

## [The "Papers, please" immigration bill](#) [1]

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In today's City AM [I highlight some of the worst parts of the government's Immigration Bill](#) [3]. The Bill forces private citizens like landlords, nurses, wedding registrars and others to become *de facto* state informants, reporting anyone they suspect of being an illegal immigrant to the authorities:

But 'papers, please' could soon become government policy. Whatever your perspective on migration, the Immigration Bill currently being debated in Parliament would turn thousands of private citizens into state agents, forced to report anyone they suspect of being an illegal immigrant. Almost every provision in the Bill will deputise some group of British citizens in this way, and would subject others to invasions of privacy.

Private landlords will have to run immigration checks on tenants, and will be at risk of prosecution if they fail to comply properly. The crackdown on 'sham marriages' will expose more Britons to investigation. Marriage registrars are already required to report 'suspicious' marriages to the state, but this Bill will double the period during which couples are under threat of being reported. Any Briton hoping to marry a non-EU citizen is open to investigation, and there will inevitably be mistakes that remove protections from legitimate couples.

Though concerns about health tourism are legitimate, the actual cost is tiny:

This week, it was reported that the NHS spends £2bn on treatment for temporary migrants in the UK. But most of this is on those, like students and temporary workers, who are already paying tax here.

The cost of actual health tourism - people coming to the UK specifically to get health treatment - is estimated by the government to be £70m, or 0.06 per cent of the NHS's annual budget. Enforcing tighter controls may seem attractive. But if the cost is greater than the amount of money it saves, it doesn't make sense.

[Read the whole thing](#) [3]. I'd be interested to hear people's views in the comments.

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