Suggested wording for long-from questions, within the Earned Settlement consultation

Do you have any comments on how 'Character' should be considered in relation to settlement? (max 200 words)

Treating historic convictions as a bar to settlement undermines the concept of rehabilitation in our criminal justice system. As well as entrenching a double standard for migrants, this is deeply impractical and will undoubtedly drive growth in the undocumented population.

People with historic convictions will not simply disappear from the UK, especially if they have British or settled family members or have lived here for a long period of time. Should they struggle to maintain temporary legal status because of the cost and complexity of repeat applications and with no hope of settlement, we would expect that more people will lose their immigration status.

Barring people with Government debt from settling is counterproductive. The stability of settlement makes it easier for people to maintain employment, increase their earnings and pay off their debts. People worried about incurring NHS debt will be discouraged from seeking early treatment for health conditions, which will lead to worse outcomes and higher costs in the long term.

Overall, this will drive poverty, homelessness and exploitation amongst migrant communities. Local authorities will face increased pressure as they retain statutory duties to support children and adults with care needs regardless of status.

Do you have any further comments on how 'Integration' should be considered in relation to settlement? (max 200 words)

To promote integration, settlement processes should be simple, quick and affordable. The way to achieve safe and resilient communities is to give people the opportunity to settle and become citizens. More long routes and insecure status will have the opposite effect.

Access to English language courses is difficult for a variety of reasons, including cost, time and availability. Certain groups will face higher barriers to learning English, such as those with caring responsibilities, or learning difficulties. If the Government wants more people to acquire English language skills, they should invest in the provision of more accessible courses and address the barriers that make learning English difficult.

Access to a more stable, more permanent immigration status shouldn't be reliant on pre-defined, exclusionary visions of what it means to be included in a community. The consultation proposes to judge integration through economic lines that make working class and disabled migrants permanently precarious, force people to find the time to volunteer as "proof" of engagement or introduce harsher English language requirements. I believe that all migrants who live in the UK should have a direct/short path to settlement to ensure they have the stability necessary to participate and integrate in society.

Do you have any further comments on how 'Contributions' should be considered in relation to settlement, including any potential benefits or challenges of recognising giving back to the community as a contribution towards settlement? (200 words)

I strongly oppose the proposal to attach NRPF to the settlement. No one should be seen as worthy of a faster settlement pathway because of their occupation, earnings or ability to volunteer. Making lower-earners wait longer for settlement and pay more in fees will reinforce wealth inequalities and increase financial hardship for low-income households. A volunteering requirement creates a two-tiered system, where migrants are effectively compelled to volunteer. This goes against the spirit of

volunteering and creates an ethical dilemma for all working with volunteers. People should not be penalised for having legally accessed welfare benefits to which they are entitled. Most who have made a change of conditions application have already been penalised by being moved to a 10-year settlement pathway. They must not be punished again. Women, particularly single mothers, are much more likely to have applied for a change of conditions, so they will be disproportionately impacted. Evidence from other countries is clear that settlement facilitates integration precisely because it brings migrants' rights and entitlements closer to citizens'. Making settlement subject to these restrictions, with the accompanying risk of poverty and homelessness, will undermine the extent to which settlement can help integration.