to all levels of talent that our economy and local services sorely need. It is crucial that this system recognises the benefits of international talent whilst ensuring the right controls are in place for managing immigration more effectively - necessary for ensuring the public's trust.

The latest immigration figures show that net long-term migration from the EU has continued to fall since 2016, and multiple surveys have shown that skills and labour shortages are making it harder than ever for employers in all corners of the country to fill vacancies. While the Immigration White Paper in December 2018 made some business-friendly proposals, more needs to be done.

In response to the White Paper, we are calling for the Home Office to keep the UK open to talent at all levels. We need:

1. A lower salary threshold – bringing down the proposed £30,000 to around £20,000 so that it is in line with the proposed skills threshold and the labour market;
2. A two-year temporary work route – extending this from one year, with the ability for workers to switch onto other routes, such as a skilled visa, while in the UK;
3. A reformed sponsorship model – reducing the costs of using the system and making payments more flexible to work for SMEs, with endorsing bodies able to sponsor freelancers and self-employed workers;
4. Mobility of talent – by reinstating the two-year post-study visa for international students, extending the current youth mobility scheme to include EU citizens, and creating an improved 90-day business visitor visa.

Our members are already investing significantly in skills, and support vital apprenticeships as a way of training the next generation. But without the ability to access international talent, many of our world-class sectors are at significant risk.

As the UK prepares to leave the EU in the near future, it is imperative that the Government puts in place measures that will avoid employers facing a cliff edge in recruitment, and works towards building a successful economy that is open and attractive.

We would like to meet you in the coming weeks to discuss how we can keep the UK at **#FullStrength**.

Yours,

David Camp, Chief Executive, Association of Labour Providers
Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive, British Retail Consortium
Dom Hallas, Executive Director, Coalition for a Digital Economy (Coadec)
Brian Berry, Chief Executive, Federation of Master Builders
Charlotte Crosswell, Chief Executive, Innovate Finance
Jasmine Whitbread, Chief Executive, London First
Emma Degg, Chief Executive, North West Business Leadership Team
Neil Carberry, Chief Executive, Recruitment and Employers Confederation
Julian David, Chief Executive, techUK
Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive, UKHospitality
Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive, Universities UK

CC: Sajid Javid, Home Secretary

CC: Greg Clark, Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy Secretary

