APPG on Social Integration’s Inquiry into immigration and integration: Call for evidence

Background to the inquiry

1. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Integration has announced a call for evidence for the Second Stage of its inquiry into how the UK’s immigration system could promote integration. At the launch of the inquiry in August 2016, the Chair said that ‘debate on immigration focusses almost exclusively on the number of migrants entering the country’ and insufficient attention is devoted ‘to understanding and responding to the impact immigration has on our communities’.

2. The first stage of the inquiry, focusing on wider policy themes, was concluded in January 2017. An interim report set out six guiding principles, which were identified as crucial in ‘the design of post-Brexit immigration system and development of a government strategy for the integration of immigrants’.

3. The APPG uses the term ‘immigrant’ to refer to economic migrants who move to the UK legally in order to engage in economic activity. This applies equally to high-skilled, low-skilled, and unskilled migrants and covers newly arrived and more established groups who do not hold British citizenship. This definition excludes other immigrant groups, including refugees, asylum seekers and family joiners.

Summary of consultation questions

4. The second stage of this call for evidence aims to explore two of the guiding principles in more detail – Principle three: Government must reassess its current ‘one size fits all’ approach to immigration policy and Principle four: For new immigrants, integration (understood as the extent to which people conform to shared norms and values and lead shared lives) should begin upon arrival in the UK.

5. The guiding principles are overarching aims, within which specific actions have been suggested by the APPG. They propose that ESOL classes should be compulsory for new arrivals who do not already speak English and migrants should be put on a pathway to citizenship upon arrival, to encourage process of integration from the start. Other proposals include introducing a devolved or regionally-led immigration system in order to meet skills shortages in different parts of the country, inspired by the example of Canada.

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1 APPG on Social Integration (Feb 2017) Call for evidence www.socialintegrationappg.org.uk/news-evidence-030217
3 APPG on Social Integration (Jan 2017) Interim report into integration of immigrants http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/themes/570513f1b504f500db000001/attachments/original/1483958173/TC0012_AAPG_Interim_Report_Screen.pdf?1483958173
4 APPG (Feb, 2017)
5 APPG (Feb, 2017)
Stakeholders are now being asked to consider these two guiding principles established by the inquiry. They are also asked to address the following questions relating to ESOL provision and devolution of immigration policy:

### English language provision

a) How might the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and community-based English language programmes be improved?

b) What role, if any, should central and local government, businesses, and service users play in the funding and delivery of these initiatives?

c) What are the advantages and disadvantages of college-based ESOL provision and community-based English language programmes, respectively?

### Barriers to participation:

d) What are the most common barriers to participation in English language classes?

e) How can these be overcome?

### Devolution of immigration policy:

f) To what extent could some of the responsibility for immigration be transferred to devolved governments, metro-regions, Local Enterprise Partnerships, or groups of local authorities?

g) How might the establishment of a regionally led immigration system impact, positively or negatively, on levels of integration?

h) How might it impact on the political and public debate on immigration issues?

### Drawing on international examples:

i) Are there any international examples of successful regionally-led immigration systems which UK policymakers might draw upon?

j) How has the system in question affected migrant settlement patterns and levels of migrant integration and community cohesion?
Migration Yorkshire response

7. Migration Yorkshire will be preparing a submission to the inquiry, which will be based on our experience in Yorkshire and the Humber working with local authorities and other stakeholders.

8. In our submission, we will reiterate our existing position that migrant integration should start immediately upon arrival to the UK. We will also suggest that integration policies should apply to all groups of immigrants (including family joiners, refugees and asylum seekers) and recognise different needs of migrant groups.

9. We will also be sharing lessons learnt from our past and current projects relating to difficulties in accessing appropriate ESOL provision (gained through our role in coordinating the Syrian Resettlement Programme in the region), and effective communication with hard-to-reach groups through our experience of working with migrant Roma.

10. We would support exploring regionally-led immigration systems. Our experience as the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) in Yorkshire and Humber means that we would strongly recommend careful implementation of any new system with full involvement of all stakeholders.

How to respond

11. If you would like your views to be considered as we develop the Migration Yorkshire response, please send your comments to ewa.jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk by Thursday 2 March 2017.

12. If you also wish to respond directly to APPG, please check submission specifications in the Call for Evidence and email your response to appg.socialintegration@the-challenge.org by 13 March 2017.

For further information please contact Ewa Jamroz
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Please note that there are likely to be further questions related to other guiding principles later in the year.