



**BELONGING
IN ACTION**

OUR STORY

Building Community. Unlocking Potential. Creating Spaces Where Everyone Belongs.

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CONTENTS

01. ABOUT BIA

02. THE CHALLENGE

03. OUR MISSION

04. COMMUNITY IMPACT

05. HOW WE WORK

06. IMPACT IN PRACTICE

07. BELONGING IN SCOTLAND

08. THE SDG GOALS

09. TRACKING PROGRESS

10. THE FOUNDER

11. OUR PARTNERS

12. JOIN US!



Community begins at BiA



Around the world, people move in search of opportunity, safety, education, and a better future. Yet arrival alone does not guarantee inclusion. It requires connection, participation, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society.

**The real question is:
How do people truly find their place?**

We deliver structured programmes that enable social, cultural, and professional integration, creating pathways for individuals to participate, contribute, and thrive. Belonging in Action was officially launched on 18 March 2025 at Uwagboe's Kitchen and Grill in Edinburgh.

Belonging in Action CIC (SC881006) is a not-for-profit social sustainability organisation supporting underrepresented and minority communities, particularly African communities, while engaging wider diverse groups across Scotland.

We operate for the benefit of the community, reinvesting any surplus to grow our programmes and deepen our impact. What makes Belonging in Action unique is our structured approach to integration, moving individuals from connection to participation and ultimately to meaningful contribution within society.

ABOUT BiA

Graham Campbell, Councillor, Glasgow City, giving the keynote address at the launch of Belonging in Action in Edinburgh, March 2026.



THE CHALLENGE

Over the past three decades, migration into the UK has steadily increased, rising from around 200,000 in the early 1990s to peaks exceeding 1.2 million in recent years. While recent figures show a slight decline, overall migration levels remain historically high, as illustrated in Figure 1. This sustained growth reflects the UK's position as a destination for talent, education, and opportunity. Across Scotland and the wider UK, migrants and international students contribute valuable skills, ambition, and cultural insight to society and the economy.

Scotland continues to attract a growing number of migrants, students, and skilled professionals. At the same time, many face increasing challenges in accessing opportunities, building networks, and fully participating in society. Addressing integration and belonging is therefore not only a social priority but also an economic one, as unlocking underutilised talent strengthens communities and supports inclusive growth.

However, arrival does not guarantee integration. Many still face barriers that limit their ability to fully participate and contribute, such as professional isolation, underemployment, limited access to networks and cultural disconnection.

This gap between migration and meaningful inclusion represents a critical social sustainability challenge. When people are not supported to integrate effectively, their potential remains underutilised, and communities miss opportunities for cohesion, innovation, and shared prosperity.

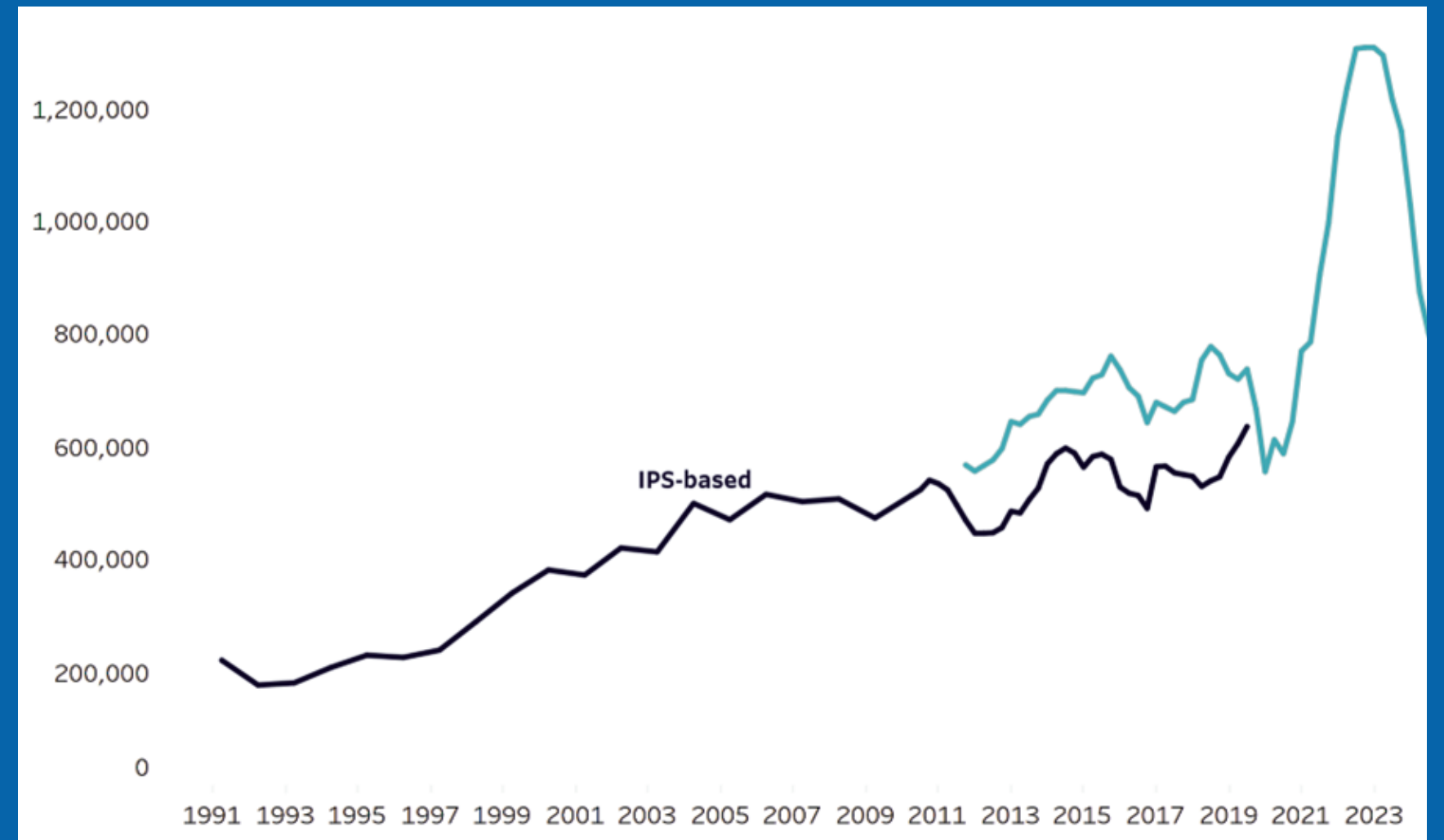


Figure 1: Net Migration and Immigration Trends in the UK (1991-2025)
Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Long-term international migration estimates

THE VISION & MISSION

We envision a Scotland, and ultimately a world, where:

- Social sustainability enables people to belong, participate, and thrive:
- talent is fully realised and contributes meaningfully to society
- diversity strengthens social and economic progress

- underrepresented and minority communities, particularly African communities, feel welcomed and included
- communities are connected and cohesive



Belonging in Action builds structured platforms that connect people across backgrounds, professions, and communities, with a focus on supporting underrepresented groups to integrate and thrive.

We turn connection into participation by enabling access to opportunities, collaboration, and shared growth within communities and the wider society.

Belonging transforms individuals into active contributors to society.

When people feel they belong:

- They participate more fully
- They collaborate more openly
- They contribute more confidently

BiA is on a mission to advance social sustainability by enabling individuals to connect, participate, and contribute meaningfully within their communities. We are building a platform where individuals are supported to integrate, participate, and contribute meaningfully to society, strengthening communities for the long term.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Belonging in Action delivers programmes designed to move individuals from connection to active participation and meaningful contribution within their communities, advancing social sustainability through structured pathways for connection, integration, and participation.

Our work centres on enabling people to move beyond presence to active contribution within society, supporting both individual growth and wider community cohesion.

We support **migrants, international students, and underrepresented communities**, particularly African communities, while engaging the wider Scottish population.

Our projects impact individuals seeking to build networks, access opportunities, and actively participate in society.

We move individuals through three stages of social sustainability:

- Connection—building relationships, networks, and a sense of belonging
- Participation—enabling engagement in opportunities, programmes, and community life
- Contribution—supporting individuals to add value meaningfully to society

Since our launch on 18 March 2025 at Uwagboe’s Kitchen and Grill in Edinburgh, we have engaged over 110 individuals within our community, including 95 pre-launch registrations and 18 on-site participants at our inaugural event. This early momentum reflects strong interest and lays the foundation for sustained social impact.

This approach ensures that belonging leads to measurable and lasting community impact..

HOW WE WORK

Community Networking Events

- Curated networking evenings for professionals, migrants, and students
- Industry-specific meetups
- “First Connections” sessions for newcomers to Scotland
- Peer-to-peer networking circles (small, guided group discussions)
- Community mixers hosted at local partner venues

Professional Development Conversations

- Career navigation workshops
- “How to Work in Scotland” sessions
- Personal branding and storytelling masterclasses
- Leadership development sessions for emerging professionals
- Mentorship matching and guided mentor conversations

Fireside Chats With Leaders

- Live fireside conversations with industry leaders and executives
- Policy and civic discussions with public sector representatives
- Founder and entrepreneur spotlight sessions
- Audience Q&A sessions for direct engagement
- Cross-sector leadership dialogues

Cultural Engagement Experiences

- Cultural exchange evenings
- City exploration and guided community visits
- Heritage and history learning sessions about Scotland
- “Bring Your Culture” community showcases
- Social gatherings centred around food and shared experiences



IMPACT IN PRACTICE

Our ambition is to expand our reach and deepen our impact by strengthening partnerships, growing our programmes, and supporting more individuals to integrate, participate, and thrive.

Visit our website to learn more about our programmes, community activities, and upcoming opportunities to get involved.

Through our programmes, we aim to:

- increase access to professional and social networks
- support individuals to navigate opportunities for work and growth
- strengthen confidence and participation within communities
- promote cultural understanding and social cohesion
- enable individuals to contribute meaningfully to society

Our focus is on building sustainable systems that deliver lasting social value.

We define success as individuals moving from isolation to active participation in society. This includes increased access to opportunities, stronger networks, improved confidence, and meaningful contribution to communities and the wider economy.

We are committed to tracking and measuring our impact as we grow, ensuring that our work continues to support inclusive, connected, and resilient communities across Scotland.

BELONGING IN SCOTLAND



Belonging in Scotland is a flagship initiative of Belonging in Action, designed to advance social sustainability by supporting integration, participation, and meaningful contribution within communities.

The initiative focuses on building connections between migrant professionals, students, and the wider Scottish community, with particular attention to underrepresented and minority groups.

This includes African communities, and builds on the strong foundation established at our launch event in March 2025. While BiA initiatives and projects will ultimately impact all of the United Kingdom, we begin with Scotland.

Through structured programmes and community engagement, Belonging in Scotland creates pathways for individuals to develop networks, access opportunities, and actively participate in society, contributing to stronger, more inclusive, and connected communities across Scotland and the United Kingdom.



THE SDG GOALS

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

We support underrepresented communities by improving access to networks, opportunities, and resources so that they can in turn thrive and contribute to their communities.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

We equip individuals with the skills, support, and connections needed to access employment and contribute meaningfully to the economy. This has a ripple effect on economic growth.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

We foster inclusive spaces that strengthen community cohesion and promote cultural understanding. Through our events and initiatives, we ensure everyone feels seen.

SDG 4 – Quality Education

We create learning opportunities through workshops, conversations, and mentorship that support lifelong growth. Our goal is to enrich the learning and integration experience for international students in Scotland.

As a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, we are committed to delivering measurable social impact by aligning our work with global priorities while addressing local community needs across Scotland.

TRACKING PROGRESS

As a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, Belonging in Action is committed to measuring the difference our work makes. We focus on simple and meaningful indicators that reflect participation, integration, and contribution within communities. We are committed to building a strong foundation for impact measurement as we grow, ensuring that our work continues to deliver real and lasting value to individuals and communities across Scotland.

Our Key Indicators

- number of individuals engaged through our programmes and events
- number of community networking and engagement sessions delivered
- participation in mentorship and professional development activities
- self-reported improvement in confidence, connection, and social integration
- number of partnerships and collaborations established





THE FOUNDER

John Uwagboe is an award-winning Nigerian British entrepreneur, corporate leader, and community builder working at the intersection of business, culture, and social impact.

He is the Founder of Uwagboe's Kitchen and Grill, established in 2020, which has grown into a recognised hospitality brand in Edinburgh.

With a background in senior leadership at Lloyds Banking Group, John brings expertise in systems, strategy, and inclusion. His work is rooted in the belief that true belonging creates pathways for people to contribute, grow, and thrive.

To learn more about John and his work, visit www.johnuwagboe.com

OUR PARTNERS

We collaborate with organisations and community stakeholders who share our commitment to inclusion, integration, and social sustainability.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we sustain our work through partnerships, sponsorships, grants, and collaborative programmes with organisations, institutions, and community stakeholders.



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

ISCA**NET**



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Message from Foysoil Choudhury MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for
Lothian Region**

7th April 2026, Edinburgh

SUPPORT FOR BIA

Scotland's strength has always been shaped by the diversity of the people who choose to live, work, and contribute here. When individuals from different cultures, experiences, and backgrounds come together, they enrich our communities and strengthen the social and economic fabric of our nation.

Initiatives such as Belonging in Action play an important role in fostering dialogue, connection, and understanding. By creating spaces where professionals, migrants, students, and community leaders can share experiences and build meaningful relationships, the initiative contributes to a Scotland where opportunity, participation,

and mutual respect are accessible to all. Conversations around work, identity, and belonging are increasingly important in today's global society. Platforms that encourage these discussions help ensure that Scotland remains a welcoming place where talent can thrive and where people from all walks of life feel able to contribute

fully to our collective future.

I commend the organisers of Belonging in Action for bringing people together in this spirit of community and collaboration, and I wish the initiative every success as it continues to encourage connection, understanding, and shared progress across Scotland.

FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region
Shadow Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development



JOIN US

Be part of building inclusive and connected communities across Scotland.

We work with students, professionals, migrant and diaspora communities, as well as universities, employers, and community organisations committed to building inclusive and connected societies.

Whether you are a student, professional, organisation, or community leader, there is a place for you in Belonging in Action.

- attend our programmes and community events
- partner with us to deliver impact
- support our work through collaboration or sponsorship
- join our growing network and community.





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