

GMB Congress 2026

Immigration and Migration Motions

This text has been extracted from the Final Agenda document and the qualifications from the London Region 2nd preliminary agen

POLITICAL: IMMIGRATION & MIGRATION

248. A FAIRER AND MORE HUMANE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Congress notes according to the United Nations, 122 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, with 8 million asylum seekers overall.

The refugees' charity RAMFEL reported that up to now, refugees claiming asylum in Britain could be granted a 5-year visa and qualify for indefinite leave on completion. Now, the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood is introducing the principle of an expensive 2.5-year Visa, to be subsequently renewed 4 times, so that indefinite leave may only be granted in 20 years' time. And throughout the 20 years, the government will keep reviewing whether it is safe to deport the person.

Congress notes in the estimation of the British Refugee Council, the extra costs of this change be 872 million, adding an enormous burden of work on a government that already takes a year to process the more straightforward applications of people in the UK on Family Visas.

Congress notes that the right of refugees to family reunion was severely curtailed by Yvette Cooper in September, with family reunification being denied to anyone "not earning enough".

Now, the government takes its cue from the "Danish model", a highly restrictive policy aimed at 'zero asylum seeker'. The practice of 'offshoring' is now in force in Britain and 4 other countries, and the 'pushbacks at sea' were only dropped due to objections and opposition.

Congress also notes that in these matters, Nigel Farage accused Shabana Mahmood of stealing the policies of his Reform Party; and that Stephen Yaxley-Lennon sees in them "common sense plans to restore control and order to our borders".

Congress believes that, as migrants flee wars, persecution, famine and climate shocks, the desperate people will not be deterred by the growing cruelty and brutality against them in Europe or the UK. The pain inflicted on them will not make the refugees disappear.

Congress believes that these reforms (those already in force and the proposed new ones) are not only shocking and draconian, but self-defeating and prejudicial to the social cohesion of the country.

Above all, we believe that the 'Danish model' that inspires these new attacks on refugees, has shown that cruel policies do not placate the anti-migrant politicians and the racist elements in society. Far from it, these will shift to meet the rotten ground opened by our present government's proposals. And then, there will always be another step to take us down deeper into the abyss where Tommy Robinson, Farage and international Finance capital are taking us.

Congress calls on the CEC to stand not only against the growing attacks on immigrants, but also against the nazifying forces – national and international – that want us to believe the working class has no policy other than theirs.

The GMB can bring its considerable weight behind the forces that want to defend a fairer and more humane immigration system. And help organise activities among the population, up and down Britain.

X59 NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

LONDON REGION

SUPPORT WITH QUALIFICATION: The CEC recognises the importance of a fair, humane and effective immigration and asylum system, and acknowledges the significant contribution migrant workers make to the UK economy, public services and to our union.

GMB has long opposed the exploitation of migrant labour and has consistently campaigned for equal rights, fair treatment and dignity for all workers, regardless of nationality or immigration status.

Migrant workers must never be used to undercut wages and conditions or to divide working people.

GMB engages regularly with the Home Office and other ministers to emphasise our established policy in this area. We are clear that any Labour Government immigration and asylum policy must be rooted in our values while addressing the impact of irregular immigration.

We also recognise that global displacement is rising due to conflict, persecution, economic instability and climate change. These trends create significant humanitarian challenges that require international cooperation and responsible government policy.

Our qualifications are as follows:

1. The motion includes assertions about specific government policies and individuals that are contested and expressed in language that may not support the union's ability to influence policy effectively. The CEC believes our advocacy should be framed to strengthen constructive engagement with government, parliamentarians and wider stakeholders.

2. The union's policy focus should remain on defending the rights of migrant workers, opposing racism and discrimination, and promoting immigration and asylum policies that are fair, humane and workable.

Subject to these qualifications, the CEC supports the principle that the UK should maintain an immigration and asylum system that: respects human rights, protects vulnerable people, promotes social cohesion, and ensures all workers are protected from exploitation.

The CEC will continue working with sister unions, community organisations and policymakers to promote fair migration policies and defend the rights and dignity of migrant workers.

249. WELCOMING AND SOLIDARITY WITH IMMIGRANTS

Congress notes the white paper and the November announcement on immigration and citizenship.

Congress believes that this is an intensification of the hostile environment done for reasons of appearance rather than policy effectiveness.

Congress reiterates its belief that immigrants for the purpose of work do not negatively impact wages levels.

Congress believes that both the White Paper and the November announcement conflict with the need for an immigration policy based on dignity and welcome.

In particular the prohibition of families for researchers, the extending of the time required before obtaining indefinite leave to remain, the residence longevity before access to citizenship, and the visa costs are discriminatory, cruel and counterproductive.

Congress believes that it is in the best interests of all citizens that immigrants become citizens as soon as possible so that they can act in solidarity without fear of deportation.

Congress believes that the movement cannot outperform Reform UK and that we and the Labour Party must stand for an immigration and refugee policy based on dignity and welcome.

X58 LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH, London Region

SUPPORT WITH QUALIFICATION: The CEC is concerned about the changes to the immigration system, which will have an effect on key sectors such as Adult Social Care, and in the gig economy where we are likely to have the most affected members. In line with the motion we will engage in processes which limit the impact on workforces most at risk. Naturally we agree with the motion that immigrants coming to the UK to work and build a life here should be treated with dignity, and that pathways to settled status should be honoured. Our qualification is on the line that "Congress believes that it is in the best interests of all citizens that immigrants become citizens as soon as possible so that they can act in solidarity without fear of deportation" as this is not a practicable request to have as policy of the union.