

## Top scientists call for rethink on immigration controls

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Senior figures from the world of science and engineering have today called for an urgent rethink on the Government's proposals to drastically limit potential settlement rights for immigrants, warning that the changes could damage the UK's science and engineering base.

The individuals, who include two former Presidents of the Royal Society and the current Director of the Wellcome Trust, have argued that special consideration needs to be given to the long-term nature of science and engineering research.

Their comments came in a letter, coordinated by the Campaign for Science and Engineering, and published in today's edition of The Times. The letter and its full list of 20 signatories is available on the CaSE website.

The letter states that the UK's research success has been made possible by our global outlook, that the new settlement restrictions would particularly damage our potential for collaborating with emerging economies such as India and China - and that, with regard to the immigrant scientists and engineers themselves, "the UK needs them more than they need us".

CaSE's Director, Imran Khan, commented:

"When the immigration cap was imposed we had to fight pretty hard to warn the Government of the damage that it could do to science and engineering. To its credit, it eventually listened and changed its plans, but its settlement proposals could be just as harmful. The Government is effectively saying to the world's top scientists, 'Well, you can come and work here — but we'll be kicking you out after five years'."

"That's not nearly enough for the kind of long-term research that the UK has built its reputation on, and it will mean that we are not even considered as a destination by the world's best talent."

CaSE argues that a probable limit of five years will effectively make it pointless for many researchers to come to the UK, or funders to sponsor them.

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