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Members of Parliament Warn Home Office Fails to Track Foreign Workers After Visa Expiry

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The Home Office cannot confirm whether foreign workers leave the United Kingdom after their visas expire, according to a report by Members of Parliament, exposing critical weaknesses in the country's immigration enforcement system.

The Public Accounts Committee, a cross-party group of Members of Parliament, revealed that despite granting hundreds of thousands of work visas annually, the government does not have a reliable mechanism in place to track whether individuals depart once their visa permissions end. The report underlined long-standing failures in monitoring and enforcement procedures, which Members of Parliament warned could seriously undermine public confidence and the credibility of immigration controls.

At the centre of the issue is the Home Office's inability to verify who exits the country due to fragmented and outdated data systems. Although the government reintroduced exit checks in 2015, the committee found they are still not fully functional or comprehensive. The department continues to rely on third-party data sources, including commercial airline records, which often fail to provide a complete or accurate picture of who has left the country.

In one example highlighted in the report, more than 280,000 skilled worker visas were issued in 2022, but the Home Office was unable to confirm how many of those individuals had departed the United Kingdom after their visa terms ended. Members of Parliament said the absence of this basic information severely restricts the government's ability to assess the scale of non-compliance and enforce immigration laws effectively.

The Home Office has acknowledged the gaps and stated that work is underway to improve data-sharing processes and modernise the tracking of visa compliance. It pointed to plans for a broader technological overhaul of the immigration system. However, Members of Parliament criticised the slow pace of reform and warned that similar

recommendations have been made repeatedly over the past decade without meaningful change.

The report urged ministers to prioritise immediate reforms and to ensure the Home Office establishes a more effective method of tracking departures. Without action, the committee warned, the government risks further erosion of public trust and the integrity of the immigration system.

The findings contribute to ongoing concerns about the United Kingdom's management of migration and reflect broader scrutiny of the Home Office's operational competence.