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Russell in attack over 'nasty' UK policies on immigrants

Wednesday 29 January 2014



Magnus Gardham
Political Editor



EDUCATION Secretary Michael Russell has provoked a row between the Scottish and UK governments after claiming Britain's immigration policies are based on "nasty xenophobia".



Mr Russell attacked the UK Government's immigration policy as "revolting" and suggested it was being driven by the UK Independence Party (Ukip) and was damaging Scottish universities.

The SNP minister, who has faced accusations of discrimination against English students by charging them to study at Scots universities, will use a speech at an education conference in Edinburgh today to accuse the UK Government of treating foreign students with suspicion and damaging Scottish Higher Education's global reputation.

In a section of his speech released last night, Mr Russell said: "The debate south of the Border is being driven by Ukip and by a nasty xenophobia which certainly revolts me and I think revolts many others."

He blamed UK Government policies for halving the number of Indian students at Scots universities last year to 1665, which he claimed was "daft and self-defeating".

Mr Russell also claimed the country's leading seats of learning were "up against an immigration policy entirely focused on cutting numbers and measuring success by restriction and expulsion".

He added: "When students are excluded, when genuine scholars are treated with suspicion, then the reputation of the UK and by association - Scotland - as a place to study is undermined. It is essential Scotland is able to set our own policies on migration and citizenship.

"Scotland needs to be seen as a welcoming place, open for academic and research business and more than willing to see those of talent staying if they wish to build lives and careers."

Mr Russell's comments are due to be made at the Economic and Social Research Council event discussing the possible consequences of independence on higher education.

His comments come days after Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael, who is also a speaker at the event,

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warned SNP proposals to boost immigration after independence were incompatible with plans to join the UK and Ireland's borderless travel zone.

The SNP have outlined a series of policies designed to increase immigration, including work visas for graduates, to tackle problems caused by the country's ageing population.

Scotland Office Minister David Mundell said: "This is an outrageous comment from Mike Russell.

"It is simply ridiculous of him to talk about xenophobia when his own Government talks about pursuing a plan for tuition fees if Scotland chose to leave the UK. That would be illegal under EU law because it discriminates against students in the continuing UK simply on the basis they are English, Welsh or Northern Irish."

The Scotland Office issued figures showing that while the number of students from India fell dramatically, those from other countries rose.

They included a 4% increase in Chinese students to 7795 and a 4% rise in American students to 3790. Overall, the number of foreign students fell 1% last year to 28,305.

Mr Mundell added: "This shows a complete lack of understanding of immigration policy. There is no cap on numbers of foreign students at universities and no bar to EU students coming here to study."

Neil Bibby, Scottish Labour's deputy education spokesman, said: "This is hypocrisy from a man who decides whether he will charge students tuition fees based on their nationality and discriminates against English, Welsh and Irish students."

He added: "It is a desperate attempt to take attention away from the fact his tuition fees policy would fall apart if Scotland votes Yes."

In his speech today, Mr Carmichael is to say an independent Scotland will lose out on millions of pounds. He is to point out that Scots higher education institutions spent £953m in 2011, or about £180 per head of population in Scotland, compared with £112 across the UK generally.

He will say: "We don't get access to this despite being part of the UK. We get it because we are part of the UK."

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Peter Piper, Ayrshire · a day ago If Carmichael told me it was snowing outside I'd get my legs our for a suntan.

What Russell says may be fair enough, but considering that, apart from Carmichael,

parts of the UK Government are starting to be a little more sensible and conciliatory, doubtless having been watching the opinion polls, it would behove the Scottish Government to stop giving it the rhetoric and start looking to cut the deal with the rUK that will come with negotiations on 19th September with a 75% YES, 25% NO.

Points can be made without insulting the other side. It's good to talk ...

33 ^ | 2 v · Reply · Share >



Jeanne Tomlin → Peter Piper, Ayrshire · a day ago

In some negotiating situations, it can be productive to play 'good cop-bad cop'. I suspect Russell is being the 'bad cop' and doing it pretty well.

13 ^ | 5 v · Reply · Share >



David Mudford, Malaysia → Peter Piper, Ayrshire · a day ago

'Nasty xenophobia' - 'Revoluting' - 'Provoking a row between the S.G. and U.K. Governments' - all by Mike Russell of the SNP - on the very day his leader is meeting with Mark Carney of the B. of E. - to discuss the SNP's 'wish' of a currency-union on the Pound Sterling with the very U.K. Government ('exploratory' talks, as nothing will be decided)- who are so 'detested' and 'revoluting'. You couldn't make it up - except that 'provoking rows' is par for the course in the SNP's arsenal - calculated to generate headlines - to capture a few more votes, perhaps - although that shouldn't be taken for granted.

However, in Russell's case - it most certainly 'is' hypocritical as he intends to charge U.K. students for higher education - against the opinion of all others who have stated it would not be legal within the EU. I think Mr Salmond should allow Mike Russell to speak out more often and be 'headlined' - he must be a good recruiting-Sergeant for a No vote..

I wouldn't say the U.K. Government are prompted by opinion polls though Peter - in the last 10 days, I've seen so many - and all of them different and

[see more](#)

26 ^ | 33 v · Reply · Share >



Elrick Dodd, SW Scotland → David Mudford, Malaysia · a day ago

A currency union was first recommended to the SG by the fully-independent Fiscal Commission Working Group in it's 246-page 'First Report - Macroeconomic Framework' published in January 2012.

That report had taken 12 months to create, and the Commission's members are four of the planets most influential, trusted, and experienced economists.

Working under the Chairmanship of Sir Crawford Beveridge, Professor Sir James Mirrlees (Nobel Laureate), Professor Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Laureate), Professor Andrew Hughes-Hallett, and Professor Frances Ruane also recommended using Sterling and the BoE, creating two 'oil funds', a radical new tax system linked to welfare, and much more.

Four lengthy and highly detailed reports (so far) - but how many people have even heard of the Fiscal Commission ?

Now ask yourself why.

[see more](#)

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Alasdair Galloway → David Mudford, Malaysia · a day ago

David you say that Russell is "hypocritical as he intends to charge U.K. students for higher education", but I think you need to be clearer about why the SG propose to do this (and indeed do this now under the present regime).

The problem here is not that the students in question come from elsewhere in the UK, but that the rest of the UK has a regime of HE fees which are not only totally out line with the no HE fees that runs in Scotland, but out of line with most of Europe. Jim and Margaret Cuthbert in "Paying for Higher Education" showed in their analysis of

"nineteen areas, eleven have a no tuition fees policy. Of the remaining eight, the highest charge by a considerable margin is other UK. Next is the Czech Republic at €1000 per semester followed by the Netherlands at € 1,670 per annum." In other words the "no fees" policy pursued by Scotland is not unusual in Europe (being one of the 11 out of 19) and that rUK's policy of fees up to £9k per year (with the possibility that cap will be removed after the next election) is the exception (for comparison £9k is almost €11,000).

So what is a student in rUK to do? As the Cuthberts point out

[see more](#)

21 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [alasdair galloway](#) · a day ago

Alasdair, thanks for the reply and clear information on the situation - some of which I did know - but not all. I agree of course that in part - the reason for charging other U.K. students - is indeed the fact that the U.K. universities do charge also - but, within the context of the EU - which is what is being legally discussed at present - would be keen to see what is suggested - 'if' a U.K. split does happen.

For instance - for 'debate's sake - 'if' Scotland became independent 'and' joined the EU in a relatively short time - then, that is what the issue is all about - indyScotland wouldn't be allowed to 'discriminate' against the U.K. - in the same way as other EU countries have to abide within the EU laws. Likewise, then the rU.K. cannot then charge Scottish students - if they were both in the EU. So, this is the issue you say it's all about - and you are correct. Finding a solution to higher education funding without 'illegally' charging other EU students. Both (theoreticaly) rU.K. and indyScotland - if ever it

[see more](#)

2 ^ | 5 v · Reply · Share ›



[alasdair galloway](#) → [David Mudford, Malaysia](#) · a day ago

First of all re HE fees, the SG seems intent on seeking a derogation at the ECJ, and its not entirely certain that this wont be forthcoming, given the degree that rUK is out of line with the rest of Europe. One argument is that their regime of fees is such that they are looking to "export" their young people for the education at HE. However even if that werent forthcoming, the problem can be managed in other ways. The Cuthberts in their article suggest that an independent Scotland might charge either a tuition fee, or an administration fee, but through grants reimburse these for domestic students. Eck of course has made this somewhat more difficult with his "rocks will melt in the sun" speech, but given that a grant can be made residence specific, it seems unlikely that it could be challenged.

Re currency union you say "the U.K. debts are in the name of the 'U.K,' as it is 'now' - which means Scotland has a debt liability to repay". Well, actually no, strictly speaking. The claim by rUK is that it IS the UK as was. Moreover the

[see more](#)

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [alasdair galloway](#) · a day ago

Hello Alasdair - An interesting piece particularly about higher education. It may not come to it of course - independence, but it does need to be 'looked-at' in the context of Europe and who pays and who doesn't. The Cuthberts seem to have some good points as you say.

Sterling Zone: As mentioned earlier - perhaps we'll know more after the Carney meeting - whether it is viable or not. I see it myself as too similar to the Eurozone and anyway - in the

event of indyScotland eventually getting into the Eurozone - it would face the same issues as their perceived 'problem' with Westminster holding the purse-strings (exc. devolved matters) - i.e. Berlin holding the purse-strings... and having fiscal control. And if you think Westminster was bad....

Signing off now - sorry I couldn't do your posting better justice, but it was interesting indeed.

1 ^ | 5 v · Reply · Share ›



[Alasdair Galloway](#) → David Mudford, Malaysia · 21 hours ago

Pleasure debating with you David. On HE, as you say it may not come to it, though it wont surprise you to learn that I hope that it does :-)

Re the sterling zone, I think there is most merit in the argument of divergence of the two economies - after all right they should be fairly well integrated. Divergence could well happen - indeeds over time almost certainly will. But by that time Scotland would have been an independent state for some time and launching our own currency would be much less problematic. Tbh I think this is the route to go - sterling zone for a bit and then our own currency. I would be very sceptical of the euro for two reasons. One is that to join you need to shadow the value of the euro within a +/- % band for, I think three years. Hard to see us doing that from within a sterling zone? Secondly if we had our own currency - like the Danes, the Swedes, rUK etc - there would be a cost of setting that up. Would it be financially worthwhile to run it for three years and then wind it up to join the Euro? Remember too that the Swedes have been promising to join up "when circumstances permit" for getting on for twenty years, and that following the last crisis I would have thought the EU would be more focused on not dragging countries in that could create their own problems?

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Steve McKay](#) · a day ago

Mundells party is responsible for imposing sky high fees on EWNI students. For some reason he feels free to insinuate that it is xenophobic for the Scottish Government, in order to maintain a balanced intake system for school leavers in Scotland, to do exactly the same. Bibby is no better - also claiming it is somehow discrimination for Holyrood to treat EWNI students in the same fashion as they are treated by Westminster. Those are bizarre positions to take.

The immigration issue is quite straightforward. Holyrood wants foreign students trained in Scotland to remain after they graduate and contribute their knowledge and taxes to benefit the Scottish economy. Westminster wants to kick them out to meet some arbitrary quota.

The Condemns and Labour are shouting and stamping their feet because they are furious that Scottish Government policy is more enlightened and progressive than their own.

They want to force Scotland to follow Westminster. Those days have gone.

71 ^ | 6 v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → Steve McKay · a day ago

Well said Steve. It is important to remember that the student fees position has come about because of actions at Westminster (by all three main parties) and has resulted in students in EWNI paying the highest fees in Europe (by some way). To charge Mr Russell with xenophobia over this issue is ridiculous both in interpretation and because he himself is English.

51 ^ | 2 v · Reply · Share ›



[Steve McKay](#) → Dr Douglas McKenzie · a day ago

I hadn't realised Mike Russel was English - that is priceless!

19 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → Steve McKay · a day ago



Originally from Kent.

17 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[william brown](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

Kelvin McKenzie is of Scottish descent.
Yet couldn't be more Anti Scottish.

11 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[gerald singh](#) → [william brown](#) · a day ago

yeah..the midgie. That explains the irritating buzz in you ear when he appears on the scene.

12 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

The 'article' stated that it was Mike Russell who claimed 'Britain's Immigration Policies were based on 'Nasty Xenophobia' and he was 'revolted' - I don't think any poster stated that - only that Russell was being hypocritical.

It's irrelevant whether he is English or Scottish if an SNP/ S.G. Minister is using inflammatory words against 'our best pals', isn't it?

8 ^ | 21 v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → [David Mudford, Malaysia](#) · a day ago

Mr Russell is commenting on Government policy which he (correctly) points out is xenophobic at least in its application if not actual intent. He (correctly) ascribes this shift in policy to be the result of pressure from UKIP. Only UKIP supporters would hesitate in calling much of what passes as immigration policy these days as nasty.

We are splitting hairs but if you say that someone is being hypocritical by calling others xenophobic then you are saying that they are themselves xenophobes.

22 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

As has been mentioned above - Mr Russell used the words 'Xenophobic' and 'Revolted'. He is entitled to 'criticise' U.K. Government policy as you say - but he is in fact - in my opinion, using 'discrimination' against other U.K. students on the fees issue - so, he is indeed being 'hypocritical' in his allegations.

If I wanted to use 'Xenophobic' about Mr Russell, I would have written that - but, I believe his negative words are designed for 'effect' and 'headlines' - and I question the timing of his words - when we see Mr Salmond 'desperately' needing someone to talk with on the Pound Sterling(I write that deliberately, as we know he/they/Scotland 'desperately' need the currency-union) - and the U.K. Government - and U.K. taxpayers, would rightly question which of the two Ministers should they accept as mirroring what the S.G. think of the U.K. Government?

see more

4 ^ | 18 v · Reply · Share ›



[Andy Wallace](#) → [David Mudford, Malaysia](#) · a day ago

" I write that deliberately, as we know he/they/Scotland 'desperately' need the currency-union" - Really? Where's your proof of this?

There is a difference between want and need. As in, the S.G *want* a currency union, they do not *need* a currency union.

On a personal note, I believe we should ditch the British Pound and use our own currency instead. That's just my *opinion though*

opinion though.

15 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



David Mudford, Malaysia → Andy Wallace · a day ago

'Proof'? It's stated 'daily' - and there are no doubts at all on the fact that a theoretically-independent Scotland can not function without a currency-union on the Pound Sterling - with a Lender of Last Resort - no control of any interest rates, currency supply etc., as the B of E will pull the 'levers' that the SNP would 'like' to do.

You wouldn't be in the Euro - so, that would leave only a separate Scottish currency - which you propose. When would this take place in theory?

As this is your opinion Andy - my own opinion is that a currency-union is 'needed', not just 'wanted'. Kindly advise me how else indyScotland could operate on open markets without their own currency if no Pound-union is established?

As we're talking 'theory' - I mean 'established' in the beginning of independence, should this happen, if you want a Scottish currency somewhere along the line.

[see more](#)

3 ^ | 14 v · Reply · Share ›



Andy Wallace → David Mudford, Malaysia · a day ago

Again, where's your proof? Simply because it is oft repeated does not make it true.

Other small nations such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway etc. have their own currencies. Why could Scotland not do this?

No offence intended but it sounds like you've been reading too many scare stories from the Unionistas David.

11 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



David Mudford, Malaysia → Andy Wallace · a day ago

Yes Andy - small countries 'can' have their own currency - including Scotland - that's what I wrote earlier. If you want it - then the S.G. should have that as their stated intention. But they don't - they want the Pound Sterling - which would not be controlled by Scotland - as it is a 'U.K.' Bank - which Scotland would have left. Yes, they can use the Pound - but with no control.

If it was a Unionist 'scare' story - why is Salmond having talks with Mark Carney today? He, therefore - by your logic - wouldn't need to - he could just say he was going to create a new currency in the time after a (theoretical) Yes vote - but, in the meantime, indyScotland could just continue to use the Pound with absolutely no control whatsoever. But, Salmond doesn't want that - as he has no idea of what the market value of a separate Scottish Pound would be.

I've been 'reading too many scare stories from the Unionists'

[see more](#)

3 ^ | 12 v · Reply · Share ›



Andy Wallace → David Mudford, Malaysia · a day ago

Seriously, get yourself a copy of the Whitepaper.

6 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



Bob McTavish, Elgin → David Mudford, Malaysia · a day ago

Sorry David, I have followed this currency thing quite closely and read papers daily. Nowhere has it been said that Scottish Independence will only work with a currency union with the pound.

What has been said is that Scotland is capable of being a successful independent country and can choose in the future to use the pound, the Euro or its own currency. That is what independent countries can do.

Currency union is one option that makes sense for at least the transition period and will be much clearer once Independence is certain to happen. As has been said many times the language and attitude of Westminster will change when that happens.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → [David Mudford, Malaysia](#) · a day ago

David: while the SNP are keen on a currency union it is just nonsense to state that an independent Scotland needs a currency union to function. The vast majority of countries operate their own currency and have few problems doing so. Proponents of a currency union point to simplicity as the main benefit and this is indeed true though there are also disadvantages. It is not my favoured option but I can see why some are keen on it. If it pans out that a union is not feasible then Scotland will use its own currency and join those other bankrupt European nations such as Denmark, Norway and Switzerland (et al) who have been foolish enough to go it alone without the benefit of a currency union.

14 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

Douglas - thanks for the reply. Having a sandwich break now, will read and revert later. Needs must.

David

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[David Mudford, Malaysia](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

Douglas - Second attempt at a reply - earlier one gone into the ether..

I didn't write that an independent Scotland needs a currency-union to 'function' - not indefinitely, but it does in the short-term after a potential Yes vote - unless the S.G. are told the U.K. will not agree to a currency-union, then the S.G. may well have to launch its own currency - and take the market view of that.

A separate Scottish currency is the 'only' way for a S.G. to have any control of the finances. A currency-union is the weaker choice - but, it is the preferred choice of the S.G. as it doesn't want to take the risk of a new currency. The rest of the U.K. taxpayers do not believe in a currency-union with an indy Scotland - and they count in this matter.

I happen to believe that the S.G. 'want's a currency-union, as it is the easiest way for it to work if an indyScotland is born.

[see more](#)

3 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[william brown](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · an hour ago

'The vast majority of countries operate their own currency and have few problems doing so.'

They possibly still have industries we don't have Douglas

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → [william brown](#) · 14 minutes ago

And equally we have ones that they don't have. The Scottish economy is stronger than the vast majority of countries on the planet all of whom are independent and have their own currencies.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) → [Andy Wallace](#) · 20 hours ago
Suggestions how to achieve that in a few months on a postcard please.

^ | 6 v · Reply · Share ›



[Andy Wallace](#) → [Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) · 19 hours ago
Why on a postcard? They've nearly three years to implement such a thing if they wanted to.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago
It's always interesting to note that to control your own borders or any part of your Country is deemed xenophobic by those who espouse Scottish Nationalism. Me thinks that there is some confusion on many comments today. Remember that UKIP have no MPs and to most are still only a protest group until they clear the board of all those LILaCon types who have wreaked havoc with the United Kingdom for too long. Scotland may wish to have free and open borders but whatever the outcome in September I think you will find that very shortly a desire to control your numbers will gain the attention of the majority. Unlimited levels of everything is not the answer to maintaining a quality of life that we all desire.

11 ^ | 18 v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → [Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) · a day ago
Geoffrey: no-one in Scotland is advocating free and open borders: what we are discussing is a more enlightened immigration and visa policy that benefits our economy and society.

23 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[mick clark, falkirk](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago
Germany has over 10,000 UK citizens living there claiming benefits. Don't hear many complaints from them.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[John Jamieson](#) → [Steve McKay](#) · a day ago
Scotland Office Minister David Mundell said: "There is no cap on numbers of foreign students at universities....."
He should have added ".....provided that they qualify for a student visa from the UK Government."

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Derek Harper](#) · a day ago
The immigration policy is driven by the general public as all opinion polls show (seems like they are being believed now since the one showing YeSNP gaining a few more votes). As said before, this is a weak spot in their policies as generally the Scottish public are of the same opinion as the rest of the UK on this matter.

15 ^ | 27 v · Reply · Share ›



[alasdair galloway](#) → [Derek Harper](#) · a day ago
And if opinion was to bring back hanging, make homosexual acts illegal once again (both of these were the legal position in the 1960s), and putting children up chimneys that would be ok would it Derek? What exactly do you see the role of govt to be? Is it to follow the basest instincts of the lowest common denominator of the UK press (and that is pretty low)? Or is it to provide leadership?

16 ^ | 3 v · Reply · Share ›



[Stephen Cowley, Edinburgh](#) → [Derek Harper](#) · 19 hours ago
Not only is the advocacy of displacement levels of immigration unpopular, as pointed out, but Mike Russell's emotive terminology, absence of argument and general lack of insight into the issue show the immaturity of political

debate in Scotland. That itself is a weakness in the independence campaign. As with Labour in England, the public are ahead of the SNP on this issue.

The idea of A Galloway (below) that public opinion should be ignored (and the spurious example of chimney cleaning) hardly helps the case for democracy and accountability.

4 ^ | 3 v · Reply · Share ›



[Alasdair Galloway](#) → [Stephen Cowley, Edinburgh](#) · 17 hours ago

Stephen, I didn't suggest that public opinion should be ignored. I said govts are there to provide leadership. Let's leave children and chimneys out of it if you like - it was tongue in cheek anyway - but seriously do you think that we should bring back hanging? Would our society be a better place for imprisoning gay people, even if the conduct in question took place in private between two consenting adults? Do you never wonder about the pressures that lead to the public holding certain views? Would you like to see the UK transformed into the image of that some columnists in our tabloid newspapers (and sometimes even the better ones) would want to see? What sort of democracy is it when its conduct is determined by the prejudices of a handful of journalists, who have never gone to the bother of getting elected? Perhaps we should have Alf Garnett for PM?

Lastly, you refer to what you allege is Russell's "absence of argument and general lack of insight". I might suggest that you look at your own post, and if this is typical of your level of argumentation then I would suggest looking to your self first. There is a difference that you seem not to understand, between the function of democracy and rabble rousing.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Stephen Cowley, Edinburgh](#) → [Alasdair Galloway](#) · an hour ago

Your distinction between leading and ignoring is a fine one, but I think I would accept it. There is a literature on the psychology of relations between ethnic groups that Russell does not begin to address, at least in the snippets of quotes attributed to him. My criticism was directed at his apparent blanket condemnation of identity politics on grounds of "xenophobia" which is itself a form of left wing populism.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



[Ken McIntosh](#) · a day ago

It's much worse than just a student problem! Since Westminster changed the visa rules in 2012, I, as a British Citizen am not allowed to have my wife live with me in Scotland without going through a totally ridiculous and expensive bureaucratic nightmare.

We are now in Malaysia attempting to get the required Visa because we are not allowed to apply for the visa while we are in UK. It will take a total of 4 to 5 months, she has to take a UK approved English test, she has to submit to a UK approved Tuberculosis test, we have to pay a total of over £2,000, plus all our Malaysian travel and living costs. My wife and I have been married for 25 years, she is the mother of a British citizen and has obtained the visa once before, and I was forced to leave my job in Edinburgh to support her new application.

The new rules are clearly designed to prevent legitimate applicants from even attempting to apply to stay in UK. They are also contrary to EU law. The EU court of human rights has ruled that any EU citizen has the right for his/her spouse to reside with them, No matter what the nationality of the spouse.

The Westminster govt is xenophobic, racist and intolerant and as they refuse me my human rights, I will take great pleasure in voting YES in September.

Note that this situation applies to any citizen who has a non EU spouse and applies to all commonwealth citizens such as Australian, NZ, Canadian, etc. who happened to marry a Brit.

52 ^ | 2 v · Reply · Share ›



[Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) → [Ken McIntosh](#) · a day ago



Ken: yours is a number in a long list of similar stories reflecting the frankly stupid decisions by the UK Government with regard to spouses. We have seen Americans who are married to Scots having to leave the country despite having jobs because they do not meet the income threshold requirements because they have previously been students at university in Scotland.

I want Scotland to be seen as a welcoming and enriching place for people to come and study, work and live and I suspect that most Scots feel the same way.. The UK Government seems hell bent on making it as unfriendly and difficult to do this as possible.

Another good reason to vote Yes.

51 ^ | 3 v · Reply · Share ›



[gerald singh](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

There is obviously not enough lebensraum in the South East and so we find that what are, frankly, racist policies are finding plenty of traction in Tory heartlands. Sometimes you have to use intemperate language to spell out grossly indecent policies. It is not the language Russell is using that should be condemned but the attitudes of the British Government .

14 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) → [gerald singh](#) · 20 hours ago

The British Government should represent the wishes of the majority and I'm not sure at times if it does. The ideas of the UK population is nor restricted to the South East and you will find many good folk who don't think the same way as you but refrain from using words that are out of context and simply used to insult. It is not "grossly indecent" to hold a view different from yours and if someone thinks thoughts on subjects that involve race or sexuality don't accord with yours then that's tough. I'm feed up with the liberal lefties who claim they have the right to silence anyone who dares to disagree with their ideas.

5 ^ | 3 v · Reply · Share ›



[gerald singh](#) → [Geoffrey Bastin, East Sussex](#) · 19 hours ago

You seem to be making plenty of noise.I don't hear anyone objecting,least of all me. It is government policies I am referring to,not the rights of people to hold a different view. That would be absurd. I certainly agree with your comment that governments don't ""represent the wishes of the majority",but only vested interests.

4 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[alasdair galloway](#) → [Dr Douglas McKenzie](#) · a day ago

"I want Scotland to be seen as a welcoming and enriching place for people to come and study, work and live and I suspect that most Scots feel the same way." - spot on Douglas. Utterly agree.

14 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



[Brian Eagleson](#) → [Ken McIntosh](#) · a day ago

Ken, what a truly dreadful situation. Your account of it makes me want to weep! Surely anyone reading it, whatever their views on immigration, must realise now just how spiteful the Westminster government's attitude to immigrants and their families has become? Their mean and nasty policies are driven in part by overpopulation in the south of England and have no place in an underpopulated Scotland. As always, Westminster policies take no account whatsoever of the quite different needs in its Scottish "territory". Scotland doesn't matter to them, except for its oil and its overall contribution to the economy. That's what's really driving the Dependence campaign - Greed and Xenophobia. I don't always agree with Mike Russell, but on this particular occasion he is spot on!

18 ^ | 4 v · Reply · Share ›



[Ken McIntosh](#) → [Brian Eagleson](#) · a day ago



Brian, Before we left to make the application, I wrote to the SG about it. One of the SG cabinet phoned one evening - which was an unexpected and pleasant surprise - and explained that whenever any complaint was made, the response to the SG was a standard "this is a matter reserved to Westminster" The differing attitudes to their citizens problems between UKGOV and SG, in itself, a major reason for a strong YES vote in September.

7 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



Sheila McIntosh Isle of Barra → Ken McIntosh · a day ago

Certainly you'll be voting YES in September. Your family's commitment to seeking independence for Scotland dates back over fifty .. Hope you enjoyed being part of the INDEPENDENCE March in Edinburgh in September

4 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



John Rattray, Edinburgh → Ken McIntosh · 15 hours ago

There are quite a high number in a similar situation and this needs highlighted.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

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