

8th April 2019

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill and other immigration issues.

I welcome the commitment of the Government to building a single, global immigration system which considers people on skills, rather than nationality. I am clear that when people voted to leave the EU, they did so in the knowledge that the free movement system imposed by the EU would end. The Government is clear that this means continued work to bring net migration down to sustainable levels while ensuring the UK continues to attract and retain those who come to the UK to work and bring significant benefits. I am glad Ministers share my view that this should not include an open door to those who do not. The future border and immigration system will support the UK economy, but also address the public's concerns.

As set out in letter 166 on my website, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has suggested a salary threshold for skilled workers of £30,000. This is to ensure that migrants are making a positive contribution to the UK economy, paying into the public finances and not placing downward pressure on earnings.

Designing a comprehensive new immigration system will of course take time and consideration. That is why the Government has taken on board the MAC's proposals, while continuing to consult employers, devolved authorities and others to determine whether the threshold is at the right level. As the White Paper released before Christmas makes clear, the Government believes there should be some flexibility where skills are in shortage.

The Government also maintains a Shortage Occupation List, which identifies occupations that are in high demand and urgently need positions filled. The Home Secretary has asked the MAC to review the Shortage Occupation List. Additionally, the MAC will provide an annual report on the status of the UK's immigration system.

I share your concern about making sure we have a migration policy that is right for the UK, including the NHS. For that reason, I want to assure you that the Government is open to proposals and is looking extensively at how to ensure this policy delivers.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP

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