

## 5 Year strategy on immigration and asylum

**T**he Government has launched their new strategy on immigration and asylum on the 19th July 2005 for consultation until 7th November 2005. The new strategy was actually out before the general election however with very little detail until now.

The Guardian newspaper reported, on the 20th July, that the changes in the immigration will have a wide impact on all migrations to Britain except for the very wealthy and the highly skilled workers (top tier) with a job offer, will be allowed to stay and to be joined by their families. No details have yet been identified as "top-tier" but the current scheme shows that a high proportion are doctors, or earners with an average salary of more than £45,000.

These changes only have an impact on migrants coming from outside the EU. The EU governments are already bound by treaty obligations to allow free movement of labour as well as goods and capital within the EU's borders. For UNISON migrant members, it will be mainly our pub-



lic sectors and care workers such as teachers, nurses and cleaners. This group of workers are not considered as 'highly skilled' and will be more likely to be in lower tiers.

Here are just some points on what the 5 year strategy will mean:

- To replace the work permit system, the government is putting in its place a five tier points-based system. There is also a proposal to hold "green card" style monthly auctions of work permits in non-shortage areas.
- Biometric residence permits (ID card) issued to all foreign migrant workers without which they cannot work or access services. (This will be compulsory in comparison to indigenous population that have an option to carry an ID card)

college with authorisation to inform Home Office if they fail to attend. (There is no option of being sick or disabled.)

- Only the top two tiers of workers are allowed to bring families to Britain or have a chance to settle in Britain after 5 years. (It will remain that all groups of migrant workers will not be able to access public funding despite of having to pay full income tax and national insurance, increasing from 4 to 5 years)

- Low skilled migrants will have part of their wages compulsorily withheld until they return home. Employers would pay part of the wages of migrants on temporary work schemes into a bank account in their home country, which the workers could access once they returned home. (There is no recourse if on return; the worker found that their employer failed to 'banked' the wages that were deducted.)

To access the full report, on website:

[http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws\\_\\_policy/consultation/documents/current consultations.html](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws__policy/consultation/documents/current consultations.html)

Keith Best, of the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) banded this as 'very intrusive' and stated that this is part of a package that is designed to ensure that businesses, employers and colleagues act as unpaid immigration officers to tackle the problem of overstayers.



Tony McNulty, Immigration Minister

**"We will ensure..... we only admit those who meet our criteria that people stick to the terms of their leave to enter while they are here and leave when they are supposed to"**

- All but the "top-tier" migrants to have a sponsor with some asked to deposit a financial bond against their departure. (This is bonded labour!)
- Overseas students to be certified to attend a specific course at a specific

*5 Years strategy on immigration and asylum continued*

The Home Office also announced that from 30th August 2005, those who are granted refugee status would no longer be given permission to remain indefinitely.

Instead they will be allowed to stay for 5 years and then face an official review of risk of persecution they face.

The Refugee Council stated that this change would leave those fleeing persecution in a cruel limbo unable to plan for the future.

The Immigration minister, Tony McNulty, said that the points based migration system was designed to ensure that the public had the confidence to see that it was properly run with strict controls that worked. "We will ensure the new system is underpinned by measures to ensure we only admit those who meet our criteria that people stick to the terms of their leave to enter while they are here and leave when they are supposed to".

In April at the 7th ILO European Regional meeting in Budapest the Worker representative, on behalf of the trade union movement of Europe, stated, "Labour is not a commodity, and migration is a human and labour market issue. Immigration policies should ideally be developed through social dialogue"

It is important that you are aware of these changes, its impact on your own situation and response to the government consultation. There is also a 39 question consultation document that you can download or submit electronically to:

Pointsbased.consultation@ind.homeoffice.gov.uk or by post to:

**Managed Migration Customer Service Team**

PO BOX 3468  
Sheffield  
S3 8WA

Fax: 0114 259 3776

You can write about your concern to:

- Directly to your Member of Parliament, Houses of Parliament, London (you can find out who your MP is in your local library)
- Or directly to Tony McNulty at the Houses of Parliament, London.

You should bring these changes to the attention of your union branches. And get a friend to do the same, but remember there is solidarity in number so join a trade union, join UNISON.

*Sofi Taylor, Overseas Nurses Network*

## A date for your diary!

The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) organises the St Andrew's Day march Against Racism and Fascism every year on St Andrew's day, the Patron Saint of Scotland. This year it will be on the 26th November 2005. The format will be a traditional march through the streets of Glasgow with a celebratory event that will appeals to young people and families.

The arrangement are:

March assembles	10.30am Blythswood Square, Glasgow
March off	11.00am Blythswood Square, Glasgow
March arrives	12.00 noons Trades Hall, Glassford Street
Festival	12.00 noons to 4.00pm Trades Hall

The event in the Trade Hall will have a range of activities, including:

- Food and hot snacks to purchase
- Soft drinks, hot drinks and beverages available from a bar
- Music
- Solidarity stalls
- Children's games and activities
- Art display

The march is suitable for all ages and usually take time to include all who take part in it however if you are taking very young children, it is best to bring a push chair, and for the elderly and disabled members who may find the march tiring it may be best to meet up at the end of the march. However come along, bring friends and family and march with the UNISON banner and make a day of it meeting follow trade unionists and make new friends.

This event is open to all trade unions, solidarity organisations and other stakeholders.



## Keeping a diary, are you interested?

The Joseph Rowtree Foundation and the Institute for the Study of European Transformations (London Metropolitan University) are funding a study called the 'Rhythms and realises of everyday life' which is part of JRF's Immigration and Inclusion projects, across Britain, that will require a number of migrant workers to keep a dairy for a year that record all their big and small concerns and joys.

This study is to put realities of everyday lives into context. If you are interested or want to hear more, please contact me at 0141 276 3723 and you can live anywhere in Scotland and we are looking for more than a few people who can take part in this study.

*Sofi Taylor*

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

**T**he United Kingdom, as well as Scotland, has seen a massive influx of foreign workers from member states of the European Union, Asia, Africa and South America in short from all over the world: in different trades and professions. British people look at these foreign workers in so many ways and we, all, are only too aware of what their feelings towards these outsiders.

Anyway we all read the newspapers with their headlines on "FLAWED IMMIGRATION LAWS" or "WE ARE OVERRUN BY FOREIGNERS" shouting at us.

On the other hand politicians welcome these workers with open arms knowing that these foreign workers are now a big contributor to their adoptive country and that the government cannot simply do without them.

Losing these foreign workers will bring some of the country's public sectors to a grinding halt, as a quarter of the workers are from overseas especially in the health department. The sad part of it all is that their contribution is not being reciprocated, for they are not entitled to anything in comparison to indigenous workers as the immigration process sums it up "NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS". This means no sickness benefits, housing benefits, unemployment benefits, child benefits or child tax credit. How ironic!

We are required to pay full income tax, national insurance and Vats from our first day in this country. To make the matters worse these working permit holders are now subjected to exploitation; "our modern day form of slavery and forced labour".

Foreign workers are highly skilled and professionals, what drives them to migrate? Why migrate? Is the reason to migrate thousands of years ago any different now?

What made them decide to leave their place of their birth?

What drive them to abandon their culture and their way of life and most importantly leaving their families behind?

What are their expectations to the host country and its people?

Will it be easy? Are they welcome?

Will they be able to build a new life? What about their relationship to their families back home? Will it be stronger or will it be the step to losing that loving relationship?

In other words: is it worth it?

These are just the few of the many questions faced and dilemmas haunts these overseas workers daily. I can tell you exactly the answers for I am one of them.

I came here three and a half years ago, I am only in my mid 20's, I belong to the working class back home and I am married with a five-year-old kid. The reasons now and then to migrate are the same nature tells us exactly why the birds migrate, to survive.

Moving to foreign soil is not an easy decision to make for I and my betterhalf discussed and talked about it for nearly two years, we discussed the pros and cons, does the economic benefit outweigh the personal and emotional effect of it? Then I was yet to find out.

As I have said the reasons for migration thousands of years ago are the same, the man's instinct for survival, this instinct is the very reason why we still exist otherwise we will cease to exist. The only difference now is that migrants today are armed with good scholastic records for without which we will barely cope.

What about the host country and its people? Do they easily accept us? The answer is yes and no. Some of them are rude and hostile they even drive us to depression but some are genuinely kind.

Now after three and a half years I am beginning to know this country and its people I also know partly the answers to those questions that I had asked myself before coming. Some answers are good and some are not. Some of my dreams have come true some are not. But having said that my lifestyle from the day I set my foot in this country remain the same; a continually and never-ending world-weariness: it's my choice though.

Three and a half years has passed, yes I survived those years, barely, for most of us, migrant workers. Many are all planning to either go back home or go somewhere else for we are not really happy here. The acid test will be in ten years from now most of us will no longer be here and why? For so many reasons and the answers are entirely depends on the government and its lack of commitment to retain foreign workers, its raw deal and policy on immigration, employment rights, human rights, personal development and the income.

Dennis

A Personal account of three and half years





### Do you know?

"Being British "means tolerance, decency, a determination to talk about the weather on all occasions- and a tendency, when a stranger stands on one's foot, to apologise."

*Martin Bell (Independent MP)*

### What do you think being British is?

Send your responses to the address below.


## AIMS OF THE NETWORK

To set up and maintain a network of nurses and other care workers from overseas which will do / provide the following:-

- Act as an information point to provide information on a range of relevant issues such as Trade Union rights, employment rights, contracts of employment, employment law affecting overseas workers etc. etc., welfare information, etc. etc
- Use the network as a conduit for consultation with this group of members. What are their specific needs as overseas workers?
- Provide access to training such as Stewards and/or Health & Safety training, assertiveness training, Rights issues, Communications training such as newsletter and computer training.
- Provide a means to network on a professional level for overseas members working mainly in the private healthcare sector, (but also in the voluntary and NHS sector), such a network does not exist at present.
- Provide a means to network on a social level, and meet other members in similar circumstances. Provide a chance to "get together" and share experiences and useful information. Establish stewards who will act as buddies as well for new members, newly arrived in Scotland.
- Provide access to UNISON Welfare and other support where appropriate.
- Organise an annual event which will be the main event in the network's calendar ( less formal than an AGM).
- Encourage members to become active in their Branch.

## BECOME A PART OF THE NETWORK

Please complete the form in **CAPITAL LETTERS** and return to:  
 UNISON Overseas Nurses Network  
 Glasgow Resource Centre  
 2 Fitzroy Place, Glasgow G3 7RH

NAME	
ADDRESS	
	
EMAIL	
EMPLOYER	

## Where are you?

**T**he overseas nurse network is intending to do a mapping exercise to try to find out where the overseas nurses are at this point in time. This mapping exercise is confidential and purely statistical. No details of individual respondents will be revealed. It is important to try to find out what your needs are and to direct the union to meet these needs. We are also interested in what information you would like to have when you arrive in this country and this will inform us what information we need to give to new comers into the country. We will also use this information to give the Scottish Executive Health Dept to support Human Resource planning. You only need to fill in the form once and in return we will give you an information pack and goodies. If you have filled in a form already, you can give it away to another overseas nurse, the more the merrier. The return post is free.

Part of this information will (it is all anonymous) will go to the Public Service International (PSI) - an umbrella organisation of all the public sectors trade unions in the world - project on health workers migration. PSI is looking at preparing pre-departure information pack and post arrival information pack. The information will be given out to future migrants who are considering migrating to work in Britain. This is a piece of work done across 20 countries, from Africa, Asia to South America and will have impact on how new migrants are prepared to leave and arrive in the country of destination. Scotland is very much at the heart of this project, 2 years ago a survey was completed on 50 migrants' health workers and this is a followed up to this survey. More information can be accessed via the PSI website. [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)

Interested in finding out more about immigration to the UK, a great start is an extremely interesting and factual book 'Bloody Foreigners' by Robert Winder which deals with immigration through the centuries. Well worth reading! Available from all good bookshops.

