**Jonathan Portes**

# Immigration policy: challenges for the UK and Scotland

The UK in a Changing Europe

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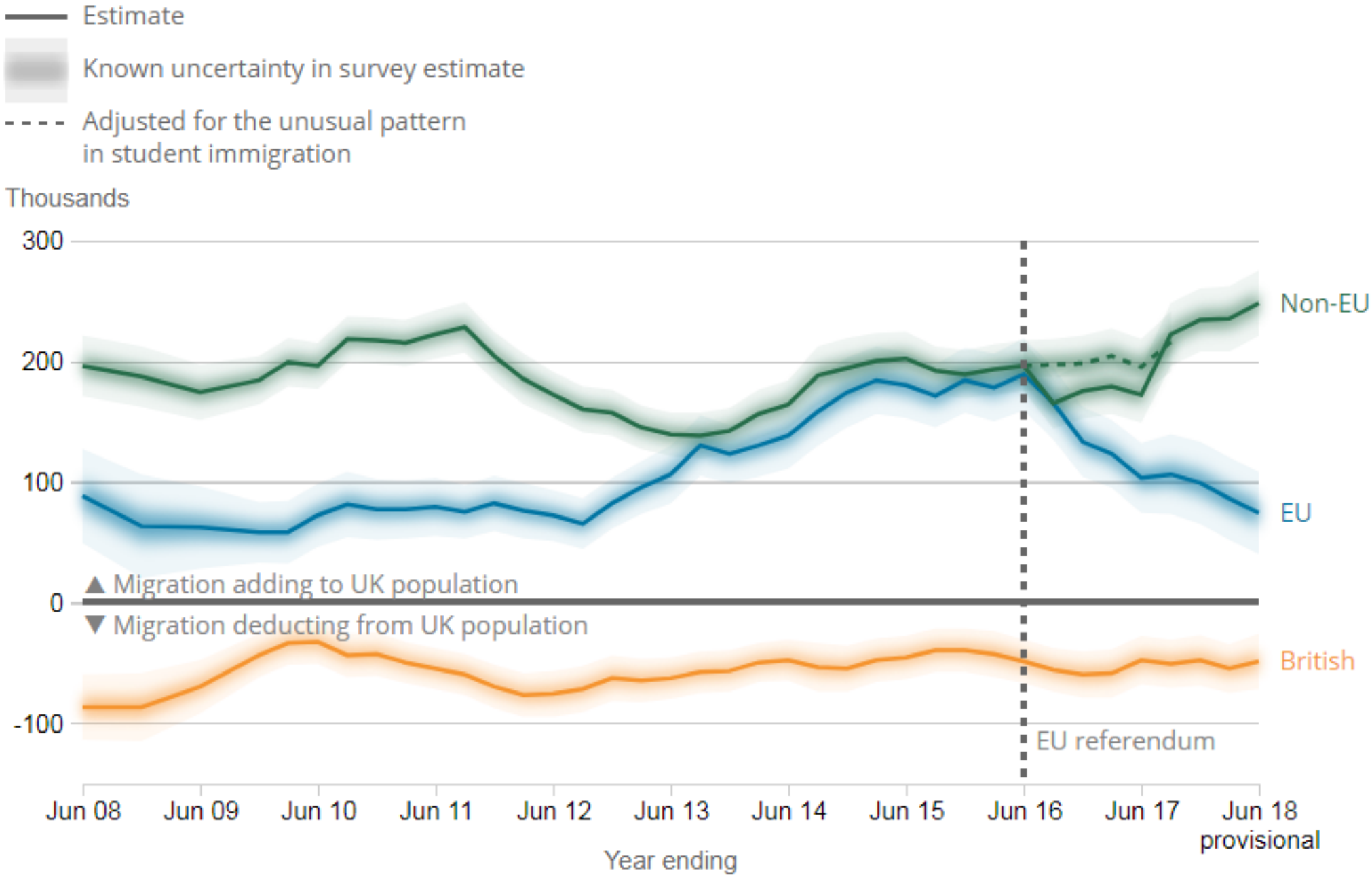
E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

# Net migration to UK by citizenship



# Where do we stand? Lots of moving parts

- Withdrawal Agreement covers transition and status of (approx. 3.5 million) EU citizens currently resident in UK and (approx. 1 million) UK citizens resident in EU
- Migration Advisory Committee Report made recommendations for post-Brexit system
- Immigration White Paper December 2018 set out government's proposals
- Prime Minister has said UK will introduce an "Australian-style points-based system) and has asked MAC to look at evidence

# White Paper: “Future skills-based system”

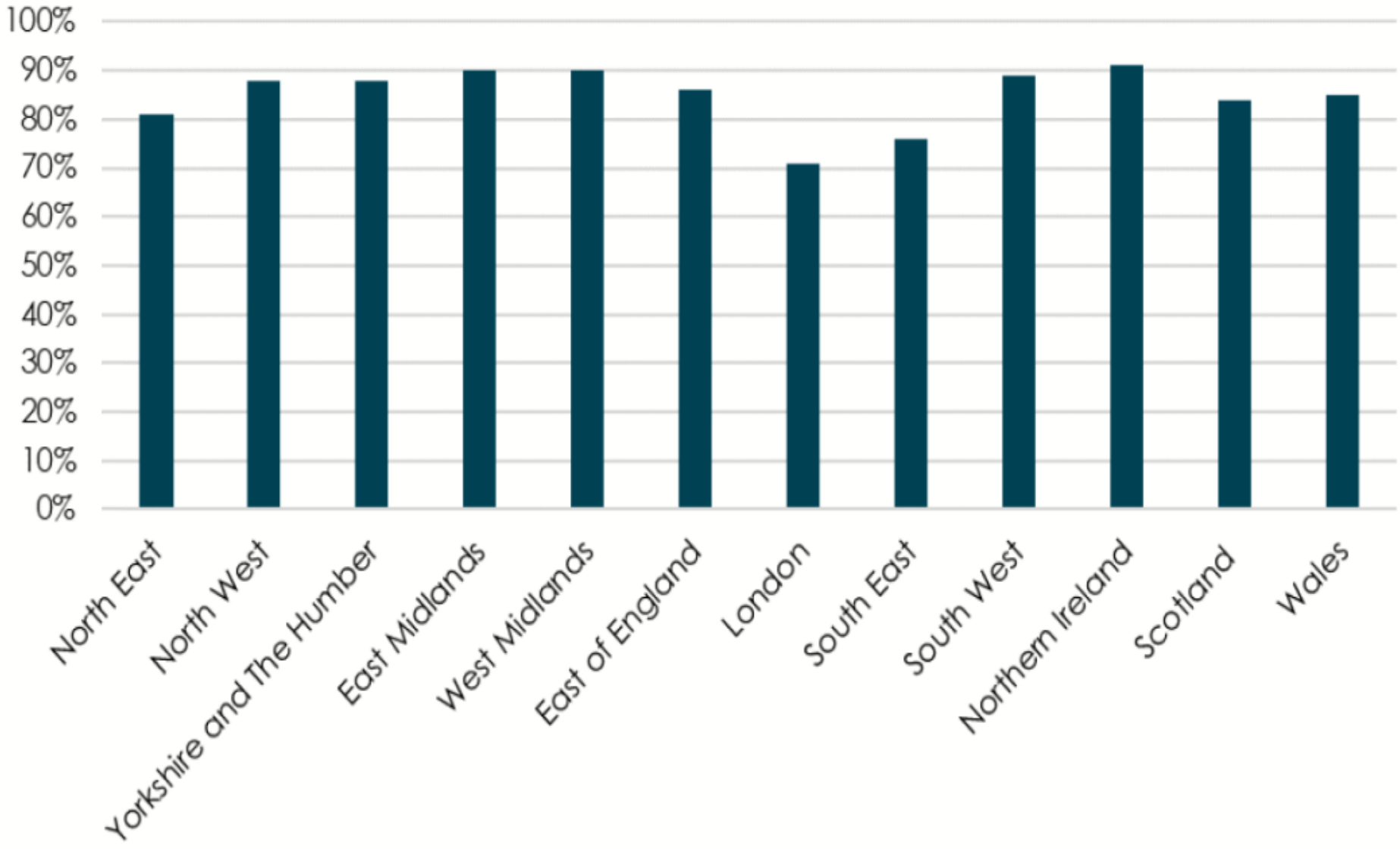
- End free movement:
- extend current “Tier 2” system for non-EEA nationals to EU citizens: work permits with skills, salary (£30K??), qualification thresholds
- Remove cap.
- Sectoral/seasonal scheme for agricultural work, but no or limited other schemes
- Temporary (one year) low skilled work visas

# MAC on regional/geographical differentiation

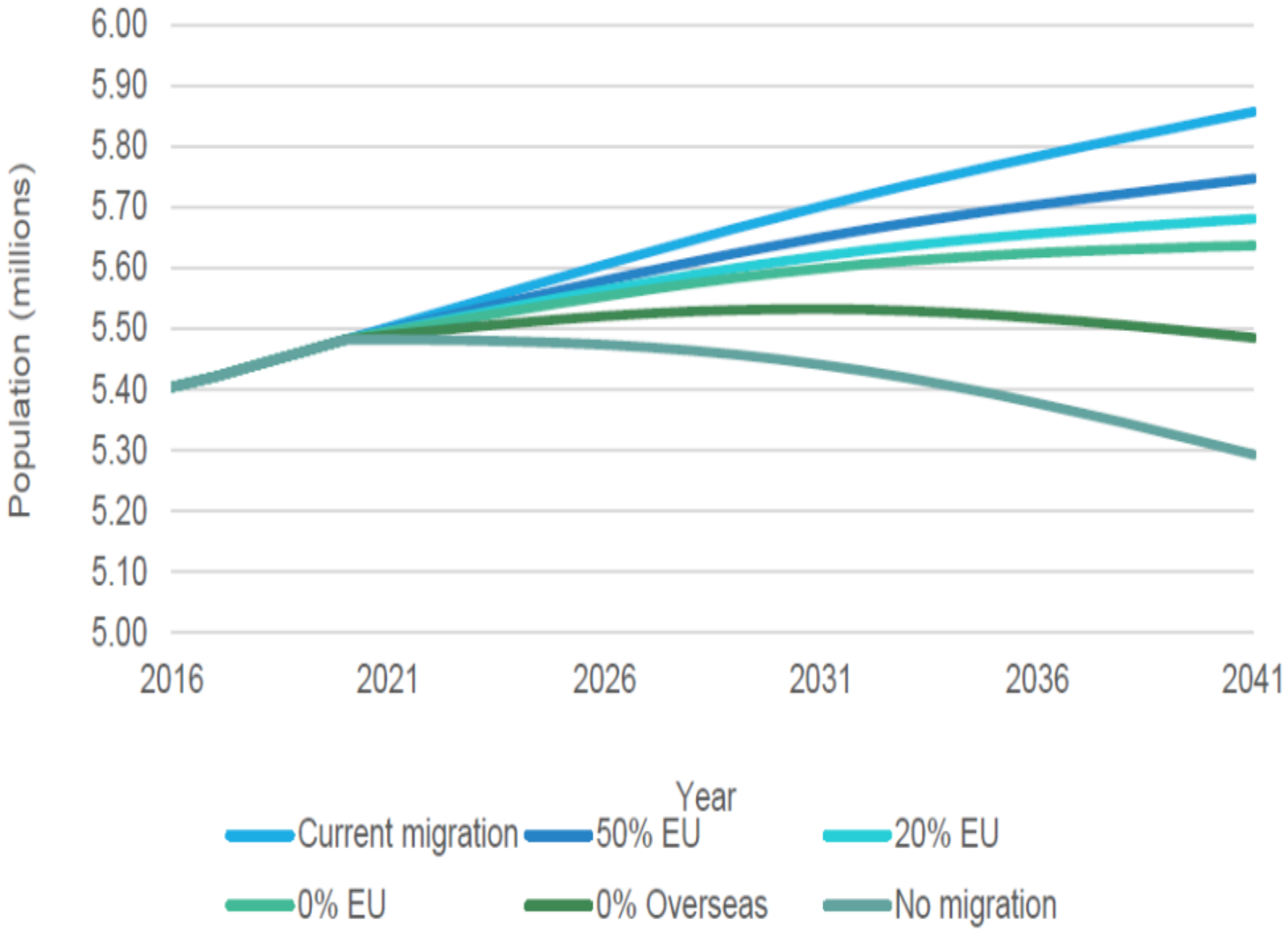
- “we were not of the view that Scotland’s economic situation is sufficiently different from that of the rest of the UK to justify a very different migration”

- “We have considered it desirable to keep the system as simple as possible and the salary thresholds have been set based on national pay distributions and not by the demands of higher wage regions”

**Figure 1: Proportion of projected long-term EEA worker inflows to English regions and devolved adminsitrations which would be affected by an RQF 3 and £30,000 threshold.**



# Impact of migration on Scotland's population



# What does a “points-based system” mean?

- Rebadging Tier 2 – or a completely different system?
- A more human capital focused system?
- Allows geographical preferences/focus (as in Australia, Canada)

# Opportunities for Scotland? [Boswell, Kyambie & Smellie]

| | Overall assessment Criterion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recruitment model | Meets Scottish needs (max 12) | Implementation/ enforcement (max 6) | Political viability (max 6) | Score (max 24) |
| *Points-based system* | 11 | 4 | 2 | 17 |
| *Post-study work visa* | 9 | 4 | 4 | 17 |
| *Employer-led* | 8 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| *Occupational shortage* | 9 | 4 | 4 | 17 |

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