



How to Solve a Problem like a Visa

The unhappy state of Commonwealth migration in the UK

by Tim Hewish

Foreword by Boris Johnson / Mayor of London





/About Commonwealth Exchange/

Commonwealth Exchange (CX) is a newly established think tank that promotes the trading, educational, and strategic potential of the Commonwealth in the UK. It does so through the publication of research papers, the production of seminars, and the creation of introductory trade guides.

Its chairman is Lord Howell, Commonwealth Minister 2010-12. It is also assisted by a cross-party advisory board and supported by a wide range of benefactors.



/About the Author/

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Tim is the author of: *Common-Trade, Common-Growth, Commonwealth: An inquiry into the establishment of freer trade, growth, and prosperity across Britain and the Commonwealth.*

He was also awarded third place in the Institute of Economic Affairs' Brexit essay competition 2014.

/Acknowledgements/

We would like to thank all those who submitted a pen portrait to our report. We sincerely want to help the thousands of Commonwealth citizens who strive to make the UK a better place through their hard work and love of Britain. Ultimately this is their story and we want to be able to give them a happier ending.

Thank you to Lord Howell, our chairman, for providing feedback as well as to our advisory board and of course our benefactors, who make CX possible.

Thanks also to those behind the scenes, but never far from our thoughts, who spend their days supporting us and have spent many late nights proof-reading the report.

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TJH



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/Foreword – Commonwealth Contribution to London/

As Mayor of the greatest city on earth, I see the fantastic contribution immigrants make to London's culture and economy every day. However, the UK needs immigration controls, and an end to porous borders. But we also need a flexible, dynamic workforce. So we should welcome the brightest and the best from a wider range of countries. As we re-examine our relationship with the European Union, we have a vital opportunity to recast our immigration system in just this way. And the first place to start is with the Commonwealth.

Therefore I welcome this report by Commonwealth Exchange as the beginning of a long-overdue discussion about how we engage with Commonwealth citizens, specifically on the matter of visas to work and invest in the UK. I am not necessarily endorsing all of the report's recommendations, but I am welcoming its approach.

In 2013 I visited Australia and was reminded of the myriad enduring bonds between "the English-speaking peoples", to use Churchill's phrase. I was also struck by the strength of the Australian economy. A year previously I had been in India, marvelling at its economic growth and yet wondering why Britain's share of Indian trade remains so relatively small. Recent data from Africa shows an economic renaissance across that continent. It seems that almost all parts of the Commonwealth are brimming with a new energy and optimism, at precisely the time that the European Union is struggling. As we reconsider Britain's place in the world, I want us to reconsider how we engage with Commonwealth peoples.

I have proposed a bilateral migration agreement between Australia and the UK, which if successful could be extended to other Commonwealth countries too, and I am pleased that Commonwealth Exchange has started to examine this idea.

The UK has bonds of history, language, law, family and customs across the world and we would be foolish not to make more of these at this time of profound global economic revival.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London



“I cannot think of any senior discussion I have had over the last couple of years that has not started from the position of visas.”

Sir Martin Davidson, CEO, British Council (2014)



/Executive Summary/

The Commonwealth has fallen out of fashion in recent years, often seen as a historical anachronism in a modern world. This has been to the detriment not just of policy makers but also, importantly, the British public and those Britons from a wider Commonwealth background.

Regardless, Commonwealth immigration and its legacy remain worthy subjects of study.

The Commonwealth matters to the UK because it represents not just the nation's past but also its legacy in the present, and its expanded potential is the UK's future. As a collection of 53 developed, developing, and emerging economies, it has a combined population of 2.3bn people including a growing labour force and middle class; English – the language of business and the internet – is its lingua franca.

English common law underpins the majority of its legal systems, and it has been described recently as the Network of Networks with the ability to tap into every habitable continent at any time. Its total GDP stands at US\$8.3trn as of 2012 and its combined growth figure is 3.7%.

The UK also contains a microcosm of the Commonwealth within itself, with London often the focal point. Because of this it has one of the most powerful levers to tap into these new markets with its wonderful, multifaceted, modern population make-up, which has linkages all over the world.

However, at present the UK under-utilises this network and the Commonwealth is undermined by an outmoded UK visa regime.

At a time when the UK is considering whether it is just a European nation or a nation with a true global role, using its Commonwealth connections through revamped migration policies will help not just its Commonwealth diasporas but also those who want to do business with – and in – the UK as well as Britons who want to think globally by studying, living, exporting, and setting up businesses in other Commonwealth nations.

[\(An extended history section on Commonwealth immigration can be found from page 12\)](#)

The history of Commonwealth immigration in the UK is paramount to understanding why the Commonwealth matters today and why our recommendations should be studied. History shows that there was no conception of modern citizenship prior to the end of World War II. Previously all individuals in the Commonwealth were seen as British subjects; however, now they are seen as foreign citizens through a combination of tighter UK immigration laws, rapid decolonisation, and deeper European integration. The knock-on effect has made the UK and its policy makers come to understand the Commonwealth and its citizens as completely foreign while ignoring their shared history, language, and law – and, importantly, new opportunities.

Modern Day Commonwealth Immigration 2000-2012

- Yearly immigration by nationality from Old Commonwealth nations – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa – peaked at 73,000 in 2004. This figure crashed to 29,000 in 2011.
- Annual New Commonwealth immigration has remained relatively constant, growing from 141,000 to 151,000 between 2004 and 2011. However, this category increased rapidly from a 1999 base of 68,000.
- The latest records (2012) show a slight immigration increase to 31,000 from Old Commonwealth countries, while New Commonwealth immigration has collapsed to 98,000 as a result of the current Government's non-EU migration policies.
- The figures for *country of last residence* show a dramatic drop in Commonwealth immigration. Annual Australian migration to the UK shrank from 40,000 in 1999 to 26,000 in 2011. New Zealand has seen its annual number of immigrants reduce from



18,000 to 8,000 between 2000 and 2011, while the South African number has tumbled from a high of 37,000 in 2004 to just 5,000 in 2012.

- Only Canada in the Old Commonwealth has seen sustained increases, from 6,000 to 9,000 (1999–2012). 2012 brought only slight increases in migration from Australia and New Zealand.
- Commonwealth Africa (excluding South Africa) has also seen a drop, from a peak of 45,000 in 2004 to 19,000 in 2012.
- Although the Indian sub-continent Commonwealth had large immigration numbers, rising rapidly from 40,000 in 1999 to 122,000 in 2011, the figure crashed back down to 69,000 in 2012.
- David Cameron made a 2010 election pledge to reduce net migration levels from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands. As Prime Minister the solution open to him in terms of policy was to find methods of reducing immigration into the UK from non-EU nations. This has had an impact on the Commonwealth.
- The UK 2011 Census highlights the current overall numbers of Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK through its published figures for the *estimated overseas-born population resident in the UK by country of birth*:

UK Census 2011, Estimated overseas-born population resident in the UK by country of birth

Country of Birth	Numbers	Country of Birth	Numbers	Country of Birth	Numbers
India	729,000	Jamaica	145,000	Ghana	80,000
Pakistan	465,000	Kenya	142,000	Malaysia	55,000
Bangladesh	234,000	Sri Lanka	131,000	New Zealand	54,000
South Africa	209,000	Australia	110,000	Zambia	34,000
Nigeria	180,000	Canada	90,000	Tanzania	31,000

Source: ONS

- This is compared to 643,000 Polish; 397,000 Irish; 297,000 German; 189,000 American; and 137,000 French-born residents in the UK.



/Recommendations/

I Restore the Youth Mobility visa to the Commonwealth

- The current Youth Mobility visa used to possess a full Commonwealth component, but when it was modified in 2008 only four nations were granted access: Australia, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand. This list has since been expanded to include Monaco, South Korea, and Taiwan, and as of 2014 Hong Kong.
- The cost of the visa is £208 for two years and the new criteria are that applicants must be aged between 18 and 30 and have £1,890 in savings.
- We recommend additional Commonwealth nations be returned to the approved list annually.
- In keeping with the UK's current theme of recruiting highly economically developed Asian countries, we recommend discussions with Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.
- Bolder action would also include a number of Commonwealth nations that require a Tourist visa to visit the UK, such as South Africa. Under the old system South Africa had a high success in its application rate.
- Furthermore, we recommend that the UK works towards admitting young Indian nationals. This could be limited to 1,000 places as has been the case with previous additions such as Hong Kong and Taiwan.
- Another fix would be for governments on the scheme to clearly show online the remaining visa quotas, as at present many young people simply do not apply for fear of wasting their time.
- As the Youth Mobility visa is based on reciprocity, the numbers of those leaving the UK should balance out with those entering the UK, thereby keeping the net migration target stable.

II Provide a *Commonwealth Concession* for Tourist and Business-Tourist visas

- Visiting the UK, especially London, as a tourist is no doubt on the wish list of many people around the globe. For Commonwealth citizens this is no different. If tourist visas must remain for 21 Commonwealth nations, our major recommendation is to make sure that the UK provides value for being a Commonwealth citizen through a reduction in the visa's cost – a *Commonwealth Concession*. At present, the Tourist visa costs £83 to apply for six months multiple entry.
- Old Commonwealth nations such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand do not require a Tourist visa. The same goes for Commonwealth Asia, where citizens of the smaller and wealthier nations such as Malaysia and Singapore can visit visa-free.
- Despite their countries having strong UK diasporas, Bangladeshis, Indians, and Pakistanis all require Tourist visas.
- It is a major surprise that Jamaicans and South Africans require Tourist visas to visit the UK. Eleven and five years (respectively) have passed, yet no solution has been found. It is damaging that Jamaica remains the only Commonwealth Caribbean island that needs a Tourist visa. UK–South African relations are also at a low ebb with neighbouring countries such as Namibia and Botswana not requiring a Tourist visa.
- A *Commonwealth Concession* could happen immediately and would go some way to address the visa concerns of nations such as Jamaica and South Africa plus the remaining African and Asian Commonwealth countries.
- Much has also been made of Chinese visitors to the UK and their spending. However, Commonwealth nations that require a Tourist visa are also valuable consumers (see page 26).



- The volume of tourists is also crucial. In 2012 there were 215,000 Chinese visitors compared to 211,000 South Africans, 154,000 Nigerians, and 339,000 Indians.
- We argue that the Commonwealth plays a key part in the UK tourist economy despite the lack of the media coverage that Chinese visitors have received.
- At a time when the UK has waived the fee for first 25,000 Tourist visas for Chinese nationals in 2015-17 there is little reason why our *Commonwealth Concession* cannot be implemented.
- The UK's Business-Tourist visa should receive the same treatment for Commonwealth nations. This visa costs the same (£83) but applies to 50 Commonwealth nations (see page 27).
- The UK should want to foster as many business deals and their resulting commerce as possible. With there being a number of key developed and emerging economies in the Commonwealth, it makes economic and political sense to place a high value on these visits.

III The Case for Boris' Bilaterals

- Mayor of London Boris Johnson has floated the idea of establishing '*bilateral labour mobility zones*' between the UK, Australia, and New Zealand: *"Growth has taken place everywhere else – in Africa, in Asia, and, above all, in the very Commonwealth countries British negotiators so snootily disregarded in 1973. We need to raise our eyes beyond Europe, forging and intensifying links with countries that are going to grow in the decades ahead."*
- We echo Mr. Johnson's call for a bilateral mobility zone between Commonwealth nations. We tasked ourselves with asking what this might look like and how politically possible it is.
- A variation of the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) between Australia and New Zealand provides one such solution. The TTTA allows freedoms to travel, live and work between the two nations. This represents the most practical means to establish Mr. Johnson's vision. The visa itself is also free.
- A further strength is that those entering the UK would not be offered immediate access to the UK's welfare state, although transitory requirements could be implemented if desired politically.
- Many New Zealanders have concerns with the current TTTA visa arrangements as Australia has reduced and abolished welfare and voting rights for New Zealanders in Australia. Therefore, any new bilateral agreements between these nations must take these temperatures into consideration.
- The TTTA should, as such, be seen as a starting point for the UK to build a flexible, fair, reasonable, and reciprocal regime. New Zealand's two-year wait for welfare provision and five-year wait for eligibility for citizenship appear sensible ideas that the UK may wish to replicate.
- We recommend Canada's inclusion given its similar ties to the UK.
- This bilateral approach could also be opened up to include other Commonwealth nations over time after greater economic development within those nations.
- There is no EU law that controls member countries' non-EU migration. Therefore, the EU might voice disapproval but it would have no legal mechanism of redress.

IV Add a Commonwealth component to the Exceptional Talent Visas

- The UK has introduced a visa that allows five designated British institutions to support individuals who show exceptional talent in their respective fields.



- We recommend that a Commonwealth agency be added to this list to help businesspeople in any field as this would signal to the Commonwealth the UK's commitment to value these nations and their exceptional talent.
- More broadly, we urge the Home Office to widen the parameters of the Exceptional Talent visa so as to allow for the full take-up quota to be exhausted.

V Create a UK Commonwealth Business Visa and Realm Airport Queue

- We have long argued for such a visa in previous publications that focused on a Commonwealth-wide visa based on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Business Travel Card. Its fast-track airport lanes are an added benefit.
- There is no underlying reason why the UK cannot lead the way by developing its own pilot for a Commonwealth Business visa card and passport lane, which over time could be reciprocated by other Commonwealth nations.
- This would display the UK's Commonwealth credentials to the world at the arrival gates at Heathrow and Gatwick.
- Andrew Rosindell MP's Private Members' Bill regarding a Commonwealth Realm airport queue deserves revisiting. His point regarding realms being treated as second-class subjects is strong as this damages the UK's soft power significantly.
- Such a queue would allow the British public the choice to join either the Realm or the EU queues.
- Importantly, the realms have much in common: they share the same Head of State in Queen Elizabeth, and the Queen is intertwined in the very fabric of each of those nations from coinage and stamps to politicians, judges, and military officers swearing an oath of allegiance to her.

VI Retain the Tier I Post-study Work visa

- We argue that the Government should look again at the abolition of the Tier I Post-study Work visa as key businesspeople and organisations have argued that these changes have made the UK a less attractive destination for international students and have weakened the wider economy by not having these students study in the UK or remain for a further two years post-study.
- The impact on the Commonwealth of this abolition will be notable as four out of the top ten nationalities issued student visas are Indians, Nigerians, and Malaysians (third to fifth places respectively).
- The system is described by Sir James Dyson as being one where 'we take their money, we give them our knowledge, and then we kick them out'.
- Australia is introducing new post-study work arrangements similar to the old UK system.
- There now exist a number of unintended signals and consequences of this abolition that will damage the UK's soft power relations with young Commonwealth nationals. These should be addressed.

Conclusion

We urge the British Government to look upon our recommendations without fear or prejudice and see them as practical policy options to acknowledge and address the Commonwealth's contribution to the UK in the past, now, and in the future for wider prosperity.

It would be shameful and a deep error to disregard the shared language, legal system, and customs that the Commonwealth family provides. UK soft power will be significantly weakened if we ignore the Commonwealth and its potential.



/Introduction/

With current discussions surrounding immigration in the UK often seen as politically poisoned, at times hysterical, and cynically airbrushed for opposing ends, it is easy in terms of public policy to leave the matter as seen but not heard.

The rationale for this report was to build an up-to-date picture of Commonwealth immigration and its citizens in the UK and consider how this should be understood and improved upon. Presently, there is traditional, or dare we say colonial, debris embedded deeply into the consciousness of policy makers. If left untouched, this may become detrimental to Britain's soft power and its place in the world.

Soft power is described by the UK's House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence as:

“New methods involving the generating of international power through influencing other countries to want the same things as the UK, by building positive international relationships and coalitions which defend our interests and security, uphold our national reputation and promote our trade and prosperity.”¹

People ask why the Commonwealth matters. The answer is clear. The Commonwealth was the UK's past, its legacy is the UK's present, and its expanded potential is the UK's future. As a collection of 53 developed, developing, and emerging economies, it has a combined population of 2.3bn people including a growing labour force and middle class; English – the language of business and the internet – is its lingua franca. English common law underpins the majority of its legal systems, while it has been described recently as the Network of Networks with the ability to tap into every habitable continent at any time. Its total GDP stands at US\$8.3trn as of 2012 and its combined growth figure is 3.7%.²

However, at present the UK under-utilises this network and the Commonwealth is undermined by an outmoded UK visa regime.

Pen Portrait I

Simon Walker, Director General of the Institute of Directors

Like many people living and working in the UK today, I am the grandson of men who travelled from this country to fight for Britain – in my case, in the Boer War. In turn, many South Africans would serve under the Union Jack in two world wars, and maintain a close association with the United Kingdom throughout their lives, making a huge contribution to business and British society as a whole. As did many from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore and the other countries which now make up the Commonwealth. Many FTSE companies, government departments and institutions are still led by people from these countries, with an emotional commitment to Britain as well as to the place of their birth.

The treatment of Commonwealth visitors – particularly young people wishing to work in the country with which their home history is intertwined – is shabby and mean-spirited. It is also profoundly self-defeating: those who have lived here, for long or short-periods, make a huge contribution to the economy and rarely become dependent on the state. It is disgraceful that the number of visas issued to South Africans has been reduced by 90%, and tragic that the number of Australian and New Zealanders arriving to work has been halved. If today's migration policies had been in place thirty or forty years ago, Britain would have been deprived of many of its most distinguished law lords, vice-chancellors, scientists, business and military leaders.

The UK has a natural affinity with the Commonwealth states, and the movement of people for work and study benefits our economies, promotes trade and boosts diplomatic links. Britain's strength has for centuries been based on its position as an open, trading nation, with strong connections across the globe. It is deeply worrying that Britain is shutting out people from Commonwealth countries who want to come here to work.



Therefore, we want to add distinct value to Commonwealth citizenship for those who wish to visit, work or study in the UK. At present Commonwealth citizenship amounts to hazy platitudes with no economic or social incentive. This must be altered to capture the hearts and minds of businesspeople and young people, the majority of whom unfortunately have a poor understanding of the Commonwealth and its benefits in terms of law, language, and common customs.

This is why we are grateful to Policy Exchange for its inaugural work on immigration, *A Portrait of Modern Britain* (2014), which charts the changing ethnic landscape of British society. We found an equally significant, although perhaps concealed, Commonwealth thread running through Policy Exchange's work, as the five major ethnic groups it highlighted were Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black Africans, and Black Caribbeans.

A key pillar of our own research will be pen portraits. Migration is about individual people and their families; therefore, our work requires a distinctly human touch. The reader will be hearing from those of a Commonwealth background who have valuable stories to tell.

We also want to explore the juxtaposition of current European and Commonwealth migration policy and consider whom we view as foreign. Much of this is to do with identity; specifically, is Britain chiefly European or international? Recently, the UK has moved hurriedly down a European path without awareness of the overall destination. This has created implications the largest of which has been the Government's decision to restrict migration into the UK from non-EU nationals.

Historically, the UK made the Commonwealth, so it should come as no surprise that the largest multi-ethnic Commonwealth citizenry has emigrated to the UK with London as its central hub. The UK has been described as having a *Commonwealth within*. With that in mind we were intrigued by the Mayor of London's comments in relation to Australian and New Zealand immigration, the difficulties of such, and how the process can be better streamlined. Mr. Johnson's proposal of a bilateral labour mobility zone is certainly novel in a UK context and will be explored here.

Immigration isn't merely about arriving on another country's shore; it is about why one has arrived and for what future purpose. This creates a visa conundrum regarding which one to obtain. We will chart the existing struggle, as well as its history, that Commonwealth citizens have in this regard.

Much has been made of the economic rise of China, which has led to topical news stories about Chinese visitors to the UK and Europe. An interesting research paper by the UK-China Visa Alliance – *Building on Progress* (2014) – explains the economic detriment of maintaining an outdated visa regime with regard to one of the world's fastest growing spenders. We argue that the same logic can be applied to a Commonwealth context.

If the UK does not act quickly to address these issues, tensions will grow and damage its soft-power leverage. Therefore, our recommendations will primarily focus on the economic case for wider Commonwealth visas in areas related to business, young people, and tourism.

Finally, we want to be helpful. Our recommendations are not intended to become hindrances to the UK Home Office. National security is of course the paramount objective. We are not asking for a complete open door to unchecked migration flows from Commonwealth nations. Our suggestions are meant to be pragmatic – rooted in what is achievable and amicable. Not all Commonwealth countries are the same – no 53-nation club should be homogenous. A security risk in one country will mean restricted access for its citizens into the UK. This is a fact of political and social reality.

However, an evident, non-abstract concept of British fairness should also feature. Despite how economically and socially divergent a number of new EU nations are, they have the freedoms to live, study, and work in the UK, yet key Commonwealth nations are denied similar freedoms, which disregards strong and enduring ties.

The Commonwealth has a unique role to play for the UK and it is in this full context that we set out our research.



/Commonwealth Citizenship: A History/

The Commonwealth has fallen out of fashion in recent years, often seen as a historical anachronism in a modern world. This has been to the detriment not just of policy makers but also, importantly, the British public and those Britons from a wider Commonwealth background. Regardless, Commonwealth immigration and its legacy remain a worthy subjects of study. Images of the *Empire Windrush* docking in Tibury, London, in 1948 from Jamaica are indeed iconic but tend to offer us a rather over-simplistic snapshot. This is why a recap of British citizenship is fundamental in explaining the make-up of the UK in 2014 and beyond.

Civis Britannicus Sum

Ideas of nationality as the modern world would understand them did not exist prior to World War II. The closest comparable notion was the pledging of allegiance to the Crown, which was upheld by English common law. All those born under the Crown were British citizens. Your allegiance was your birthright.

As Britain grew imperially throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the geographic reach of the Crown and the subsequent allegiance to it spread British subject status. Think of it as a Greater Britain. For instance, if you resided in Canada you were not Canadian but a British subject just like people from the British Isles. It is actually quite hard for those in 2014 with a modern concept of nationality to understand this basic point.

Ancient Roman citizenship is another way of looking at this. Just as Rome extended beyond its geographical confines through the notion of rights and the legal protection of *civis Romanus sum* (I am a Roman citizen), global British nationality adopted this exact same dictum – *civis Britannicus sum*.

As Professor Nigel Harris has explained, Britain has always been a commercial trading nation that relied on keeping borders open. It was not in the consciousness of politicians to desire records of migration of people who were then seen as loyal British subjects. If they were perceived as British there was no need to deny them right of entry.³

British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914

Problems started to appear during the rapid economic and social development of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa between 1850 and 1914, when these countries made calls to codify what British nationality actually meant. As ideas of nationality meant association with the Crown, it fell to Parliament in Westminster to create a common code for all Commonwealth countries. The culmination of such a policy resulted in the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914. This was the first time a British subject had been defined by statute as opposed to common law.

As Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa secured increasing self-governing powers prior to World War I and then through Dominion status during the inter-war years, it became clear that they were beginning to resemble nations in their own right equal to Britain. This had profound implications for British subject status.

British Nationality Act 1948

It took World War II and the birth of new nations via decolonisation to break the link between Crown allegiance and nationality. Canada started this process in 1947 with the Canadian Citizenship Act, which created a status separate from British nationality. The Partition of India added to the pace of change. The British Government's reaction was to create the British Nationality Act of 1948. The official summary was as follows:

“The introduction of the status of Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKCs) whilst retaining the term British subject to cover every citizen of a Commonwealth country, including the United Kingdom and the Colonies.”⁴



Having a new CUKC status along with nine dominions as independent Commonwealth nations fundamentally fragmented what Britishness actually meant. Crucially, both categories still retained British subject status for the near future, but significantly a socio-political distinction had been made. There was no going back. CUKCs were allowed to enter the UK freely as British subjects; however, as British colonies increasingly became independent and enacted their own citizenship laws, the CUKCs' status as British subjects was slowly eroded.

This system lasted just over a decade until there was an influx of people from the Caribbean exercising their CUKC rights to enter the UK freely. This caused a social response in the UK, which eventually was dealt with politically by the Conservative Government of the time.

As Don Flynn, director of the Migrants' Rights Network, highlights:

“As the State assumed a central role in directing the economic affairs of the country it was more responsive to political pressure about which groups had legitimate claims to protection and support in the UK.”⁵

Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962

The answer was the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. This marked the first attempt in the UK to restrict Commonwealth immigration and it affected people who until recently had legally been seen as British subjects, not foreign aliens.

The 1962 act's opening preamble set the scene:

“An Act to make temporary provision for controlling the immigration into the United Kingdom of Commonwealth Citizens, to authorise the deportation from the United Kingdom of certain Commonwealth citizens convicted of offences and recommended by the court for deportation; to amend the qualifications required of Commonwealth citizens applying for citizenship under the British Nationality Act, 1948.”⁶

This demonstrated a further break from the long-standing idea of *civis Britannicus sum* and also showed that the Commonwealth no longer constituted a single territory in which British subjects could move freely.

Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968

Again, events during decolonisation happened fast. It wasn't long until the Labour Government introduced its own Commonwealth Immigration Act, in 1968, despite its vehement condemnation of the 1962 Act, which it equated to crude racism within British citizenship.

The spark was the arrival of large numbers of Asian CUKCs exercising their right to enter the UK having left their countries of birth as a result of the Africanisation policies of governments in Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. Surprisingly, Labour introduced the concepts of *belonging citizens* and *patriality*. This meant that those who could demonstrate British ancestry, the near total of which would be white, from British-born parents or grandparents, would retain freedom of entry. Thus the citizens of nations such as Canada and Australia could easily prove such linkages to the UK, but people from the African Asian, and Caribbean Commonwealth would often lack this ancestry claim. Here was another distinct fracture between Old and New Commonwealth nations.

As explained in *British Nationality: Summary*:

“The idea of patriality was that it should serve as a secondary status – an individual CUKC would also have been either a patrial or a non-patrial. A patrial was a person who had a right of abode.

Skin colour and race were not referenced at all in the Act, but it was clear that *belonging citizens* would not be affected while the tightening of the ban would harm the Commonwealth freedoms of nonwhite CUKCs. This culminated in a view of ethnicity as a key



component of British citizenship, which was a significant shrinking of the notion of global British subjects. To make matters worse, this policy was pushed through Parliament in just seven days under emergency measures.

Immigration Act 1971

CUKCs had had little time to digest these changes when the incoming Conservative Government introduced new legislation through the 1971 Immigration Act. Note the significance of dropping the word Commonwealth from the Act's title. The Act now made provisions to control the immigration into the UK of peoples of all nationalities. There were now no distinguishing features for Commonwealth nations. Of course, *belonging citizens* from Old Commonwealth nations were still admitted through ancestry clauses, but, by denying any special relationship to the Commonwealth, this statute formally told the world that Britain was no longer the heart of the Commonwealth.

Another sideshow was also taking place at the time – the UK's European Economic Community (EEC) application. The 1971 Act was passed four months before the UK signed the Treaty of Accession to the EEC. Just when Commonwealth nationals were being put on the same level as any other foreigner, EEC nationals would have increased rights to enter the UK freely. This is the situation that the UK finds itself in today – unrestricted EU migration on the one hand yet curbed immigration controls on everyone else, including Commonwealth nationals, on the other.

This can be summarised as a mental policy shift in which, as Greater British citizenship withdrew, European identity grew.

British Nationality Act, 1981

The death knell finally came in the 1981 British Nationality Act. The term *British subject*, which had lasted for hundreds of years as a common description of all Commonwealth citizens, ceased to exist with the term *Commonwealth citizens* being used in all future descriptions. The break was now complete.

As we highlighted in our award-winning Brexit paper:

“The idea of Britishness was slowly returning to its own shores, while the idea of being a European nation began to rise...this process of viewing Commonwealth nations as aliens had a profound effect on the UK's national psyche and trading position in the world. Britain's global identity had been diminished in favour of a solely European one.”⁸



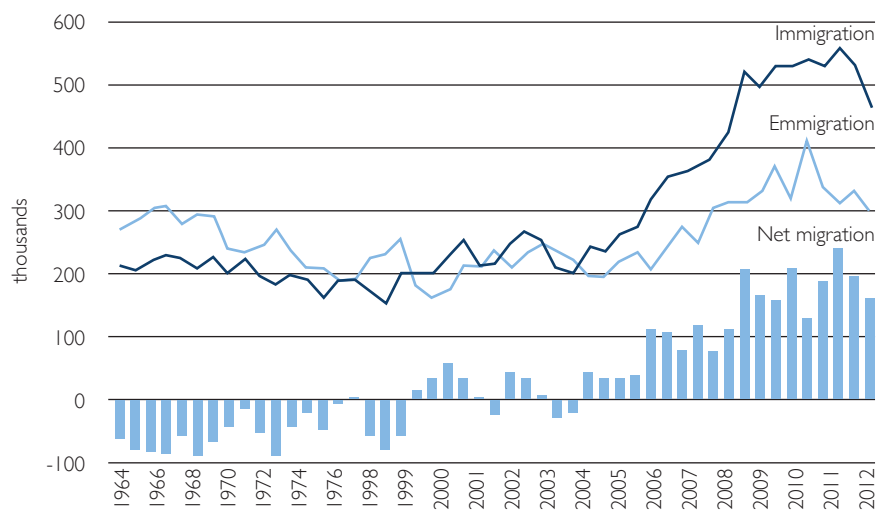
/Current Commonwealth Immigration Trends/

The Past Decade, 1999–2010

Immigration flows increased greatly over this governing period. Data from the House of Commons Library's 2013 and 2014 briefs (see tables below) show a distinction between Old and New Commonwealth nations.

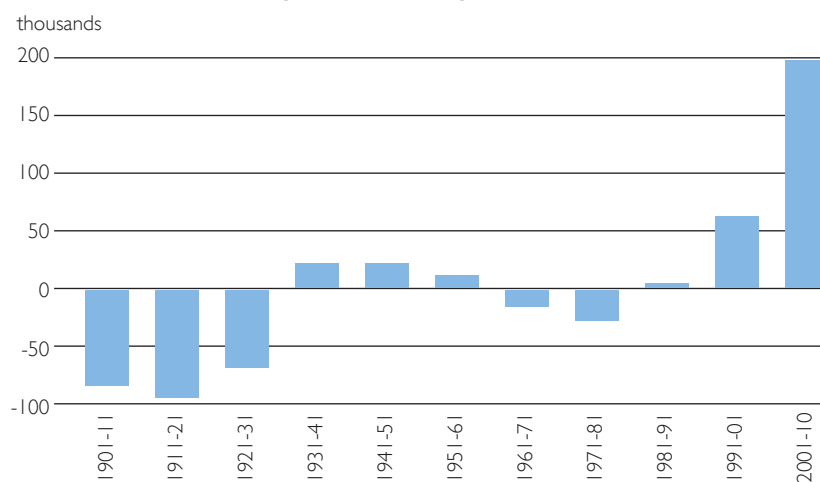
Yearly immigration from Old Commonwealth nations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa) peaked at 73,000 in 2004, but this figure crashed to 29,000 in 2011. New Commonwealth immigration has remained relatively constant, growing from 141,000 to 151,000 between 2004 and 2011; however, this category increased rapidly from a 1999 base of 68,000.⁹ Updated records for 2012 show a slight increase to 31,000 from Old Commonwealth figures, while New Commonwealth immigration has collapsed to

Chart 1: IPS estimates of long-term international migration in the UK, 1964-2012



Source: House of Commons Library

Chart 2: Estimated average annual net migration in the UK, 1901-2010



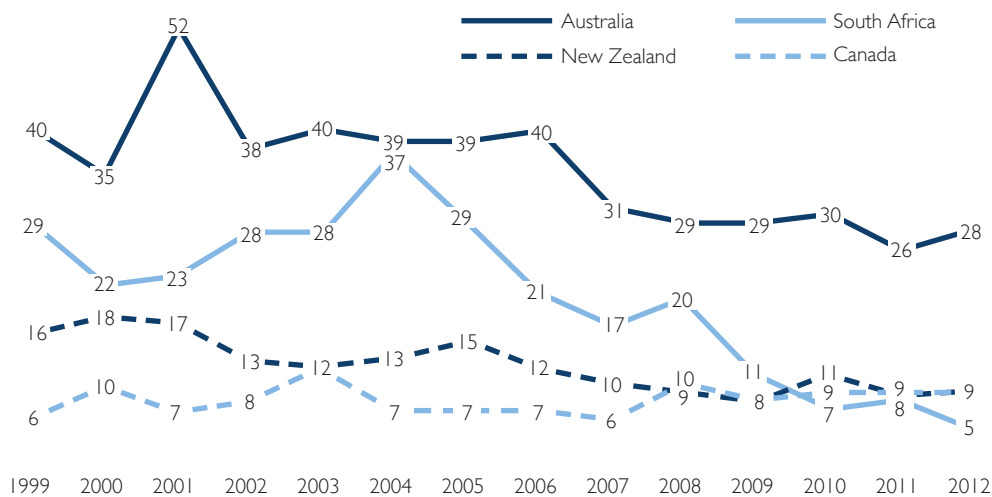
Source: House of Commons Library



98,000 as a result of the Cameron Government's non-EU migration policies.¹⁰ A concerning picture emerges when these figures are broken down to specific Commonwealth nations.

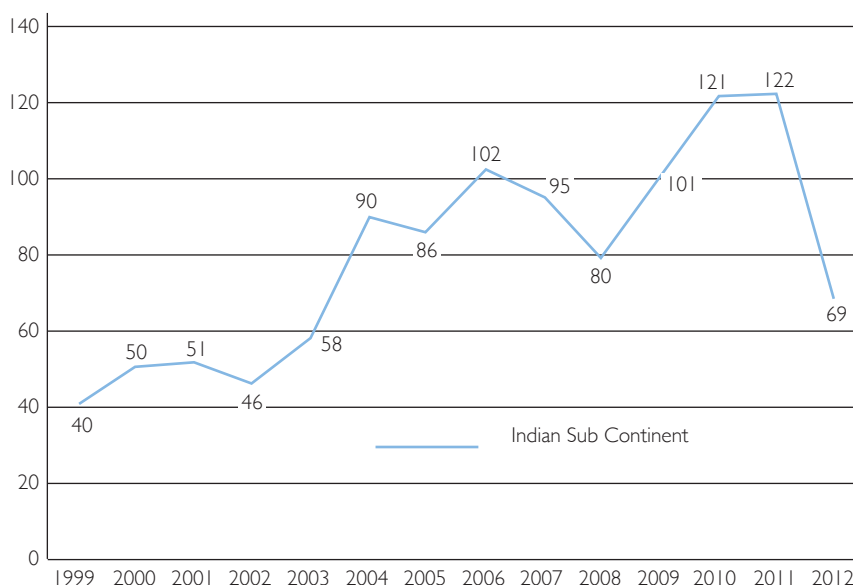
There has been a dramatic drop in annual Australian migration to the UK, from 40,000 in 1999 to 26,000 in 2011. New Zealand has seen its annual number of immigrants reduce from 18,000 to 8,000 between 2000 and 2011, while the South African number has tumbled from 37,000 in 2004 to just 5,000 in 2012. Only Canada in the Old Commonwealth has seen increases, from 6,000 to 9,000 (1999–2012). 2012 brought a slight increase in migration from Australia and New Zealand.

Chart 3: Old Commonwealth Y-on-Y migration into the UK (Thousands)



Source: House of Commons Library

Chart 4: Indian Sub Continent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) Y-on-Y migration into the UK (Thousands)



Source: House of Commons Library



Chart 5: Immigration to the UK by nationality, 1999-2011 (thousands)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
British	115	99	110	98	100	89	98	83	74	85	96	93	78
European Union	66	63	58	61	66	130	152	170	195	198	167	176	174
European Union I5	66	63	58	61	66	77	73	74	77	90	82	76	83
European Union A8	:	:	:	:	:	53	76	92	112	89	68	86	77
European Union Other	:	:	:	:	:	0	3	4	6	19	17	14	14
Non European Union	273	316	313	356	344	369	316	344	305	307	303	322	314
Old Commonwealth	55	56	65	63	62	73	62	62	45	44	30	31	29
New Commonwealth	68	91	84	92	105	141	117	139	129	121	141	156	151
Other foreign	150	169	164	201	177	155	137	143	131	142	132	135	135
Total	454	479	481	516	511	589	567	596	574	590	567	591	566

Source: House of Commons Library

Chart 6: Immigration to the UK by country of last residence, 2000-2012 (thousands)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
European Union	89	84	90	101	153	186	210	220	224	198	208	203	182
European Union I5	89	84	90	101	98	107	110	100	114	114	110	107	112
European Union A8	:	:	:	:	54	76	93	113	89	67	81	77	57
European Union Other	:	:	:	:	1	3	7	7	21	17	17	19	13
Rest of European	50	37	47	35	18	20	21	17	14	13	14	12	16
Old Commonwealth	85	99	86	92	96	90	80	65	68	56	57	51	51
Australia	35	52	38	40	39	39	40	31	29	29	30	26	28
Canada	10	7	8	12	7	7	7	6	10	8	9	9	9
New Zealand	18	17	13	12	13	15	12	10	9	8	11	8	9
South Africa	20	23	28	28	37	29	21	17	20	11	7	8	5
New Commonwealth	104	101	102	113	152	130	139	135	128	148	162	153	102
African Commonwealth	30	30	41	40	45	32	23	24	31	31	23	19	19
Indian sub-continent	50	51	46	58	90	86	102	95	80	101	121	122	69
Other Commonwealth	24	19	15	15	17	11	14	16	17	16	19	12	14
USA	24	25	29	30	27	25	23	23	28	31	22	23	27
Rest of America	12	6	7	8	9	7	8	10	12	9	10	6	7
Middle East	30	31	33	26	29	19	21	23	30	26	24	26	24
Other	85	99	122	107	104	90	93	82	87	84	94	91	89
All countries	479	481	516	511	589	567	596	574	590	567	591	566	498

Source: House of Commons Library

Commonwealth Africa (excluding South Africa) has also seen a drop, from a peak of 45,000 in 2004 to 19,000 in 2012. Although the Indian sub-continent Commonwealth had large immigration numbers, rising rapidly from 40,000 in 1999 to 122,000 in 2011, the figure crashed back down to 69,000 in 2012.

One possible reason for this decline, other than the knock-on effects of the 2008 global recession, is the abolition of the Commonwealth Working Holiday Scheme in 2008. This visa allowed young people (aged 17–27) from every Commonwealth nation the opportunity to visit the UK for two years and gave them the option of working during this period for 12 months. There were no quotas and the vast majority came from the Old Commonwealth. The scheme increased year-on-year from 40,400 in 2000 to 69,500 by 2004/5, but had started to decrease (to 52,600) by the end of 2006.



However, the then Immigration Minister stressed the Government's commitment:

“The House will see clearly how determined we are to ensure that there is a continued opportunity for people from Commonwealth countries.”¹¹

Despite this claim, the Labour administration introduced a points-based Youth Mobility Scheme that abolished the Holiday Work visa and removed Commonwealth exclusivity while significantly reducing which Commonwealth nations could apply. The new 2008 Youth Mobility visa was only open to Australia, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand. This has since been extended to the odd mix of Monaco, South Korea, and Taiwan, while in January 2014 Hong Kong was admitted. One can deduce that this shift reflects an intake skewed to the high-income nations of developed Asia and North America. This change can be argued to be a definitive undermining of the UK's wider Commonwealth links with young people.

2010-Present

David Cameron made an election pledge to reduce net migration levels:

“We would like to see net immigration in the tens of thousands rather than the hundreds of thousands. I don't think that's unrealistic. That's the sort of figure it was in the 1990s and I think we should see that again.”¹²

As seen from the graphs above, Mr. Cameron was indeed correct in highlighting the difference between the net migration levels of the 1990s and the 2000s. However, the solution open to him in terms of policy was to find methods of reducing immigration into the UK from non-EU nations. He was restricted on EU migration by way of its sacrosanct four freedoms, one of which is the freedom to live and work in any country within the EU. This of course would have an effect on Commonwealth migration, as the 2004–2012 figures have borne out.

Additionally, Home Secretary Theresa May brought in other measures such as the closure the Tier 1 (General) visa stream and of the Tier 1 (Post-study Work) visa stream, and imposed a cap of 20,700 on the number of Tier 2 (General) Skilled Worker visas. There were a number of arguments used to justify the changes. Assessing these measures is not in the scope of this research, but they are mentioned to highlight the political process.

The Prime Minister's 'hundreds of thousands' pledge still remains difficult to deliver on despite changes to non-EU migration, because any spike in EU nationals would legally be free from a cap. As the latest Office for National Statistics figures of August 2014 demonstrate, the number of EU citizens moving to Britain rose to 214,000 from 170,000 in 2013, while the net long-term migration to the UK was estimated to be 244,000.¹³

However, the UK 2011 Census does shed light on the current totals of Commonwealth residents, through its published figures for the *estimated overseas-born population resident in the UK by country of birth*.¹⁴

Chart 7: UK Census 2011, Estimated overseas-born population resident in the UK by country of birth

Country of Birth	Numbers	Country of Birth	Numbers	Country of Birth	Numbers
India	729,000	Jamaica	145,000	Ghana	80,000
Pakistan	465,000	Kenya	142,000	Malaysia	55,000
Bangladesh	234,000	Sri Lanka	131,000	New Zealand	54,000
South Africa	209,000	Australia	110,000	Zambia	34,000
Nigeria	180,000	Canada	90,000	Tanzania	31,000

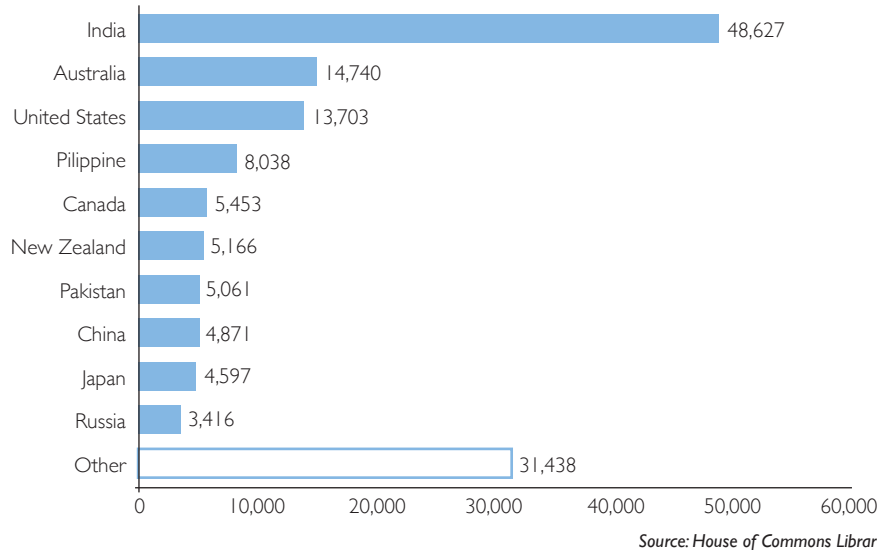
Source: ONS

This is compared to 643,000 Polish; 397,000 Irish; 297,000 German; 189,000 American; and 137,000 French-born residents in the UK.



Chart 8: Top 10 nationalities issued work-related visas, 2012

48, (Total 145,110)



Despite the historical attempts to impair Commonwealth migration, the latest one-off snapshot of 2012 immigration statistics from the Government shows that the Commonwealth is well represented in the top ten nationalities issued work-related visas, with India first, Australia second, Canada fifth, New Zealand sixth, and Pakistan seventh. These figures of course do not take into account the cost or difficulty of obtaining a visa, the visa tier level or the need for a work-related visa in the first instance. This process could be so much easier for applicants, as our recommendations will set out.

We also compared the Government's 2014 migration analysis with that of the previous year (March 2012 to March 2013). These data showed an increase from 141,772 to 156,378 work-related visas (March 2013 to March 14), of which Indians represented a 12% increase of 6,020 and Australians a 7% increase of 1,035 visas. These data must be tempered by the figures displayed previously of overall Commonwealth immigration to the UK, which has decreased significantly since 2004.

Another particularly interesting statistic from the latest data set concerns *permission to stay permanently* grants: South Africa ranked second but is not seen in the top ten for visas. The Government's analysis showed that 955 of the 2,404 grants received were approved through the criterion 'Commonwealth citizens with a UK born grandparent taking or seeking employment', which goes some way in explaining South Africa's increase.

This detailed history lesson brings the reader up to date with Commonwealth immigration patterns. To conclude, British citizenship has been transformed from the stable ancient concept of allegiance to the Crown and a resulting global British subject status to the rapid birth of new nationhoods supplanting the traditional understanding and multiple waves of domestic legislation to reduce Britishness to the British Isles. This was altered further with the political emergence of European citizenship, to which the UK is currently bound. It has created an unjust and stilted system that appears to value Europeans highly, whatever their ethnic background or heritage, while demoting the demonstrable linguistic, legal, and cultural ties that endure between Commonwealth nations. It is clear that successive policies from both Conservative and Labour governments have damaged the UK's rapport with the Commonwealth. We argue that this must be addressed in order to keep the Commonwealth relevant to everyday people, especially the young. How the Commonwealth is to be repaired and rejuvenated is the subject of our next section, which provides a number of pragmatic policy proposals that we hope will start a further debate on adding much-needed value to what it means to be a Commonwealth citizen in the UK.



/Recommendations/

I Restore the Youth Mobility Visa to the Commonwealth

The current Youth Mobility visa used to possess a full Commonwealth component, but when it was modified in 2008 only four nations were granted access: Australia, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand. This list has since been expanded to include Monaco, South Korea, and Taiwan, and as of 2014 Hong Kong.¹⁵

Importantly, there is a trend in policy to seek new additions to the youth scheme. Therefore, focus must be placed on working towards restoring Commonwealth countries as a means of making young people see the Commonwealth as something of value rather than an abstraction.

The quotas are reviewed each year with the Commonwealth nations seeing small changes. The allocations are based upon the number of UK nationals who were issued visas on reciprocal schemes in the previous year.¹⁶ Current participants in the Youth Mobility Scheme have differing quotas:¹⁷

Chart 9: Youth Mobility Visa quotas by nation

Nation	Quota 2014	2013	2012
Australia	38,500	35,000	32,500
New Zealand	9,500	10,000	10,000
Canada	5,500	5,500	5,000
Japan, Monaco, Taiwan South Korea, Hong Kong (2014)	1000 each	1000 each	N/A

Source: gov.uk

The cost of the visa is £208 for two years and the basic criteria are that applicants must be aged between 18 and 30 and have £1,890 in savings. The only major distinction concerns those who have Deemed Sponsorship Status, which means they do not require their governments to sponsor them. This includes all three Commonwealth nations plus Japan and Monaco.¹⁸

We accept that the process of admitting new nations is slow, taking over a year and often happening one nation at a time. However, the scheme itself is new and had a two-year transition from 2008. Therefore, we recommend additional Commonwealth nations be returned to the approved list – security arrangements and the need for reciprocity pending. However, it is worth reflecting on the old Holiday Worker visa and on the applications for which that were rejected (See Chart 10).

We can see a high level of rejections for Equatorial Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia from the 2005/06 snapshot. However, the volume of applications should also be taken into account. We are not in a position to ultimately say which Commonwealth nations should be returned to the scheme as it is for the Government to develop these relationships. However, in keeping with the current theme of recruiting highly economically developed Asian countries, we would recommend discussions with Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

Being bolder, it would make sense to include a number of Commonwealth nations that do not require a Tourist visa to visit the UK. More difficult would be the inclusion of Jamaica and South Africa, as each needs a Tourist visa to enter the UK due to restrictions put in place in 2003 and 2009 respectively. This is despite South Africa having high application numbers for the old Youth Mobility visa and a low refusal rate. Including South Africa may go some way to address the low numbers of South Africans entering the UK in 2012 (just 5,000).

Another issue concerns India. The UK has gone to great lengths to develop its ties with India, most notably via two recent high-profile visits to the country, by the Prime Minister in 2013 and by the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary in 2014. One such example is



the tripling of the Chevening Scholarships for Indian students to study in the UK, although the total number of scholarship available is still only 150.¹⁹

Chart 10: Working Holidaymaker applications – regional summary, 2005/2006

	Recieved	Issued	Refused	Issue rate	Refusal rate
Australia & South Pacific	25,311	23,618	76	93	0
Central Europe & Former Soviet Union	112	78	29	70	26
Equatorial Africa	9,211	2,607	6,781	28	74
Far East	136	130	6	96	4
Latin America	41	39	0	95	0
Middle East	201	80	121	40	60
North America	5,211	4,980	169	96	3
North & North East Africa	64	47	15	73	23
South Asia	8,469	1,861	4,825	22	57
South East Asia	649	491	115	76	18
Southern Africa	20,704	17,236	3,639	83	18
Southern Europe	102	89	11	87	11
West Indies & Atlantic	1,153	694	469	60	41
Western Europe	1,097	650	393	59	36
Total	72,461	52,600	16,649	73	23

Source: House of Commons Library

We recommend that the UK works towards admitting Indian nationals via the Youth Mobility visa. The quota could be fixed at 1,000 places, as has been the case with previous additions such as Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Pen Portrait 2

Teacher, Australian National, female

I was sponsored by my school back in April of 2013. I came back to Australia in August 2013 to renew my visa and to come back to work starting in September. I sent off all the necessary paper work to Manila but then 2 weeks later received a refusal letter stating that I did not have the correct certificate of sponsorship and that my visa application had been declined. I was absolutely devastated and distraught. I emailed and rang my Head Teacher and explained the situation and also rang the local council. The council informed me that I had the old and outdated certificate as they changed all the laws and regulations regarding sponsorship in April of 2013. My initial thought was 'that was when I gained my certificate so why did I not get the correct paperwork in the first place?'

After many phone calls, emails, sleepless nights and emotions running high, my Head Teacher applied for a new certificate in September, only to then be told they needed extra documentation for my sponsorship. The school then had to make the decision on whether or not they would go through the whole process again. Thankfully they did. After having my position advertised for a month, (30 calendar days) then having 3 people be interviewed for my position, the Head Teacher proved to the council I was still best suited for the position. They then filled the paper work again and finally after 6 months of waiting and still paying rent over in the UK as I did not wish to lose my place, working 4 jobs in Australia to pay the rent and bills and still have slightly enough money to stay afloat whilst in Australia I was back in the UK working for the school who sponsored me.

It was such a trying time for me and I would not wish what happened to me to my worst enemy. Jumping through hoops, playing the waiting game and being in limbo is definitely something I wish not to have any time soon. The amount of processes that Australian and New Zealand and other Commonwealth citizens have to do just to stay in the UK is absolutely ridiculous. Something needs to be done.



The majority of Commonwealth nations lament the loss of the Youth Mobility visa option, which enabled their citizens to visit and work in the UK for two years. Thus it makes for sound policy in terms of exercising the UK's soft power to reinstate a number of these nations over time, subject to security protocols and reciprocity arrangements. Such arguments and others were deployed in Labour's 2006 white paper on the Youth Mobility visa:

“Those coming to the UK under Tier 5 additionally contribute to the economy by working, paying taxes and spending on goods and services... Youth mobility schemes can bring long-term benefits to the UK. A temporary but positive experience of the UK when young can lead to life-long links which can bring benefits in terms of trade, tourism and international relations. Youth mobility schemes can be used to help support and grow bi-lateral relationships with our international partners. Furthermore, such schemes can lead to greater access to work and travel for our nationals overseas.”²⁰

However, there are two major issues surrounding the Youth Mobility visa. The first is that information about the current application levels are hard to discern. We have heard stories of individuals not knowing whether the quotas have been reached for the year. A quick fix would be for governments on the scheme to clearly show online the remaining visa quotas, as at present many young people simply do not apply for fear of wasting their time. This applies just as much to the UK as it does to other nations.

The second issue is the current Government's commitment to reduce the amount of non-EU migration. Again, this highlights the policy antagonisms between EU and non-EU migration, which we restate are unjust and poor public policy for Commonwealth citizens. However, we would argue that, as the Youth Mobility visa is based on reciprocity, the numbers of those leaving the UK should balance out with those entering the UK, thereby keeping the net migration target stable. Again, the debate should not be fixated on numbers. It is important that young citizens are able to enrich their understanding of the diverse nature of the Commonwealth for mutual benefit.

Pen Portrait 3

Finance, South African National, male

In 2012, my employer transferred me to our London office on a Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer visa to fulfil a unique role in the banking and payments industry that powers business within the United Kingdom. While the initial excitement was as thrilling as it would be for anyone arriving in London for the first time, a number of harsh realities quickly disillusioned me. As my love for the UK grew, so did the realisation that I would never have an opportunity to fully embed myself in this new place due solely to the visa rules currently in place. The rules state that I will be required to leave the country after 5 years and I'm forced to ask myself how I could ever invest in a home, purchase a vehicle or meaningfully contribute to the environment and community around me if I know that my time would soon expire and I would be forced to leave?

It's a state that I now refer to as 'Bureaucratic Purgatory' and I find it truly baffling. I fail to understand why upstanding and hard-working people who pay their taxes, share their unique skill-sets with the people of Britain and are ultimately a net gain on the economy and their communities would not be considered for long term residence.

In conclusion, our recommendation is to open up the Youth Mobility visa to include a greater number of Commonwealth nations on a bilateral basis as a way of projecting the UK's benevolent soft power to young people and to acknowledge that the shared links of language, law, and culture are of distinct value and have more currency than links between nations without these common systems. Importantly, it would also show that the UK is not solely interested in Europe and has global ambitions. Such a policy would not dilute time and resources away from the Home Office as the scheme is already growing at a rate of one new country a year.

Welcoming Commonwealth countries such as Malaysia and Singapore follows the UK's trend to advance the scheme to South Asia, while approaching South Africa would go some way to repair recent visa disagreements. South Africa's previously strong record of acceptances under the old UK Youth Mobility visa scheme indicates that its readmittance would be a repeat success that in turn could help increase its shockingly low year-on-year migration numbers into the UK. India is also a prize worth pursuing, but this would not happen without substantial difficulties. However, we would argue that developing a visa agreement would be a useful bargaining chip for other Anglo-Indian policy objectives, such as trade and investment.



II Provide a *Commonwealth Concession* for the Tourist and Business-Tourist Visa

Visiting the UK, especially London, as a tourist is no doubt on the wish list of many people around the globe. For Commonwealth citizens this is no different. However, there is a difference for those who need a Tourist visa. We would also argue that the cost is significant too. It has wide implications for the tangible and everyday value of being a Commonwealth citizen.

At this stage it is salient to show clearly which Commonwealth nations do and do not need a tourist visa:

Chart 11: Commonwealth Nations that need a Tourist visa

Nation	Region
Bangladesh	Asia
Cameroon	Africa
Fiji	Pacific
Ghana	Africa
Guyana	Caribbean
India	Asia
Jamaica	Caribbean
Kenya	Africa
Lesotho	Africa
Malawi	Africa
Mozambique	Africa
Nigeria	Africa
Pakistan	Asia
Rwanda	Africa
Sierra Leone	Africa
South Africa	Africa
Sri Lanka	Asia
Swaziland	Africa
Tanzania	Africa
Uganda	Africa
Zambia	Africa

Source: gov.uk

As one can see, there are some obvious patterns; for example, Old Commonwealth nations such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand do not require a Tourist visa. The same goes for Commonwealth Asia, where citizens of the smaller and wealthier nations such as Malaysia and Singapore can visit visa-free while, despite their countries having strong UK diasporas, Bangladeshis, Indians, and Pakistanis all require visas.

However, there are other countries that do not readily spring to mind. Tourist visa-free travel extends to all of the Commonwealth Caribbean except Jamaica and Guyana in South America. In continental Commonwealth Africa the overwhelming majority of countries require a tourist visa except for Botswana and Namibia, while the Commonwealth islands off Africa do not need a visa. Importantly, Old Commonwealth South Africa needs a visa. In the Pacific only Fiji needs a visa.

Therefore, this spread is somewhat unbalanced. The major surprises are Jamaica and South Africa. In the former the visa requirement



was introduced in 2003 by the British Government. The rationale was that drug trafficking had become a prevalent problem, as had Jamaican nationals absconding once they had arrived in Britain. Then Home Secretary David Blunkett commented:

“For some years the number of Jamaican passengers being refused entry on arrival in the UK has been increasing. This is a real problem and the consequences of this abuse of the immigration system are felt mainly by genuine visitors from Jamaica.”²¹

Pen Portrait 4

Electrician, Australian National, male

I arrived in the UK from Australia in July 2012. I came here holding the youth mobility tier 5 visa. My intentions were to work in the UK and travel through Europe for 2 years and then return home. I didn't anticipate I would fall in love with the UK.

I started working in October 2012 as a maintenance electrician. My final placement was for a major entertainment company who are based in Soho, which started in October 2013. I was originally supposed to be working there for a week, as I was filling in for one of their permanent engineers who was off work due to illness. However, this engineer resigned, and I was kept on.

I soon found myself fitting in, getting along well with my colleagues and dedicating myself to the job. The company was very happy with me, and wanted to employ me full time. Although my tier 5 visa expired in July 2014, the company were willing to sponsor me for a tier 2 visa.

I was excited by this prospect. I was enjoying my time in London, I had settled into a job and was working with a good group of colleagues. I was learning a different side of my profession, and my colleagues were learning from me. Everything was going swimmingly.

Unfortunately, due to the strict and long process it takes for non EU citizens to apply for a tier 2 visa, the HR department informed me they could not sponsor me. They had been informed by the home office that they have to conduct a labour market test to ensure that nobody in the UK or the EU can do my job. Even if after conducting the test I was the most qualified candidate, they would still have to offer the job to somebody from the UK or the EU.

I was quite disappointed with this outcome. My boss was even more so. He was glad that he finally had a great team of engineers who were working well and getting commendations, only to be told that I couldn't be sponsored. My intentions to stay in the UK were to help the economy and develop my skills. I would never dream of staying here and claiming welfare. Additionally, UK companies should be able to choose who they want to work for them and sponsor them if need be, without being dictated by the EU. I believe there should be special allowances for Australians and UK citizens to work and live freely between the two countries. The language, culture, and democratic ideas are almost identical to each other. It makes sense.

Understandably, the Jamaican High Commission took the decision badly, saying that it would mean additional cost and inconvenience, but admitted that there was little that could be done to change the mind of UK policy makers. This was over a decade ago and it is disturbing that little progress has been made since. It is damaging that Jamaica remains the only Commonwealth Caribbean island nation that needs a Tourist visa and it also injures the link between those of a Jamaican background in the UK and their home country.

In no way is this paper arguing that visa-free travel should be restored to the detriment of the UK. Defence of the Realm is the fundamental objective of the UK. Our concern is that it has been 11 years since the ruling regarding Jamaica and a solution has not yet been found. What makes matters worse is that Jamaica is a Commonwealth Realm, which means that it shares the same constitutional monarch as the UK and therefore has closer ties to the UK than many countries, and yet it is the only Realm that needs a Tourist visa. At a time when Jamaica is considering dropping its Realm status and connections with the Crown, an unsolved visa issue remains a significant factor to its people.²²

South Africans started to require a visa in 2009, when the Home Office became concerned that South African passports were



being used by al-Qaeda to bring terrorists into the UK.²³ The *Daily Telegraph* reported that over 6,000 immigrants entered the UK through illegitimately obtained South African passports (over an unspecified period).²⁴ It was understood that the issue was not so much whether or not the passport could be forged but that individuals were entering the UK on South African passports when they themselves were not South African citizens. Just like in Jamaica, the introduction of a visa requirement led to severe disappointment, as South Africa's Home Affairs Minister explained:

“We had been given a promise that following the Olympics, there would be a focus on whether this visa requirement can be lifted. There hasn't been any movement and I think the time has come for us to consider reciprocity.”²⁵

Again, we would not wish to advocate undermining the UK's security, especially if al-Qaeda militants were using South African passports to enter the UK. The matter comes down to the fact that five years have passed and progress has been too slow, which has damaged UK–South African relations. This anger was expressed most demonstrably by a South African who wrote to Prime Minister David Cameron:

“Why are South Africans not treated equally when they want to visit family and friends in Britain? We were good enough to fight for Britain's freedom in the Second World War, but have been treated as second class citizens...My parents and grandparents were of British origin and my father fought with forces alongside Montgomery in North Africa for Britain. It is not right that South Africans as Commonwealth citizens suffer such discrimination by effectively being treated as second class. Britain has many attractions but it's not worth such an ordeal.”²⁶

The Home Office has stated firmly that it does not comment on individual nations but that processes are kept under constant review. However, the UK is still at an impasse, and, if this issue is not addressed soon, it will damage the country's soft power in South Africa and the wider continent. That neighbouring countries such as Namibia and Botswana do not require a Tourist visa only adds further fuel to the already flammable topic of visas. South Africans will ask simply, 'Why allow Botswana but not us?' With 209,000 South African-born nationals residing in the UK (as shown in Chart 7) and the annual immigration figure having plummeted to 5,000, ties between the two nations are not being best served by a Tourist visa. We recommend that the Home Office redoubles efforts to find a lasting fix in order to return South Africans to visa-free travel to the UK. South Africa cannot be left in the same situation as Jamaica, for which a decade has gone by with no improvement.

Pen Portrait 5

Sara Rajeswaran, Deputy Head of the BME Unit, Policy Exchange, co-author of Modern Britain (2014)

As Sir John Major recently stated, it takes a great deal of guts and drive to travel halfway across the world to make a better life for you and your family. In the 1950s and 60s, many Commonwealth citizens, often from the Caribbean, India or Pakistan, arrived in the UK in response to job advertisements. They were often highly educated, ambitious and tenacious individuals. They came from former British colonies where British law, customs and language had a pervasive influence on society. And some of them may have also fought alongside the British Armed Forces in the Second World War.

Fast forward half a century and many of those first generation immigrants have set down roots here, with successive generations of descendants born in the UK. Today, 14% of the population are from an ethnic minority background – and this is set to grow to up to a third of the population by 2051.

Against this backdrop, Policy Exchange set up a new unit to research, analyse and understand Britain's burgeoning ethnic minority population. We also want to shine a light on best practice from abroad – such as in Canada, where Jason Kenney has re-written the rules on political engagement with ethnic minority communities. His authentic and tireless commitment to these communities has helped him to reinforce Canada's welcome to immigrants, whilst allowing him to call-out and crack-down on illegal immigration – what he calls the high walls and broad gate approach. He has done this with the support of immigrant communities – who have also demonstrated support for a strong economic dimension to immigration and an equally strong dislike of illegal immigration.

The face of Britain may have changed, but it does not follow that this change should be unwelcome.



Tourist visa

If tourist visas must remain for 21 Commonwealth nations, our major recommendation is to make sure that the UK provides value for being a Commonwealth citizen through a reduction in the visa's cost. At present it costs £83 to apply for a six-month multiple-entry Tourist visa to the UK. Longer term visas can also be granted: one- and two-year visas cost £300, five-year visas cost £544 and ten-year visas cost £737. It doesn't matter if you are from Russia or Commonwealth India; the cost is the same. We suggest that nationals from Commonwealth nations should pay less given their strong association – a *Commonwealth Concession*.

This distinction would demonstrate that the UK values Commonwealth citizenship despite any visa being required for national security purposes. This could happen immediately and would go some way to address the visa concerns of nations such as Jamaica and South Africa as well as those of the remaining African and Asian Commonwealth countries.

For us it appears strange that people with a Commonwealth connection have to pay the same as foreign nationals with no linkage to the UK. We would not wish to tell the Home Office exactly what figure to set the Commonwealth component of a reformed Tourist visa at, but £83 can be prohibitively high to emerging and developing nations.

Much has also been made, through the latest UK–China Visa Alliance report, of Chinese visitors to the UK and their spending. One result of this lobbying is the recent announcement that will see the UK refund 25,000 Tourist visas for Chinese visitors in 2015–17. The UK could easily replicate similar arrangements for key Commonwealth countries that still require visas such as India or South Africa, or preferably provide our more inclusive *Commonwealth Concession* on both Tourist visas.²⁷

As you can see Commonwealth nations that require a tourist visa are valuable consumers:²⁸

Chart 12: Average spend of Commonwealth tourists who need visas, 2012 (incl.: China)

Nation requiring a visa	Average Spend as Holiday Tourists (2012)	Number of holiday visitors (2012)
China	£1,268	88,000
Nigeria	£1,579	67,000
South Africa	£1,283	49,000
Pakistan	£1,139	15,000
Jamaica	£302	1,000
India	£484	118,000
Sri Lanka	£855	4,000

Nation requiring a visa	Numbers visiting friends and family (2012)	Total spend
China	54,000	£66m
Nigeria	52,000	£70m
South Africa	99,000	£76m
Pakistan	42,000	£42m
Jamaica	4,000	£2m
India	107,000	£57m
Sri Lanka	9,000	£4m

Source: gov.uk

Of course the volume of tourists is also crucial. In 2012 there were 215,000 Chinese visitors compared to 211,000 South Africans, 154,000 Nigerians, and 339,000 Indians who came through the main airports and ports as well as the Channel Tunnel.²⁹ Therefore,



we would argue that the Commonwealth plays an key part in the UK tourist economy despite the lack of the media coverage that Chinese visitors have enjoyed.

Business-Tourist visa

We would also argue strongly that the UK's Business-Tourist visa should receive the same treatment for Commonwealth nations. It costs the same £83 to apply for this visa, which is equally six-month multiple-entry. The extensions cost the same amounts too. However, only business visitors who are EU nationals have visa-free travel, which means all 50 Commonwealth nations need this Business-Tourist visa. This is despite the Commonwealth countries' shared language and businesses culture, and their similar legal systems and accounting practices based on common law. The UK should want to foster as many business deals and their resulting commerce as possible. With there being a number of key developed and emerging economies in the Commonwealth, it makes economic and political sense to place a high value on these visits, which we argue requires a lower visa fee in light of shared Commonwealth membership. This again is a measure that the Government could easily enact overnight should it wish to do so, thereby strengthening its soft power within the whole Commonwealth. Again, the figures are significant.³⁰

Chart 13: Commonwealth business visitors: visits, av. spend, and spending total, 2012 (incl. China)

Nation	Business visits	Business average spend	Business total spend
China	46,000	£1,626	£74m
South Africa	46,000	£1,102	£50m
Nigeria	18,000	£1,662	£30m
India	92,000	£1,790	£164m
Pakistan	11,000	£1,120	£13m
Canada	95,000	£1,196	£114m
Australia	63,000	£1,808	£119m
New Zealand	11,000	£1,449	£18m
Sri Lanka	5,000	£1,497	£7m

Source: gov.uk

There are also a number of recommendations from the UK-China Visa Alliance with which we agree and that we support. The major one is its pragmatic solution to the difficulty of foreign nationals having to apply for both Schengen and UK visas, which takes additional time and effort. The Alliance's research shows that there are more Chinese visitors to European nations in the Schengen Zone because this visa allows for entry into 26 countries and also does not require biometric data. However, unlike the UK's visa, the Schengen visa only allows for a single entry, and it only lasts for three months as opposed to the UK's six months. The Alliance also found that only 6% of Chinese visitors to Europe obtained the two visas – 85% obtain just a Schengen visa and 9% obtain just a UK visa. This led them to say:

“It is clear from our research that the need to obtain a separate visa to visit the UK is the biggest obstacle preventing more Chinese from visiting the UK. If the UK is to match the performance of our European neighbours in terms of the number of Chinese visitors it attracts, this is the issue that most needs to be addressed.”³¹

Its solution is for the UK's Visitor Application Centres or equivalents to be able to accept both visa applications in one visit, subsequently passing the Schengen application to French or German centres to be processed. It also wants to see the extension of a pilot study that allowed Chinese visitors to use the Schengen application form when applying for a UK visa, halving the number of forms to fill out.

We believe these recommendations have implications for Commonwealth nations too and should be adopted accordingly. The media is currently fixated on Chinese nationals visiting the UK but it should turn some of its attention to the plight of Commonwealth



citizens, who we argue have a stronger shared claim for easier passage into the UK as tourists and businesspeople.

In conclusion, we propose that more can be done to aid the UK's image in Commonwealth nations through Tourist and Business-Tourist visas. Once again, we accept that defence of the Realm must be the priority for the UK. If a Commonwealth nation is not up to the required standards for visa-free travel then that fact is to be respected. However, the Commonwealth must mean something to its citizens.

Pen Portrait 6

Leading UK-based Immigration Lawyer

The current visa application fee to apply for a 6-month tourist or business tourist entry clearance visa is £83. Long-term visit visa fees are currently upwards of £300. Business visitors from Commonwealth countries who can demonstrate that their business visits will contribute to an increase in mutually beneficial trade between the UK and their home Commonwealth country would benefit from a fee concession or a fee waiver in relation to business visitor entry clearance visa application fees. Lower visa application fees (or none at all) would enable business visitors from the Commonwealth to compete on a wider scale more effectively with their counterparts from other countries who do not pay visa application fees to visit the UK.

Trade visits would benefit UK consumers through lower prices for goods and services produced in other parts of the Commonwealth, they would have a wider choice of goods and services produced globally and it would be possible for the UK thereby indirectly to contribute to the potential for increased employment in other Commonwealth countries by facilitating international business meetings and international trade negotiations that take place in the UK.

Family visitors from Commonwealth countries who are coming to the UK to visit their family members living here would also benefit from a fee concession or a fee waiver of family visitor entry clearance visa application fees. Such an approach would increase good relations between the UK and its Commonwealth partners ensuring a healthy, manageable flow of visitors across the generations between the relative countries.

It is arguable that better relations can be established between the Commonwealth family of nations by way of visitor visa application fee concessions or waivers for specific groups of applicants. This approach would also go some way in balancing the position between EU free movement countries and Commonwealth countries in their respective access to the UK for business visits and family visits which would benefit everyone overall.

Therefore, if a visa must remain in place a *Commonwealth Concession* should be applied to both these types of visas. The cost should be left to the discretion of the Home Office, but it should certainly be less than the current £83 application fee. The UK must remain a welcoming place to do business.

The value of Commonwealth tourists and business visitors is more than equal to that of their Chinese counterparts. Their value is only going to grow as many of these nations become developed or emerging economies of the future. The UK must build up and secure its soft power in this area as more contact with the UK will leave a warm impression on Commonwealth citizens. This starts before they even enter the UK – at the visa process. We also believe that more should be done to assess whether South Africa and Jamaica need Tourist visas. Five- and eleven-year waits are simply not good enough, especially against a backdrop of retaliatory responses that undermine reciprocity. A *Commonwealth Concession* could be enacted virtually overnight if the Government were willing; it would represent short-term tangible goals that could rejuvenate Britain's soft power status.



III The Case for Boris' Bilaterals

In September 2013, the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, floated the idea of establishing *bilateral labour mobility zones* between the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. He did so by highlighting the story of Sally Roycroft, a school teacher in East London who was forced to return to Australia after her visa expired and her school did not renew it. In his regular Daily Telegraph column, Mr. Johnson wrote:

“In spite of all her efforts she has been effectively kicked out of Britain. What is her crime? That she isn't French. Nor is she German, or Polish, or Croat, or Italian, or Greek, or Portuguese... In 1973 we betrayed our relationships with Commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand... it was assumed that in order to be internationalist it was enough to be European. Well it is perfectly obvious in 2013 that this is no longer enough and we need to seek a wider destiny for our country.³²

He goes further in support of the Commonwealth and his words are worth quoting at length:

“Growth has taken place everywhere else – in Africa, in Asia, and, above all, in the very Commonwealth countries British negotiators so snootily disregarded in 1973. We need to raise our eyes beyond Europe, forging and intensifying links with countries that are going to grow in the decades ahead... and you could not do better than by starting with Australia... We British are more deeply contacted with Australians – culturally and emotionally – than with any other country on earth.³³

Mr. Johnson's solution to 'undo the damage of 1973' is to give people like Ms Roycroft the same freedoms that 'we give a French teacher' trying to find a job in London. This would involve the creation of what he dubs a Free Labour Mobility Zone. The Mayor of London stated that this would mean ending the 'absurd discrimination', which would be:

“Good for Australia, where the unspoken reality is that Australians are actually quite keen to encourage more immigration from Britain... it would also be a small but practical way of intensifying British links with the growing economies of Oceania... where we no longer think of ourselves as little Europeans, run by Brussels, but as a country with a truly global perspective.³⁴

We echo Mr. Johnson's calls for a bilateral mobility zone between Commonwealth nations. However, we tasked ourselves with asking what this might look like and how politically possible it is. We first researched areas where such a programme exists. We discovered the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement between Australia and New Zealand (TTTA). The TTTA provides the ability for Australians and New Zealanders travel to, live in, and work in each other's countries without restriction.

Uniquely it is not expressed in any binding bilateral treaty; rather it is a set of procedures applied by each nation and underpinned by joint political support. Furthermore, it does not dilute original citizenship as it is only available to those who retain their current nationality.³⁵

Pen Portrait 7

Nurse, Australian National, female

I am an Aussie who has recently returned home from spending 2 years in London on the Tier 5 YMVisa. I didn't plan to stay beyond two years, but things changed, I met someone, and subsequently I am now left in limbo wondering how I will be able to return. But I didn't have a workplace willing to sponsor me. What really upsets me is the fact that I am a nurse. Anyone can see the UK is in dire need of well-trained Western nurses. I know because I worked alongside many European nurses that had poor English skills and whose clinical skills were borderline dangerous.

I have been on such an emotional rollercoaster trying to get back in to the UK. I'm under 30, educated, work hard and pay taxes. Yet everyday in the English papers I'd see stories on immigrants, welfare cheats, and an overburdened healthcare system. I'm trying not to get my hopes up with the potential new changes but it seems pretty clear cut to me.



Pen Portrait 8

Don Flynn, Director, Migrants' Rights Network

The joyous events in Glasgow around the splendid Games ought to remind us that whilst Brits seem to love the Commonwealth, they have not always been so keen on its citizens.

Our modern history of immigration control measures dates from the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which, for the first time, curtailed the rights of people from the Commonwealth nations to work and settle in the UK.

The politicians of that time thought they were taking the measure to head-off the dangerous rise of racist responses to the settlement of Commonwealth citizens. To balance the restrictions on immigration rights they introduced much-needed measures in 1965 which outlawed the 'colour bar' which has discriminated against Caribbean and Asian Commonwealth citizens in the field of employment and housing.

But neither immigration restrictions nor the Race Relations Acts provided the complete answer to the tide of racist sentiment that existed across the 1960s. By 1968 the politicians were returning to legislation once again, this time to curtail the arrival of the Asian UK passport holders who were being forcibly displaced by discriminatory measures being enacted in Uganda and Kenya.

In 2014 it is often asked why the British citizens of those times had displayed so much animosity to Commonwealth citizens. The Caribbean and Indian subcontinent migrants who arrived during this period are now presented as exemplary citizens who have done so much to build the vibrant culture of the UK today.

The study of Commonwealth migration has much to teach us about the dangers of ill-considered reactions to the populist moods of the times. If modern-day enthusiasts for the Commonwealth can help revisit this history with more balanced viewpoints then they might help lay down some valuable ground rules for handling all forms of migration now and in the future.

For New Zealanders it allows free entry to Australia to visit, work, and live for an indefinite period. Importantly, New Zealanders are not eligible for Australian social welfare benefits. Upon entry to Australia, New Zealand citizens are given a Special Category visa with an arrival date but no termination date. It is cost free.³⁶

We argue that this template represents the most practical means to establish Mr. Johnson's vision. Whereas the EU has numerous formal treaties that the UK is bound to honour, one of which is the free movement of people to live and work, a Trans-Tasman variant wouldn't need any codified laws. At bottom this would be a flexible arrangement.

There is also no EU law that controls member countries' non-EU migration. Therefore, the EU might voice disapproval but it would have no legal mechanism of redress. Another positive is that this agreement exists between the two nations Mr. Johnson signalled out, so a British advance of a similar plan would not be alien to them. A further strength is that those entering the UK would not be offered access to the UK's welfare state, although transitory requirements could be implemented if desired politically.

We consulted a number of significant individuals, who said that one of the biggest concerns for Australia and New Zealand would be the populations involved. The UK has a population of 63m compared to 23m for Australia and 4.5m for New Zealand. That is not to say they are fearful of being 'swamped' by the UK – to borrow anti-immigration rhetoric – but rather to recognise that the numbers are disparate. That said, those same individuals told us that Australia is keen to find solutions to allow easier passage of its citizens to the UK. This could certainly be one such suggestion. Also both these countries are used to UK immigration with it having been the principal source behind the founding of their modern nations, after which they were replenished by the British over two centuries. Extra Brits would never be seen as alien. Nor would Aussies or Kiwis in Britain.

This issue may come down to political climates and the resulting political will. For instance, Australia's current attitude towards



immigration has become quite turbulent in relation to Asian asylum-seekers and their branding as 'boat people'.³⁷ It may be seen as hypocrisy for any Australian Government to on the one hand allow freedom of work and movement of Britons yet on the other refuse entry to nationals from Asian countries. However, one could argue correctly that there is a difference between asylum-seekers and prospective economic migrants.

However, many New Zealanders have concerns with the current TTTA visa arrangements. Since 2001 Australia has made a number of unilateral changes to its residency laws, and these have had a knock-on effect on New Zealanders entering via the TTTA route. This is due to those with Special Category visas being legally branded 'temporary' despite the visa itself having no end date. Such residency alterations led to a reduction in and abolition of welfare and voting rights for New Zealanders in Australia whereas there were none for Australians in New Zealand.³⁸

For example, New Zealanders on the post-2001 Special Category visa do not have the right to vote in Australia; are not eligible for citizenship; cannot access unemployment, sickness or single-parent benefits; and are not entitled to a student loan. In contrast, Australian nationals in New Zealand can vote within one year; become a citizen after five years; and receive numerous welfare provisions after two years.³⁹ This has led to considerable social push-back and resentment from New Zealanders in Australia, which is creating a growing political problem. We would not wish a UK agreement to be soured by such issues; however, given the backlash with EU nationals having near immediate access to the NHS and other welfare services, these concerns may well surface unless they are dealt with sensitively.

Therefore, any new bilateral agreements between these nations must take these temperatures into consideration. The TTTA should be seen as a starting point for the UK to build a flexible, fair, reasonable, and reciprocal regime. New Zealand's two-year wait for welfare provision and five-year wait for eligibility for citizenship appear sensible ideas that the UK may wish to replicate.

Pen Portrait 9

Musician & Artist, Canadian National, female

The right to live and work in the UK has been the bane of my existence for the last 6 years. I initially came to the UK on a 2 year working holiday visa. The UK became my new second home. I was asked to sign a contract with a management company towards the end of my working holiday visa, but they could not act as a sponsor for me. I had to move back to Canada. My heart was broken and my dreams shattered.

I came back to the UK several times over the next few years to take meetings to try to find a way to obtain a work visa. I didn't fit neatly into any of the visa categories despite my UK experience, skills and education. Those few years were some of the most stressful, emotional years of my life for both myself, my partner, and my family and friends in the UK and Canada.

I spent countless hours speaking to immigration lawyers and was introduced to one that was a policy-maker for the Exceptional Talent visa. He explained that he had helped to design the category specifically for people like myself, but unfortunately the UKBA made the criteria such that I would have to win a Grammy or Tony award to be considered. Had I been at that level in my career, I could have come in under a different route so the visa category was superfluous.

I was finally able to obtain a Tier 5 work permit, which my sponsor can only issue in 3 month increments due to yearly quotas. I now live my life in the UK 3 months at a time, never knowing when the quota might be full. This has the most deleterious effects on both my personal and professional life.

I recall in my early school years singing the British national anthem at the beginning of each day and I was educated to understand the common laws and abiding ties to the UK. It is an honour to contribute my talents and skills to this wonderful country, and to learn of the rich history and culture that has influenced Canadian values. I hope that the future will bring a time in which the relationships within the Commonwealth are strengthened and can result in further cultural exchange, freedom of movement, and prosperity for all of its citizens.



We also spoke with a director of a leading New Zealand think tank who said that, despite the outstanding issues New Zealanders have with the TTTA, the possibility of something similar with the UK would be overwhelmingly positive. He took the view that the current New Zealand Government would welcome such an arrangement with the UK. This is in part due to Prime Minister John Key often lobbying behind the scenes for more lenient visa requirements for New Zealanders in the UK.

Meanwhile, the immigration environment in Australia has similarities to that in the UK, where there remains talk of a 'flood' of migration from Eastern Europe and beyond, some illegal but most legitimate through the EU. Mr. Cameron's pledge to cut net migration figures is unwavering. He reiterated it in July 2014, stating, 'Our goal is clear: an immigration system that puts Britain first.'⁴⁰ The political appetite for this subject therefore clearly remains soured. However, the British Prime Minister's pledge is based around net figures. Our recommendation of a bilateral agreement allows for emigration to Australia; thus, if more Britons left the UK, the net numbers would have a chance to decrease. Furthermore, as the latest UN report shows, of the 5m Britons who live abroad, 1.3m reside in Australia, while New Zealand is the fifth-biggest destination with over 300,000 British residents. Canada is third with 670,000.⁴¹ This affirms the existence of strong ties between this set of nations – ties that could be enhanced further with our reforms.

Moreover, the four economies (we recommend the inclusion of Canada, which has a population of 35m) are all developed and have strong, growing markets and top-level democracies, unlike the mixture within the EU. The idea that this recommendation draws a racial distinction based on the old white dominions fails to take into account the changing make-up of not just the UK (as highlighted by the latest Policy Exchange report⁴²) but also Canada and Australia. The large cities of these nations – such as Toronto, London, and Sydney – are heterogeneous melting pots.

In reality a number of fundamental and often ignored statements need to be made and then questions asked. The UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand share the same Head of State, the same language, and the same common-law legal system. Critically, they are all highly economically developed democracies, and there is also a distinct common culture and familial bond between them.

Taken together this has led some to ask why policies of free movement don't already exist. We certainly heard this during our research. Some also questioned why the countries should share all of these common characteristics, even the Union flag in some cases, if the association doesn't appear to mean something tangible through public policy to its everyday citizens. Again, why should the UK be tied to a single European political construction based on formal treaties that are alien to British culture yet deny a basic freedom to those who already share so much through a new flexible, uncodified agreement? There is a critical lack of fairness and common sense in this respect.

Pen Portrait 10

Dale Eaton, National Director, The Britain-Australia Society

The UK-Australia relationship has waxed and waned but is never less than strong. The US/UK "special relationship" pales compared to the connections between Australia and Britain. Impetus exists on both sides to recognise and exploit our ties. Familiarity makes the UK a natural destination for Australians looking for their first overseas working experience. Australians have a well-earned reputation for hard-work and hard play and today they are highly-placed in every facet of British life – politics, architecture, the arts and commerce.

The Aussie backpacker coming to do bar work and overwhelmed by the "big smoke" has gone. Australia has changed. Today it is self-confident with high expectations of quality and service. Today's expat is likely to be a lawyer, architect, banker, surgeon or managing director. 5% of Australians were born in the UK (including the PM). 50% have UK ancestry. Between those figures are the Australians with patriality. Add those with another EU patriality and those with sponsorship contacts. It's frivolous to restrict the remainder.

The relative difficulty to obtain a work visa makes the US look more attractive with less onerous restrictions. The UK is denying itself qualified and eager talent who can slot into British society without a ripple, give their skills in return for international contacts and who intend to then take their experiences, and perhaps a little bit of Anglophilia, back home to Australia.



In conclusion, we admit that the timing and political capital required are both stumbling blocks. With the UK less than one year out from a general election, new ideas will not be readily engaged with; in addition, grasping the nettle of immigration policy is always replete with trials in Britain. However, what this situation requires is a little imagination from policy makers in the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – a shift away from a European mindset to embrace the latent strengths of the UK's soft power. The 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow may have helped in this regard.

If Australia, Canada and New Zealand were to make representations individually on lines set out similarly to the TTTA, the UK would have a chance to reflect and form a policy. We also believe that this bilateral approach could be opened up to include other Commonwealth nations over time and after greater economic development within those nations.

Once set in motion we strongly believe that a free, flexible, non-statute special visa agreement would take little time to enact (six months). However, it does not look likely that such a process will be initiated from a UK perspective until after May 2015. Therefore, we rank this as a medium-term objective. The Mayor of London's idea of a mobility zone has merit once fleshed out and engineered to mirror a TTTA-style approach. It would provide a much needed recalibration of what it means to be a Commonwealth citizen and what such a connection offers. It would certainly allow a greater flourishing of our common unity, which has been expressed through our pen portraits.

IV Add a Commonwealth Component to the Exceptional Talent Visa

The UK has introduced a visa that allows five designated British institutions to support individuals who show exceptional talent in their respective fields. This is geared towards humanities, engineering, medicine, digital technology, and the arts. The bodies have a total of 1,000 endorsements shared between them, and successful candidates do not have to have a job offer before they arrive, nor do they need a sponsor.

We recommend that a Commonwealth agency be added to this list to help businesspeople in any field as this would signal the UK's commitment to value these nations and their talent.

We acknowledge that the visa is currently extremely hard to apply for. For example, only seven people qualified in 2011. Additionally, the fees involved are steep, with stage one costing a nonrefundable £437 and stage two another £437.⁴³ However, the visa grants the holder a maximum of three years and four months to work in the UK. Crucially, introducing extra visas that allow the very best talent among all Commonwealth nationals to apply would be a strong and worthy indication that the UK places a high value on the Commonwealth. That being said, the process by which organisations can become a 'designated competent body' can be as challenging to navigate as the visa process itself.

We believe that there is no stand-alone Commonwealth organisation that has an outright claim to be the designated body for the Commonwealth, and a further difficulty lies in the fact that the numerous Commonwealth organisations based in London have a Commonwealth-wide remit. Our suggestion is to encourage the newly created Commonwealth Enterprise and Development Council (formerly the Commonwealth Business Council), the Commonwealth Secretariat or the Royal Commonwealth Society to apply for the status of 'designated competent body'. We recognise this could be a drawn-out process and therefore rank this as a medium-term policy recommendation that will take over a year to achieve.

More broadly, we urge the Home Office to broaden the parameters of the Exceptional Talent visa so as to allow for the full take-up of quotas, with a Commonwealth body becoming empowered to endorse visa applications. As WorkPermit.com has argued, 'It is not the cap that is the problem. It is the visa itself. It is just too hard to get one.'⁴⁴

V Create a UK Commonwealth Business Visa and Realm Airport Queue

We have shown the soft power opportunities and economic potential of a *Commonwealth Concession* for the UK's Business-Tourist visa. However, this quick remedy to enhance Commonwealth connections could be transformed further with a stand-alone Commonwealth Business visa. In previous publications we have argued for such a visa, which would be based on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Business Travel Card. We will briefly explain how the ASEAN card works,



although this proposal is a long-term recommendation that may bear more fruit if initially developed within the UK immigration system and later slowly expanded. As noted in our Institute of Economic Affairs Brexit essay:

“APEC [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation]’s approach has been to create a visa, which allows business travellers a pre-cleared, short-term entry system for participating countries. It removes the need to individually apply for visas, which saves valuable time and also allows multiple entries for three years before it must be renewed. There are also special lanes at major airports for APEC cardholders... The typical cost for the three-year visa is Aus\$200.⁴⁵

Six Commonwealth nations are part of this scheme, with Australia having the largest number of card holders. It is successful because it allows businesspeople to visit multiple nations around the Asia-Pacific region for the cost of one visa. The fast-track lanes are an added benefit. Even the US and Canada have these lanes. Thus a similar plan for the Commonwealth would, at least on paper, certainly appeal.

Pen Portrait I I

Graphic Designer, New Zealand National, female

I am a New Zealander who has just spent two years in London on the Tier 5 Youth visa. (Arriving back in NZ February 2014) My partner and I quickly packed our bags to move to the UK, as the Tier 1 general had closed and my partner was a few months short of his 31st birthday. It had always been our plan to move to the UK on the Tier 1, little did we know we were going to miss out on the opportunity.

I am a graphic designer, with a Bcom and my partner is an accountant, with a BCom, BA, Chartered accountancy... as you can see we have tried to make a good go of things. Working in our industries for sometime now, we both struggled on the Tier 5 visa. My partner didn't land his first role till 5 months in London, however after that had a smooth run, working as the financial accountant for Shell.

I picked up freelance roles here and there, but no prominent fixtures came my way and no one wanted to touch me marketing wise. I got the classic answers, you are only here for two years... or you don't have any UK experience. Things started to look up and in my last leg of my visa, I landed a freelancing role for 7 months here, I built a amazing relationship with management and produced some great work.

My directors were very interested in sponsoring me. We did all the research. However HR did not want a bar of it. They did not see how a creative designer could pass through the tier 2 general application. Luckily it didn't end there as I am still working from my home office in New Zealand. Getting paid in pounds is the added bonus. But I would really love to be there. Being in our early 30s, we are responsible adults, who want to enjoy life, but unfortunately visa restrictions have enabled us to have that experience.

This notion is supported by the work of the Ramphal Institute, whose consultations showed that 11 of the 13 Commonwealth nations surveyed who do not currently use the ASEAN card were willing to investigate this or a similar scheme. The UK was one such country.⁴⁶

We echo the Ramphal Institute's calls for the Commonwealth Secretariat to devise a mechanism to deliver a practical implementation of such a card for the Commonwealth. This would no doubt have to occur in stages and would be long-term goal. However, there is no reason why the UK cannot lead the way by developing its own pilot Commonwealth Business visa card and passport lane, which over time could be reciprocated by other Commonwealth nations.

This would display the UK's Commonwealth credentials to the world at the arrival gates at Heathrow and Gatwick. At present, when entering the UK one is greeted with a choice of EU and international queues. Surprisingly the UK does not even have its own queue.



However, in August 2014 the UK trialled a Registered Travel Service, which allowed Australian, Canadian, Japanese, New Zealand, and US nationals to use the EU queue if they had visited the UK four times during the past twelve months.⁴⁷

A distinct business-oriented queue for the Commonwealth would go some way in advancing the UK's global reach. That said, rolling out a new travel card scheme would have significant costs and take considerable time to implement. This is certainly a long-term project. Therefore, we recommend that the UK pilots a wider co-sponsored Commonwealth Secretariat scheme as a test case to study the uptake and assess the views of those using the card. This would indicate the UK's growing engagement with the Commonwealth as a whole and rebalance its focus away from an EU monopoly of the UK's borders. What are required are bold initiatives and Commonwealth leadership, which the UK could provide.

A Commonwealth Realm airport queue

The ASEAN card example is linked to the idea of a fast-track queue for Commonwealth nationals. One High Commission that we interviewed previously conveyed that the UK suffers from what it called a 'Heathrow problem', whereby Commonwealth nationals feel undervalued by the UK upon entering despite the existence of historic and often familial ties as well as growing business links. The same High Commission said that a passport lane of some sort would 'help play its part in keeping the Commonwealth identity alive'.⁴⁸ Such an idea was advanced by Andrew Rosindell MP via a Private Members' Bill in relation to Commonwealth realms:

“I propose a dedicated channel at international terminals for those from the Commonwealth realms...so that all Her Majesty's subjects may enter the United Kingdom with appropriate decorum and not as second- class subjects...it is a travesty that citizens from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Jamaica have to queue up in the foreign nationals channel at London Heathrow airport, while citizens from European Union countries that have never had any historical connection to the Crown or the United Kingdom...are allowed to enter alongside British citizens by virtue of their EU membership.”⁴⁹

Mr. Rosindell's point regarding second-class subjects is strong as this perception damages the UK's soft power significantly, especially since the realms share the same head of state in Queen Elizabeth and, as he explains, the Queen is intertwined into the very fabric of each of those nations, from coinage and stamps to politicians, judges, and military officers swearing an oath of allegiance to her. Therefore, it does beg the question: What is the value of such an association if no benefit is conferred upon its members upon entering the UK?

Recently, to advance his case, Mr. Rosindell highlighted the Smart Gates schemes in Australia and New Zealand, which allow for a separate queue for nationals from Australia, Singapore, the UK, and the US.⁵⁰ This shows that similar designs could be enacted in the UK.

Pen Portrait 12

Australian National, male

I would really like to see an EU agreement equivalent exist between our nations.

When I found out that our Romanian roommates can stay and work in the UK because of the EU agreement but we are restricted to a two year visa I was shocked. It's not that I begrudge them their chance to do so. There are things that just make it seem unfair to me. Things like the fact that English is our native tongue; that the British flag is on our flag; that we are part of the Commonwealth and the Queen is on both of our monies; and last but not least that we share many core cultural similarities with UK citizens... so much so that I sometimes feel like it's a colder, rainier, more densely populated version of home!

It was a pretty big deal to pack up our life in Australia and come here. We only have 17 months left on our visas and would really like the option to stay longer and work here without having to worry about the rigmarole of sponsorship (which seems expensive and unfair on businesses also). I have British friends in Australia and I would love to see and be a part of a much more open visa policy between our two nations. Maybe something similar to the way we are with our cuzzie-bros in New Zealand?



However, implementing such a queue for the realms may well be problematic. This is because the other 15 realms – one of which is Jamaica – are a mixture of economies. As we have explained, Jamaican nationals still need an expensive Tourist visa, which undermines the idea of a fast-track Commonwealth Realm lane. If the UK and Jamaican authorities can come to an agreement soon, this would remove a stumbling block as no other realm requires a Travel visa. Additionally, UK citizens could then freely choose which queue to use – the EU or the Commonwealth.

In conclusion, a Commonwealth business travel card does appear to be further down the policy-making priorities than other proposals. A unilateral British spending commitment coupled with the required political capital could be put to better use on the Mayor of London's bilateral mobility zones, although the travel card would apply to more Commonwealth nations and would be seen as far more inclusive. That being said, greater traction could be gained revisiting the idea of a Commonwealth Realm queue if a solution can be forged between the UK and Jamaica. This would show that these nations are not alien or foreign but share a deep and continued bond. This could be implemented in the medium term with the Home Office taking a lead. However, forging this link would mainly have social effects, as opposed to the economic benefits a Commonwealth business travel card could bring.

VI Retain the Tier 1 Post-study Work Visa

We have focused on Youth, Tourist, and Business visas as well as airport queues, but we are also interested in briefly exploring concerns around Student visas. Despite not calling for a Commonwealth-specific Student visa, we are interested in the abolition of the Tier 1 visa and its effect on Commonwealth students. The visa enabled non-EU graduates to work in the UK for up to two years after obtaining their UK degree. It also allowed those who did find a job to switch to a full Tier 1 or 2 visa. The current Home Secretary, Theresa May, enacted the change after a wider consultation on Student visas against a climate of abuses of the system.

The two strengths of her rationale were, firstly, that the two-year extension undermined the very concept that Student visas were temporary migration and, secondly, that the visa was disappointing as a bridge between study and skilled work in the UK, with only half of non-EU graduates gaining the appropriate work. Added to this was the backdrop of UK graduates remaining unemployed or only gaining low-skilled jobs due to the extended recessionary period.

Pen Portrait 13

Australian National, male

In 1990-91 I had a brief working holiday in London. I felt part of something bigger than myself. It was a feeling of deep connection to my ancestors. So far it seems that that may be the only chance I get in a lifetime to make a contribution to the UK economy.

Many Australians now live in the UK on the strength of a "false flag". They have European passports. But they are drawn to London because they are Australian. An inequitable situation has been created where Australians of European heritage can live in London but those of us with more distant British ancestry cannot.

I admit that as a grown man of 50 I wept when I heard of the Mayor's bilateral mobility zone idea. I believe it is an excellent way of modernizing our Commonwealth relationship and giving British business a firmer base from which to explore opportunities in Asia. I believe it will prove a boon for many industries, such as aviation, finance and construction. I consider it unlikely that there will be any significant net migration in either direction. The traffic is likely to be two way, and both societies will be enriched by the increased opportunities it provides. There should be significant cost savings for both Governments by no longer needing to issue visas which in a majority of cases will have been approved in the past.

Australians have wisely embraced the Asian region and the richness of our indigenous people's heritage. The link to Britain is equally important. The potential benefits to the United Kingdom of this simple innovation present themselves in the 21st century in ways that could not be imagined when the door was closed in the 1970s.



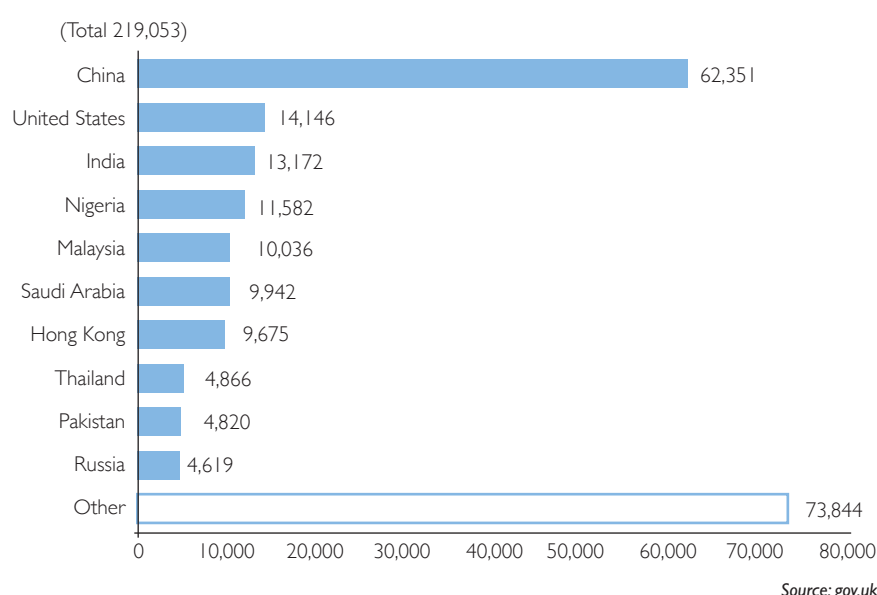
Despite this, key businesspeople and organisations have argued that the changes have made the UK a less attractive destination for international students to study in the first place and have also domestically reduced the income for universities from international students. Others argue that the loss of international students and of students remaining for a further two years has weakened the wider economy. The UK has one of the most sought after and developed higher education markets in the world, with the British Council reporting that the total value of international students to the UK economy was £8.5bn in 2010.⁵¹

This has been most eloquently explained by the director general of the Institute of Directors (IoD), Simon Walker:

“Eighty percent of IoD members say that educating foreign students in British universities is good for the country – yet the system is described by Sir James Dyson as being one where ‘we take their money, we give them our knowledge, and then we kick them out’. This is madness. I agree with Sir James that we ought to be handing out visas to the brightest students at their graduation ceremony... The economy of the future will be powered by a young, mobile workforce... we must do all we can to attract them from around the world.”⁵²

There is a notable Commonwealth link, with four out of the top ten nationalities issued student visas being Indians, Nigerians, and Malaysians (taking third to fifth places respectively). Weakening their working options damages such figures.⁵³

Chart 14: Top 10 nationalities issued study visas, (excluding student visitors), year ending March 2014

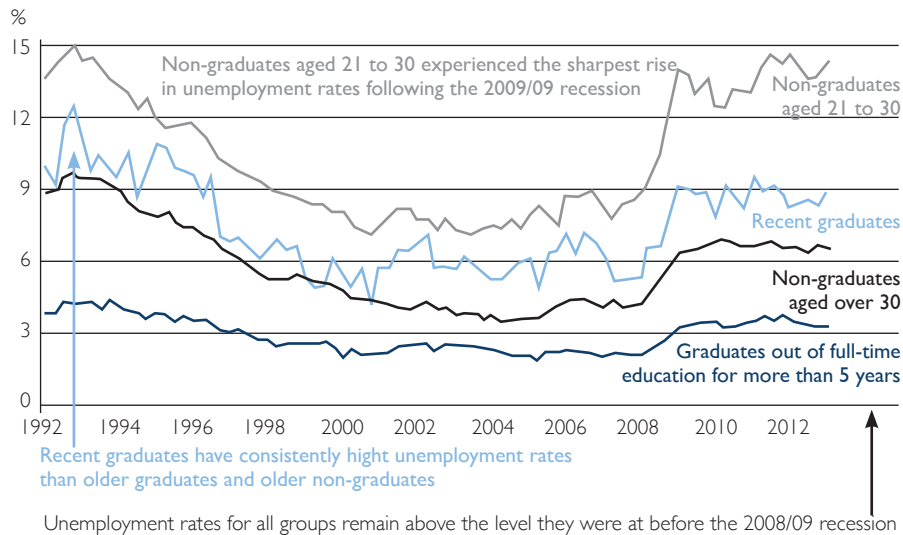


Addressing the Home Secretary's arguments on UK graduate unemployment also presents a mixed picture. In February 2014, the UK press ran headlines stating that 'Nearly 40% of graduates still hunting for jobs six months after leaving university'. In June 2014 these was followed by 'UK employers expect to hire "18% more graduates in 2014"'. However, examination of the Office for National Statistics figures shows that the data are dependent on how recently people have graduated.⁵⁴

Recent graduate unemployment remains stubbornly at 9%, an increase of 4% from the 2008 recession. On this point Mrs. May is therefore justified in not yet reinstating the two-year allowance. However, we would argue that the short time frame allowed for Commonwealth and other student nationals to find and secure a job in the UK is proving Sir James Dyson's dictum correct, especially when other nations can take the talent the UK has nurtured at degree level. These changes also come at a time when Australia is introducing new post-study work arrangements similar to the old UK system, allowing two-, three-, and four-year visas for bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees respectively.⁵⁵



Chart 15: Unemployment rates, 1992-2013



To conclude, we acknowledge that, against the back-drop of tough economic conditions and considerable abuses from bogus students in the past, the UK Student visa system had to be reformed. However, the reforms have resulted in a number of unintended signals and consequences that will damage the UK's soft power relations with young Commonwealth nationals. Redressing these consequences is certainly a longer term policy suggestion that will take many years to enact. We recommend that the UK revisits its Post-study Work visa policy with the view of mirroring Commonwealth partners such as Australia, which should keep the talent the UK teaches while providing British businesses with a greater chance of securing young, talented individuals of the Commonwealth with extensive knowledge of both the UK and their home markets.



/Conclusion/

With the face of the UK changing, there is a Commonwealth dimension that must be understood. We have shown clearly that Commonwealth immigration in the UK needs to be reassessed. Failure to do so will create many headaches for wider British policy. Our history section highlighted the Commonwealth's legacy of countries' strong linguistic, legal, and cultural ties to the UK, but it also demonstrated the economic, social, and political potential of positive Commonwealth ties through migration. However, at present, this is being undermined by a visa system that is outdated and unjust.

With European immigration outside domestic governance, policies to reduce immigration have had an undeserved impact on the Commonwealth. Our goal has been to advance proposals that can benefit the UK and the Commonwealth in order to realign and provide balance for British foreign-policy objectives. We will always acknowledge that defence of the Realm is paramount; thus, we have made recommendations that do not undermine this principle.

In the short term, the UK can re-establish a Commonwealth focus on its Youth visa. The UK's old version was exclusively Commonwealth yet it now only reflects a few advanced economies. Admitting Commonwealth nations each year would display a commitment to the Commonwealth that has been lacking in recent years. Admitting more than one nation per year could be made possible provided the reciprocity arrangements are in place and limited to the current quota of 1,000 visas for ease.

Another short-term option is a *Commonwealth Concession* in fees for Tourist and Business-Tourist visas. The £83 cost has been seen to be prohibitive so a reduction for Commonwealth nations would highlight the value the UK places on Commonwealth citizens. The economic benefits this would bring to the UK via tourism have been explained, as has the wider business case for the Business-Tourist visa, which affects 50 Commonwealth nations. Moreover, finding workable solutions for Jamaica and South Africa over lifting visa requirements would boost relations after long periods of unsolved tension.

We explored the Mayor of London's idea of a bilateral labour mobility zone. This could most readily be implemented by emulating the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement between Australia and New Zealand, which is flexible, cost free, and does not need a treaty. It allows these nationals the chance to live, work, and travel with little to no hindrance in each other's countries while also protecting the countries' respective welfare regimes. We also argued that Mr. Johnson's scheme be opened up to include Canada, and other Commonwealth nations could be added over time. Furthermore, we noted the changing ethnic make-up of each nation, which goes some way in dispelling the charge that such an arrangement would be exclusive to old white dominions. This is a medium-term goal that could be pursued after the 2015 UK general election. It could be established within six months provided there is a wider vision from civil servants to focus on policies away from the European scene.

Other medium-term proposals include a reassessment of the abolition of the Post-study Work visa for all international students. The arguments for and against are fairly balanced, but we share Sir James Dyson's view that educating students only to then lose many of them is not sensible policy. There are strong economic benefits to having these students remain to find future employment in British businesses, bringing with them knowledge of their own domestic markets. We also argued that the Exceptional Talent visa should include a Commonwealth component to indicate the UK's support of Commonwealth talent. We admit the visa itself is hard to obtain, and it is also difficult for bodies to attain the status needed to support applicants; however, a move to add a Commonwealth organisation should be welcomed by the Home Office.

Our longer term recommendations would require a large amount of political capital. One is a UK prototype of a Commonwealth business travel card similar to APEC's own successful scheme, while a Commonwealth Realm airport queue would prove a welcome sight to nations whose 135m citizenry (including the UK) share a monarchy and much more besides. We reiterate that many ask why this arrangement is not already in place, given the obvious and enduring shared ties between the Commonwealth nations. The current EU queue causes much dissatisfaction for Britons and Commonwealth citizens alike. This policy would be the most visual and would again strengthen the UK's soft power status.

In summary, we believe we have demonstrated that the Commonwealth does matter. At a time when the UK is considering whether it is just a European nation or one with a true global role, using its Commonwealth connections through revamped migration policies will help not just its Commonwealth diasporas but also people who want to do business with – and in – the UK as well as Britons



who want to think globally by studying, living, exporting, and setting up businesses in other Commonwealth nations. We urge the British Government to look upon our recommendations without fear or prejudice and to see them as practical policy options to acknowledge and address the Commonwealth's contribution to the UK in the past, now, and in the future for wider prosperity. It would be shameful and a deep error to disregard the shared language, similar legal system, and customs that the Commonwealth family provides. UK soft power will be significantly weakened if we ignore the Commonwealth and its potential.



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I welcome this report by Commonwealth Exchange as the beginning of a long-overdue discussion about how we engage with Commonwealth citizens, specifically on the matter of visas to work and invest in the UK.

Boris Johnson / Mayor of London

It was such a trying time for me and I would not wish what happened to me to my worst enemy. The amount of processes that Australian and New Zealand and other Commonwealth citizens have to do just to stay in the UK is absolutely ridiculous. Something needs to be done.

Australian / Teacher / Female

The joyous events in Glasgow around the splendid Games ought to remind us that whilst Brits seem to love the Commonwealth, they have not always been so keen on its citizens.

Don Flynn / Director / Migrants' Rights Network

I am now left in limbo wondering how I will be able to return. I don't have a workplace willing to sponsor me. What really upsets me is the fact that I am a nurse. I have been on such an emotional rollercoaster trying to get back in to the UK. I'm under 30, educated, work hard, and pay taxes.

Australian / Nurse / Female

Britain's strength has for centuries been based on its position as an open, trading nation, with strong connections across the globe. It is deeply worrying that Britain is shutting out people from Commonwealth countries who want to come here to work.

Simon Walker / Director General / Institute of Directors

My intentions to stay in the UK were to help the economy and develop my skills. I would never dream of staying here and claiming welfare. I believe there should be special allowances for Australians and UK citizens to work and live freely between the two countries. The language, culture, and democratic ideas are almost identical to each other. It makes sense.

Australian / Electrician / Male

As my love for the UK grew, so did the realisation that I would never have an opportunity to fully embed myself in this new place due solely to the visa rules currently in place. How I could ever invest in a home, purchase a vehicle or meaningfully contribute to the environment and community around me if I know that my time would soon expire and I would be forced to leave?

South African / Finance / Male

We are responsible adults, who want to enjoy life, but unfortunately visa restrictions have not enabled us to have that experience.

New Zealander / Graphic Designer / Female

I have British friends in Australia and I would love to see and be a part of a much more open visa policy between our two nations. Maybe something similar to the way we are with our cuzzie-bros in New Zealand?

Australian / Male

I had to move back to Canada. My heart was broken and my dreams shattered... I now live my life in the UK 3 months at a time, never knowing when the quota might be full. This has the most deleterious effects on both my personal and professional life.

Canadian / Musician / Female

