

Britain Has Voted, Migrants are Watching.



Editor's Note

The fragmented political atmosphere in the UK may be attributed to the key impacts of its post-Brexit positions on migration. This conclusion arrives after a close inspection of the recent UK local elections and what the results could mean for immigrants. Reform UK swept a majority, a move that entrenched the growing anti-immigration sentiments. This majority is also followed by wins



from The Green Party and The Liberal Democrats, both contrasting the values of the hard-right Reform, while dissolving the once two-party majority.

Immigration takes a kind of prominence in the top conversations that control the outcome of electoral alliances. That is why Brexit remains a recurring conversation, and the questions that often follow are whether it was, in fact, a favourable one for the Kingdom, since immigration skyrocketed to higher levels after that landmark decision. The questions may have led to the outcome of the recent local elections; the wins of the hard-right Reform Party pose a shift to extreme perspectives on immigration, while the wins of the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats may have balanced that out. In summary, the dichotomy that exists between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party is a gentle alternative to the contrast evident between the growing majorities. Alliances are dancing to new music, and African immigrants might be the stomping ground for the dance battle.

Cover Illustration

The design depicts post elections in the UK, images of flying policies and signages that encourage a migration focused campaign.

Migration Monitor

The British political landscape has previously been dominated by two parties over the past century. However, Reform UK, a relatively new party and regarded as the second-largest party in Scotland and Wales, has gained widespread attention after emerging as the winner in the local elections held in May.

Despite this, many people view the party's current victory as a cause for concern, as it's known for its strict views on immigration, deportation, and other national policies. Critics argue that these positions could lead to further social division within the United Kingdom.



Nigel Farage MP @Nigel_Farage · Sep 22, 2025



Welfare will be for British citizens only.



1.1K

1.9K

15K

801K



The Reform UK ideology timeline and what it means for African migrants and diaspora communities in the UK:

2018-2020:

Reform UK emerged from the Brexit Party, during the period the UK withdrew from the EU, amidst frustrations over prolonged and unresolved negotiations in the party. In 2020, it rebranded as Reform UK to tackle domestic-centred and broader right-wing issues and opposition to COVID-19 lockdown policies.

2021-2022:

The rebranding marked a significant shift toward internal UK issues, advocating for electoral reform, stricter immigration control, lower taxes, and smaller government. In March 2021, Nigel Farage handed over leadership of the party, allowing the party to further expand its broader political policies.



Katie Lam @Katie_Lam_MP · Jul 15, 2025



Today we learn 1.3 million foreign nationals in the UK claim Universal Credit.

So many Brits are struggling to get by. Why should they be taxed more to fund the billions we're spending on this?

Those who come here must contribute. **Welfare should be for British citizens only.**



Neil O'Brien @NeilDotO'Brien · Jul 15, 2025

New stats out today show that of the 1,279,765 non-UK nationals claiming Universal Credit, only 40% are in work.

So 757,000 are claiming and not working. And UC is only half of working age welfare spending. This is not a sensible immigration policy.

107

485

2.5K

72K



2003:

In 2023, Reform UK intensified its efforts by increasing the number of candidates nominated in by-elections, although it yielded no wins. However, this allowed the party to benefit from public dissatisfaction with the Conservative Party over the failed implementation of the Rwanda deportation scheme and the rise in small boat crossings across the English Channel.

← Post



Sarah Pochin MP
@SarahForRuncorn



Under a Reform UK Government, welfare will be for British citizens only. Britain is not the world's food bank.

[#reformUK](#) [#boriswave](#)

1:53 PM · Sep 22, 2025 · **641.1K** Views

980

1.2K

13K



2024

In mid-2024, Nigel Farage returned to leadership, and Reform UK succeeded during the general elections held that year. In May, the party introduced the "employer immigrant tax", proposing a higher National Insurance charge for companies that hire foreign workers rather than British nationals.

← Post



Reform UK's Zia Yusuf says his party would abolish indefinite leave to remain, "replacing it with a five-year renewable work visa, with a special visa available to spouses of UK citizens."

trib.al/gJ1wOjn

📺 Sky 501, Virgin 602, Freeview 233 and YouTube



2025-2026:

The party's political significance continues to grow in 2025, gaining additional council seats in local elections and strengthening its position among dissatisfied voters with the main parties, particularly on issues relating to migration, national sovereignty, and border control.



Ghana Chronicles 
@_GhChronicles



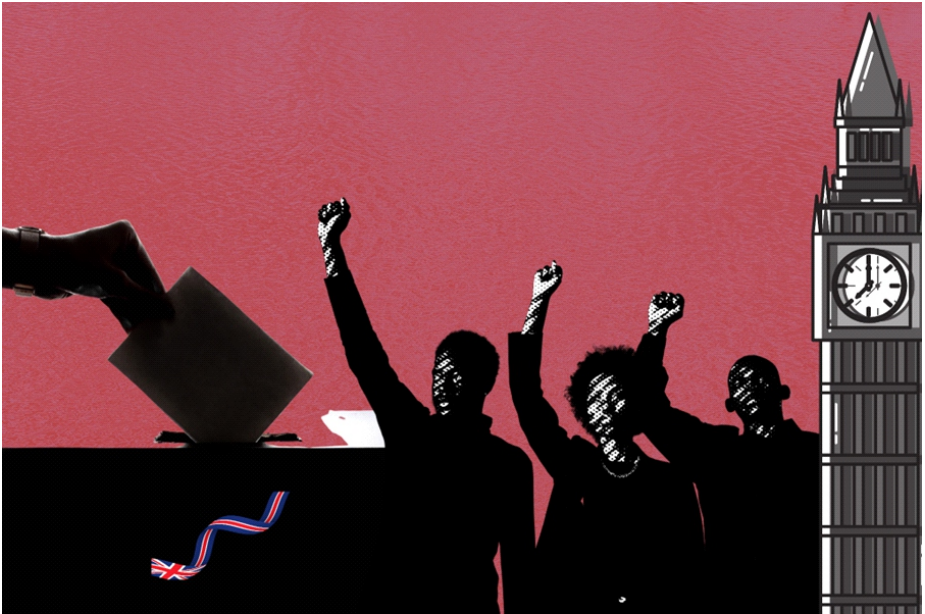
“We will block visas for countries that demand Reparations”

-UK Muslim Immigrant and Home affairs spokesman Zia Yusuf



That same year, the party outlined a tougher immigration enforcement agenda, including proposals to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and create a more centralised immigration system. Nigel Farage continues to advocate for stricter deportation policies for illegal entrants and foreign criminals, including a stronger legal system for dealing with crimes committed by non-citizens.

What Does Reform Mean for UK Migrants



Jamila Pereira

Brexit. A recession too often dismissed as merely a “cost of living crisis”. Five Prime Ministers in seven years. Thousands gather at far-right riots while activists are jailed

for pleading for humanity. Alongside this, a staggering rise in anti-migrant sentiment across the globe. Together, these events have marked a profound political shift in the UK and prompted many people to reconsider not only their future in this country but also the fragile contingencies that attach to their lives as economic migrants, refugees,

asylum seekers, international students, or family members trying to build stability here.

At the same time, the painful reality remains that these communities are continuously met with shrinking alternatives and diminishing protections. For many households, that warning has already arrived at the doorstep, and in some cases, the door barely moved. Following the latest local election results, in which Reform UK secured outright majorities in 24 councils across Great Britain, it became impossible to ignore the growing political apathy toward issues that will inevitably affect us all. Although I cast my vote with immense pride and gratitude, many chose not to participate, while others actively supported Reform UK. In doing so, some appeared to forget that “it’s no use crying over spilt milk” — because regardless of political allegiance or personal beliefs, the

consequences of these decisions rarely remain isolated to one group alone.

What many people also fail to recognise is that political participation in the UK is already deeply uneven depending on your immigration status. Settled migrants like myself are often limited to voting in local elections, if we are permitted to vote at all. In my case, despite living, working, and contributing here - not that I would ever minimise one’s inalienable rights to their position within an imperialist, white supremacist capitalist patriarchal society -, my ability to engage fully in what is often described as a “civic duty” remains restricted by law. Current voting eligibility rules continue to exclude large groups of residents from national political participation. While Commonwealth citizens are allowed to vote in all UK elections and referendums, EU nationals are generally restricted to local and

devolved elections, and many other residents — including people from countries such as Japan or Algeria — are denied voting rights altogether despite building their lives in this country.

When I consider all of this, I cannot help but question whether people truly understand the weight local elections carry, particularly for communities already living with limited political representation. For many of us under the EUSS, stability has never felt guaranteed, and the prospect of increasingly hostile immigration policies only deepens that uncertainty. These elections are not abstract political exercises; they shape the conditions under which migrants live, work, study, and attempt to belong. And while some may view local politics as secondary, for others, it can determine whether they continue to feel safe, represented, and welcome in

the place they call home.

From the Reform councillor suggesting that “Nigerian population in Sunderland should be melted down to fill in potholes” to another member of the party celebrating the racially motivated sexual assault of Sikh women, we have all been shown that fascism, hatred, racism and misogyny bolster one another and deliver nothing but the nation’s most vulnerable on a rusty platter.

According to the BBC, 171,000 people were added to net migration figures last year — roughly half the number recorded in 2024. “The figure is at its lowest level since 2012, excluding the Covid pandemic (...)”. Yet despite this significant decline, much of the UK’s political class continues to obsess over dismantling what they describe as “mass migration” and reducing the country’s reliance on foreign skilled workers, with Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer

insisting that there is still “more to do.”

By continually scapegoating migrants, there seems to be a growing willingness within Britain’s social fabric to remain oblivious to social housing shortages, a crumbling NHS, rising food costs and above all else, migrant dehumanisation. In many cases, migrants are framed as culturally incompatible and therefore somehow less deserving of empathy, dignity, or protection. The silence and inaction surrounding these narratives only further legitimise the dangerous belief that the right to rebuild one’s life on British soil should be reserved for those who possess a certain complexion, nationality, or socioeconomic privilege. There is a quiet comfort in this hierarchy — even if unconscious — that allows equality itself to feel negotiable, as though extending fairness to some would somehow diminish

what others believe they are entitled to. And in confronting this reality, we are forced to question what mobility truly means for migrants as a whole.

Because if we were all standing in the same room — an American digital nomad living in Lisbon, a Senegalese seamstress settled in Paris, a British diplomat stationed in Nigeria, a nursing student from Guinea-Bissau training at a hospital in Milan, a German businessman living in Salvador, and a Congolese widow raising her children in Amsterdam after losing her husband in a minefield — who among them would be granted the privilege of pursuing a better life freely, and who would instead be met with suspicion, hostility, and the constant erosion of their humanity? Inevitably, we arrive at the uncomfortable understanding that mobility itself is racialised. For those of darker complexions and deeply rooted cultures, movement across borders is

too often framed as a threat and opposition.

As I wrote previously in an article for Black Ballad, “Participating in democracy is a basic human right. Even though this may push individuals to attain citizenship and full voting rights, depending on the migrant group you belong to, accessing them can be quite intricate and costly. The UK sits in third place as one of the countries with the highest visa fees; citizenship costs almost £1,700 [now £1,839] per adult, and there are also hefty surcharges attached to an already struggling NHS.”

“For most migrants, these structural issues are accompanied by a sense of toxicity, obligating us to constantly justify our worth and dive into binaries of migration as we stand and evaluate which migrants are ‘worthier’ of voting rights. From how we contribute to the country’s progress to how useful immigration is, even

when we are “legal”, the public discourse around our lives degrades us to chattel since it perpetuates othering narratives where migrants are only necessary when societies can reap the fruits of our labour.”

As someone who recently completed the Life in the UK Test, I often find myself questioning what guarantees truly exist that this same opportunity will not one day be taken away. It becomes difficult not to feel disillusioned while witnessing the alarming treatment of vulnerable young people being groomed into extremism and stripped of their citizenship, while at the same time watching powerful men accused of perpetuating violence and committing war crimes continue to evade accountability without consequence.

Even the possibility of obtaining a British passport and securing permanence here is a privilege in itself—

one that countless people will never have access to. So, if I eventually decide to get my Portuguese passport and leave while envisioning a life elsewhere, I won't stop thinking about those who do not have the possibility of returning home.

Empathy has to begin somewhere, and collective action through its lens can carry us much further than we often realise. While some of us may still have an escape route, many others do not. Those who fled simply to survive — because of war, financial hardship, drought, climate collapse, abuse, or circumstances far worse than many of us will ever experience. How can I sit and imagine a future for myself while others are left with nothing to fall back on? No safety net. No anchor to hold onto.

So, now imagine being forced to leave your home, your community, your career, and the life you built because

because the political climate became intolerable, all while knowing you did not use the little political power you did have when it mattered most. And though this might be hard to digest, this might be the road we are being led through.

Looking away because the discomfort still feels far enough removed does not make the situation disappear; it only delays the moment we are forced to confront ourselves. As I wrote in a previous article, "I strongly feel like, for those who can vote but feel hopeless, not voting shouldn't be a solution.

The length of this story has been reduced for this magazine. You can read the full report on the Diaspora Africa website

**African Migration News
Biweekly**

**Compiled By Migrants
For Migrants**



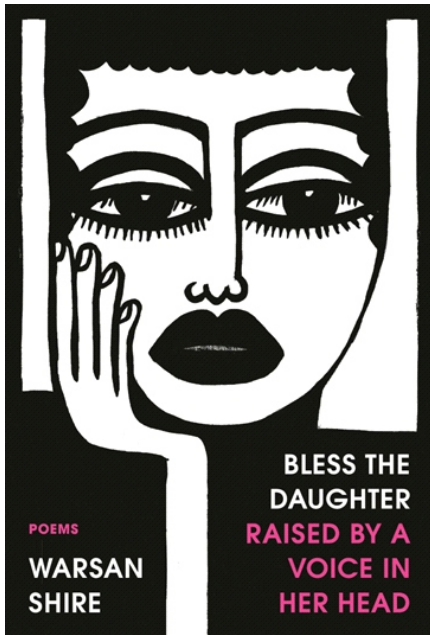
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What to Read Now



When despair hangs in the air and hovers like a prying hawk, a poet looks it in the face and names it. Warsan Shire, the Somali-British poet, in her debut 'Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in her Head', recognises this despair at once and has named it in different pages of this poetry collection. It is a prayer, an ode, a nurturing, or maybe hope. The immigrant and refugee experience often begins with despair— war, hunger, discomfort, quest for greener pastures, a longing

for ordered life, etc— people commonly in search for one thing: freedom.

But soon they arrive in these countries with their tall buildings and lights everywhere and fine things and cold weather and are declared 'unwanted', like weed. An Unwanted Plant.

Shire may be no physician, but she aptly traces the reason for migration, especially from countries whose history is made dense by the bigger nations with those tall buildings; in *Home* she writes: 'no one leaves home unless it is the mouth of a shark'. Who placed the shark at home in the first place?

Resources



Donate



Founded in 1983 by migrants who had fled their home countries seeking asylum in the UK. Praxis built a strong community in East London dedicated to supporting migrants and refugees. The organisation provides legal advice and active campaigning in a country where many politicians treat migrants with suspicion and cruelty.

With a mission to support marginalised immigrant communities, Praxis offers services to help navigate complex immigration systems and partners with experts and organisations to make lasting changes to exclusionary policies.

Further inquiries: Praxis, for Migrants and Refugees

In Numbers

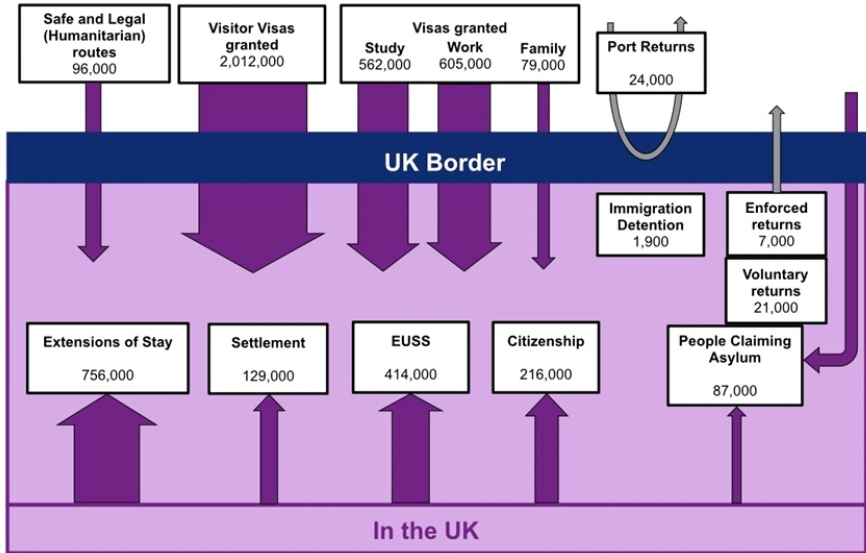


Figure 1: Summary of the UK immigration system year ending March 2024

The diagram illustrates the UK immigration system in March 2024. Statistics show how the system continues to tighten control to reduce immigration, despite the fact migrants rely on work, study, family, and asylum routes to enter and remain in the country, with over 2 million visitor visas, 600,000 work visas, more than half a million study visas, and nearly 90,000 asylum seekers recorded during the year.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2024/summary-of-latest-statistics>

The Mobility Gaze

In this Mobility Gaze, we spotlight members of the African diaspora who recently won seats in the UK local elections and are now serving as councillors in their respective wards. Their victories reflect the positive impact of migration and the important role migrants continue to play in their communities, serving with commitment, purpose, and care.



Cllr AJ Egemonye recently won his seat as a councillor representing Alexandra Park Ward, Haringey, London, under the Labour Party.



Cllr Nanda Manley Browne was re-elected to serve the residents of Brixton North. She is Lambeth Council's Cabinet Member for Healthier Communities (Job Share) and Co-Chair of the Lambeth Together Care Partnership Board.



Cllr Anthony Okereke was elected Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich in May 2022, having previously served as Cabinet Member for Housing. He was re-elected again in the last local election and now serves as Labour and Co-Op Councillor for Woolwich Common.

**Are you a traveller or just someone who is on the move?
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Send us a message on WhatsApp +44 7986 983956**

The Community Corner



Name: Marcus Balogun
Location: London, United Kingdom

What is your takeaway from the recent local elections in the UK, and what does it entail for immigrants?

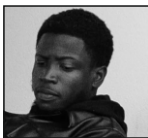
From seeing the 'Unite the Kingdom' marches under Tommy Robinson (EDL 2.0) & the occasional bigoted far-right politician tweet - Glenn Gibbins tweeting that Nigerians should be melted down to fill road potholes. There has been a steady wave of fascism and islamophobia across Europe since Trump's original election as president. The (White Europeans) say they want to restore their traditions nationwide. But the reality is they harbour a fear complex - White people fear becoming a statistical minority across Europe, the U.S & Australia. The genetic makeup of Western nations is changing, and it is only inevitable. I worry for those who have 'Indefinite stay', but in the same breath, I am aware that a PM has to put forth a vote in the House of Commons (which offers us some hope). On the flipside, Starmer's Labour has become a right-leaning party, and we only have the Greens representing humanity (real people). To finalise...The U.K would not survive without immigration, and it has been this way since the end of WW2. It's going to take a lot more than the so-called 'Reform party' to change what is inevitable. Immigrants built Britain. From afar, overseas. During Slavery. During colonialism and still today through migration. I have hope that the resistance against hate will win in the end



Name: Abi
 Location: London, United Kingdom

What is your takeaway from the recent local elections in the UK, and what does it entail for immigrants?

I'm not in the slightest surprised at the level of societal and institutional racism that is prevalent in the U.K., but I did raise a slight brow at the result of the votes. To see Nigel Farage front the polls and discussions again, it felt like revisiting the dark past of his last run. It's not for this particular reason that I didn't vote; I just didn't feel so included, seen, or compelled in any way to. British politics has clearly shown us the dangers of identity politics; that even those who are non-white are merely just their skin tone, and publicly sharing views similar to those with often discriminatory views. I don't feel doomed quite yet, having lived in many parts of the world, and I'm thankful to live in parts of London where I'm seen in many parts of it, but this experience has widened my eyes to what exists around me.



Name: Ayomide Johnson
Lawyer and PhD student in Leadership, Security and Development
 Location: London

What is your takeaway from the recent local elections in the UK, and what does it entail for immigrants?

The success of the Reform Party in the last local elections and, by implication, the resurgence of the far right in England, is no surprise to me. The element of surprise for me is the African and Caribbean

diaspora's inability to learn from historical patterns and organise to counter them. Far-right nationalism is not especially unique in a country built upon the sale and purchase of persons as chattel, colonialism, and, as we speak, neo-colonial enterprises that strip people of life and livelihood in the Global South. But as a community, we tend to seek psychological refuge in victimhood. We tend to play flutes on the front lines; we overdose on martyrdom rather than protecting ourselves from harm. The UK far right is 'entitled' to its stance on anti immigration (even though the UK's collusion with Global South despots to loot resources, involvement in Southern politics, and climate irresponsibility are key factors in why people leave their homelands) as much as diaspora communities are entitled to organise themselves into civil societies and a strategic political bloc to look after their own. A useful reference point is the Bengali community's political organisation in Tower Hamlets through the Aspire Party, which, despite its limitations, reflects a model of locally rooted collective political engagement.

Lamentably, we are our biggest obstacles. Internal tensions surrounding "Africanness vs Black Britishness" or "Africanness versus Caribbeanness" keep us in a constant loop where debate clubs replace strategic movements. Most important of all, we do not hate oppression as much as we think we do; we only hate being the oppressed. That means we foreground individualism over the common good. It is a crabs-in-the-bucket mentality where we would rather foreground faux privileges and personal access over concern for our kin. The challenge is not the self-interest of nationalist politics; the challenge is the self-interest we direct against ourselves.

Got a migration experience to share or want to be featured?

Send us a message on WhatsApp at **+44 7986 983956**, and we will chat with you!

Join our community on WhatsApp, message us “Hi”

+44 7986 983956, and we will allow you into the large room!

When you JOIN THE COMMUNITY, you get free access to:

- The biweekly migration magazine
- Verified global migration updates
- Resources and opportunities
- Policy and data on migration explained simply
- Help decide what you want us to talk about in our next issue

We are building a newsroom & community that counters misinformation and bias in global mainstream news about African migration. We are working with local and cross-border journalists to challenge biased global reporting frameworks that shape migration. We want to disrupt extractive storytelling practices & expand the range of perspectives represented in international media discourse surrounding migration.

The magazine is independently funded by the Diaspora Africa team. Many updates featured in this publication are sourced from our Migration Monitor database, which tracks migration trends affecting African migrants and diasporic communities globally.

monitor.diasporafrica.org

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