

Citizenship

The **Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009** introduced a new **Pathway to Citizenship** that extends the amount of time it takes to obtain British citizenship from 5 years to up to 8 years. As well as the **Life in the UK Test** and **English Language Test** it also placed additional duties on applicants. From summer 2011 the concepts ‘earned’ and ‘probationary’ citizenship include increased duties, such as volunteering that leave some migrants feeling insecure for much longer. People from outside Europe, for example, who come here on work permits have their passports stamped ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ until they get either residency or citizenship. If they lose their job they have no safety net and have to return home.

Before this legislation was passed in February 2009 the **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)** warned that the recession could be longer and deeper if the Bill became law. It criticized aspects of the proposal to end the automatic right to stay after five years’ residence and replace it with ‘earned citizenship’.

www.relocatemagazine.com/index.php/relocation-news-blog-format/13-immigration-a-visas-news/469-think-tank-criticizes-government-bill-on-immigration-restrictions

People doing valuable jobs feel let down and unappreciated. In a combined briefing document for local politicians supported by trade unions, human rights and migrant worker support groups (including EMBRACE) a nurse, Ricky Gallo, explained how the Bill’s proposals would inhibit community integration.

‘I think this bill is making it harder for us to get involved in anything, not the other way round! You have to work and make sure nothing goes wrong with your work, because everything depends on you keeping that job. And then, you never know what will happen next. You always feel like they could send you home, so you don’t really want to get involved in anything, because it doesn’t feel like this is definitely going to be ‘home’ until you’ve got some kind of settled status.’

To read the full document, see

<http://www.lawcentreni.org/borders-citizenship-and-immigration-bill-second-reading.html>

Since this Act was passed many migrant workers, including nurses, have moved on to countries, such as Canada or Australia where they can still gain citizenship after 4 years.