

THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO AND IMMIGRATION

18 May 2017

The Conservative manifesto was released on 18 May, a week and a half later than planned. It is less specific than the Labour Party manifesto on costing and the Conservatives' plans to reduce net migration are clear. A Conservative government would also increase the costs of hiring migrant workers.



The top line

“Britain is an open economy and a welcoming society and we will always ensure that our British businesses can recruit the brightest and best from around the world and Britain’s world-class universities can attract international students.”

“We also believe that immigration should be controlled and reduced, because when immigration is too fast and too high, it is difficult to build a cohesive society.”



Special relationships, not free markets

“We do not believe in untrammelled free markets...we will no longer be members of the single market or customs union but we will seek a deep and special partnership including a comprehensive free trade and customs agreement.”

“We will maintain the Common Travel Area and maintain as frictionless a border as possible for people, goods and services between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.”

“We will seek to replicate all existing EU free trade agreements and support the ratification of trade agreements entered into during our EU membership.”



A certain type of migrant

“We will...establish an immigration policy that allows us to reduce and control the number of people who come to Britain from the European Union, while still allowing us to attract the skilled workers our economy needs.”

“We will...continue to bear down on immigration from outside the European Union.”

“We will always ensure that our British businesses can recruit the brightest and best from around the world and Britain’s world-class universities can attract international students.”

“We will take action to make it harder for people to enter the country if they have a criminal conviction and will implement satellite tracking for every foreign national offender subject to an outstanding deportation order or deportation proceedings.”



Tougher for students

“We will toughen the visa requirements for students, to make sure that we maintain high standards. We will expect students to leave the country at the end of their course, unless they meet new, higher requirements.”

“Overseas students will remain in the immigration statistics – in line with international definitions – and within scope of the government’s policy to reduce annual net migration.”

THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO AND IMMIGRATION

18 May 2017



Still committed to net migration in the tens of thousands

“We will reduce and control immigration...It is our objective to reduce immigration to sustainable levels, by which we mean annual net migration in the tens of thousands.”



Increased costs for sponsored migrants

“We will double the Immigration Skills Charge levied on companies employing migrant workers, to £2,000 a year by the end of the parliament, using the revenue generated to invest in higher level skills training for workers in the UK.”

“And we will increase the Immigration Health Surcharge, to £600 for migrant workers and £450 for international students, to cover their use of the NHS.”

“We will increase the earnings thresholds for people wishing to sponsor migrants for family visas.”



Securing the skills we need

“Address the immediate needs of those sectors of the economy suffering shortages in skills. We will make the immigration system work for these sectors, whilst ensuring that we develop the skills we need for the future.”

“Allow us to set aside significant numbers of visas for workers in strategically-important sectors, such as digital technology, without adding to net migration as a whole.”

“We will ensure digital businesses have access to the best talent from overseas to compete with anywhere in the world...”

“We will open discussions with the leading tech companies and other like-minded democracies about the global rules of the digital economy, to develop an international legal framework that we have for so long benefited from in other areas like banking and trade.”

“We will make it a priority in our negotiations with the European Union that the 140,000 staff from EU countries can carry on making their vital contribution to our health and care system. However, we cannot continue to rely on bringing in clinical staff instead of training sufficient numbers ourselves.”



Human rights

“We will ensure Britain remains a place of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers...the government will offer asylum and refuge to people in parts of the world affected by conflict and oppression, rather than to those who have made it to Britain.”

“We will not repeal or replace the Human Rights Act while the process of Brexit is underway...We will remain signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights for the duration of the next parliament.”