



Media release

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## **Host citizenship ceremonies before the FA Cup Final to celebrate Britishness, says Modern Britain**

**A Conservative campaign group has today called for citizenship ceremonies to be held at major cultural and sporting events, such as the FA Cup Final, Wimbledon, Glastonbury or the Edinburgh Tattoo, rather than in town halls, as a way for the country to celebrate Britishness.**

The idea is contained in a new report by Modern Britain entitled ***The New Migration Contract***. Other proposals include: doubling the net number of high-skilled migrants to 50,000 while significantly reducing low skilled migration; a £600m fund to meet the extra public services costs of migration, while boosting spending on English language lessons for newcomers; and, a 70,000 'returns' target for illegal immigrants, while encouraging more non-British students to study in the UK.

The report is the first major research produced by Modern Britain, a Conservative campaign group launched by Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP last year, that is backed by a number of prominent Conservatives, such as Rishi Sunak, Kit Malthouse, Lord Finkelstein, Suella Fernandes, Helen Grant and Syed Kamall.

The report, ***The New Migration Contract***, sets out how the UK can develop a modern approach to immigration that works for everyone. It urges the Government to find ways to better integrate migrants who want to become British citizens. Currently, citizenship oaths are taken at low-key ceremonies, usually in town halls. Modern Britain proposes that the UK should follow the Australian model, where new citizens are celebrated as full members of the community at high-profile ceremonies, including on Australia Day.

Binita Mehta-Parmar, author of the report, said:

*"A citizenship ceremony is often an emotional experience for the individual and their family. Swearing allegiance to the Queen and recognising the values of our country is the ultimate display of Britishness. Instead of holding these events in town halls, we should be celebrating New Britons at iconic British events. There is much to commemorate in becoming a citizen of modern Britain and it is right that our new fellow citizens are welcomed appropriately."*

**The New Migration Contract** proposals include:

- A new net limit of 50,000 highly skilled immigrants to cover all migrants from around the world, replacing the current 20,700 limit covering migrants from the rest of the world and the unlimited number of EU migrants currently able to come to the UK
- Low-skilled immigration to only be possible for very limited sectors of the economy, where a demonstrable shortage of labour is apparent that cannot be filled, for example, by increased wages or capital investment



- A £600 million Immigration Mitigation Fund – or £2,000 per new migrant – that councils could bid for on a competitive basis to help cope with extra demand on local public services
- The creation of a single government agency to replace the four departments that currently manage asylum. This new Asylum and Integration Agency would help to ensure refugees learn English and other skills to enhance their employability. Asylum seekers would be allowed to work while their cases are considered and enabled to return to their country of origin once it is safe
- The introduction of an annual rolling refugee target of 20,000, with flexibility to bank unused places or bring forward future allocations to cope with wars or major humanitarian crises
- Setting a 'returns' target for illegal immigrants and failed asylum seekers at 70,000 a year. This would earn the Government new credibility to begin building a new, realistic national consensus on immigration for the 21st century

Binita Mehta-Parmar added:

*"After Brexit, Britain will have far greater ability to control immigration. We need to use this opportunity to attract the migrants our country needs for future economic success and give newcomers the tools they need to integrate quickly. We are proposing a contract on migration that will benefit both new immigrants and British citizens."*

*"Our contract on asylum would provide a limit on refugee numbers but allows asylum seekers to work while they apply, and then offers far more training and English language skills to help them integrate – and begin to contribute economically. In return, there would be a much tougher approach on illegal immigration and failed asylum seekers."*

#### **Notes to editors**

Binita Mehta-Parmar is the Next Generation Director of Modern Britain and former Leader of Watford Council's Conservative Group.

Modern Britain was established to develop centre-right ideas and policies designed to improve the lives of Britain's many Black and Minority Ethnic citizens.

For more information, visit [www.modernbritain.org.uk](http://www.modernbritain.org.uk) or email [info@modernbritain.org.uk](mailto:info@modernbritain.org.uk).