

Recommendations from SMF Report: All immigration is local

By Jonathan Thomas

1. For the purposes of the allocation of resources by local area, the starting point for policymakers and public bodies should be that immigrants are counted as ordinary people and not treated as a different category.
2. The section of the Controlling Migration Fund that is overseen by MHCLG should, together with ICIF, ICELP and other integration programs become part of an expanded Integrated Communities Fund. This fund would aim to address the integration of all within the community, not only recently-arrived immigrants. This Fund should continue to allocate money on a bid basis, but the pool of eligible bidders should be expanded to include third-sector bodies.
3. The local funding formulae across all relevant services should be expeditiously reviewed in the light of the criticisms of the MAC regarding transparency, understandability, consistency and responsiveness.
4. This review should also specifically take into account evidence of the ways in which international migrants' behaviour might currently be resulting in an under- or over-funding of some services or bodies. For example, do international migrants' exhibit lower rates of GP registration ahead of actually seeking treatment, which may then result in under-funding of GP services.
5. In the first instance, this funding review should consider options to change migrant behavior that affects resource allocation and services. For example, new publicity campaigns to encourage new arrivals to register with a GP.
6. Where such behavioural interventions cannot be shown to be effective, funding formulae should be amended to direct more resources in line with the best estimate of the consequences of migrants' behavior. For example, if international migrants' exhibit lower rates of GP registration ahead of actually seeking treatment, then funding formulae for GP services in those areas should be adjusted to reflect this and assess other ways to best proxy immigrants' likely use of these services.
7. Enhanced Strategic Migration Partnerships (or any other vehicle that can best deliver the required expert local review and feedback) should be provided with information to be able to understand and assess the working of the local funding allocation formulae. This must be sufficient for them to be able to compare the outcomes with their own evidence and experiences from the local level. They should be able to formally question and challenge those outcomes as part of an annual review process.

8. The ONS' move to highlight the impacts of international migrants should be presented in a balanced context, acknowledging also the impact at the local level of internal migrants' movements. In line with treating migrants as ordinary people, the ONS should, where possible, report the movements of non-UK nationals at the same time as reporting movements in the domestic population.
9. The Government should recognize the importance of survey data in seeking to track local issues around immigration over time. In particular the Government should commit to continue, but also enhance, questions in key surveys that can better measure integration outcomes particularly through ascertaining immigrants' own experience of more subjective key integration aspects, including their assessment of their language proficiency, their use of their qualifications and evaluation of quality of work, and the educational outcomes of any children.
10. The Cabinet Office should lead a review of how the Digital Economy Act can be used to share official administrative data on immigrants' impact, not just on services but also on wages and housing, between different government departments and public bodies.
11. Administrative data on the impacts of migration should be made more easily available for independent researchers to bring about a better-informed and evidence-based public debate on the issue.
12. The review should also consider how commercial data could be used to deliver better and more responsive policies around migration and its impact. Companies holding large volumes of aggregated data (for example, Facebook) should be encouraged to securely share anonymized data on local populations and movements. Incentives for co-operation could include tax breaks or other financial incentives for companies.
13. The Strategic Migration Partnerships structure should be further enhanced and expanded as the forum best placed to have an understanding and overview of the local impacts and challenges of the different aspects of immigration policy. As such it could complement, but also potentially challenge, the data, in being able to gather and calibrate local evidence and feedback in particular on the local service, wage and housing impacts of immigration.
14. This aspect of the SMPs' role should form part of an annual review in which the SMPs report to Parliament on their views of the local impacts of immigration, in particular in the context of their experience of the performance of the local funding formulae and other data used to seek to manage these.
15. Local authorities should be specifically involved in the consideration of the development of new survey questions designed to capture local experiences of immigration, including integration outcomes, and also of those types of administrative and commercial data which might be most helpful for identifying and managing immigration impacts at the local level.
16. Statistics on the financial contribution of immigrants should form a core part of ONS's plans for immigration statistics to better address the impacts that

immigrants have. They should be reported at the same time, on the same frequency, and alongside, statistics on the other impacts that ONS are reporting on. This will allow a more balanced, and joined up, framing of migration statistics more generally, including by the media.

17. Currently lack of publicly available data, including from HMRC, precludes the presentation of data in the UK on the financial contributions of immigrants to local areas of the type provided by the New American Economy in the US. HMRC should make this data available to allow a fuller, more balanced presentation of the impacts of immigration.
18. It is important that the financial contributions of immigration are seen to be available to be spent on the local impacts of immigration. The aim of making the central UK border and immigration control system self-funding from receipts should be scrapped.
19. Business should more proactively and publicly engage on integration matters at the local level. This should start in its own operations, by business publicly acknowledging the importance of the workplace in integration, and taking this into account when considering its business practices, such as 'language shifts'.
20. Business should also consider the extent to which its interests could be best served, and better aligned with those of the local community, by going beyond the simple confines of its own operations. Companies that employ migrants should consider providing a space and time for language tuition at work, or sponsoring time spent by staff on integration initiatives in the local community. Policymakers should consider what financial incentives might be made available to firms doing so, perhaps in the form of tax relief on direct costs for such programmes!
21. The UK's poor record on minimum wage compliance should be addressed through a better resourced, more active and intrusive labour inspection regime. Consideration should be given to whether increased penalties, potentially linked to annual turnover or some other metric which makes the risk of these penalties less likely to be discounted, might be more impactful in achieving better outcomes.
22. Business leaders and metro mayors in the UK should seek to emulate the 'New American Economy' approach championed by US business leaders including Michael Bloomberg and Rupert Murdoch. Leading UK businesses that benefit from immigration should seek to form alliances that can present the benefits of immigration in a less narrowly sectoral and self-interested, more user-friendly and holistic, manner.
23. Business should be pushing for the collection and public release of official datasets of the type that are available in the US and used by the New American Economy data analysis, that can show both the direct and indirect benefits that immigrants bring to the resident population.

24. For its part business should consider what anonymised data it could make available which could be useful for the purposes of analysing and managing the impacts of immigration at the local level. We note that the members of the New American Economy “coalition” include Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ APPG on Social Integration (n 50).

ⁱⁱ New American Economy, membership list, March 2018

http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/NAE_MembershipList_MAR2018.pdf.