**Freedom of Movement of people – communication challenges and possible solutions**

**Mark English (personal views, not those of European Movement UK)**

**One page summary (evidence backing these points in the longer version)**

Freedom of movement of people did raise genuine problems in the UK. In any future debate, Brexiteers will again focus relentlessly on exaggerating them.

Our messaging must be segmented according to the target group, where possible ‘story-based’ and combine emotion, facts and rational self-interest to show that benefits of FoM outweigh challenges.

**Challenges**

3 to 5 times as many EU citizens came to the UK under FoM as Brits going to the EU.

For many reasons, Brits do not have the same positivity towards FoM as in most EU countries, nor the same expectation that they will use FoM for work.

The UK was and would be again a – or the - leading destination for EU citizens:

* High pay at the top end of the labour market;
* Flexibility and easy access to jobs at the lower end;
* High levels of English among most EU citizens and motivation to further improve.

The UK welfare system intervenes extensively to support low earners and EU rules means low paid EU citizens must qualify. This is an attack point for right-wing press.

The UK’s decentralised pay negotiation system, lack of ID cards/registration and weak enforcement made it hard to counter accusations – some true, most not - that EU workers were being exploited and or undercutting UK ones.

The ‘take back control’ message remains powerful where immigration is concerned.

**Responses (to be checked by polling)**

Emotionally resonant stories of Brits – from diverse backgrounds - who did use FoM.

Messaging on reciprocity, fairness, restoring equal rights to Brits.

Focus not only on FoM for work/study but FoM for: retirement; providing services; performance..

Strong messaging about FoM for leisure, used by many times more Brits than FoM for work: border delays, pet passports, 90/180 day limit on length of stay in EU.

Positive messaging on inward FoM to UK: can fill labour shortages; end supply chain problems; help staff the NHS; boost tourism – including reviving the school tourism sector.

When challenged on earlier problems, highlight steps government can take to deal with them.

**Don’t**

Focus on stats and numbers

Waste time trying to convince hardline anti-FoM voters: focus on other issues, e.g. cost of living.