

Social problems and issues
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Session four: Migration

Is migration a social problem?

Take a look at these quotes below and write a 500 word piece arguing why you agree or disagree, or perhaps partly agree, with these authors' comments.

Case example I

A.N. Wilson (2012), a columnist in the *Daily Mail* suggests that:

'...the effect of the huge increase in immigration in the past decade or so has left millions of us feeling a little shell-shocked. We no longer recognise the country we grew up in. We are increasingly aware that a uniting British culture that evolved over centuries is fragmenting. It is not racist to suggest that our social infrastructure our schools, hospitals and housing stock cannot cope with such enormous numbers of migrants so quickly. The numbers of foreigners settling in this country must be reduced. And one thing which could and should be done immediately is for the Government to ban the use of any language other than English in schools. Until we all speak the same language, there is small hope that we could ever come together and cohere as the new society of the future.'

Case example II

Norman Ginsburg (2014), Professor of Social Policy, London Metropolitan University

'One of the most pernicious constructions of migration as a social problem is the notion that migrants, both economic and political, have come with the intention of claiming benefits and using public services, to live off the welfare state at the taxpayer's expense. This led in the 00s to the passage of legislation to try to prevent asylum seekers using the welfare state, while at the same time preventing them from finding paid employment. The obvious intention was to make life very unpleasant for those in the country and to deter would-be asylum seekers outside the country. But the allegation of welfare 'abuse' is also extended to economic migrants, including people from other EU member states, who have been alleged to practice 'welfare tourism'. A major research project commissioned by the European Commission ICF-GHK (2013) found very little evidence to support the notion that *'the main motivation of EU citizens to migrate and reside in a different Member State is benefit-related as opposed to work or family-related'* ICF-GHK (2013: v). The project examined the use of public benefits and healthcare services by non-active (i.e. not employed) intra-EU migrants. Despite many requests the British government has been unable to supply evidence of significant intra-EU welfare tourism to the European Commission.'

References

Wilson, A.N. (2012) 'I no longer recognize the Britain I grew up in', *Daily Mail*, 15 December. Available online: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2248365

Ginsburg, N. (2014) in Isaacs, S et al (2014), 'Social Problems in the UK: An Introduction', Routledge

Is migration a social problem?

- Any balanced argument, even if taking a particular position, would be a good answer in this assessment.
 - An understanding of how migration is conceived as a problem by those who would limit migration and by those who would be more liberal would be a good response too. So this question asks for students to try to be objective and weigh up the issues.
 - Any un-evidenced opinion ('migrants take jobs' etc) should be discussed as to how and why the student came to such a view. If Brexit is now mentioned extra points!
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Further reading

Chapter 6 of 'Social Problems in the UK: An Introduction' by Stuart Isaacs, David Blundell, Anne Foley, Norman Ginsburg, Brian McDonough, Dan Silverstone, Tara Young

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