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Immigration can be positive but must be controlled

Immigration can play a very positive part in the development of the UK economy but an explicit annual limit on non-EU migrants should be introduced together with controls on future EU countries, Kris Hopkins, the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley, has argued.

Cllr Hopkins was speaking following the release of Department of Work and Pension figures which showed that, in the twelve month period to March 2007, 510 new foreign workers living in Keighley and Ilkley had received national insurance numbers.

Of the 510 additional workers who came to Keighley and Ilkley, the largest number originated from Poland with 180, followed by Pakistan with 110, Slovakia with 40 and India and Bangladesh with 30 apiece.

The remaining 50 workers, according to the official figures, included 10 each from Lithuania, South Africa, China, Czech Republic and Latvia.

Cllr Hopkins said he believed it was important to recognise the key economic role many of the new arrivals were playing but added it was equally vital to accept that the current influx was not sustainable in the longer term.

He commented:

“Migrants play a very important role in complementing our domestic workforce, particularly in filling vacancies that might otherwise be left empty.

“However, the fact is that the continuing high level of migrants into the UK – particularly those who are economically inactive and do not have national insurance numbers - is going to result in increased pressures on our public services including housing, schools and hospitals.

“The last ten years have seen a Labour Government pursuing what can only be described as an ‘open door’ policy where no restrictions on numbers have been applied.

“The horse has effectively bolted in relation to the new EU accession states whose residents have now gained the freedom to live and work wherever they wish in any member country.

“The British Government must ensure that residents of future member states do not gain such unrestricted rights, certainly in relation to the UK.

“Of more pressing importance is the need for the Government to move swiftly to impose a strict annual limit on the number of non-EU migrants allowed to enter and remain in this country.

“This would be a positive move and a law that could be implemented relatively swiftly.

“Together with a much stronger border controls which Conservatives like me have been demanding for many years, I believe we would then have a platform for greater stability.

”Unfortunately, I do not believe this Government has the stomach or the will to take what I would regard as simple, common sense decisions.”

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