

# Don't lift curbs on Romanian migrants, Tories tell Cameron

Tory MPs will challenge David Cameron over Romanian and Bulgarian migrants today – urging him not to throw open Britain's borders from next year.

Backbench support is coalescing around a plan to extend restrictions on new arrivals from the two eastern European countries, due to expire on January 1, for a further five years.

Dozens of Tory MPs are likely to back the measure and put huge pressure on the Prime Minister to defy the European Union over its cherished free movement rules.

The proposal will be heard by a committee of MPs today and could come before a full vote in the House of Commons within weeks.

Nigel Mills, the MP for Amber Valley in Derbyshire, is spearheading the campaign. His proposed changes to the Government's Immigration Bill currently passing through the House of Commons would extend restrictions until the end of December 2018.

Extending restrictions on migrant workers would provoke squeals of outrage – and likely legal challenge – from Brussels.

But supporters say it would prevent huge pressure being placed on public services, including the NHS, and on jobs at a time when many British workers are struggling to find employment.

It would also allow Mr Cameron to make a defiant stand over two crucial issues for his supporters – Europe and immigration – where he is seen to be leaking support to Ukip.

Last night Mr Mills warned the economy 'cannot cope' with another large influx of migrants.

He said: 'The Government is putting through a very worthwhile Immigration Bill which introduces a number of measures most people concerned about immigration will welcome.

'But what we don't have are any measures on Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, which is what people mention if you ask them about immigration.

'Quite rightly, people want to know what will happen from January. The unofficial forecast would mean a quarter of a million people coming here over the next five years.

'People are quite rightly concerned about whether public services can cope, about what benefits they will claim and about the number of jobs they will take.'

There is no official estimate of possible new arrivals in the UK when working restrictions are dropped for 29million Romanian and Bulgarian nationals, but migration campaigners predict it could be 50,000 a year.

Any movement of this order would decimate Mr Cameron's pledge to cut yearly net migration to the 'tens of thousands' by 2015.

Currently that figure stands at 176,000 which is down from more than a quarter of a million in 2010 but still short of Mr Cameron's target.

Mr Mills pointed to 2004 when Labour ministers did not adopt temporary restrictions on migrant workers from Poland and seven other new EU countries. More than a million migrants arrived in Britain despite official predictions that just 13,000 would come.

A Home Office spokesman said last night: 'This government has extended transitional controls to the maximum period of

December 31. There is no power to extend them further as we are bound by the terms of the Accession Treaties negotiated by the previous Government.

'We are focusing on cutting out the abuse of free movement between EU member states and addressing the factors that drive European immigration to Britain.

'We are working to ensure our controls on accessing benefits and services are among the tightest in Europe to protect the UK from abuse.'

Eight out of ten newly qualified Bulgarian doctors are planning to work abroad, a study has shown.

In a questionnaire put to graduates from Bulgaria's largest medical school in Sofia, the majority said they planned to leave their country, with preferences for working in Britain and Germany.

One vascular surgeon told the BBC he could earn seven times more in the UK. But most Bulgarian doctors cite their reason for wanting to move as being due to corruption concerns within their own health service.

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