

Disappointment over immigration rules change

The Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesperson, Christine Jardine, has heavily criticised the Government's Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill, which received its second reading in the House of Commons earlier this week.

The Bill will end free movement for EEA nationals, while giving the Home Secretary sweeping powers to make changes to the so-called 'Immigration Rules'.

Ms Jardine says these adopt a similar status to secondary legislation and allow ministers to implement changes without full Parliamentary scrutiny.

Ahead of the debate, the Edinburgh West MP had tabled an amendment with fellow Lib Dems which would have blocked passage of the Bill, but it was not selected by the Speaker.

Speaking shortly after the Bill passed second reading, Ms Jardine commented: "At a time when we need our NHS and other key workers most, this Government is willingly blocking their entry to the UK.

"I am disappointed the Government has such a short memory that on Thursday its ministers will clap for the EEA nationals upon whom we are so reliant, having just shut the door in their face.

"I am also frustrated that this Bill fails to secure the right

of British citizens to live, work and study in other EU member states – nor of those UK citizens already living across the EU.

“On top of this, the Bill will also allow this Government to shape our future immigration system in whatever way it likes, without proper Parliamentary scrutiny.

“This Bill will have a profoundly negative effect on this country, but in this time of crisis the Liberal Democrats will continue to stand up for a decent and fair immigration system that gives our key sectors the workers they badly need.”