

From: Office of Apsana Begum MP <officeofapsanabegum@parliament.uk>

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Subject: ILR Pathway

Type: MP response

Personal data removed: recipient details and salutation.

Thank you for contacting me about this important matter.

I value the contribution made by those who come to live in the UK. I have always acknowledged that the movement of people around the world has enriched our society, our economy, and our culture.

I am therefore alarmed at the increasing use of anti-migrant rhetoric across the mainstream political and media landscape.

I strongly disagree with assertions that migration has a negative impact on our public services and housing supply. I note that it is not migrants, but Governments, who have underfunded and privatised the NHS, failed to build council housing or enforce rent controls on landlords.

As such I share concerns regarding the Government's proposals laid out in 'A Fairer Pathway to Settlement', and currently open for consultation, which explicitly seeks views on "options to reduce the current forecast volumes" of people migrating to the UK.

I am aware that the consultation includes plans to extend the standard qualifying period for permanent residence (also known as indefinite leave to remain, ILR, or settlement) from five to ten years, as part of plans for a new "Earned Settlement", which, as the Work Rights Centre has pointed out, "effectively penalise people who get sick, are exploited, or become destitute".

It is particularly troubling to me that the Home Secretary proposes to apply these changes retroactively, so that everyone who is currently in the UK and not settled yet will be affected once the rules are updated.

I am all too conscious of the anxiety that these proposals, which the Workers' Rights Centre has called "an extraordinary betrayal of migrant communities", has caused to people in the UK who now face years of uncertainty over their status. The charity Praxis, which works to support migrants in the UK, explains that "attaining settlement means no longer having to worry about visa fees, being turned away from state support, or waiting for Home Office decision" and that the doubling of the qualifying period means that "most people will be forced to wait an entire decade before they can have any certainty about their future."

I understand that more than 45 human rights groups including the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Asylum Matters have published a statement opposing the proposals and the accompanying consultation “in its entirety”, calling them “fundamentally racist and classist”, and that trade unions including Unite and Unison, the UK’s largest unions have opposed the proposals.

I am utterly opposed to all of these proposals.

I am aware that the Government has clarified that people from Hong Kong on British National Overseas (BNO) visas, and spouses and dependents of British citizens who meet core family requirements (such as a minimum income requirement), will keep a five-year route to settlement. They will, however, be subject to new mandatory requirements for settlement, which include making any debt to the Government, including NHS debt, grounds for refusal of settlement.

There is also a new requirement that people on BN(O) visas have an earned income above £12,570 for 3-5 years prior to applying for settlement is new. As charities and campaigners have pointed out, this is likely to discriminate against anyone who is more likely to be in a low-paid, part-time role or unable to work, namely women, people with disabilities or mental and physical health conditions, and people with caring responsibilities.

I am extremely concerned that the introduction of these new mandatory criteria may exclude a significant number of existing BN(O) visa holders from ever reaching ILR. As commentators have noted, this risks shutting many people out of eligibility entirely. I agree that it is deeply unjust that people who have moved from Hong Kong to the UK under the promise that they would be offered settlement and stability, should have their lives disrupted in this way.

I spoke at the Westminster Hall Debate on Indefinite Leave to Remain on 8 September 2025 as shown here-

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-09-08/debates/25EC2767-BBFF-4FE8-8F52-65B2C28CED10/IndefiniteLeaveToRemain>

and can be viewed here-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxLxQHSeKL8>

I also spoke at a Westminster Hall debate on 02 February 2026 on ILR, demanding, “When will the impact assessments be published? Given the potentially wide-ranging impacts on all our communities and the economy, including on local authorities and voluntary service providers, how does the Home Office reconcile the

potential impacts of the proposals on migrant families with the Government's wider commitments to reduce child poverty and homelessness in particular, as laid out in their respective strategies published last year?"

Also asking, "How can the Home Office justify retrospective applications of the changes to more than 1 million people who came to the UK on the understanding that they would be able to settle after five years? For the educators in my constituency, many of whom contacted me over the weekend, I ask: will the changes apply to all staff in the education sector? As we know, professional services staff in the education sector play an essential role, but their salaries make alternative settlement routes inaccessible."

Please view the Hansard transcript of my key asks here-

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2026-02-02/debates/A0693D73-AD95-418E-86A6-FAB882454522/IndefiniteLeaveToRemain>

Further, I also spoke on Immigration Reforms during a debate on Tuesday 17 March 2026, asking questions about survivors of domestic violence, as well as those on EECAA routes as outlined here-

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2026-03-17/debates/4F72CE9C-6D61-4E45-BC07-E520ACF795B7/ImmigrationReforms>

On 11 March 2026 I met constituents at a lobby on the changes to ILR, specifically 'Lobby Day: The Government's "earned settlement" proposals', to speak to them directly.

In addition, I attended the UNISON Lobby Day of Migrant Carers on December 17th 2025.

<https://x.com/ApsanaBegumMP/status/2001297737719988361>

The incredible efforts of refugee and migrant rights campaigners across the UK have demonstrated that overall, many want a fair asylum system, based on compassion and human rights.

I will always stand up for refugee and migrant rights as I have always done - both in Parliament and beyond.

Thank you for contacting me about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Apsana Begum MP

Member of Parliament for Poplar and Limehouse

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