

UK Wastes £38 Billion on Migrant Schemes, Oxford Report Finds

August 4, 2025

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The UK government has spent an estimated £38 billion over the past decade on migrant arrival and accommodation programmes, much of it ineffectively, according to a new report from Oxford University's Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity. The study criticises the lack of strategic planning, fragmented funding streams, and failure to support long-term integration.

Covering the period from 2014 to 2024, the report finds that over £20 billion was spent across 26 separate government schemes to support new arrivals, including those from Afghanistan, Syria, Hong Kong, and Ukraine. When adjusted for inflation, the total rises to £38 billion. Researchers argue that the bulk of the spending went toward emergency housing and short-term support, rather than structured integration efforts or sustainable community development.

Jacqueline Broadhead, the director of the research program, said that the government's crisis-led approach has led to inefficient use of public funds. She warned that without a clear strategy or local engagement, public support for migration risks further erosion. "We need to shift from reactive responses to long-term investment in social infrastructure," she said, calling for a rebalancing of funding priorities.

The report found that while initial reception services were well-financed, schemes to help migrants settle into communities and participate in civic life were consistently underfunded. Local authorities often received limited guidance and had insufficient input into planning, leading to tensions in areas where services were overstretched.

Despite the high cost of migrant arrival programmes, the study notes that migration can deliver long-term economic benefits. Projections suggest that net migration of 350,000 people could reduce government borrowing by £7.4 billion by 2028. However, researchers argue that poor planning and short-termism have obscured these potential gains.

The report calls for improved coordination between departments, better site selection for housing, and closer alignment of funding with integration goals. It also recommends a stronger focus on securing local

consent, particularly in areas that have experienced social pressures due to sudden increases in population.

Although the current government has begun simplifying parts of the system, including efforts to consolidate budgets and streamline administration, the researchers insist that more structural reform is needed. Without meaningful change, they warn, Britain risks repeating costly mistakes and deepening social division.

The report concludes that without long-term investment in integration and clearer accountability, the UK's migration policy will continue to deliver poor value to both taxpayers and host communities.