# Starmer’s immigration clampdown threatens to collapse UK social care sector, warns Dundee expert



The UK’s social care sector is teetering on the brink of crisis following the draconian immigration policies introduced by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. A key figure in the care home industry from Dundee, Dr. Robert Kilgour, has issued a stark warning that these measures could critically undermine care services, especially for the vulnerable populations who depend heavily on state support. The recent nationalist tone adopted by political leaders, including Starmer, echoes a troubling trend prioritised by many, reflecting the discontent that has fueled movements within the right.

In a troubling announcement, Starmer declared plans to cease the recruitment of care workers from abroad, ostensibly as a means to cut net migration, which reached an alarming high of around 906,000 in the year ending June 2023. Critics, including voices from the social care sector, argue that this decision reveals a dangerously short-sighted perspective that threatens vital services such as healthcare and social support. Leaders like Dr. Kilgour are right to condemn a Labour government that seems more focused on political narratives rather than the real, pressing needs of staffing challenges.

Dr. Kilgour remarked, “It should be about people not politics, and vulnerable people at that,” expressing his discontent over what he perceives as a hasty and ill-advised move by the Labour government. He further warned that care providers may soon need to reduce council-funded placements due to the government's unrealistic wage demands aimed at attracting British workers. When questioned about how to manage the necessary funding for these pay hikes, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper's lack of a coherent plan only deepened concerns about the viability of Starmer's proposed changes.

The social care sector has historically relied on international workers to fill essential roles, a lifeline now threatened. With about 70% of residents in Kilgour’s homes receiving state support, a shift towards privatized care funding could lock out those who cannot afford such services, setting the stage for an imminent care crisis just as the UK's aging population continues to escalate demand.

While Starmer insists that these changes will incentivise the hiring of British nationals through fair pay agreements, Kilgour’s concerns highlight a painful disconnect: unless the government acknowledges and rectifies the misleadingly low care costs set by local authorities, many care providers will be unable to operate sustainably. “It’s fairly two-faced of the prime minister... when your main customer won’t pay the true cost of care,” he pointed out, indicating that care home operators may have to shutter facilities or dramatically scale back services in the face of these drastic reforms.

Wider implications loom as many operators voice urgent concerns about financial sustainability, with Dr. Kilgour referencing potential closures in his sector. The ramifications of unfounded cuts to immigration could further aggravate the challenges facing the National Health Service (NHS), given that robust social care infrastructure is essential to tackling broader health crises.

As Starmer’s government attempts to portray a firm grip on immigration, it risks neglecting the reality that punitive policies rarely yield practical solutions. Analysts argue that any meaningful reduction in migration must be coupled with a serious commitment to strengthen the domestic workforce, particularly in terms of education and training. This ties back to ongoing discussions around the urgent need for skilled labor and the rising costs of service provision.

Amid mounting public concern regarding the implications of immigration on essential services, Starmer confronts a complex balancing act. His policies reflect a populist pivot in response to electoral pressures, mirroring sentiments that have intensified amid criticism of long-standing immigration practices. Yet, many warn that framing immigration as the core issue behind socio-economic strife could backfire, alienating potential voters while disregarding the significant contributions, migrants make to UK society.

Ultimately, the intertwined crises surrounding care funding, immigration policy, and public service sustainability present a formidable challenge for this Labour administration. Dr. Kilgour aptly encapsulates the dilemma, asserting that addressing NHS issues requires first confronting the systemic weaknesses afflicting social care. The future of care services hangs precariously as the government struggles to reconcile its political ambitions with the stark realities faced by the sector.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/politics/5243272/dundee-care-boss-keir-starmer-immigration/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/92070e36-921a-458d-ab37-6c682b9da645> - UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has unveiled a stricter immigration policy in response to growing public concern and the surging popularity of Nigel Farage's Reform UK party. While aiming to control net legal migration—which peaked at 906,000 in the year to June 2023—Starmer's rhetoric and proposed measures closely mirror populist narratives, reflecting pressure from both public sentiment and his own MPs. Labour's plan includes reducing net arrivals by 100,000 annually, promoting English proficiency among migrants, and closing abused visa routes such as those for care workers. However, critics warn that these measures may impair key sectors like healthcare and academia and fail to address the politically sensitive issue of small boat crossings. The strategy also shifts focus towards attracting high-skilled migrants while delaying settlement and citizenship opportunities, potentially deterring talent. Analysts argue that to truly reduce immigration, the government must tackle underlying issues such as skills shortages and economic inactivity among the UK workforce. Without substantial investment in education and training, the reforms may hinder Labour’s goals of revitalizing public services and economic growth.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/ee91cad6-c5f2-4a95-8fee-937e1ec10df6> - The UK Labour government's recent white paper on immigration proposes significant curbs, particularly affecting the care sector. By eliminating the existing social care visa without introducing a viable alternative, the country risks exacerbating its growing care-dependency crisis due to an aging population. Though the original visa route was flawed, the UK still faces genuine labour shortages in the care industry. Without foreign workers or substantial tax hikes to fund social care, public services may deteriorate, increasing the burden on local governments and potentially diminishing the quality of public life. Past attempts to reform social care financing, such as the "death tax" and "dementia tax," failed due to public resistance. While the government’s anti-immigration stance may appeal rhetorically, it risks political backlash if service standards fall and taxes rise. Meanwhile, Labour's broader strategy of imposing more burdens on businesses could further complicate economic recovery and public service reliability. Public dissatisfaction is growing not over net immigration numbers, but due to declining service quality and under-resourced local councils, as highlighted in recent surveys. This disconnect could prove politically costly if not adequately addressed.
4. <https://cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/12/starmer-anuncia-un-plan-para-reducir-la-inmigracion-quienes-vengan-a-nuestro-pais-deben-comprometerse-a-integrarse-cadena-ser/> - El primer ministro británico, Keir Starmer, ha anunciado un ambicioso plan para reducir la inmigración al Reino Unido y reforzar el control fronterizo. En un discurso contundente, afirmó que se acabó el modelo de “fronteras abiertas” y que su gobierno adoptará medidas más estrictas para controlar las llegadas. Starmer subrayó la necesidad de que los inmigrantes se integren plenamente, aprendiendo el idioma y participando en la sociedad británica. El plan incluye duplicar a diez años el tiempo mínimo de residencia necesario para obtener la residencia permanente, endurecer los exámenes de inglés y limitar la contratación de trabajadores extranjeros en sectores como el sanitario, una medida criticada por la patronal de residencias debido a su impacto en la atención a mayores. Estas acciones responden tanto al ascenso de la extrema derecha en recientes comicios municipales como al aumento del 21% en la llegada de inmigrantes irregulares en 2024, particularmente por el Canal de la Mancha, y al incremento del 14% en las deportaciones. Starmer también abogó por una mayor cooperación internacional para combatir la inmigración irregular y el tráfico de personas.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/d83661777617aae46a5cb6942f544e54> - UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced a new initiative to significantly reduce immigration numbers and make it more difficult to settle in the country, in response to increasing public concern and the electoral rise of the anti-immigrant Reform UK party. Speaking in Downing Street, Starmer pledged to tighten all areas of the immigration system—work, family, and study—emphasizing a controlled, selective, and fair approach. These measures include raising salary thresholds and English language requirements for employment visas, ending overseas recruitment for care home jobs, and requiring 10 years of residency for citizenship. Migration has long been a contentious issue in the UK, especially post-Brexit, with net migration reaching 900,000 in the year to mid-2023. Despite past Conservative efforts to curb immigration, numbers have remained high, fueled by international crises in Ukraine and Hong Kong and dangerous Channel crossings by small boats. Critics argue that eliminating low-skilled visas risks harming essential services like care homes, while refugee advocates and some Labour members caution against adopting rhetoric and policies resembling those of the far-right. Conservatives claim that Labour’s proposals are insufficient and demand a binding annual cap on immigration.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/9b916a14-95b3-435f-a79e-de1331153297> - Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer's government has introduced significant reforms to the UK’s post-Brexit immigration system, aiming to reduce migration and pivot towards attracting high-skilled graduate workers. The proposed changes, detailed in a government white paper, restrict work visas to graduate-level roles and significantly limit lower-skilled worker visas to temporary exceptions where labor shortages exist. Settlement pathways have also been extended, requiring migrants to prove societal contribution, while higher fees and salary thresholds will make the UK’s immigration process among the most expensive globally. The Home Office estimates a reduction of about 100,000 arrivals annually, although the net migration impact remains uncertain. Critics warn of negative effects on sectors dependent on foreign labor, particularly in social care, due to policy shifts including the closure of care visas and restrictions on family accompaniment. The higher education sector faces a contentious 6% levy on income from international students. Economists expect minimal GDP per capita impact, though public finances may benefit from a shift toward higher-earning migrants. Political observers have raised concerns that Starmer's messaging, blaming immigration for economic stagnation, might alienate voters and echo right-wing narratives rather than offering a balanced discussion on immigration’s benefits and challenges.