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PRIME MINISTER

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IMMIGRATION RULES

You queried the reference in the attached draft White Paper to children under 25. The Home Secretary's proposal in the draft White Paper in response to the Select Committee's Report on Immigration is that any UKPH child under 25 should be admitted as a dependent, provided that he would be eligible in his own right. This does not, in fact, conflict with the Manifesto, which referred to an upper age limit of 18 for children applying to come here as the dependents of those already here. The Home Secretary's proposal deals only with United Kingdom Passport Holders who qualify to come here in their own right. At present, all UKPH over the age of 18 have to wait for a voucher; the proposal means that children between the ages of 18 and 25 could come here when their parents obtain a voucher rather than them having to wait for one themselves. The figure of 25 was chosen because there is a seven-year waiting list for vouchers. The arguments in favour of the proposal are first that it enables families who are coming here anyway to do so together and, second, that it has a minimal effect on immigration in the short term (and none at all in the long term, since all those affected could come here anyway).

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5 October 1982