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Clash Erupts on GB News Over Record Immigration as UK Population Surges by Over 700,000

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A sharp on-air confrontation unfolded between political commentator Matt Goodwin and Lambeth councilor Martin Abrams during a GB News segment, as the pair debated the impact of Britain's accelerating population growth driven largely by immigration.

The clash came in response to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which revealed that the population of England and Wales rose by 706,881 in the year to mid-2024, reaching 61.8 million. Of this increase, 690,147 was attributed to net international migration, continuing a trend of historically high inflows. The figures follow an even steeper rise the year prior, bringing the two-year population growth to over 1.5 million, the largest on record since data collection began in 1949.

Goodwin challenged Abrams over the sustainability of such numbers, asking pointedly whether an annual influx of 700,000 was justifiable. “Are you saying adding 700,000 people to the population in a year is acceptable?” he asked. Abrams, a Labour councillor, defended the trend by highlighting its variability and attributing the rise to structural issues, including what he described as decades of mismanagement and underinvestment in public services.

Abrams argued, “We’ve had 45 years of neoliberalism and 15 years of Conservative Party austerity that has absolutely decimated our public services,” while also pointing to falling birth rates and an ageing population as key demographic pressures necessitating the need for more workers.

Goodwin dismissed these justifications, asserting that mass immigration is exacerbating rather than solving Britain’s problems. “What the left never talk about is how mass immigration is making those things worse,” he said, citing strain on housing, childcare, and public infrastructure. He also questioned why the country continues to rely on imported labour while millions of working-age Britons remain economically inactive. “What about the nine million British adults not in work?” he asked. “Are we just going to keep them on the welfare regime while we have mass immigration at the same time?”

The GB News presenter further criticised the idea of immigration as a long-term demographic fix, noting that “immigrants get older too,” and suggesting that the policy only kicks difficult decisions further down the road.

The discussion reflected growing public unease over Britain’s immigration policy, especially in light of the unprecedented figures. According to ONS spokesperson Nigel Henretty, “Net international migration continues to be the main driver of this growth, continuing the long-term trend seen since the turn of the century.”

With net migration now a central issue in British political discourse, the fiery debate between Goodwin and Abrams underscored the deep divide over how best to manage

population growth and ensure the country's long-term sustainability.